

# Encyclopaedia of German Diatheses

Michael Cysouw

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# Encyclopaedia of German Diatheses

Michael Cysouw

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## Preface

[0.1] Errors and omissions are unavoidable in scientific writing. They are the writer's equivalent of statistical Type I and Type II errors, respectively. And just as with statistical data, I have worked hard to keep all errors and omissions to a minimum in relation to the number of justified statements and judgements. Still, I need to start with a major disclaimer: this book is a work in progress. The current version undoubtedly contains numerous errors, omissions, inaccuracies and wrong generalisations. I can say this with certainty because I have been changing, adding and deleting details up to the last moment before publication of the current version of this book. And I do not expect it to stop here. Actually, the work-in-progress status is intended to be taken quite literally: I plan to update and revise this book regularly in the future. Any progress can be followed online at [github.com/cysouw/diathesis](https://github.com/cysouw/diathesis). I welcome any suggestions for improvement, which can be submitted as an 'issue' on that website, or, even better, as a 'pull request' including proposed changes and corrections.

[0.2] This book is about German grammar, but the book is written in English. These two decisions have a purely personal background. First, the idea to write about German grammar arose in the context of me teaching German grammar at the Philipps-University in Marburg. Actually, the diversity of diathesis could, and should, be investigated in the same depth in other language besides German. Second, the book is written in English first and foremost because I personally feel more comfortable writing in English than in German. Also, I think that the current approach to diathesis is also of interest to readers that do not care too much about all minute details of German grammar. And for the readers that are interested in those details of the German language, I assume that they both have a working knowledge of English (so they can read this text) and of German (so they can understand the German examples). For that reason I decided to omit any interlinear glossing of the examples. Most examples are simple enough to be understood even with just an approximate understanding of German. Adding interlinear glossing throughout would be an enormous undertaking, which I think is not worthwhile given the intended readership.

[0.3] This book is written in Pandoc Markdown. Markdown ([commonmark.org](https://commonmark.org)) allows for clean and readable raw text, while Pandoc ([pandoc.org](https://pandoc.org)) provides easy transformations of the text into beautiful output, for example in formats like XeLaTeX/PDF or HTML. I have used various extensions for Pandoc ('filters' in Pandoc-parlance), for example to format and number linguistic examples. More information on these filters can be found on the GitHub webpage mentioned above.

The many lists, examples and subsections of this book make it a serialised database, and I have included many cross references to connect related parts throughout. To read the resulting hypertext I would urge the reader to try out an electronic version, either PDF or HTML. I personally have become really enamoured with the HTML version as it allows for easy searching and for quick forward-and-backward jumping through the text using our already internalised muscle-memory from web browsing. Also, the advances in CSS-styling have progressed to such an extent that the layout of HTML is almost approaching LaTeX sophistication, while adding a responsive/adaptive design ([ref-marcotte2010](#)). The HTML version of this book is prepared as a single standalone file that can be used offline. This file will be opened in a web browser, even when the file is saved locally. It just uses the web browser as a text-rendering engine.

[0.4]

Many thanks to Martin Haspelmath, Simon Kasper, and especially to Jens Fleischhauer for extremely helpful comments and detailed suggestions. The proofreaders at the Language Science Press did magnificent work: many thanks to Agnes Kim, Annemarie Verkerk, Elliot Pearl, Felix Kopecky, Jeroen van de Weijer, Katja Politt, Lea Schäfer, Lisa Schäfer, Patricia Cabredo Hofherr, Yvonne Treis and one additional anonymous proofreader. Of the many students that have participated in my lectures and seminars (and had to endure my work-in-progress) I would like to explicitly thank Annika Besser, Dennis Beitel, Franziska Beyer, Patricia Bier, Katja Daube, Milena Gropp, Eric Ilten, Jens Jakob, Christina Jann, Vanessa Lang, Katrin Leinweber, Rieke Hänche, Philip Ossowski, Nico Reinicke, Kristina Splanemann and Stella van den Berg. They wrote very useful term papers related to the topics discussed here and provided valuable suggestions, feedback and corrections. And finally I would like to thank all people at the *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (DWDS) as listed at [dwds.de](http://dwds.de). Such easy-access resources are reinvigorating linguistic research enormously.

[0.5]

# 1 Setting the scene

## 1.1 The daunting diversity of diathesis

[1.1] The quintessential example of German diathesis, discussed in every grammatical description of this language, is the *werden+Partizip* passive construction (1a). The crucial characteristic that makes this a diathesis is that the state-of-affairs as described by the passive is fundamentally the same as in the corresponding active (1b). Yet, while the circumstances remain the same, the grammatical structure and the communicated perspective differ between the two expressions.

- (1) a. Das Gemälde wird von einem Künstler gemalt.  
b. Der Künstler malt ein Gemälde.

[1.2] This general approach to diathesis, viz. alternating sentence structures that express approximately the same state-of-affairs, is applicable to a large number of grammatical phenomena in German. All in all, almost 250 different German diatheses are described in this book, some highly productive, some only attested for a handful of verbs. The main goal of this book is to present this wealth of grammatical possibility in a unified manner, while at the same time attempting to classify and organise this diversity.<sup>1</sup>

[1.3] It might come as a surprise that there are so many different diatheses in German, but my impression is that in this respect German is no exception among the world's languages. I expect that all languages have a similar abundance of different ways in which to construe a sentence around a lexical predicate. In a sense, a diathesis allows for the expression of a distinct perspective on the event described, something that is arguably a common desire of any language user.

[1.4] By way of an introduction, consider the following five illustrative examples of diathesis.<sup>2</sup> Some verbs, like *beginnen* 'to start' (2a), allow for a passive-like con-

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<sup>1</sup>I will make no attempt to fit all the hundreds of constructional possibilities of the German language into any specific grammatical framework, although the collection of diatheses presented here might be taken as a modelling-challenge for your favourite grammatical theory.

<sup>2</sup>Many examples in this book contain masculine nouns, not because of laziness on my behalf, but because their definite articles overtly show the different German cases (*der, des, dem, den*). Notwithstanding this grammatical preference, I will try to use examples with as much diversity as possible throughout this book.

struction without any *werden* auxiliary, often called “anticausative”. Other verbs, like *schießen* ‘to shoot’ (2b), allow for an alternation between an accusative and a prepositional phrase, often called “antipassive”. Further, there are many different kinds of diathesis marked by a reflexive pronoun, like the reflexive antipassive with *beklagen* ‘to lament’ (2c). Diathesis is also frequently marked by a prefix, like the applicative between *stammen aus* and *entstammen* ‘to descend from’ (2d). Lastly, many light-verb constructions show diathesis, for example the *sein+zu-Infinitiv* passive, as illustrated below with the main verb *lösen* ‘to solve’ (2e).

- (2) a. Der Diktator beginnt den Krieg.  
Der Krieg beginnt.  
b. Der Jäger schießt den Bären.  
Der Jäger schießt auf den Bären.  
c. Der Lehrer beklagt den Lärm.  
Der Lehrer beklagt sich über den Lärm.  
d. Der Kandidat stammt aus einem Adelsgeschlecht.  
Der Kandidat entstammt einem Adelsgeschlecht.  
e. Der Ermittler löst den Fall.  
Der Fall ist für den Ermittler leicht zu lösen.

### 1.2 Defining diathesis

A diathesis is defined here as special kind of alternation between two different clause constructions. To properly define diathesis, I will first define “alternation” in general. The definition of “clause alternation” will then be established on that basis. Finally, a diathesis will be defined as a special kind of clause alternation. [1.5]

Hidden in these succinct definitions there are various grammatical concepts that will be expanded upon in the subsequent sections. The more general aspects of CLAUSE ALTERNATION are discussed in this chapter, directly below the following definitions, while the details of the analysis and the classification of DIATHESIS are postponed to the next chapter. [1.6]

#### Alternation

An ALTERNATION (or simply “grammatical marking”) is defined as follows: [1.7]

- An alternation consists of two different linguistic constructions, i.e. there are two alternants.



- Typically, the lexical root (or possibly a larger linguistic entity) does not change in the alternation, i.e. there is some fundamental linguistic material in both alternants that remains the same.
- Typically, the difference between these alternants is overtly indicated by the presence of some additional linguistic material.
- Typically, the overt marking introduces a direction into the alternation, i.e. one alternant consists of less/shorter/zero linguistic elements (“less marked”) and one consists of more/longer/overt linguistic material (“more marked”). In some situations the direction of the alternation remains undecidable, i.e. the alternation is equipollent.
- The collection of roots (or possibly larger linguistic entities) to which the alternation applies creates an empirical linguistic class. Such an empirical class often has a semantic/functional interpretation, but not necessarily so.

[1.8]

Alternations include basic morphological oppositions, like singular vs. plural (3a) and in general comprise any opposition of grammatical forms, like synthetic present vs. analytic perfect (3b). Alternations also exist in syntax as oppositions between different sentence structures, like a plain transitive nominative+accusative structure alternating with an intransitive reflexive anticausative with obligatory adverbial (3c).

- (3) a. Ein Haus.  
Zwei Häuser.
- b. Das Kind schläft.  
Das Kind hat geschlafen.
- c. Ich verkaufe das Buch.  
Das Buch verkauft sich gut.

[1.9]

There is a thought-provoking and almost philosophical issue here, which I will not further explore, namely whether the basis of grammatical analysis are the constructions themselves or the alternations between constructions. The approach taken here is that the alternations are the more crucial entities. I consider alternations as the morphosyntactic equivalent to phonological minimal pairs. Alternations are also useful in the practice of grammatical description. The meaning/function of a construction by itself is often hard to describe in full, while the meaning/function of an alternation can simply be described by the difference in meaning between the alternants. Only the crucial facets that are added by the alternation need to be captured – a task that often is already difficult enough. Similar intuitions about the importance of alternations have led to the development of syntactic transformations (cf. **ref-harris1957**).

## Clause alternation

Based on the above definition of an alternation, a **CLAUSE ALTERNATION** is defined as follows:

[1.10]

- In a clause alternation both alternants are monoclausal, i.e. both alternants contain a single main predicate. For German, the crucial definitional property of monoclausality will be a phenomenon called “coherence” (see Section 1.3.1).
- In both alternants, the main predicate consists of the same lexeme, i.e. both contain the same verb and the meaning of the lexical verb does not (substantially) change between the alternants (see Section 1.3.2).
- The lexical roles of the verb do not change between the alternants. Lexical roles are an inherent part of the meaning of a verb and alternations do not change them. Note, however, that there might be new roles introduced or some roles might be left unexpressed (see Section 1.3.3).
- A specific clause alternation is only applicable to a restricted set of verbs. The list of applicable verbs constitutes the domain of application of the alternation. Any semantic/syntactic characterisation of these applicable verbs should be seen as a summary of the domain of application, not its definition (see Section 1.3.4).
- The meaning/function of the whole clause changes between the alternants. This functional difference is the whole point of having a clause alternation in the first place (see Section 1.3.5).

Clause alternations are widespread when auxiliaries are introduced, like modal *müssen* ‘have to’ (4a), see Section 11.4.7. However, clause alternations are attested with many more different kinds of marking, like the verb particle *auf*- marking completeness of the action (4b), see Section 6.7.8, or the somewhat mysterious “free” reflexive *sich* with verbs like *ansehen* ‘look at’ (4c), see Section 7.4.4. Arguably, the special word order in German subordinate clauses (viz. with the finite verb in clause-final position) can also be regarded as a clause alternation (4d).

[1.11]

- (4)
- a. Er erledigt seine Hausaufgaben.  
Er muss seine Hausaufgaben erledigen.
  - b. Ich esse den Apfel.  
Ich esse den Apfel auf.
  - c. Er hat das Haus angesehen.  
Er hat sich das Haus angesehen.
  - d. Er erledigt seine Hausaufgaben.  
(Ich hoffe, dass) er seine Hausaufgaben erledigt.

## Diathesis

[1.12] Based on the notion of a clause alternation, a DIATHESIS (sometimes also known as “valency alternation”) is defined as follows:

- A diathesis is a clause alternation in which at least one of the lexical roles has a different form between the clausal alternants, i.e. at least one of the roles is remapped to a different grammatical expression. In other words, a diathesis is a clause alternation with a co-occurring role-marking alternation (see Section 2.4). In opposition to diathesis, a clause alternation without any role remapping is called an EPITHESIS (see Chapter 4).
- Remapped roles do not substantially change their meaning, i.e. “who does what to whom” does not change. However, the details of the relation between the main predicate and the remapped roles can (and normally will) change. For example, the role’s influence on the action, or its affectedness by the predicate, might change. At the extreme, the remapping of a role can consist in the addition of a completely new role or in the complete removal of an existing role (see Section 2.2).
- As is true for all alternations, a diathesis has a direction from a formally “less marked” to a “more marked” alternant. However, in some special instances a diathesis will have no overt marking other than the change in marking of the remapped roles itself. This will be called a covert (or equipollent, or bare) diathesis. The different ways of marking a diathesis will be the basic organisational structure of this book (see Section 2.3).
- As a practical restriction, I will only consider diatheses in which one alternant is a basic clause with a single finite verb. In principle, when there is a diathesis between a basic clause and structure A, and another diathesis between the same basic clause and structure B, then there is also a diathesis between structures A and B. However, such diatheses are not included here. It is a major goal of this book to present a precise description of all possible role remappings relative to the basic clause structure (see Section 2.7).

[1.13] The prototypical example of a diathesis is the *werden+Partizip* passive as in (5a), see Section 10.5.15. Also widely acknowledged is the *bekommen+Partizip* dative passive as shown in (5b), see Section 10.5.21. However, the diversity of diatheses in German goes well beyond such light-verb constructions. There is also, for example, a passive-like diathesis marked with a reflexive pronoun as shown in (5c), see Section 7.5.7, or an applicative diathesis marked with a prefix *be-* as shown in (5d), see Section 8.8.8.

## 1 Setting the scene

- (5) a. Der Schreiner lackiert den Tisch.  
Der Tisch wurde von dem Schreiner lackiert.
- b. Der Lehrer nimmt dem Schüler das Handy ab.  
Der Schüler bekommt das Handy von dem Lehrer abgenommen.
- c. Der Preis empört den Kunden.  
Der Kunde empört sich über den Preis.
- d. Der Tourist steigt auf den Berg.  
Der Tourist besteigt den Berg.

## 1.3 Definitional details

### 1.3.1 Monoclausality and coherence

Diatheses are defined here as alternations between clauses with the same main verb. However, a single clause in German can contain multiple verb forms, for example when auxiliaries are used. It is crucial to strictly distinguish between expressions in which a multi-verb construction is monoclausal and when it is not. Only monoclausal constructions will be considered in this book. [1.14]

To define monoclausality, I will use the fact that the finite verb in German is placed at the end of a subordinate clause. The dummy main sentence *Es ist bekannt, dass* ‘it is known that’ will be used to force such a subordinate construction. The position of the finite verb in the subordinate clause can then be used to identify the boundary of the clause. Concretely, everything that can occur before the finite verb still belongs within the clause. In contrast, everything that has to come after the finite verb belongs to a different clause. For example, the sentence in (6a) will turn into (6b) in a subordinate construction. The finite verbform *gehe* now occurs at the end of the sentence. In this example it is not possible for anything to follow after this finite verb, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (6c). So, the original sentence in (6a) is a single clause. [1.15]

- (6) a. Ich gehe morgen nach Hause.
- b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich morgen nach Hause gehe.
- c. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich gehe morgen nach Hause.

Sentences with this characteristic will be called (syntactically) COHERENT, following Bech (ref-bech1955; see also ref-kiss1995 for an in-depth discussion).<sup>3</sup> [1.16]

---

<sup>3</sup>This usage of the term “coherence” is slightly confusing, because it is used here as a technical term from the syntactic literature, completely independent from the pragmatic usage of the term “coherence” for contextual interconnectedness.

Coherent constructions are considered to be monoclausal. For example, coherence is attested in auxiliary constructions with participles (7) and infinitives (8). Such constructions are thus monoclausal.

- (7) a. Ich habe gestern ein Haus gekauft.
- b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich gestern ein Haus gekauft habe.
- c. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich gestern gekauft habe ein Haus.
- (8) a. Ich will morgen ein Haus kaufen.
- b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich morgen ein Haus kaufen will.
- c. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich morgen kaufen will ein Haus.

[1.17] In contrast, constructions with *zu* and an infinitive are sometimes coherent, e.g. (9) with the finite verb *geben* ‘to give’, and sometimes non-coherent, e.g. (10) with the finite verb *behaupten* ‘to claim’. The coherent construction in (9a) is thus monoclausal, while the non-coherent construction in (10a) consists of two clauses.

- (9) a. Der Protest gibt ihr zu denken.
- b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) der Protest ihr zu denken gibt.
- c. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) der Protest gibt ihr zu denken.
- (10) a. Der Sportler behauptet den Wettkampf zu gewinnen.
- b. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) der Sportler den Wettkampf zu gewinnen behauptet.
- c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) der Sportler behauptet den Wettkampf zu gewinnen.

[1.18] All diatheses in this book are monoclausal (by definition). Besides trying to list all German diatheses, I will also catalogue all monoclausal alternations without any change in role marking (i.e. without diathesis). Such alternations will be called *EPITHESES*. This book can thus also be read as a collection of all German monoclausal constructions, with or without role remapping. Somewhat unexpectedly, the number of alternations with role remapping (i.e. diathesis) is about twice as large as the number of monoclausal alternations without changes in role marking (i.e. epithesis).

[1.19] When the above definition of monoclausality is strictly followed, then there turn out to be dozens of verbs that can be used as the finite “auxiliary” in a coherent multi-verb clause. When used as finite auxiliaries, these verbs are grammaticalised, i.e. they shed much of their lexical meaning when used in a multi-verb

construction. Such grammaticalised verbs are classified into different groups and referred to by many different names in the German grammatical literature, for examples *Hilfsverb*, *Kopulaverb*, *Modalverb*, *Modalitätsverb*, *Halbmodalverb* (ref-eisenberg2006a), *Nebenverb* (ref-engel1996: 406), *Funktionsverb* (Polenz 1963 cited in ref-kamber2008: 34), *Strukturverb* (ref-weber2005), or *Stützverb* (Seelbach 1991 cited in ref-kamber2008: 34). I will not pursue the question here how to classify these verbs into different kinds. I will simply refer to the whole group of these auxiliary verbs as LIGHT VERBS.<sup>4</sup> All light verbs that will be discussed in this book are shown in alphabetical order in (11).

- (11) German verbs that can be used as light verbs  
*aussehen, bekommen, bleiben, brauchen, bringen, drohen, dürfen, erscheinen, fahren, finden, fühlen, geben, gehen, gehören, gelten, glauben, haben, halten, heißen, helfen, hören, kommen, kriegen, können, lassen, legen, lehren, lernen, liegen, machen, mögen, müssen, nehmen, pflegen, riechen, scheinen, schicken, sehen, sein, setzen, sollen, spüren, stehen, suchen, tun, vermögen, versprechen, verstehen, werden, wirken, wissen, wollen*

### 1.3.2 Grammaticalisation of lexical meaning

It is not always immediately clear whether a verb remains the same verb in a clause alternation. For example, the verb *trinken* means ‘to drink’ when used as a transitive verb (12a). In contrast, when used intransitively it contains a strong insinuation that the drinking includes too much alcohol, so it might better be translated as ‘to be an alcoholic’ (12b). In effect, the transitive and the intransitive use of *trinken* have a different meaning. However, in this case, the special intransitive meaning is probably best analysed as a conversational implicature because the suggestion of alcoholism can be suppressed given the right context (12c).

[1.20]

- (12) a. Er trinkt einen Orangensaft.  
b. Er trinkt.  
c. Er trinkt hastig, weil er durstig ist.

In general, when the same lexical verb is used in different alternating construc-

[1.21]

---

<sup>4</sup>The same English term “light verb” has recently also been used as a translation of the German term *Funktionsverb* (ref-fleischhauer2019; ref-fleischhauer2021; ref-fleischhauer2021a). Actually, both that use and my use of the term “light verb” are instances of a more general overarching concept. The *Funktionsverb* can be specified as a “light verb with a nominal main predicate”. In contrast, in this book the term “light verb” is used for a “light verb with a verbal main predicate” (cf. Section 13.2.5).

tions, then there is (of course) a difference in meaning between the two occurrences. However, ideally this difference is completely induced by the alternation and not by the lexical verb itself. Yet, it is extremely common for the combination of a lexical verb with the surrounding construction to grammaticalise into a new meaning. For example, the verb *auftreten* means something like ‘to act’ as an intransitive (18a), but ‘to kick open’ as a transitive (13b). Both meanings originate as metaphorical extensions from the meaning ‘to step on something (by foot)’.

- (13) a. Er ist in der Oper aufgetreten.  
b. Er hat die Tür aufgetreten.

[1.22] Likewise, historical processes can lead to current homophony of two different lexemes. For example, this appears to be the case with the verb *abhauen*, which has a transitive meaning ‘to cut off’ (14a). However, it has attained another usage during the course of the 20th century as an intransitive meaning ‘to run away’ (14b), probably based on a southern German dialectal meaning of *hauen* ‘to go, to walk’.<sup>5</sup>

- (14) a. Er hat den Ast abgehauen.  
b. Er ist abgehauen.

[1.23] In between those extremes (i.e. conversational implicature as with *trinken* and different lexicalisation as with *abhauen*) there are various intermediate stages of semantic separation. For example, the verb *hängen* ‘to hang’ can be used as a regular intransitive verb with a location (15a). However, the specific combination with the preposition *an* can also have a special meaning ‘being emotionally attached to something’ (15b). In this case it seems most appropriate to interpret the combination *hängen an* as a separate lexicalisation, although the path of the grammaticalisation to this new interpretation can still be intuitively grasped.

- (15) a. Er hängt an einem Seil.  
b. Er hängt an seinem Teddy.

[1.24] As with all grammaticalisation, it is often difficult to decide where to draw the line on the continuum between implicature (*trinken*), metaphorical extension (*auftreten*), contextual lexicalisation (*hängen an*) or completely different lexicalisation (*abhauen*). I tend to be rather lenient in allowing slightly different meanings still to be counted as diatheses of the “same” verb. However, I will exclude clear examples of grammaticalised lexicalisation and treat those as separate verbs.

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<sup>5</sup>Pfeiffer (ref-pfeiffer1993), entry *hauen* at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/etymwb/hauen>, accessed 12 December 2018.

### 1.3.3 Lexeme-specific lexical roles

A crucial aspect of diathesis is that the lexical roles of a specific verb do not change, only the grammatical encoding of the roles is modified. For example, the verb *füllen* ‘to fill’ occurs in various monoclausal constructions (16) but the roles of (i) filler, (ii) filled container and (iii) filling substance remain the same. The different grammatical forms that are used to express these roles are indexed with the corresponding subscripts in the examples below.

[1.25]

- (16) a. [Der Koch]<sub>i</sub> füllt [den Topf]<sub>ii</sub> [mit dem Reis]<sub>iii</sub>.  
b. [Der Koch]<sub>i</sub> füllt [den Reis]<sub>iii</sub> [in den Topf]<sub>ii</sub>.  
c. [Der Reis]<sub>iii</sub> füllt [dem Koch]<sub>i</sub> [den Magen]<sub>ii</sub>.  
d. [Der Koch]<sub>i</sub> füllt sich [den Magen]<sub>ii</sub>.  
e. [Der Blumentopf]<sub>ii</sub> füllt sich [mit Wurzeln]<sub>iii</sub>.

Already from this example it becomes clear that it is often really difficult, if not impossible, to attach a specific valency to a verb. Given that most (and possibly all) German verbs show some kind of diathesis, I reject the traditional notion of a fixed valency belonging to a specific verb (see Section 2.2 for a more extensive discussion). Alternatively, I propose that it is possible to list all LEXEME-SPECIFIC ROLES (or equivalently LEXICAL ROLES) as a fixed characteristic of each lexical verb. The following three criteria will be used to determine the lexical roles of a verb.

[1.26]

First, each role that is case-marked in at least one clause alternant is a lexeme-specific role. In the example of *füllen* in (16), each of the three roles is marked as nominative, accusative or dative in at least one of the alternants, so all three roles are lexeme-specific. Various exceptions and stipulations to this criterion are discussed in Section 5.2.

[1.27]

Second, all obligatory prepositional phrases are lexeme-specific roles. There are different kinds of such lexeme-specific prepositional phrases. First, some verbs obligatorily require such a location, like *sich befinden* (17), see Section 6.3.3. Second, some diatheses introduce an obligatory location, like the caused-motion diathesis with *waschen* (18), see Section 6.8.7. This diathesis turns an accusative object *Hose* ‘trousers’ (18a) into an obligatory location (18b,c).

[1.28]

- (17) a. Der Stuhl befindet sich im Wohnzimmer  
b. \* Der Stuhl befindet sich.



- (18) a. Ich wasche meine Hose.  
 b. Ich wasche den Fleck aus meiner Hose.  
 c. \* Ich wasche den Fleck.

[1.29] Third, there is a large class of lexeme-specific prepositional phrases that I will call GOVERNED PREPOSITIONS, like with *arbeiten an* ‘to work on’ (19a). These prepositional phrases are not obligatorily present (19b). However, the intuition behind governed prepositions is that these prepositions are lexically determined by the verb and often strongly grammaticalised both semantically and structurally. For example, the preposition *an* with the verb *arbeiten* ‘to work’ (19a) is semantically strongly bleached with none of its local meaning remaining. Syntactically, the prepositional phrase in *arbeiten an* can be paraphrased with a complement clause of the form *daran, dass* (19c). The possibility of such a syntactic paraphrase will be used as the main characteristic to identify governed prepositions. Various exceptions and stipulations to this criterion are discussed in Section 6.2.

- (19) a. Ich arbeite an meinem Buch.  
 b. Ich arbeite hart.  
 c. Ich arbeite daran, dass das Buch bald fertig wird.

[1.30] Under this approach, there are a few lexical roles that appear to be very widespread, up to the point of seemingly being universally applicable to all verbs. If that would be the case, then it would defeat the idea of lexeme-specific roles. However, on closer inspection it appears that there are no roles that apply to all verbs. The closest contender is, arguably, the role of causer, which can be introduced to almost any German verb by using the *lassen+Infinitiv* diathesis (20), see Section 11.6.2. However, there is a small group of verbs that do not allow for this diathesis, like *gefallen* ‘to like’ (21). This shows that even virtually universal roles are still lexically determined in German.

- (20) a. Der Student arbeitet an einer Aufgabe.  
 b. Der Professor lässt den Studenten an einer Aufgabe arbeiten.
- (21) a. Dein Haarschnitt gefällt mir.  
 b. \* Er lässt mir seinen Haarschnitt gefallen.

[1.31] Such lexeme-specific roles are called “verb-specific semantic roles” in Van Valin (ref-van-valin2004) and “microroles” in Hartmann et al. (ref-hartmann2014)■

The obvious next step (as discussed in both these papers) is to group such microroles into clusters of semantic/thematic mesoroles, i.e. widespread roles like agent, patient, experiencer, etc. Such semantic roles are used constantly in contemporary linguistics, but they are surprisingly ill-defined. For example, given a random German verb like *füllen* as exemplified at the start of this section, it is not clear at all what should be its semantic roles, and what criteria should be used to determine them. Hartmann et al. (ref-hartmann2014) and Cysouw (ref-cysouw2014a) use cross-linguistic data to approach this problem. However, such an approach does not allow for language-specific definitions, which is the problem here.

As a solution, I propose to use the applicability of a diathesis as a criterion for the language-specific determination of semantic mesoroles. For example, a “German patient” might be defined as the group of those lexical roles that are changed from accusative to nominative in the *werden+Partizip* passive diathesis. Note that this definition is not supposed to satisfy all intuitions that surround the notion “patient” in linguistics. Quite to the contrary, the proposal is to DEFINE a semantic role like “patient” on the basis of applicable diatheses and adapt any intuitions to that definition (or, if that feels too radical, simply use a different name for the newly defined semantic role, like *Leidtragende*). Even more general, a semantic role could also be defined by the cross section of multiple diatheses. The determination of suitable (combinations of) diatheses to define semantic roles for German will not be pursued here, but left for a follow-up investigation.

[1.32]

### 1.3.4 Domain of application and verb classes

A widespread assumption in linguistic analysis is that most alternations (including diatheses) have a sensible domain of application. This is the idea that there is some rationale, often a kind of semantic characterisation, explaining which roots allow for a specific kind of linguistic marking (e.g. only transitive verbs allow for a *werden* passive).<sup>6</sup> Although I also believe that many alternations, including diatheses, mostly behave sensibly, I would advise not to expect too much (semantic) regularity to be hidden in grammatical structure. Many grammatical regularities have unexpected exceptions, be it because of haphazard diachronic change or through creative analogical extension. Even stronger, some grammatical marking appears to be almost completely without (semantic) rationale, like

[1.33]

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<sup>6</sup>For example, compare the infamous sentence on the first page of Levin (ref-levin1993: 1) “the behavior of a verb, particularly with respect to the expression and interpretation of its arguments, is to a large extent determined by its meaning”. In contrast to that claim, Levin in practice uses form to establish classes of verbs, not meaning. That practical approach is also taken here.

the assignment of plural allomorphy in German. If that can happen in morphology, it can also happen in syntax.

[1.34]

As a practical approach to determine the domain of application (say, which verbs allow for the *werden+Partizip* passive) I propose to always first enumerate as much examples as possible. In other words, first empirically establish a verb class of those verbs that happen to be possible with an alternation. In this book, I will not be satisfied with four or five cases that suggest a neat semantic characterisation for a specific diathesis. In contrast, I will list as many as possible further examples, idiosyncratic as they may be. Only after such a formal listing of the domain of application (which ideally needs much more corpus research than I have been able to perform here) is it possible to investigate the presence of any (semantic) rationale. In many cases there might be a (partial) rationale for the attested group of verbs, but it is just as likely (and just as interesting) to have to conclude that there apparently is none.

[1.35]

Taking this principle one step further, I propose to DEFINE the domain of application by the concrete listing of all examples. Any (semantic) characterisation is then always a post-hoc generalisation, not a definition. This radically lexicalist interpretation is the approach that I will follow in this book. For each diathesis I will list as many example verbs as possible that take part in the diathesis (for some I will reverse the approach and list verbs that are not possible). These lexical lists (i.e. the empirical verb classes) are the definition of the domain of application. For some diatheses I will speculate about semantic generalisations, but I consider these generalisations always to be secondary to the concrete listing of examples. My semantic generalisations are thus never a causal explanation.

This principle of definition by listing even holds for questions of productivity.<sup>[36]</sup> For example, when somebody would propose a nonce-verb like *flurchten* to be a new verb for the German language in an experimental setting, then its meaning is partially defined by stipulating what kind of diatheses it can take part in. For example, the following constructions might, or might not, be chosen in examples that contextualise the new verb. The choices made will strongly influence the interpretation of the new verb.

- (22) a. Ich flurchte den Gärtner.  
 b. Ich flurchte auf den Gärtner.  
 c. Ich flurchte mich vor den Gärtner.  
 d. Der Gärtner flurchtet.  
 e. Der Gärtner flurchtet sich.

### 1.3.5 Functional analysis

Intimately connected to the domain of application (i.e. which verbs allow for which diathesis) is the question as to the meaning/function of a specific diathesis. In essence, this question asks for a description of the difference in meaning between the two alternants of a diathesis. For example, what is the difference between the transitive *schließen* (23a) and the corresponding reflexive anticausative *sich schließen* (23b), cf. Section 7.5.2. Although the answer might seem obvious for some diatheses, it turns out to be extremely difficult to give a concise description of such differences for most diatheses, and I will regularly refrain from trying to provide such a descriptions. Each diathesis is actually its own research project, preferably investigated using predictive corpus analysis (cf. the large literature on the English dative alternation, or for German [ref-devaere2018](#)).

- (23) a. Ich schließe die Tür.  
b. Die Tür schließt sich.

There are two empirical pieces of information that are crucial for such a functional analysis of a diathesis. The first key data point is the actual list of verbs that allow for a specific diathesis (i.e. the verb class as defined by a diathesis, see the previous Section 1.3.4). The second important consideration is any restriction on the kind of nominals that can be used to fill the roles of a diathesis (i.e. nominal classes as defined by a diathesis). Both these classes can be established empirically by collecting and analysing a corpus of examples of a specific diathesis. [1.38]

The problem of a functional description for a diathesis becomes even larger with the realisation that there are many dozens of diatheses, often highly similar to each other. For example, it is really difficult (cf. [ref-schafer2007](#); [ref-kurogo2016](#)) [1.39] to characterise the difference between the reflexive anticausative, like with *schließen* above in (23), and the unmarked anticausative, like with *kochen* in (24), see Section 5.5.5.

- (24) a. Ich koche den Kaffee.  
b. Der Kaffee kocht.  
c. \* Der Kaffee kocht sich.

The problem of providing a concise functional description for a grammatical construction is not restricted to diatheses. Clause alternations that do not have any role-remapping are also in need of a functional description (see Chapter 4 for a survey). An example is the phenomenon of “free” reflexives, illustrated with *ansehen* in (25), see Section 7.4.4. Although there is no role-remapping in this [1.40]

alternation (and thus no diathesis), it turns out to be really difficult to describe the difference between (25a) without reflexive and (25b) with reflexive. All clause alternations, with or without role-remapping, are in need of a functional analysis, and most such analyses will need substantial further research.

- (25) a. Ich habe das Haus angesehen.  
b. Ich habe mir das Haus angesehen.

## 1.4 Method

[1.41] Methodologically, I regard the approach in this book as an attempt to unify grammatical research with lexicographic research, two aspects of linguistics that are often considered to be separate inquiries. In contrast to such a separation, I would like to propose a view of linguistics that might be called GRAMMAR OF THE LEXICON (cf. **ref-levin1993**: 2–4, but one might just as well include all of construction grammar here). In this approach, each grammatical phenomenon should always be linked to individual occurrences, either types (lexicon) or tokens (corpus). It is my experience from compiling the current compendium of diatheses that identifying and characterising a specific grammatical structure is really just “step one” of grammatical research. Only by trying to find more examples, with different lexemes and in different contexts, it becomes clear how prominent and varying a grammatical structure really is.

[1.42] As a rule-of-thumb, I propose the 10-IN-10-RULE as “step two” of grammatical research. If you think that a particular construction is widespread, or maybe even typical for a specific class of words (e.g. typical for intransitives), then take 10 minutes to search for examples, either using your own intuitions or in one of the many online databases or corpora. Resources like the *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (DWDS), the various online offerings of the *Institut für Deutsche Sprache* (IDS), or just a Google “exact search” are literally just a click away and completely rejuvenate linguistic research. If you are not able to list 10 examples in 10 minutes, then go back to the drawing board and reconsider your intuitions.

[1.43] Such quick-and-dirty 10-minute surveys of course still only represent a preliminary step of grammatical analysis. It is this level of detail that I have aimed for in this book (although I have often spend way more than 10 minutes searching for examples of a specific diathesis). Each sub-subsection about an individual diathesis lists lexemes that can be used with this diathesis. It includes examples of the diathesis, either from my own intuitions or from any of the above mentioned

databases. I plan to expand and fine-tune these lists in future revisions of this book.

However, the real research is only yet to come. “Step three” would be the in-depth investigation of individual diatheses by sampling examples from corpora and formulating predictive parameters to explain their usage. For example, De Vaere *et al.* (ref-devaere2018) investigate the dative antipassive (see Section 6.7.11) for just the single verb *geben* ‘to give’. Now, there are hundreds of diatheses and hundreds of verbs listed in this book, so there are tens of thousands of similar research projects just waiting to be tackled.

### 1.5 Previous research

The current attempt to present an all-encompassing survey of German diatheses builds on a rich scholarly tradition (with many scholarly precursors to be cited in appropriate places throughout this book). A comparable and highly influential survey of diathesis for English is Levin (ref-levin1993), followed by a similar attempt for German by Sauerland (ref-sauerland1994). A recent cross-linguistic survey of valency and diathesis in this tradition is edited by Malchukov & Comrie (ref-malchukov2015a), which also includes data on German (ref-haspelmith2013a)

Independently, there is a long tradition in the German grammatical literature to investigate diathesis, e.g. as “*Konversenverhältnis der Aktanten*” (ref-eroms1980: 24; cf. ref-heringer1968). An early attempt at a survey of various diatheses is presented by Höhle (ref-hohle1978). Basic summaries of German diathesis in the context of valency can be found in Eroms (ref-eroms2000: Ch. 10) or Ágel (ref-angel2000: Ch. 6). There also are a few monographs about specific German diatheses (e.g. ref-leirbukt1997; ref-holl2010; ref-jager2013) and recently some corpus studies into the effect of specific diatheses on individual verbs have appeared (ref-devaere2018; ref-imo2018; ref-dux2020: Ch. 6).

Diathesis is of course closely linked to the concept of valency, so the groundbreaking valency dictionary for German by Helbig and Schenkel (ref-helbig1991, originally from 1969) deserves mentioning. They identify the problem that certain verbs can be used in different constructions, but diatheses are not investigated consistently in their dictionary. Another highly influential valency dictionary for German, edited by Schumacher (ref-schumacher1986; also the precursor ref-engel1978), discusses passive diatheses for all verbs that are included. I regard the current survey of German diatheses as a next step to extend such valency dictionaries into even more all-encompassing dictionaries that discuss all possible clause constructions for each verb.

## 1.6 Structure of this book

The structure of this book is somewhat unusual for a scholarly monograph. It is not a narrative with a painless beginning, a sturdy middle and a satisfying conclusion. Rather, this book is open ended, and it does not have a gratifying closure at the end. That is by design. It is an encyclopaedia after all.

[1.49]

The book consists of three different parts. First, Chapters 1 and 2 discuss the major theoretical considerations that guide the collection and organisation of the data. This is the part to read for insights into the nature of diathesis and sundry topics. Second, Chapters 3 and 4 are the closest to what this book has to offer in the way of a conclusion. Each of these chapters presents an astonishingly long list of grammatical constructions, summarising a selection of the major linguistic structures as identified in the remainder of this book. These summaries are intended to be a quick entry into the actual German language data, with ample cross-references to the following encyclopaedia. Finally, Chapters 5 to 13 make up the actual encyclopaedia, with separate sub-subsections about individual phenomena. Each of these sub-subsections is a fragment of a research project, sometimes mundane, but often full of surprising avenues for future research.

[1.50]

Going through the chapters in more detail, this first chapter summarised the basic definitional properties of clauses and clause alternations. The next Chapter 2 describes in detail how diatheses are analysed and classified. Chapter 3 presents a summary of the about 80 major German diatheses and proposes German names for those structures. As a small extra, Chapter 4 summarises the about 40 major epithetical structures and provides an unconventional approach to the analysis of verbal categories of German.

[1.51]

Chapters 5 to 13 are the core part of this book. These chapter are database-like texts, discussing each clause structure separately. All of these chapters have exactly the same internal structure. Sometimes certain sections are empty, because there is no grammatical structure in that category. However, the headers of those empty sections have been preserved for the sake of parallel numbering across chapters. The following structure is used in all data chapters:

- Section X.1 is a concise introduction into the kind of diatheses discussed.
- Section X.2 is a detailed discussion of the relevant grammatical definitions.
- Section X.3 lists deponent structures  
(i.e. structures that look like diathesis, but there is no alternation).
- Section X.4 lists epitheses  
(i.e. alternations with the relevant structure, but there is no diathesis).
- Section X.5 lists diatheses with subject demotion.

## 1 *Setting the scene*

- Section X.6 lists diatheses with promotion to subject.
- Section X.7 lists diatheses with object demotion.
- Section X.8 lists diatheses with promotion to object.
- Section X.9 lists symmetrical diatheses.

In these data chapters, each diathesis has its own sub-subsection with a unique section header that can be used as a name to refer to the diathesis (e.g. Section 10.5.15 on the “*werden+Partizip Passive*”). Many of these unique names are quite boring, but hopefully descriptively useful for future reference. More imaginative German names are only added for the major diatheses. Individual verbs are listed with each diathesis to show the extent of its applicability. Often a section with further examples is added to illustrate the diathesis. Neither these lists of verbs nor the examples are intended to be exhaustive in any way. Sometimes an additional section with notes is provided to discuss idiosyncrasies of individual verbs. All this information should be read as a first step towards a more in-depth research into individual diatheses and into the constructional possibilities that are available to individual verbs.



## 2 The structure of a diathesis

### 2.1 Analytical dimensions

[2.1] The central concepts to analyse the structure of a diathesis are VALENCY (Section 2.2), VOICE (Section 2.3) and DIATHETICAL OPERATION (Section 2.4). These concepts will be discussed extensively in this chapter. Two new concepts are introduced as well, namely STACKING (Section 2.5) and CHAINING (Section 2.6). Finally, I will present an extensive discussion about NAMING diatheses at the end of this chapter (Section 2.7).

[2.2] A diathesis (as defined in Section 1.2) is an alternation between two different clausal construction. Each of the alternants show a different mapping of (grammatical) expressions onto (semantic) roles. Such an alternation is what is called a “diathetical operation” in Zuñiga & Kittilä (ref-zuniga2019: 4), in contrast to the term “diathesis” being used for each individual mapping between expressions and roles. However, because I will only consider diathetical operations between an unmarked basic clause and a marked alternant, I have decided to simplify the terminology in this book. Both the alternation itself (Zuñiga & Kittilä’s “diathetical operation”, e.g. “causativisation”) and the derived alternant (Zuñiga & Kittilä’s “diathesis”, e.g. “causative”) will be referred to here simply as a DIATHESIS, from Greek *διάθεσις* ‘placement in order, (re)arrangement’.

[2.3] A side-effect of this approach is that “active” is not a diathesis, but simply the unmarked counterpart of a diathetical operation. Even stronger, I will refrain from using the term “active” because it immediately conjures up “passive” as its antithesis. This opposition is too much of an oversimplification as “passive” is just one of the hundreds of possible diatheses. Also, the “active” does not necessarily describe an action, so content-wise this term is also ill-fitting.

[2.4] As an alternative to “active”, I will use the term BASIC CLAUSE as the unmarked base of comparison for all clause alternations. A basic clause is a clause with a single finite verb from, either in the German *Präsens* or *Präteritum* tense.<sup>1</sup> All

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<sup>1</sup>Strictly speaking, a basic clause can also be a clause with a single finite verb in the *Konjunktiv I* or *Konjunktiv II*. However, because these are rather rare nowadays I have hidden this possibility in this footnote.

## 2 The structure of a diathesis

other verb forms, including the *Perfekt* and the other traditional German tense-aspect distinctions, are all DERIVED CLAUSES, i.e. the result of some kind of clause alternations. A diathesis is a special instance of a derived clause that also exhibits a diathetical operation. In contrast to a diathesis, a derived clause without any diathetical operation will be called EPITHESES, from Greek *ἐπίθεσις* ‘placement upon, imposition’. Epithesis is grammatical marking “on top of” a basic clause.<sup>2</sup> A summary of all major epithetical constructions will be presented in Chapter 4.

The actual linguistic marking of a diathesis (for example using verbal morphology or auxiliaries) is called GRAMMATICAL VOICE. The crux of this term is that a voice is the language-specific linguistic expression used to mark the diathesis. For example, a diathesis in German can be “voiced” by a reflexive pronoun (Chapter 7) or by a light verb with a *zu-Infinitiv* (Chapter 12), and so on. The different kinds of grammatical voice in German are used here as the central organisational characteristic for the separation of the data chapters. An overview of the different German voices is given in Section 2.3.

A major objective of research into diathesis is to describe the connection between a diathetical operation and its semantic effects on the meaning of the clause.<sup>3</sup> For example, when an accusative argument is remapped onto a prepositional phrase (“antipassive”) this often implies less involvement of the participant. The details of such semantic effects for each of the hundreds of diatheses in this book is an important and fascinating topic, for which I can currently offer only limited insights throughout. In practice, I assume that each diathesis as described here has some kind of semantic/pragmatic effect. However, the concise specification of these effects needs much more detailed research, which has to be provided by subsequent work. Wherever I can, I will observe tendencies and propose hypotheses for such future research.

Lastly, I prefer to use the term “diathesis” over the frequently attested term “valency alternation”, although in practice both terms can mostly be used interchangeably. There is only a difference when using a highly simplistic interpretation of the term “valency”, namely as indicating the NUMBER of arguments of a verb. There are many diatheses in which the number of arguments does not change between the alternants. For example, in (1) both sentences have the same (surface) valency, having three arguments: a nominative case, an accusative

<sup>2</sup>There appears to be a rarely used alternative meaning of the term “epithesis” in linguistics to indicate the addition of a sound to the end of the word, i.e. a special kind of epenthesis, see for example <http://www.websters1913.com/words/Epithesis>, accessed 23 December 2022.

<sup>3</sup>Somewhat confusingly, Zuñiga and Kittilä (ref-zuniga2019: 3) use the term “transitivity” (following ref-hopper1980) for such semantic effects. However, the effects of diathetical operations seem to far surpass differences in transitivity.

case and a prepositional phrase. Yet, there clearly is a role-remapping between both sentences. Strictly speaking, “number-of-arguments” valency alternations are then just a subset of all possible diatheses.

- (1) a. Ich schmiere Salbe auf die Wunde.
- b. Ich beschmiere die Wunde mit Salbe.

## 2.2 Valency

### 2.2.1 Utterance valency and lexical roles

[2.8]

Valency is traditionally interpreted as a fixed constructional characteristic of a lexical verb, e.g. the verb *geben* ‘to give’ is said to be ditransitive. A central thesis of this book is that this conception of valency is too limited. Individual verbs can (and normally will) be used in many different constructions with different valency (i.e. most verbs show some kind of diathesis). Consider for example the verb *wehen* ‘to blow’. Such weather verbs are often considered to have zero valency, which in German is characterised by an obligatory non-phoric *es* pronoun (2a). However, the same verb can just as well be used as an intransitive (2b,c), as a transitive with an accusative object (2d), or even as a ditransitive with a dative and accusative object (2e). Note that the prepositional phrases in (2c,d,e) cannot be left out and their obligatory presence might be used to argue for argument-status of these prepositional phrases. The example in (2e) then will be an example of the verb *wehen* with a valency of four.

- (2) a. Heute weht es.
- b. Gestern wehte kein Lüftchen.
- c. Der Rosenduft weht ins Zimmer.
- d. Der Sturm weht den Schnee von den Dächern.
- e. Der Fahrtwind weht mir die Mütze vom Kopf.

[2.9]

There is a recurrent tendency in the literature to try and reduce such variation to a single valency per verb (viz. its “real” or “underlying” valency), and various strategies are employed to arrive at such a prototypical valency (see e.g. **ref-welke2011**: Ch. 9 for a survey). That will not be the approach taken here. Instead, valency is proposed to be a characteristic of a specific utterance, not of a specific verb. So, the examples in (2) can simply be assigned an **UTTERANCE VALENCY** from zero (2a) to four (2e) even though they all use the same lexeme *wehen* as their main verb.

## 2 The structure of a diathesis

As a replacement of the traditional lexeme-specific notion of valency (e.g. *geben* is ditransitive), I propose to use the notion of lexeme-specific LEXICAL ROLES (e.g. *geben* has lexical roles “giver”, “givee”, “given object”, etc.). Lexical roles are participants that are treated as an argument of utterance valency in at least one of the possible diatheses of a verb (see the next section for the complete definition of such arguments). The existence of such lexical roles is solely determined by the verb and does not change with different sentence constructions around the verb. Looking back at the example in (2e), the following lexical roles of the German verb *wehen* ‘to blow’ can be established: [2.10]

- i. BLOWER: the blowing air, *Fahrtwind* ‘headwind’.
- ii. BLOWEE: Object affected by the blowing air, *Mütze* ‘cap’.
- iii. BLOWING LOCATION: Location affected by the blowing air, *Kopf* ‘head’.
- iv. BLOWING LOCATION POSSESSOR: Possessor of the locational object, in (2e) the dative *mir* ‘my’. This role is necessarily the possessor of the location *Kopf* ‘head’ affected by the blowing.

Additionally, it is of course possible to define a notion of LEXEME VALENCY. A straightforward approach would be to take the utterance valency of a basic clause (cf. paragraph 2.4 on page 21) as the definition of lexeme valency. However, in general lexeme valency has to be a much more complex construct. For example, lexeme valency can be defined as the collection of all attested utterance valencies for a specific lexeme. To be precise, this lexeme valency also has to include an indexation of the lexical roles across all arguments. This addition is important to distinguish between, for example, the lexical valency of *kochen* ‘to cook’ (3) and *essen* ‘to eat’ (4). Both can occur with a transitive and intransitive utterance valency, but the lexical roles that can be used in the intransitive differ. Specifically, the patient-role “eaten object” of *essen* cannot be used as nominative subject in the intransitive (4c), which is different from *kochen* (3c). In effect, these verbs have a different lexeme valency. [2.11]

- (3) a. Der Chef kocht den Fond.  
b. Der Chef kocht immer noch.  
c. Der Fond kocht immer noch.
- (4) a. Der Chef isst den Fond.  
b. Der Chef isst immer noch.  
c. \* Der Fond isst immer noch.

### 2.2.2 Arguments of utterance valency

[2.12] The lexical roles of a specific verb are defined as those participants that are treated as argument in at least one of the possible utterance valencies of this verb. So, to identify lexical roles, a strict definition of the arguments of utterance valency is needed. The following four kinds of arguments can be identified. First, all case marked noun phrase constituents are arguments, with a few exceptions that will be discussed in Section 5.2. Basically, case-marked arguments (5a) can be questioned by the question pronouns *wer* or *was*, including their case forms *wem*, *wen* and *wessen* (5b,c). Further, case-marked arguments can be pronominalized by personal pronouns (5d) or the indefinite pronouns (*irgend*)*jemand* or (*irgend*)*etwas* (5e).

- (5) a. Der Löwe sieht einen Vogel.  
 b. Wer sieht einen Vogel?  
 c. Was sieht der Löwe?  
 d. Er sieht ihn.  
 e. Jemand sieht etwas.

[2.13] Second, prepositional phrases (6a) are arguments of an utterance when they can be paraphrased by a complement clause of the form *da(r)+preposition*, *dass* (6b). All details of the difficult question when to treat prepositional phrases as arguments in German are discussed in Section 6.2.

- (6) a. Der Weltreisende wartet auf einen Zug.  
 b. Der Weltreisende wartet darauf, dass ein Zug kommt.

[2.14] Third, there exist obligatory prepositional phrases, though they are not very widespread in German and mostly designate a location. Some verbs always expect such a location-role, like *sich befinden* ‘to be located’ (7a,b), see Section 6.3.3 and 7.3.4.

- (7) a. Der Stuhl befindet sich im Wohnzimmer  
 b. \*Der Stuhl befindet sich.

[2.15] More widespread are diatheses that introduce an obligatory local role, like with *brechen* ‘to break’ (8), see Section 6.8.7. This example crucially shows that arguments should be determined as part of the clause structure, not the lexeme structure. It is perfectly possible to use the verb *brechen* without a prepositional phrase (8c), but only with a different lexical role in the accusative, viz. *Felsen* takes

the role “broken object”, while *Loch* has the role “location where the breaking took place”.

- (8) a. Ich breche ein Loch in den Felsen.
- b. \*Ich breche ein Loch.
- c. Ich breche den Felsen.

Finally, all complement clauses are arguments (9a,b). Complement clauses can be questioned by *was* (9c) and pronominalised by a definite pronoun *es* (9d) or an indefinite pronoun (*irgend*)*etwas* (9e). Complement clauses are thus syntactically highly similar to case marked noun phrases. Caution should be taken when interpreting pronominalised examples like (9d,e), because it is not immediately obvious whether the pronouns are replacing a case-marked noun phrase or a complement clause. For example, with the verb *hoffen* (9e) it is not possible to replace the pronoun *es* with a noun phrase, though a governed prepositional phrase with *auf* is possible (9f). The impact of such complement-clause arguments has not (yet) been thoroughly investigated in this book. [2.16]

- (9) a. Er hofft, dass er rechtzeitig kommt.
- b. Er hofft rechtzeitig zu kommen.
- c. Was hofft er?
- d. Er hofft es.
- e. \*Er hofft eine gute Note.
- f. Er hofft auf eine gute Note.

### 2.2.3 *es* Arguments

A further kind of utterance-valency argument can be instantiated by *es*, the 3rd person nominative/accusative pronoun in the neuter gender. There are four uses of this pronoun that have to be distinguished, the last of which is particularly important for the analysis of diathesis. First, the most obvious use of the pronouns *es* is for anaphoric reference (PHORIC *es*). The next two uses do not have argument-status (viz. CORRELATIVE and POSITION-SIMULATING *es*). Most interestingly in the current context, the fourth usage of *es* does not have anaphoric reference, but will still be counted as an argument (viz. VALENCY-SIMULATING *es*). I will illustrate these four options below. [2.17]

First, *es* can be used for anaphoric reference to neuter nouns, typically with gender agreement as shown in (10). There are many variants of such PHORIC usage, extensively discussed by Czicza (ref-czicza2014: Ch. 2). [2.18]

- (10) Das Mädchen weint.  
Ich tröste es.

[2.19] Second, another kind of referential *es* occurs with some non-finite complement clauses. By definition, a complement clause replaces an argument (11a), but in some examples a pronoun *es* remains in place of the original argument, side by side with the complement clause (11b). This is known as a CORRELATIVE *es* (ref-czicza2014: 79ff.).

- (11) a. Ich vergesse [meine Aufgaben].  
Ich vergesse [schnell zu laufen].  
b. Ich hasse [meine Aufgaben].  
Ich hasse *es* [schnell zu laufen].

[2.20] Third, the pronoun *es* is also used to fill the first sentence position in front of the finite verb (*Vorfeld* in the German grammatical terminology), because there is a strong regularity in German that this position cannot be left empty (except in imperatives and in yes/no questions). Word order is rather flexible in German, and it is often possible to have no lexical content in the *Vorfeld*. In such sentences, the pronoun *es* has to be used to fill the *Vorfeld*, as shown in (12b). This is known as a POSITION-SIMULATING *es* (ref-czicza2014: 115).

- (12) a. Ein Mädchen weint.  
b. Es weint ein Mädchen.

[2.21] Finally, there are also constructions that obligatorily include the pronoun *es* in the sentence as part of the valency of the utterance. The main reason for such a pronoun *es* is that there is a strong regularity in German that a nominative subject has to be present in each sentence (with very few exceptions, see below). Note that “subject” is defined here strictly for German as the nominative noun phrase that shows agreement with the finite verb. When there is no such subject available, then the pronoun *es* is used to fill this gap. This is known as a VALENCY-SIMULATING *es* (ref-czicza2014: 115). In the analysis of diatheses in this book, such valency-simulating *es* is always explicitly noted.

[2.22] In constructions with a valency-simulating *es*, as exemplified in (13a,b), the pronoun *es* can occur in the *Vorfeld* (13a), seemingly parallel to the position-simulating usage (12b). However, when another constituent is placed in the *Vorfeld*, the pronoun *es* in (13a) cannot be dropped, but has to occur elsewhere in the sentence, typically immediately after the finite verb (13b). This post-verbal retention of the pronoun *es* is a typical sign for the valency-simulating use.

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- (13) a. Es stinkt hier sehr.  
b. Hier stinkt es sehr.

In a very limited set of constructions the expected valency-simulating *es* is not present, resulting in sentences without any formal nominative subject. Some of these examples are historical idiosyncrasies (14), see Sections 6.5.3 and 5.9.3, respectively.

[2.23]

- (14) a. Heute ist mir kalt.  
b. Dem Arzt graut vor Blut.

However, there are a few impersonal diatheses that completely remove the subject but still have no valency-simulating *es*. Specifically, the following diatheses result in sentences that do not have any nominative subject.

[2.24]

- (15a) impersonal *werden+Partizip*, see Section 10.5.1
- (15b) impersonal *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv*, see Section 11.5.1
- (15c) impersonal *sein+Infinitiv*, see Section 11.5.3
- (15d) impersonal *sein+zu-Infinitiv*, see Section 12.5.1

- (15) a. Im Bett wird geschlafen.  
b. An der Ernsthaftigkeit der Aussage lässt sich zweifeln.  
c. Mit einem neutralen Deutschland ist schwer leben.  
d. Mit ihm ist nicht zu spaßen.

There are also a few rare cases in which there is a valency-simulating *es* in what appears to be an accusative case (16), see Sections 6.3.5 and 9.7.3, respectively. These constructions need a more in-depth investigation.

[2.25]

- (16) a. Ich belasse es bei einer Warnung.  
b. Ich meine es ernst.

### 2.2.4 Adjuncts

Adjuncts, the counterparts of arguments, are phrases that are not specifically induced by the main verb of a clause. Typically, such adjuncts are adverbial prepositional phrases, see Section 6.2.2. Just like with arguments, adjunct status should not be linked to a lexical verb itself, but to the clause construction in which it is used.

[2.26]



[2.27]

For example, the verb *tanzen* ‘to dance’ is typically considered to be an intransitive verb with optional (adjunct) location prepositional phrases (17a,b). However, there is a crucial difference between the two locations in these two examples, see Section 6.8.2. The static location *im Saal* ‘in the hall’ (17a) remains optional in the perfect (with auxiliary *haben*), see (17c,d), while the dynamic location *in den Saal* ‘into the hall’ becomes obligatory in the perfect (with auxiliary *sein*), see (17e,f). So, the obligatory location in (17e) is an utterance argument (and as a consequence, the role of “path” is a lexical role of such verbs of movement like *tanzen*).

- (17) a. Ich tanze (im Saal).  
 b. Ich tanze (durch den Saal).  
 c. Ich habe im Saal getanzt.  
 d. Ich habe getanzt.  
 e. Ich bin durch den Saal getanzt.  
 f. \* Ich bin getanzt.

[2.28]

Adjuncts are, by definition, optionally present, so there is a natural connection to zero expression. A central unanswered problem is whether there is a crucial distinction between constructions in which a participant is obligatorily absent (i.e. impossible to express) vs. optionally absent (i.e. possibly not expressed). In most diatheses that involve absence, the whole point is that there is an alternation between absence and presence of a lexical role (e.g. in all diatheses that involve a drop or addition). The problematic cases are differences like passive vs. anticausative, which by definition are distinguished by possibility vs. impossibility for the agent to be expressed. This difference is highly volatile, i.e. it often differs from lexeme to lexeme whether it is possible or just dispreferred for an agent to be expressed.

## 2.3 Voice

[2.29]

The formal linguistic marking of a diathesis, for example by verbal morphology or auxiliaries, is called GRAMMATICAL VOICE (following [ref-zuniga2019: 4](#)). The different kinds of grammatical voice in German establish the basic organisational framework of this book. Each of the data chapters discusses a specific kind of grammatical voice, listing all diatheses using that “voicing”. The nine data chapters can be grouped into four kinds of grammatical voices:

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- zero-marked “covert” diatheses (Chapters 5, 6)
- diatheses expressed by reflexive pronouns (Chapter 7)
- diatheses expressed by preverbs, preverbials or adverbials (Chapters 8, 9)
- diatheses expressed by light-verb constructions (Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13)

The first two chapters deal with diatheses that are not overtly marked as such, i.e. they deal with covert diatheses. Because there is no marking on either of the two alternants, it is often difficult to discern a direction in such equipollent alternations. In Chapter 5 I will discuss diatheses that only differ in the marking of case, for example unmarked anticausatives like (18). Chapter 6 deals with unmarked diatheses in which at least one of the alternants is a prepositional phrase, for example unmarked antipassives like (19).

[2.30]

- (18) a. Er verbrennt den Tisch.  
b. Der Tisch verbrennt.
- (19) a. Ich schlürfe meinen Tee.  
b. Ich schlürfe an meinem Tee.

The contribution of reflexive pronouns for the marking of diathesis is discussed in Chapter 7. A central claim in this chapter is that ‘self-inflicting’ reflexive reference (20) does not count as diathesis in German. In contrast, there are various other diathetical constructions in German that use reflexive pronouns without such self-inflicting reflexive reference, like the antipassive in (21). In such diatheses the presence of a reflexive pronoun is the actual marking of the diathesis, it is not signalling that subject and object are the same participant. An important generalisation about diatheses with reflexive pronouns is that they are always demotions.

[2.31]

- (20) a. Ich wasche das Auto.  
b. Ich wasche mich.
- (21) a. Ich fürchte den Tod.  
b. Ich fürchte mich vor dem Tod.

In Chapter 8 I will turn to preverbs, i.e. verbal prefixes that in German grammar are known as *Verbpräfixe* and *Verbpartikeln*. Syntactically, these are different kinds of elements, but from the perspective of diathesis they appear to function rather similar. The most widespread diathesis marked by such preverbs is an applicative, like with *be-* in (22). Because of the bound morphological structure,

[2.32]

these diatheses show a strong tendency to grammaticalise into a large variety of different kinds of diathetical operations. A central generalisation of the diatheses discussed in this chapter is that the resulting sentence structures after a preverb diathesis is mostly transitive (especially nominative+accusative).

- (22) a. Ich steige auf den Berg.  
b. Ich besteige den Berg.

[2.33] Closely related to preverbs are resultative preverbials that induce diathesis, like the applicative with *leer-* in (23). There exist also diatheses induced by evaluative adverbials, like the reflexive anticausative with a manner specification *gut* in (24). Although these two kinds of elements, resultatives and evaluatives, occur in rather different kinds of diathesis, for convenience both phenomena are combined into a single chapter on adverbial-like diatheses in Chapter 9.

- (23) a. Ich habe in dem Teich gefischt.  
b. Ich habe den Teich leergefischt.

- (24) a. Ich fahre den Lastwagen.  
b. Der Lastwagen fährt sich gut.

[2.34] A large number of diatheses use light verbs in combination with a non-finite form of the lexical verb. A somewhat surprising insight is that light-verb diatheses always involve a role-change of the nominative subject. I distinguish four different kinds of light verb constructions, to be discussed in four different chapters. Chapter 10 discusses light verb construction with participles, like the infamous *werden+Partizip* passive (25).

- (25) a. Ich habe einen Brief geschrieben.  
b. Der Brief wurde geschrieben.

[2.35] The next three chapters describe different combinations of light verbs with lexical verbs in the infinitive. Chapter 11 discusses light verbs with straight infinitives, like the *lassen+Infinitiv* causative (26).

- (26) a. Ich wasche meine Kleider.  
b. Sie lässt mich meine Kleider waschen.

[2.36] Chapter 12 investigates light verbs with *zu* plus an infinitive, like for example the *sein+zu-Infinitiv* passive (27). The combination of *zu* with an infinitive is

arguably completely grammaticalised and is considered here to be yet another non-finite verb form of German, alongside *Partizip* and *Infinitiv*. I propose to call it the *zu-Infinitiv*.

- (27) a. Ich führe einen Hund an der Leine.  
b. Ein Hund ist an der Leine zu führen.

Finally, Chapter 13 looks at the combinations of prepositions, article and an infinitive, like the *halten+am-Infinitiv* causative (29). In such constructions, the preposition and article are obligatorily fused (*an+dem>am*) and this fused combination cannot be separated from the infinitive. Such completely grammaticalised constructions appear to be rather recent in German and are often considered sub-standard. Only a few of such combinations pass all the tests for complete grammaticalisation. When all tests apply, then I consider the combination of preposition+article+infinitive to be yet another non-finite verb form of German, alongside *Partizip*, *Infinitiv* and *zu-Infinitiv*. I propose to call it the *Präpositionsinfinitiv*. [2.37]

- (28) a. Das Feuer brennt.  
b. Der Wind hält das Feuer am Brennen.

## 2.4 Diathetical operations

### 2.4.1 Abbreviations used

A diathetical operation is a change that happens to the marking of the participants in a diathesis. One of the central definitional properties of a diathesis is that the coding of at least one of the participants has to change, for example a participant erstwhile coded with an accusative turns into a prepositional phrase. Because the role of the participant remains the same (again, by definition), such a change amounts to the mapping of a role onto a different grammatical form. I will call this process **ROLE-REMAPING**. [2.38]

In the analysis of diathetical operations in this book I will use the following abbreviations, as summarised in Figure 2.1. First, **GRAMMATICAL EXPRESSIONS**, i.e. actual grammatical forms as identified in traditional German grammar, are abbreviated with single letters, shown at the right side of the figure. For case-marked noun phrases I will use the easily recognisable capital letters **NADG** for nominative, accusative, dative and genitive respectively. As argued earlier (see Section 2.2.2) there are also prepositional phrases that express lexically determined roles. These will also be abbreviated with capital letters: **L** for obligatory locations and **P** for governed prepositional phrases. [2.39]

Grammatical Macroroles		Grammatical Expressions		
Arguments	Subject	<b>SBJ</b>	<b>N</b>	Nominative Subject
	Cased Objects	<b>OBJ</b>	<b>A</b>	Accusative Object
			<b>D</b>	Dative Object
			<b>G</b>	Genitive Object
	Objects	<b>PBJ</b>	<b>P</b>	Governed Preposition
			<b>L</b>	Obligatory Location
	Reflexive Objects		<b>a</b>	Accusative Referential Reflexive Pronoun
			<b>d</b>	Dative Referential Reflexive Pronoun
Adjuncts	Expressed	<b>ADJ</b>	<b>p</b>	Non-governed Preposition
			<b>g</b>	Adnominal Genitive
	Unexpressed	<b>Ø</b>	–	Zero

Figure 2.1: Abbreviations used to describe role-remapping

[2.40]

Lower-cased letters are used for non-argument participants in the clause: ‘p’ for non-governed prepositional phrases and ‘g’ for adnominal genitives. Adnominal genitives become relevant because in some diatheses a newly introduced participant is inherently the possessor of another participant (see paragraph 2.133 on page 59). Absence of a specific role will be indicated by a dash. Lower-cased ‘a’ and ‘d’ are only used in Section 7.4 to indicate accusative and dative reflexive pronouns in referential usage. As described in much detail in that chapter, it is important to distinguish between reflexive pronouns in German that refer to a lexical role (i.e. “referential” or “real” reflexive constructions) and reflexive pronouns that mark a diathesis without referring to a separate role themselves.

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Only the former reflexive pronouns, those that are (doubly) marking a role, are abbreviated by lowercased ‘a’ or ‘d’.

Besides single-letter abbreviations I will also use capitalised three-letter abbreviations for a more abstract level of analysis. As summarised at the left side of Figure 2.1, the grammatical expressions are grouped into sets of GRAMMATICAL MACROROLES, mostly along familiar lines. However, it is crucial to realise that these macroroles are defined here as a superset of language-specific German grammatical expressions. There is no abstract metalinguistic (universal) definition assumed. The current grouping is not necessarily the best or most optimal grouping, but this grouping has emerged to be useful to organise the large diversity of diatheses in this book.

[2.41]

The notion SUBJECT (SBJ) is used for nominative phrases that show agreement with the finite verb.<sup>4</sup> The other case-marked governed phrases are combined as CASED OBJECTS (OBJ). The cased objects together with the PREPOSITIONAL OBJECTS (PBJ) form a superclass of objects. Non-governed phrases are separated in OVERTLY EXPRESSED ADJUNCTS (ADJ) and unexpressed roles ZERO (Ø). Although I will use this five-way distinction throughout this book (SBJ, OBJ, PBJ, ADJ, Ø), the five steps are not equidistant. The macroroles OBJ and PBJ are rather closely related, and likewise are ADJ and Ø intimately linked. Collapsing these pairs results in the traditional subject-object-adjunct distinction.

[2.42]

There are some indications that the group of cased objects (OBJ) might be fruitfully separated into CORE (accusative) and NON-CORE (dative/genitive). This would simplify the analysis of case change in object chains (Section 2.7.5), the antipassive hierarchy (Section 6.7) and the case-marking of the reflexive pronoun (Section 7.3). However, in the majority of diatheses all three cases seem to behave as a uniform group, so I did not consistently pursue this separation.

[2.43]

It is imperative to realise that the macroroles are defined in a language-specific way for German grammar as groupings of language-specific German expressions (e.g. ADJ is defined as being either a non-governed prepositional phrase or an adnominal genitive). The names that are used (e.g. “object” or “adjunct”) deliberately conjure up general cross-linguistic associations, but it remains to be seen whether similar definitions as used here are also useful for other languages. I will refrain from any cross-linguistic speculation in this context here.

[2.44]

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<sup>4</sup>There are various other nominatively marked phrases in German grammar which are not included under this heading, e.g. the nominative in nominal or equational predication like *der Täter* in *Er ist der Täter*.

### 2.4.2 Remapping of roles

[2.45] All diatheses in this book will be organised and categorised in various levels of abstraction using the abbreviations as summarised in Figure 2.1. The following levels of abstraction will be used to arrange the diatheses in each chapter.

[2.46] **LEVEL 1: DIATHESIS.** On the lowest level, each diathesis is summarised in its own sub-subsection. The establishment of an individual diathesis is not always obvious, and each diathesis in this book is already a conscious categorisation (which could be wrong). It has actually been a voyage of discovery in the preparation of this book to decide when to consider a set of examples to be a single diathesis. Very often erstwhile single diatheses turned out to be better analysed by a separation into various different diatheses, and vice versa. Although I am rather confident in the quality of the current decisions, I expect that further refinements are necessary in the future.

[2.47] **LEVEL 2: REMAPPING PATTERN.** The role-remapping of each diathesis is analysed using the single-letter abbreviations (NADGPLpgad-) from Figure 2.1. A remapping is specified as an ordered listing of grammatical expressions for roles, both before and after the diathesis. For example, [NA | -N] is a diathesis that involves two roles that are marked N(ominative) and A(ccusative) before the diathesis but zero (“-”) and N(ominative) after the diathesis, respectively. Because there are many diatheses with this same pattern, this characterisation is already an (implicit) classification.

[2.48] **LEVEL 3: LOCAL GROUP.** Groups of diatheses with similar remapping and similar semantics within each chapter are grouped together as a local group. These groups are rather ad-hoc and mainly represent a useful summary to streamline the presentation. Local groups are unnumbered subsections, indicated graphically with dashes around the name of the local group.

[2.49] **LEVEL 4: MACROROLE PATTERN.** The remapping of each local group is structurally analysed in terms of the three-letter macroroles (SBJ, OBJ, PBJ, ADJ,  $\emptyset$ ) from Figure 2.1. For example, the remapping from above [NA | -N] includes both a change from N to zero (i.e. SBJ  $\succ$   $\emptyset$ ) and a change from A to N (i.e. OBJ  $\succ$  SBJ). These two macrorole changes can be combined into a single macrorole pattern [OBJ  $\succ$  SBJ  $\succ$   $\emptyset$ ].

[2.50] **LEVEL 5: PROMOTION/DEMOTION.** On the most abstract level, all diatheses are separated into chapter-subsections of either demotion or promotion (with only very few diatheses being symmetrical exchanges). Basically, each remapping is evaluated on the macrorole hierarchy (29) with role-remapping upwards being promotion and role-remapping downward being demotion. Note that there is a crucial additional criterion necessary, because the majority of diatheses consist

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of chains of two coinciding remappings (see Section 2.6 on the notion of “chains”). In such chained remappings, the largest jump on the macrorole hierarchy defines a diathesis as being demotion or promotion. When both jumps are equally large, then the diathesis is SYMMETRIC.

### (29) Macrorole Hierarchy

SBJ » OBJ » PBJ » ADJ » Ø

For example, the diathesis in (30) is analysed as a REMAPPING PATTERN [NA | -N], see Section 7.5.2. This should be read as follows: there is an alternation between a clause with NA arguments (nominative, accusative) and a clause with only N marking (nominative). The relative order of these letters is crucial, as the order of the roles remains fixed in this notation, e.g. the second letter on the left (A for accusative) corresponds to the second letter on the right (N for nominative). The dash on the right indicates that the corresponding N on the left is not expressed. Note that the actual linear arrangement of the letters is flexible, as long as both sides of the alternation remain in the same order, i.e. [AN | N-] would be the same remapping pattern as [NA | -N]. The pattern [NA | -N] is an implicit categorisation, because there are many other diatheses that have exactly the same pattern (see e.g. Sections 5.5.5, 9.5.2, 10.5.12).

[2.51]

- (30) a. Ich schließe die Tür.  
b. Die Tür schließt sich.

Although there is a reflexive pronoun in (30b), this pronoun is not included with a lower-cased ‘a’ in the remapping pattern [NA | -N], because this reflexive pronoun does not refer to a separate role. The verb *schließen* ‘to close’ implies at least two different roles, the “closer” and the “closed object”, expressed as nominative and accusative in (30a), respectively. In (30b) only the role of “closed object” is expressed as nominative. The reflexive pronoun does not refer to any other role. I interpret the reflexive pronoun in (30) as a marker of the diathesis itself (see Chapter 7 for an extensive discussion), so there is actually an overt direction in the markedness from unmarked (30a) to reflexive-marked (30b). The vertical bar “|” in the middle of the remapping pattern [NA | -N] implies this direction in markedness from left to right, i.e. left side describes the unmarked alternant and the right side the marked alternant. Reordering the remapping pattern around the vertical bar would result in a completely reversed diathesis [-N | NA].

[2.52]

The diathesis in (30) is one of various examples of a LOCAL GROUP called “reflexive antipassive”. Other diatheses in this group include examples like (31) with an additional governed preposition, analysed here with the remapping pattern

[2.53]



[NAP | -NP], see Section 7.5.5. All diatheses in this local group have the same MACROROLE PATTERN, namely [OBJ > SBJ > Ø], i.e. a cased object is turned into nominative subject, which is turned into zero (i.e. unexpressed).

- (31) a. Das Lied erinnert den Mann an den Krieg.  
b. Der Mann erinnert sich an den Krieg.

[2.54] This diathesis is a combination of two different remappings [OBJ > SBJ] and [SBJ > Ø], with the first being a promotion on the macrorole hierarchy and the second a demotion. Crucially, because the demotion part [SBJ > Ø] is a larger jump on the hierarchy than the promotion part [OBJ > SBJ], the complete combination is categorised as a DEMOTION.

[2.55] So, in summary, the role-remapping of the diathesis (31) is categorised as summarised below. This information also informs the place in the book where this diathesis will be discussed: Reflexive voice is Chapter 7, demotion that includes the subject in the macrorole pattern is always Section 5 within each chapter, and consequently, this diathesis can be found below the heading [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] named “reflexive antipassive” in Section 7.5.5.

1. DIATHESIS: reflexive antipassive+governed preposition
2. REMAPPING PATTERN: [NAP | -NP]
3. LOCAL GROUP: reflexive antipassive
4. MACROROLE PATTERN: [OBJ > SBJ > Ø]
5. PROMOTION/DEMOTION: demotion
6. VOICE: reflexive marking

## 2.5 Stacking

### 2.5.1 Combining diatheses

[2.56] Different clause alternations (both diatheses and epitheses) can be applied one after the other, forming STACKS of diatheses and/or epitheses. The term “stacking” is introduced here explicitly in opposition to “subordinating”. Subordination leads to non-coherent multi-clause constructions, while stacks always remain coherent and thus monoclausal. My impression is that much of modern syntactic theory could be drastically simplified by strictly distinguishing between stacking and subordinating.

[2.57] Stacked diatheses can lead to convoluted role-remappings. A beautiful example of such stacking of diatheses is given by Dixon (ref-dixon2014: 252) for the

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Amazonian language Paumari. Here, the root *noki-* ‘to see’ is transparently related to the meaning ‘to show’ through a series of derivational diatheses, viz. *noki-* ‘to see’, *noki-a-* ‘to be visible’, *na-noki-a-* ‘to become visible’, and finally *na-noki-a-hi-* ‘to make become visible’ i.e. ‘to show’.

German does not have that many morphologically bound mechanisms for diathesis, though there are incidental examples that come close. For example, the verb *liegen* ‘to lie’ changes with ablaut to *legen* ‘to lay’ (see Section 5.6.3), which in turn can take a preverb to form *be-legen* ‘to cover’ (see Section 8.7.13). However, when the perspective is broadened beyond bound morphology and all different kinds of German diathesis are considered, then it turns out that stacking of diatheses is extremely widespread.

In many cases, the different steps in a stack can be easily disentangled by carefully observing the formal marking of the diathesis. For example, the construction in (32c) includes both a preverb *be-* and a reflexive pronoun *sich* and it turns out that these are applied in turn to make a stack of two diatheses. Starting with the verb *antworten* ‘to answer’ with a governed preposition *auf* (32a), the applicative preverb *be-* changes the prepositional phrase to an accusative (32b), see Section 8.8.8. Subsequently, the reflexive anticausative turns the accusative into a nominative and drops the nominative agent (32c), see Section 7.5.2.

- (32) a. Der Lehrer antwortet auf deine Frage.  
b. Der Lehrer beantwortet deine Frage.  
c. Deine Frage beantwortet sich von selbst.

Clause alternations are applied one after the other, i.e. the order of the alternations in a stack is of crucial importance in most examples (unordered stacks exist, but are unusual, see Section 2.6.4). Basically, a stack is just a list of clause alternations applied one after the other. Syntactically this is just a linear sequence of application, i.e. there is no branching possible with stacking. Semantically this means that each subsequent clause alternation has scope over the previous one.

A stack can be written down using a symbol like  $+>$  to indicate the additive (+) and sequential (>) nature of the combination. The stack above (32) can then be analysed as: (32a)  $+>$  *be-* applicative  $+>$  reflexive anticausative = (32c). This notation leads to concise analyses, as shown for example in (33) for the difference between the sentences (39a,b) and (33c,d).

- (33) a. Der Lehrer hat die Aufgabe lösen wollen.  
b. Basic clause: Der Lehrer löst die Aufgabe.  
 $+>$  *wollen* modal (cf. 11.4.7)

- = Der Lehrer will die Aufgabe lösen.  
 +> *haben* perfect (cf. 10.4.1)  
 = Der Lehrer hat die Aufgabe lösen wollen.
- c. Der Lehrer will die Aufgabe gelöst haben.
- d. Basic clause: Jemand löst die Aufgabe für den Lehrer.  
 +> beneficiary dative (cf. 6.8.9)  
 = Jemand löst dem Lehrer die Aufgabe.  
 +> *haben* dative passive (cf. 10.5.22)  
 = Der Lehrer hat die Aufgabe gelöst.  
 +> *wollen* modal (cf. 11.4.7)  
 = Der Lehrer will die Aufgabe gelöst haben.

[2.62]

With unmarked (“covert”) diatheses such stacks can sometimes be tricky to tease apart. As an example, consider the arguably somewhat artificially constructed example in (34) using the verb *schneiden* ‘to cut’. It starts off in (79a) as a basic transitive construction with a nominative and accusative argument. Yet, after various twists and turns it ends up on (34f) with a nominative, an accusative, a dative and an obligatory location prepositional phrase, while the original agent *Arzt* is not even expressed.

- (34) a. Der Arzt schneidet den Nagel des Patienten.  
 b. Der Arzt schneidet in den Nagel des Patienten.  
 c. Der Arzt schneidet dem Patienten in den Nagel.  
 d. Der Arzt schneidet dem Patienten einen Schlitz in den Nagel.  
 e. Der Arzt schneidet dem Patienten einen Schlitz in den Nagel mit dem Fräser.  
 f. Der Fräser schneidet dem Patienten einen Schlitz in den Nagel.

[2.63]

Teasing this stack apart, there are five different diatheses, concurrently showing that the verb *schneiden* has at least five different lexeme-specific roles. As defined in Section 2.2.2, each role that appears as a case-marked constituent in at least one diathesis is a lexeme-specific role, and all of the following participants are case-marked in the stack of diatheses (34):

- the cutter *Arzt* ‘physician’
- the cut object *Nagel* ‘nail’
- the possessor of the cut object *Patient* ‘patient’
- the result of the cutting *Schlitz* ‘groove, slit’

## 2 The structure of a diathesis

- the instrument doing the cutting *Fräser* ‘milling cutter’

The five diatheses (and the corresponding role-remappings) are the following: [2.64]

- (34b), *in* antipassive: changing the cut object *Nagel* from accusative to prepositional object, see Section 6.7.8.4.
- (34c), possessor raising: changing the possessor of the cut object *Patient* from adnominal genitive into dative, see Section 6.8.11.
- (34d), object exchange: adding a new accusative object *Schlitz* as the result of the cutting, see Section 6.8.7.
- (34e), adjunct addition: adding a syntactically optional instrument *Fräser*, see Section 6.2.4.
- (34f), instrument anticausative: turning the instrument *Fräser* from prepositional phrase to nominative, see Section 6.5.5.

### 2.5.2 Fixed stacks

There are a few examples of diatheses that look like stacks of two diatheses, but on closer inspection it turns out that the intermediate construction does not exist. A few major examples of such FIXED STACKS are exemplified below. [2.65]

There is an infamous anticausative diathesis that needs a reflexive pronoun, which is attested for a large, but restricted group of verbs like *schließen* ‘to close’ (35a,b), see Section 7.5.2. A completely different group of verbs also has an anticausative diathesis with a reflexive pronoun, but only with an additional evaluative adverbial. This is for example attested with *verkaufen* ‘to sell’ (35c,d), see Section 9.5.2. In this case, the diathesis is marked by both the reflexive pronoun and the presence of an adverbial, and neither is possible without the other. Such a combination of two obligatorily co-occurring formal marking strategies is called a FIXED STACK. [2.66]

- (35)
- a. Ich schließe die Tür.
  - b. Die Tür schließt sich.
  - c. Ich verkaufe das Buch.
  - d. Das Buch verkauft sich gut.

Various diatheses between a verb, like *fassen* ‘to grasp’ (36a), and its preverb-alternant, like *befassen* ‘to be concerned with’ (36b), additionally need a reflexive pronoun, see Section 8.7.4. So here we have a fixed stack of a reflexive pronoun and a preverb together that mark the diathesis. [2.67]

- (36) a. Ich fasse einen Entschluss.  
b. Ich befasse mich mit dem Entschluss.

[2.68] Also some light verb alternations show fixed stacks. For example, there is a very widespread causative diathesis using the light verb *lassen* with an infinitive (37b), see Section 11.6.2. Additionally, the combination of *lassen+Infinitiv* and a reflexive pronoun leads to a passive alternation (37c), which does not make sense as being derived from the causative (37b). It seems better to consider the combination of *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv* as a fixed stack, see Section 11.5.5.

- (37) a. Der Schüler löst die Aufgabe.  
b. Der Lehrer lässt den Schüler die Aufgabe lösen.  
c. Diese Aufgabe lässt sich (von den Schülern) lösen.

## 2.6 Chaining

### 2.6.1 Beyond solitary remapping

[2.69] Many diatheses just remap a single role. Such diatheses are called ISOLATED DIATHESES here. However, there are also many diatheses in which more than one role is remapped. I distinguish the following kinds of combined role-remappings, of which only the first is frequently attested.

- CHAINED DIATHESIS (Section 2.6.2): Two roles change their formal marking, forming a chain in which one role changes its form from X to Y, while the other role changes its form from Y to Z. This results in a chain [x > y > z].
- MULTI-CHAINED DIATHESIS (Section 2.6.3): Three (or possibly even more) roles change their formal marking, forming a longer chain of connected changes.
- DISJUNCT DIATHESIS (Section 2.6.4): Two or more roles change their formal marking, with no overlap between marking.

[2.70] Chained diatheses are surprisingly frequent in German, and my impression is that this pervasiveness extends to many other languages beyond German. In a chained diathesis the result of the first remapping is the start of the second remapping. This can be conceptualised as a “push” or “pull” chain in which one remapping induces another. The prevalence of such chains is probably caused by two general tendencies of language structure, namely DISTINCTNESS and DEFAULT MARKING. These tendencies are formulated here as hypotheses for language structure in general, beyond the specifics of German.

First, the tendency for distinctness causes language to disprefer multiple constituents with the same structure in a single clause. For example, the German languages tends to prevent two accusatives in the same clause. In effect, if a diathesis would give rise to such a duplication, then the duplicated constituent is preferably “pushed” out to another kind of marking. Second, the principle of default marking induces languages to mark at least one of its constituents as the “default” in each clause. For example, in German the nominative subject has to be present in almost every clause. As a result, if a diathesis removes this preferred constituent, then another constituent is typically “pulled” into this kind of marking. It remains to be further investigated whether these two forces really exist, and whether the two tendencies can be teased apart. [2.71]

### 2.6.2 Chained diatheses

In German, chained diatheses typically occur when the nominative subject is involved in the diathesis. There can only be a single nominative subject in a German clause, and it is highly unusual to have a sentence without a nominative subject. This implies that any diathesis involving the nominative subject typically includes two remappings, namely one from something else to nominative and a second remapping of the erstwhile nominative to something else. [2.72]

A prototypical example of a chained diathesis involving the nominative subject is the *werden* passive (38). Here, the erstwhile accusative *Kuchen* ‘cake’ is turned into a nominative, while the erstwhile nominative *Lehrling* ‘apprentice’ is removed (or optionally retained as a *von* prepositional phrase). So, we have a chain consisting of the role-remappings [OBJ > SBJ] and [SBJ > ADJ]. [2.73]

(38) [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ]

- a. Der Lehrling backt den Kuchen.
- b. Der Kuchen wird gebacken (von dem Lehrling).

Diatheses without involvement of the nominative subject are more flexible, in that both isolated and chained diatheses are common. A typical example of a chained diathesis is an object exchange induced by the preverb *be-* (39). In this example, a prepositional phrase *für ihre Freundin* ‘for her friend’ is remapped to an accusative [ADJ > OBJ] while the erstwhile accusative *Essen* ‘food’ is turned into a prepositional phrase [OBJ > ADJ]. [2.74]

## (39) [ADJ &gt; OBJ &gt; ADJ]

- a. Sie kocht kubanisches Essen für ihre Freundin.
- b. Sie bekocht ihre Freundin mit kubanischem Essen.

[2.75]

Among the chained diatheses there is a group of frequently recurring remapping patterns. Because of their frequency, it is highly useful to give them specific names. Such names are widespread in the literature, e.g. anticausative for [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] or passive for [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ]. A survey of the various names used in this book will be pursued in Section 2.7.

## 2.6.3 Multi-chained diatheses

[2.76]

MULTI-CHAINED DIATHESES consist of combinations of more than two role-remappings that occur in a sequence. This occurs frequently as the result of a stack of multiple diatheses, but only very rarely in a single diathesis. As an example arising from a stack of multiple diatheses consider taking a verb like *lesen* ‘to read’ (40a) and applying a stack of two diatheses (40b,c). This leads to a chain of three role-remappings. First, the preverb diathesis with *vor-* (40b) leads to the addition of a dative argument *dem Jungen*, i.e. a role-remapping [Ø > OBJ], see Section 8.8.7. On top of that, the *bekommen* dative passive (40c) promotes this dative to subject and removes the original subject, i.e. a role-remapping [OBJ > SBJ > Ø], see Section 10.5.21. Combined, these two diatheses lead to a multi-chained role-remapping [Ø > OBJ > SBJ > Ø].

## (40) [Ø &gt; OBJ &gt; SBJ &gt; Ø]

- a. Der Vater hat ein Buch gelesen.
- b. Der Vater hat dem Jungen ein Buch vorgelesen.
- c. Der Junge bekommt ein Buch vorgelesen.

[2.77]

Such multi-chained diatheses that are the result of diathesis-stacking are widespread. However, I know of only two diatheses with a multi-chain that cannot be decomposed into a stack of separate diatheses. Both these “fixed” multi-chain diatheses appear to occur with just a few idiosyncratic verbs, so this phenomenon really seems to be dispreferred in German.

[2.78]

First, the preverb diathesis from *erben* ‘to inherit’ to *enterben* ‘to disinherit’ (41), see Section 8.6.13, contains three linked role-remappings for (i) the originator of the inheritance *Vater* ‘father’ [ADJ > SBJ], (ii) the receiver of the inheritance *Junge* ‘boy’ [SBJ > OBJ] and (iii) the inheritance *Schreibtisch* ‘desk’ [OBJ > Ø].

## 2 The structure of a diathesis

### (41) [ADJ > SBJ > OBJ > Ø]

- a. Der Junge erbt den Schreibtisch von seinem Vater.
- b. Sein Vater enterbt den Jungen.

Second, the verb *schmecken* ‘to taste’ (42), see Section 6.5.6, allows for two different constructions with three linked role-remappings for (i) the tasted substance *Pfefferminze* ‘peppermint’ [OBJ > ADJ], for (ii) the tasted dish *Suppe* ‘soup’ [ADJ > SBJ] and for (iii) the taster *Koch* ‘cook’ [SBJ > Ø].

[2.79]

### (42) [OBJ > ADJ > SBJ > Ø]

- a. Der Koch schmeckt die Pfefferminze in der Suppe.
- b. Die Suppe schmeckt nach Pfefferminze.

## 2.6.4 Disjunct diatheses

DISJUNCT DIATHESES consist of a combination of multiple role-remappings that are not linked to each other. Just as with the multi-chained diatheses from the previous section, disjunct diatheses regularly occur as the result of stacking of diatheses. In contrast, they are very rare in individual diatheses.

[2.80]

When multiple diatheses are stacked, i.e. when they are applied sequentially on top of each other, they are sometimes structurally independent (and thus unordered). For example, the verb *waschen* ‘to wash’ (43a) can be used in a object-exchange diathesis (43b) in which the role of washee *Hemd* ‘shirt’ is turned from an accusative into a location [OBJ > PBJ] and a new accusative object is introduced for the role of the object to be removed *Fleck* ‘stain’ [Ø > OBJ], see Section 6.8.7. Independent of this chained diathesis, the possessor of the object *Nachbar* ‘neighbour’ can be raised to genitive (43c), i.e. a possessor applicative [ADJ > OBJ], see Section 6.8.12.

[2.81]

### (43) [Ø > OBJ > PBJ + ADJ > OBJ]

- a. Ich wasche das Hemd des Nachbarn.
- b. Ich wasche den Fleck aus dem Hemd des Nachbarn.
- c. Ich wasche dem Nachbarn den Fleck aus dem Hemd.

There are only a few incidental examples of such disjunct diatheses without stacking. The following four examples all only occur with a very limited number of verbs. First, the verb *deuten* can be used both to mean ‘interpret’ (44a) and ‘forebode’ (44b) with a rather transparent connection between the two. However, the role-remappings are quite complex, see Section 6.5.11.

[2.82]



(44) [ $\emptyset \succ \text{PBJ} + \text{OBJ} \succ \text{SBJ} \succ \emptyset$ ]

- a. Ich deute den Traum.
- b. Der Traum deutet auf nichts Gutes.

[2.83] Second, some preverbs lead to disjunct diatheses, like with *schweigen* ‘to remain silent’ and *verschweigen* ‘to conceal’ (45), see Section 8.8.15.

(45) [ $\text{ADJ} \succ \text{OBJ} + \text{PBJ} \succ \text{OBJ}$ ]

- a. Ich schweige zu dir über meinen Besuch.
- b. Ich verschweige dir meinen Besuch.

[2.84] Further examples are a few verbs of naming like *schimpfen* ‘to scold’ (46), see Section 6.8.14. The disjunct diathesis in (47) is less clear, as it might be better analysed as a stack, see Section 6.5.3.

(46) [ $\emptyset \succ \text{OBJ} + \text{ADJ} \succ \text{OBJ}$ ]

- a. Sie schimpft auf mich.
- b. Sie schimpft mich einen Narren

(47) [ $\emptyset \succ \text{OBJ} + \text{SBJ} \succ \text{ADJ}$ ]

- a. Der Sommer ist kalt.
- b. Mir ist kalt im Sommer.

[2.85] The only more widespread disjunct diathesis is the caused-motion construction that can arise with some apparently intransitive verbs like *schwitzen* ‘to sweat’ (48). This diathesis introduces two roles at once: a result of the sweating *Fleck* ‘stain’ and an obligatory location of the result *Hemd* ‘shirt’, see Section 6.8.4.

(48) [ $\emptyset \succ \text{OBJ} + \emptyset \succ \text{PBJ}$ ]

- a. Ich schwitze.
- b. Ich schwitze einen Fleck in mein Hemd.

## 2.7 Naming

### 2.7.1 Names for macrorole patterns

[2.86] Throughout the introductory chapters I have used various names for diatheses, like passive, antipassive, applicative or causative. These names have a long history in the typological grammatical literature (cf. ref-melcuk1993; ref-wunderlich1993; ■■■■)

ref-wunderlich2015; ref-dixon2000a; ref-dixon2014; ref-haspelmath2004c; ref-kulikov2011; ref-malchukov2015: 96ff.; ref-zuniga2019). Although I have been using these terms as if their meaning is clear, this is often far from the truth. Many different terms and definitions have been proposed in the literature, and different terms have at times been used for the same phenomena. For example, the original proposal for the term “antipassive” is already 50 years old (ref-silverstein1972: 395), but the same phenomenon is also known as deaccusative (ref-geniusiene1987: 94) or antiapplicative (ref-haspelmath2004c: 1132; ref-scheibl2006: 371). Conversely, the term antipassive is also attested referring to a slightly different phenomenon of the drop of an object (ref-scheibl2006: 372–373).

In this section I will describe in more detail how these names are used and defined in the current book about German diatheses. The names for diatheses will here always refer to a macrorole pattern, i.e. to the highly abstract classification of a diathesis in terms of SBJ, OBJ, etc. as defined in Section 2.4.2. For example, the term “anticausative” will be used as a name for the macrorole pattern [OBJ > SBJ > Ø]. Such macrorole patterns are strictly defined here in a language-specific way for German, so care should be taken when applying the same names to different languages. [2.87]

One widespread term that I will avoid is the term “middle” (and likewise the Latinate equivalent term “medium”). This term for a diathesis is already attested as *μεσότης* in the oldest known Greek grammatical text, the *τέχνη γραμματική* of Dionysius Thrax, and it has become a mainstay in the grammatical literature ever since.<sup>5</sup> The phenomena that are called “middle” in the literature are highly variable, and there is no consensus about what kind of diathesis this term is supposed to designate, other than something that is neither active nor passive (see ref-zuniga2019: 168–177 for a thorough summary of the complex philological history of the term middle/medium). Such a broad and ill-defined term is not useful for a detailed analysis of the large variety of attested role-remappings in German. [2.88]

The discussion about the different names for macrorole patterns will be split into four parts. First, the next two sections will present names for diatheses involving the nominative subject. Subsequent sections will discuss diatheses not involving the subject. In both discussions, a central distinction will be made between isolated diatheses and chained diatheses (cf. Section 2.6). [2.89]

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<sup>5</sup>Thrax writes: *διαθέσεις εἰσὶ τρεῖς, ἐνέργεια, πάθος, μεσότης* “there are three diatheses, active, passive and middle” (ref-uhlig1883: 48).

### 2.7.2 Isolated subject diatheses

Isolated diatheses that involve a nominative subject do not show much variation in German. The most widespread kind is the drop of the subject [SBJ >  $\emptyset$ ], i.e. the complete removal of the role marked as nominative subject without any further accompanying role-remapping or reintroduction of a new subject. This is typically attested with intransitive verbs: after removing the single available role, there is no other role introduced to fill the structural subject position. Semantically, such diatheses put the focus on the activity as described by the verb itself, so I propose to call them *INSUBJECTIVE* diatheses. Note that there is a strong tendency for every German sentence to formally have a nominative subject with verb agreement. Consequently, such insubjective diatheses regularly (but not always) result in the presence of a valency-simulating nominative pronoun *es* (see Section 2.2.3).

[2.90]

[2.91]

A *INSUBJECTIVE* diathesis is attested with verbs like *stinken* ‘to stink’ (49), see Section 5.5.1. In a sentence like *es stinkt* the pronoun *es* can of course simply be an anaphor, like in (49b). In such a sentence, the role of “stinker” is still present and there is no diathesis at all. However, in other contexts (49c) the verb *stinken* is used without implied subject. This is typically attested in contexts in which some odour is attested, but the originator is not known.

(49) *INSUBJECTIVE* [SBJ >  $\emptyset$ ]

- a. Der Müll stinkt.
- b. Das schmutzige Tuch, es stinkt!
- c. Hier stinkt es.

[2.92]

Another example of a insubjective diathesis is illustrated with the verb *leben* ‘to live’ (50), see Section 9.5.1. Many such intransitive verbs can be used without a subject in a habitual sense, but this is only possible with an obligatory adverbial qualification like *gut* (50b,c).

(50) *INSUBJECTIVE* [SBJ >  $\emptyset$ ]

- a. Ich lebe in diesem Haus.
- b. In diesem Haus lebt es sich gut.
- c. \* In diesem Haus lebt es sich.

[2.93]

Also the so-called impersonal passive consisting of *werden+Partizip* (51), see Section 10.5.1, is an example of a insubjective diathesis, in this case even without any valency-simulating *es*.

## 2 The structure of a diathesis

### (51) INSUBJECTIVE [SBJ > Ø]

- a. Die Jungs tanzen hier.
- b. Hier wird getanzt.
- c. \* Hier wird es getanzt.

[2.94]

A different kind of isolated subject diathesis is subject demotion of the nominative subject to a prepositional phrase. An example is the *geben+zu-Infinitiv* (52), see Section 12.5.4. In this diathesis, the subject is demoted to an optional non-governed prepositional phrase [SBJ > ADJ]. The demotion is the only role-remapping that is happening in this diathesis, so I propose to call such a diathesis a DESUBJECTIVE.

### (52) DESUBJECTIVE [SBJ > ADJ]

- a. Wir gewinnen einen Preis.
- b. es gibt (für uns) einen Preis zu gewinnen.

The other isolated subject diatheses are only attested in incidental examples in German, like a subject demotion to a governed preposition [SBJ > PBJ] with *fehlen* shown in (53), see Section 6.5.2.

[2.95]

### (53) DESUBJECTIVE [SBJ > PBJ]

- a. Das Geld fehlt ihm.
- b. Ihm fehlt es an Geld.

Isolated SUBJECT ADDITION [Ø > SBJ] is very rare in German, partly because it would need an unmarked construction without any subject to start off with. A possible example is the addition of a subject that seems possible with some weather verbs like *donnern* ‘to thunder’ (54), see Section 5.6.1.

[2.96]

### (54) SUBJECT ADDITION [Ø > SBJ]

- a. Es donnert.
- b. Die Motoren donnerten.

## 2.7.3 Chained subject diatheses

Chained diatheses that involve the nominative subject are widespread in German (in contrast to the infrequent occurrence of isolated diatheses as discussed previously). Figure 2.2 presents an overview of the different terms that I will use for these diatheses. The bold-faced terms are used for widely attested diatheses,

[2.97]

while the other kinds of diatheses are only incidentally found. There is currently no evidence in German for the existence of the remappings that are left empty in the figure. There appears to be a preference for various kinds of demotion (i.e. the upper right corner of the figure), which fits nicely with the known typological preference of German for anticausative constructions (ref-haspelmath1993a: 101; ref-nichols2004: 189).

	To Cased Object [ ... > SBJ > OBJ ]	To Prepositional Object [ ... > SBJ > PBJ ]	To Adjunct [ ... > SBJ > ADJ ]	To Unexpressed [ ... > SBJ > Ø ]
From Cased Object [ OBJ > SBJ > ... ]	<b>Inversive</b> [ OBJ > SBJ > OBJ ]	<b>Conversive</b> [ OBJ > SBJ > PBJ ]	<b>Passive</b> [ OBJ > SBJ > ADJ ]	<b>Anticausative</b> [ OBJ > SBJ > Ø ]
From Prepositional Object [ PBJ > SBJ > ... ]	<b>Reversed Conversive</b> [ PBJ > SBJ > OBJ ]	<b>Preposition Inversive</b> [ PBJ > SBJ > PBJ ]	[ PBJ > SBJ > ADJ ]	<b>Fabricative</b> [ PBJ > SBJ > Ø ]
From Adjunct [ ADJ > SBJ > ... ]	<b>Reversed Passive</b> [ ADJ > SBJ > OBJ ]	[ ADJ > SBJ > PBJ ]	<b>Adjunct Commutative</b> [ ADJ > SBJ > ADJ ]	<b>Conciliative</b> [ ADJ > SBJ > Ø ]
From Unexpressed [ Ø > SBJ > ... ]	<b>Novative</b> [ Ø > SBJ > OBJ ]	<b>Novative extended Demotion</b> [ Ø > SBJ > PBJ ]	<b>Novative extreme Demotion</b> [ Ø > SBJ > ADJ ]	<b>Commutative</b> [ Ø > SBJ > Ø ]

Figure 2.2: Names for chained macro-role remappings with the subject in the middle of the chain

[2.98] The upper right part of Figure 2.2 are demotions, the lower left part are promotions, and on the diagonal are examples of symmetrical diatheses. I will discuss all types in this order.

### 2.7.3.1 Demotions

[2.99] The most extreme kind of demotion is an ANTICAUSATIVE [OBJ > SBJ > Ø]. The typical characteristic of an anticausative is the complete removal of the nominative subject that is the causer of the action/state of the clause. Filling the syntactic gap, a case-marked argument (typically the accusative) is promoted to subject. This is a widespread kind of diathesis. An example is the reflexive anticausative with verb like *schliessen* ‘to close’ (55), see Section 7.5.2.

## 2 The structure of a diathesis

### (55) ANTICAUSATIVE [OBJ > SBJ > Ø]

- a. Ich schließe die Tür.
- b. Die Tür schließt sich (von alleine).

Very similar to an anticausative is the PASSIVE [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ]. The main difference between the two (a distinction which is often difficult to delimit) is that for a passive the original subject is still implied and can optionally be overtly expressed (56). In contrast, for an anticausative the original subject is completely removed and a phrase like *by itself* can typically be added. As an example of a passive diathesis in (56) is the *bekommen Rezipientenpassiv* in which a dative is promoted to subject Section 10.5.21

### (56) PASSIVE [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ]

- a. Ihr Freund kocht ihr eine Suppe.
- b. Sie bekommt von ihrem Freund eine Suppe gekocht.

A CONVERSIVE [OBJ > SBJ > PBJ] looks similar to a passive, except that the prepositional phrase is a lexically governed preposition, so it has a more object-like grammatical status. An example is the verb *empören* ‘to appall’ (57a) with the reflexive diathesis *sich empören über* ‘to be outraged about’ (57b,c), see Section 7.5.7. The term conversive is adapted from Kulikov (ref-kulikov2011: 380).

[2.101]

### (57) CONVERSIVE [OBJ > SBJ > PBJ]

- a. Der Preis empört den Kunden.
- b. Der Kunde empört sich über den Preis.
- c. Der Kunde empört sich darüber, dass der Preis schon wieder gestiegen ist.

For the next diathesis, I propose the term FABRICATIVE [PBJ > SBJ > Ø] based on Lat. *fabrica* ‘plan, trick, workmanship’. This term is used for a diathesis in German in which a fabricated product can be expressed either as a governed prepositional phrase or as a nominative subject. This diathesis occurs for example with various verbs of emotional interactions like *überraschen* ‘to surprise’ (58a), see Section 6.5.7. To understand this diathesis, a distinction is needed between the role of the “fabricator” (here: *Lehrer*, ‘teacher’) and the role of the “fabricated product”, which induces the emotion (here: *Aufgabe*, ‘assignment’). The *mit* prepositional phrase that expresses the fabricated product in (58a) is a governed preposition (58c). The diathesis promotes this fabricated product to

[2.102]

nominative subject and the fabricator is removed from the expression (58b). The experiencer in the accusative *mich* remains unchanged.

(58) FABRICATIVE [PBJ > SBJ > Ø]

- a. Der Lehrer überrascht mich mit seiner Aufgabe.
- b. Die Aufgabe überrascht mich.
- c. Der Lehrer überrascht mich damit, dass er die Aufgabe schon korrigiert hat.

A similar kind of diathesis will be called CONCILIATIVE [ADJ > SBJ > Ø] based on Lat. *conciliator* ‘intermediary, mediator’. In a conciliative an external object (typically an instrument) is promoted to subject (59), see Section 6.5.5. The conciliative and fabricative in German both regularly use a prepositional phrase with *mit*, but the grammatical status is clearly different. The *mit* phrase in a conciliative is an optional adjunct (59), while the *mit* phrase in a fabricative is a governed preposition (58). This grammatical difference is paralleled by a functional difference in the role that is promoted to subject: a conciliative concerns a (typically tangible) instrument that is used by an agent, while a fabricative promotes a (typically intangible) creation that is produced by the agent.

[2.103]

(59) CONCILIATIVE [ADJ > SBJ > Ø]

- a. Der Doktor heilt die Wunde mit einer Salbe.
- b. Die Salbe heilt die Wunde.

### 2.7.3.2 Promotions

[2.104]

The most widespread promotion to subject attested in German is the diathesis with role-remapping [Ø > SBJ > OBJ], called NOVATIVE here (based on Lat. *novare* ‘renew, refresh’). This role-remapping is best known as “causative”, but this semantic characterisation does not hold for all examples of this diathesis. Various other novative diatheses exist in which the new nominative is not a causer but an experiencer, opinionator, permitter or assistant.

[2.105]

Semantically, the most widespread kind of novative adds a new causer to the construction, like with the diatheses between *brennen* ‘to burn (intransitive)’ and *verbrennen* ‘to burn (transitive)’ (60), see Section 8.6.1. Such a diathesis is aptly called a CAUSATIVE.

## 2 The structure of a diathesis

### (60) CAUSATIVE NOVATIVE [ $\emptyset$ > SBJ > OBJ]

- a. Der Tisch brennt.
- b. Ich verbrenne den Tisch.

[2.106]

The *sehen+Infinitiv* diathesis (61), see Section 11.6.6, adds a new nominative subject and the old nominative is turned into an accusative. This diathesis is thus structurally an example of a novative [ $\emptyset$  > SBJ > OBJ]. However, the newly added nominative is not a causer. The new role is better described as an experiencer, so this diathesis can semantically be called an EXPERIENTIVE. Similar constructions are also attested with light-verbs *hören*, *fühlen*, and *spüren*.

### (61) EXPERIENTIVE NOVATIVE [ $\emptyset$ > SBJ > OBJ]

- a. Der Junge putzt den Tisch.
- b. Ich sehe den Jungen den Tisch putzen.

The *finden+Partizip* diathesis (62), see Section 10.6.4 also adds a new nominative subject while the old nominative is turned into an accusative. The role of the new nominative is best characterised as somebody having an opinion, so this diathesis can semantically be called an OPINIATIVE. The main verb is typically a patientive intransitive predicate like *scheitern*, ‘to fail’, see Section 10.2.5. Similar constructions also exist with light verbs *wissen*, *sehen* and *glauben*.

### (62) OPINIATIVE NOVATIVE [ $\emptyset$ > SBJ > OBJ]

- a. Das Projekt scheitert.
- b. Ich finde das Projekt gescheitert.

The *lassen+Infinitiv* diathesis (63), see Section 11.6.2 is also structurally a novative [ $\emptyset$  > SBJ > OBJ]. This diathesis has multiple possible interpretations, among them also a causative reading (63). However, in the example in (64) the newly added nominative is allowing the action to happen, not causing it, so this diathesis can semantically be called a PERMISSIVE. This second interpretation typically happens with agentive intransitive predicates like *schlafen* ‘to sleep’, see Section 10.2.5. However, note that in both examples the other interpretation is also possible, albeit only in specially crafted contexts.

### (63) CAUSATIVE NOVATIVE [ $\emptyset$ > SBJ > OBJ]

- a. Der Junge schläft ein.
- b. Ich lasse den Jungen einschlafen.



(= Ich Sorge dafür, dass der Junge einschläft.)

(64) PERMISSIVE NOVATIVE [ $\emptyset$  > SBJ > OBJ]

- a. Der Junge schläft.
- b. Ich lasse den Jungen schlafen.  
(= Ich erlaube, dass der Junge weiter schläft.)

[2.109]

Finally, the *lehren/helfen+Infinitiv* diathesis (65), see Section 11.6.12, is a novative in which the role of the new subject is more of an assistant than a real causative. Therefore it is called here an ASSISTIVE novative. Note that both *lehren* and *helfen* can also be used with *zu-Infinitiv*, but then the constructions are not coherent, so those constructions are not included among the diatheses.

(65) ASSISTIVE NOVATIVE [ $\emptyset$  > SBJ > OBJ]

- a. Der Sohn faltet die Wäsche.
- b. Der Vater lehrt seinem Sohn die Wäsche falten.

[2.110]

The NOVATIVE WITH EXTENDED DEMOTION [ $\emptyset$  > SBJ > PBJ] is extremely rare in German. The name is adapted from Kulikov (ref-kulikov2011: 388) to denote a diathesis in which the demotion accompanying the novative is not just [SBJ > OBJ] but [SBJ > PBJ]. The diathesis between *freuen* ‘to be pleased’ and *erfreuen* ‘to please’ (66) might be an example because *mit* is a governed preposition (66c), see Section 8.6.10.

(66) NOVATIVE WITH EXTENDED DEMOTION [ $\emptyset$  > SBJ > PBJ]

- a. Das Geschenk freut mich.
- b. Er erfreut mich mit einem Geschenk.
- c. Er erfreut mich damit, dass er mich besucht.

Slightly more widespread, a NOVATIVE WITH EXTREME DEMOTION [ $\emptyset$  > SBJ > ADJ] is a novative diathesis that almost completely removes the erstwhile subject. This is attested in an interesting group of constructions using light verbs like *finden* with a participle and a transitive main verb like *aufheben* ‘to preserve’ (67), see Section 10.6.8. With this diathesis, there is a new opinionator introduced, just like with the opinative above (see paragraph 2.107 on page 52). However, the erstwhile nominative subject is now demoted to an optional prepositional phrase.

[2.111]

## 2 The structure of a diathesis

### (67) NOVATIVE WITH EXTREME DEMOTION [ $\emptyset$ > SBJ > ADJ]

- a. Das Archiv hebt den Nachlass auf.
- b. Ich finde den Nachlass (im Archiv) gut aufgehoben.

The remaining types of promotions are extremely rare. A REVERSED PASSIVE [ADJ > SBJ > OBJ] demotes the subject to object and at the same time promotes a new subject from an erstwhile adjunct role. An example in German is the diathesis from *erben* ‘to inherit’ to *enterben* ‘to disinherit’ (68a,b), see Section 8.6.13. This is semantically very close to a causative [ $\emptyset$  > SBJ > OBJ] in which the newly introduced causer can sometimes be expressed as an adjunct (68c,d). This affinity between a reversed passive and a causative is reminiscent of the affinity between a passive and an anticausative. In both pairs, the difference amounts to a switch between the closely related macro-role of an optional adjunct (ADJ) and being completely unexpressed ( $\emptyset$ ).

### (68) REVERSED PASSIVE [ADJ > SBJ > OBJ]

- a. Ich erbe den Schreibtisch von meinem Vater.
- b. Mein Vater enterbt mich.
- c. Der Wettkampf endet (durch den Gong).
- d. Der Gong beendet den Wettkampf.

Finally, a REVERSED CONVERSIVE [PBJ > SBJ > OBJ] differs from a reversed passive in that the prepositional phrase is a lexically governed preposition, as can be identified by a possible *da(r)+Preposition, dass* paraphrase. This is for example attested with the diatheses between *staunen über* ‘to marvel’ and *erstaunen* ‘to amaze’ (69), see Section 8.6.11.

### (69) REVERSED CONVERSIVE [PBJ > SBJ > OBJ]

- a. Ich staune über deine Arbeit.
- b. Deine Arbeit erstaunt mich.
- c. Ich staune darüber, dass du schon fertig bist.

#### 2.7.3.3 Symmetrical subject diatheses

Completely symmetrical diatheses involving the subject are rare in German. A perfectly symmetrical INVERSIVE [OBJ > SBJ > OBJ] is a diathesis that switches subject and object. This term is proposed by Malchukov (ref-malchukov2015: 99–100) inspired by the so-called “inverse” marking found in Algonquian languages.

An inersive diathesis is designated as a “symmetric conversive” by Kulikov (ref-kulikov2011: 380). An example of an inersive is the diathesis between *wundern* ‘to puzzle’ and *bewundern* ‘to admire’ (70), see Section 8.9.5.

- (70) INVERSIVE [OBJ > SBJ > OBJ]  
 a. Dein Verhalten wundert mich.  
 b. Ich bewundere dein Verhalten.

[2.115] Much more widespread in German are diatheses in which a nominative/accusative construction is inverted into a dative/nominative construction. This is for example attested for the *bleiben+zu-Infinitiv* diathesis (71), see Section 12.9.1. Because dative and accusative are both classified here as OBJ, this counts as an inersive diathesis. However, when a separation between core case (accusative) and non-core case (dative/genitive) would be pursued (see paragraph 2.43 on page 34), then this diathesis would be an example of demotion. There are two remappings, namely down from SBJ to NON-CORE-OBJ and up from CORE-OBJ to SBJ. When non-core is taken as being lower on the macrorole hierarchy (29) then the biggest jump is the jump down, which is the definition of demotion (see Section 2.4.2). Instead of adding a completely new set of categories I propose to simply split INVERSIVE into two subtypes and call this phenomenon a DEMOTED INVERSIVE.

- (71) DEMOTED INVERSIVE [OBJ > SBJ > OBJ]  
 a. Ich räume den letzten Schrank ein.  
 b. Dieser letzte Schrank bleibt mir noch einzuräumen.

[2.116] The opposite PROMOTED INVERSIVE promotes a dative/genitive into a nominative subject, and demotes the erstwhile nominative to an accusative. This is illustrated with the *haben+Infinitiv* diathesis in (72), see Section 11.9.2.

- (72) PROMOTED INVERSIVE [OBJ > SBJ > OBJ]  
 a. Ein Tropfen hängt ihm an der Nase.  
 b. Er hat einen Tropfen an der Nase hängen.

[2.117] At the other extreme, a COMMUTATIVE [ $\emptyset$  > SBJ >  $\emptyset$ ] completely removes the old subject and introduces a completely new role as subject. I propose this term on the basis of Lat. *commutare* ‘exchange, replace’. A German example of such a diathesis is the *geben+Partizip* construction (73), see Section 10.9.3. Note that the subjects in the two sentences do not have to be the same participant.

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### (73) COMMUTATIVE [ $\emptyset \succ \text{SBJ} \succ \emptyset$ ]

- a. Das Kind verliert den Ring.
- b. Der Vater gibt den Ring verloren.

[2.118] The two other symmetrical diatheses in between the two extremes are even rarer. A PREPOSITION INVERSIVE [ $\text{PBJ} \succ \text{SBJ} \succ \text{PBJ}$ ] is similar to an inersive, but the exchange is with a governed preposition. This is arguably attested in the diathesis between *strahlen* ‘to shine’ and *erstrahlen* ‘to gleam’ (74), see Section 8.9.6.

### (74) PREPOSITION INVERSIVE [ $\text{PBJ} \succ \text{SBJ} \succ \text{PBJ}$ ]

- a. Die Sonne strahlt auf das Haus.
- b. Das Haus erstrahlt in der Sonne.

Finally, an example of an ADJUNCT COMMUTATIVE [ $\text{ADJ} \succ \text{SBJ} \succ \text{ADJ}$ ] is possibly attested with the verb *wimmeln* ‘to swarm’ (75), see Section 6.9.1.

[2.119]

### (75) ADJUNCT COMMUTATIVE [ $\text{ADJ} \succ \text{SBJ} \succ \text{ADJ}$ ]

- a. Die Kinder wimmeln auf den Platz.
- b. Der Platz wimmelt von Kindern.

## 2.7.4 Isolated object diatheses

The situation with object diatheses is reversed from the previously discussed [2.120] subject diatheses. With object diatheses, isolated diatheses are much more widespread and they occur with a wide variety of role-remappings, see Figure 2.3. In contrast, chained object diatheses are less widespread and can mostly be analysed as a combination of multiple isolated diatheses.

The top right diatheses in Figure 2.3 are demotions, while the bottom left ones are promotions. The bottom right of the figure is left completely empty because these remappings are not diatheses anymore, but simply optional marking. There is a strong tendency for object demotions in German to be either unmarked, or marked by reflexive pronouns, while the object promotions are typically marked by preverbs or resultative preverbials.

[2.121]

The exception to this generalisation are the so-called locative and delocative diatheses. With those, promotions (locatives) are formally unmarked, while demotions (delocatives) are typically marked by preverbs or resultative preverbials. A possible explanation for this apparent markedness reversal is that the adding or removing of location phrases should not be seen as a change in valency (“diathetical operation”), but as the marking of the diathesis itself (“voice”). This would be a parallel to the addition/removal of directionals (see Section 9.2.5).

[2.122]

	To Cased Object [ ... > OBJ ]	To Prepositional Object [ ... > PBJ ]	To Adjunct [ ... > ADJ ]	To Unexpressed [ ... > Ø ]
From Cased Object [ OBJ > ... ]	<b>Case Change</b> [ OBJ > OBJ ]	Governed Antipassive [ OBJ > PBJ ]	<b>Antipassive</b> [ OBJ > ADJ ]	<b>Deobjective</b> [ OBJ > Ø ]
From Prepositional Object [ PBJ > ... ]	Governed Applicative [ PBJ > OBJ ]	Preposition Change [ PBJ > PBJ ]	<b>Delocative</b> [ PBJ > ADJ ]	[ PBJ > Ø ]
From Adjunct [ ADJ > ... ]	<b>Applicative</b> [ ADJ > OBJ ]	[ ADJ > PBJ ]	Adjunct Change [ ADJ > ADJ ]	
From Unexpressed [ Ø > ... ]	<b>Objective</b> [ Ø > OBJ ]	<b>Locative</b> [ Ø > PBJ ]		

Figure 2.3: Names for isolated object remappings

I will discuss the different role-remappings from Figure 2.3 in four subsections. First, I will summarise the various kinds of applicatives and antipassives (mid left and mid top), then the objectives and deobjectives (top right and left bottom), followed by locative and delocative diatheses (mid bottom and mid right), and finally the symmetrical exchanges (on the diagonal).

#### 2.7.4.1 Applicatives & antipassives

[2.124]

Applicatives and antipassives are very similar, though reversed. **APPLICATIVES** [ADJ > OBJ] change a prepositional phrase into a case-marked phrase, while **ANTIPASSIVES** [OBJ > ADJ] convert a case-marked phrase into a prepositional phrase. Given this affinity, instead of antipassive it might be better to call such remappings “antiapplicative” (e.g. **ref-haspelmath2004c**: 1132) or “deapplicative” (in line with the other names below).

By removing or adding an object, applicatives and antipassives change the transitivity of the sentence. However, because case marking in German is nominative/accusative aligned, changes in transitivity are not reflected in the marking of the subject. This is crucially different from languages with ergatively aligned case marking, in which antipassives also include a change in the marking of the subject, namely from ergative to absolutive (and vice versa with applicatives). Terminologically, these two situations might be distinguished by using the term “deapplicative” for nominative/accusative languages and reserve “antipassive”

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for ergative/absolutive languages. I decided against that distinction and the term “antipassive” will be used throughout in this book with this explicit caveat.

Applicatives occur frequently with the addition of a preverb, like in the alternation between *steigen auf* ‘to climb’ and *besteigen* ‘to mount’ (76), see Section 8.8.8.

(76) APPLICATIVE [ADJ > OBJ]

- a. Sie steigt auf den Berg.
- b. Sie besteigt den Berg.

[2.12.4] Antipassives in German are often unmarked (see further below), but an example of an antipassive with a clear markedness direction is the alternation between *treffen* ‘to meet’ and reflexive *sich treffen mit* ‘to meet with’ (77), see Section 7.7.3.

(77) ANTIPASSIVE [OBJ > ADJ]

- a. Ich treffe dich.
- b. Ich treffe mich mit dir.

The object of applicatives and antipassives is typically an accusative, but datives can also be targeted. An example of a dative applicative is the alternation between *stammen aus* ‘to hail from’ and *entstammen* ‘to be descended from’ (78), see Section 8.8.13. An example of a dative antipassive is the covert alternation of *berichten* ‘to report’ (79), see Section 6.7.11.

(78) DATIVE APPLICATIVE [ADJ > OBJ]

- a. Ich stamme aus einem Adelsgeschlecht.
- b. Ich entstamme einem Adelsgeschlecht

(79) DATIVE ANTIPASSIVE [OBJ > ADJ]

- a. Er berichtet dem Vorstand alles.
- b. Er berichtet alles an den Vorstand.

In the discussion of diatheses in this book I consistently distinguish GOVERNED APPLICATIVES [PBJ > OBJ] and GOVERNED ANTIPASSIVES [OBJ > PBJ] when the prepositional phrase is a governed preposition (see Section 6.2.1). An example of a governed applicative is the diathesis between *arbeiten an* ‘to work on’ (with a governed preposition *an*) and *bearbeiten* ‘to edit, adapt’ (80), see Section 8.8.9. An example of a governed antipassive is the diathesis between *beklagen* ‘to lament’ and *sich beklagen* ‘to complain’ (with a governed preposition *über*) (81), see Section 7.7.4. However, the differentiation between the governed and non-governed

applicative/antipassive does not currently allow for any promising semantic or structural generalisations, so this differentiation might grammatically be unnecessary to explain German sentence structure.

- (80) GOVERNED APPLICATIVE [PBJ > OBJ]
- a. Ich arbeite an dem Text.  
(Ich arbeite daran, dass der Text fertig wird.)
  - b. Ich bearbeite den Text.
- (81) GOVERNED ANTIPASSIVES [OBJ > PBJ]
- a. Ich beklage den Lärm.
  - b. Ich beklage mich über den Lärm.  
(Ich beklage mich darüber, dass es so laut ist.)

[2.130] There are many diatheses with a role-remapping between adjunct and object that do not have any overt indication of a direction. Without explicit marking it is difficult to decide whether such diatheses are cases of (applicative) promotion [ADJ > OBJ] or (antipassive) demotion [OBJ > ADJ]. For the sake of organisation in this book I classify such covert alternations on the basis of (debatable) semantic intuitions and parallels to other overtly marked diatheses.

[2.131] Most covert diatheses with an alternation between prepositional phrases and case-marked arguments are classified here as ANTIPASSIVE, like in the alternation between *schießen auf* ‘to aim at’ and *schießen* ‘to shoot’ (82), see Section 6.7.8. This is also widespread with datives (83), see Section 6.7.11. In such examples, I judge the case-marking to be more basic than the prepositional phrase.

- (82) COVERT ANTIPASSIVE [OBJ > ADJ]
- a. Ich schieße den Bären.
  - b. Ich schieße auf den Bären.
- (83) COVERT DATIVE ANTIPASSIVE [OBJ > ADJ]
- a. Ich schreibe dir einen Brief.
  - b. Ich schreibe einen Brief an dich.

[2.132] In contrast, there is a widespread alternation between datives and beneficiary *für* prepositional phrases (84) that I classify as an APPLICATIVE, see Section 6.8.9. In this example the beneficiary dative seems to be the derived construction.

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### (84) COVERT APPLICATIVE (BENEFICIARY RAISING) [ADJ > OBJ]

- a. Er kocht eine Suppe für mich.
- b. Er kocht mir eine Suppe.

There is a further kind of covert diathesis with a dative object, conventionally called POSSESSOR RAISING. In such diatheses there is an alternation between a possessor (typically expressed as an adnominal genitive) and a dative (85). The dative can alternate with the possessor of a nominative subject (see Section 5.8.3), an accusative object (see Section 5.8.4) or an obligatory location (see Section 6.8.11). Following widespread convention, I classify these diatheses as promotion [ADJ > OBJ]

### (85) COVERT APPLICATIVE (POSSESSOR RAISING) [ADJ > OBJ]

- a. Er schneidet meine Haare.
- b. Er schneidet mir die Haare.

These two covert kinds of dative applicative (viz. beneficiary and possessor applicative) are semantically and structurally clearly distinct. The datives that show a possessive alternation (85) are semantically experiencers. In contrast, datives that alternate with *für* prepositional phrases (84) are semantically beneficiaries. In especially crafted context it might be possible to evoke either reading for the same sentence (86).

- (86) a. <sup>?</sup> Ich schneide dir (zuliebe) in den (meinen) Finger.  
(= Ich schneide für dich in meinen Finger.)
- b. Ich schneide dir in den (deinen) Finger.  
(= Ich schneide in deinen Finger.)

#### 2.7.4.2 Objectives & deobjectives

A DEOBJECTIVE DIATHESIS [OBJ > Ø] is a diathesis that drops an object, i.e. a role [2.135] cannot be expressed anymore (the term is taken from ref-haspelmath2004c: 1131). A deobjective drop is illustrated in (87) with an alternation from *kaufen* ‘to buy’ to *einkaufen* ‘to shop’, see Section 8.7.2 for an extensive discussion.

### (87) DEOBJECTIVE [OBJ > Ø]

- a. Ich habe gestern ein Buch gekauft.
- b. Ich habe gestern eingekauft.

A special variant of a deobjective occurs with verbs that apply to the body, like *verbrennen* ‘to burn’ (88). In such constructions, a reflexive pronoun is nec-



essary. This diathesis is called ENDOREFLEXIVE (ref-haspelmath1987: 27–28), see Section 7.7.1 for an extensive discussion.

(88) DEOBJECTIVE (ENDOREFLEXIVE) [OBJ > Ø]

- a. Er verbrennt das Buch.
- b. Er verbrennt sich.

[2.137] An OBJECTIVE DIATHESIS [Ø > OBJ] is a diathesis that adds a new object, i.e. a completely new role is introduced in the form of an object. An example of an overtly marked object addition is the alternation from *zaubern* ‘to perform magic’ to *verzaubern* ‘to enchant’ (89). In this example the new object is simply an ADDED PATIENT to an erstwhile intransitive action. Such object additions are frequently attested with preverbs like *ver-*, see Section 8.8.1.

(89) OBJECTIVE (ADDED PATIENT) [Ø > OBJ]

- a. Sie zaubert.
- b. Sie verzaubert mich.

[88] A semantically special kind of diathesis introduces a new ADDED RESULT object. Such an objective diathesis adds an object that is the result of performing the activity described by the predicate. An overtly marked example is presented in (90) with the diathesis between *arbeiten* ‘to work’ and the inherent reflexive *sich etwas erarbeiten* ‘to acquire something through work’, see Section 8.8.5. The result of the work is added as an object in (90b).<sup>6</sup>

(90) OBJECTIVE (ADDED RESULT) [Ø > OBJ]

- a. Ich arbeite.
- b. Ich erarbeite mir ein Vermögen.  
(= Ich arbeite, und das Resultat davon ist, dass ich ein Vermögen besitze.)

Objectives and deobjectives are frequently attested without any overt marking (cf. ambitransitive/labile verbs), and in such “covert” diatheses it is difficult to establish a direction. As already noted above, for the sake of organisation in this

<sup>6</sup>Here I consciously avoid the term “resultative” for this phenomenon to avoid confusion. First, I already use the term “resultative” in this book for a special class of preverbal adjectives (see Section 9.2.6). Second, the term “resultative” is also frequently used in the literature for an aspectual concept, namely to indicate a special kind of state induced as the result of performing the predicate (e.g. ref-nedjalkov1988a).

book I classify such covert alternations on the basis of (often debatable) semantic intuitions and parallels with other overtly marked diatheses. For example, the verb *stören* ‘to disturb’ (91) can be used both with and without an accusative object, see Section 5.7.1. This is classified here as a deobjective diathesis. Such unmarked object drops are also attested with datives, see Section 5.7.4, and with governed prepositions, see Section 6.7. The dropping of an object is also often used to put the focus on the action itself, but then it is typically attested with an adverbial, see Section 9.7.1 for an extensive discussion.

- (91) COVERT DEOBJECTIVE [OBJ > Ø]  
a. Du störst die Veranstaltung.  
b. Du störst.

In contrast, the verb *stottern* ‘to stutter’ is classified here as an example of a covert object addition (92), although there is no formal differentiation from the previous example of a covert object drop (91). The intuition is that *stottern* is basically intransitive (and any accusative object is thus added), while *stören* is basically transitive (and any missing object is thus dropped). Correlated with this proposed difference is the fact that covert object addition with *stottern* has an ADDED RESULT interpretation (92b). However, it remains to be seen whether there is really a substantive difference between these two kinds of verbs (see Section 5.8.1 for an extensive discussion).

[2.140]

- (92) COVERT OBJECTIVE (ADDED RESULT) [Ø > OBJ]  
a. Er stotterte.  
b. Er stotterte eine Entschuldigung.  
(= Er stotterte, und das Resultat davon ist eine Entschuldigung.)

### 2.7.4.3 Locatives & delocatives

A LOCATIVE DIATHESIS [Ø > PBJ] is a diatheses that adds an obligatory location phrase to the clause. For example, the transitive *befehlen* ‘to order’ marks the ordered person as an accusative (93a). With a (directional) locative phrase *an die Front* ‘to the frontline’ the sentence obtains a caused-motion reading (93b), see Section 6.8.5. Note that there is no profound association between such a *locative diathesis* and the widespread phenomenon of a *locative case*. Both terms simply use the term “locative” to describe the fact that the marking of location is concerned.

(93) LOCATIVE (CAUSED MOTION) [ $\emptyset \succ \text{PBJ}$ ]

- a. Ich befehle eine Armee.
- b. Ich befehle die Armee an die Front.  
(= Ich befehle, und dadurch geht die Armee an die Front.)

[2] Even more noteworthy, such a caused-motion diathesis is also possible with many intransitive verbs like *schwitzen* ‘to sweat’ (94a). With such verbs, a locative diathesis not only adds a location, like *in mein Hemd* ‘in my shirt’, but also an added-result accusative object, like *einen Fleck* ‘a stain’ (94b), see Section 6.8.4.

(94) LOCATIVE (CAUSED MOTION & ADDED RESULT) [ $\emptyset \succ \text{PBJ} + \emptyset \succ \text{OBJ}$ ]

- a. Ich schwitze.
- b. Ich schwitze einen Fleck in mein Hemd.  
(= Ich schwitze, und dadurch ist ein Fleck in meinem Hemd entstanden.)

The reversal of a locative diathesis is a DELOCATIVE DIATHESIS [ $\text{PBJ} \succ \text{ADJ}$ ]. In such a diathesis an obligatory location loses its obligatory status and is often completely dropped. An example of such a diathesis is shown in (95) with the alternation between *stecken* ‘to put into’ and *verstecken* ‘to hide’. The verb *stecken* needs an obligatory location (95a,b). Such an obligatory location is classified here as a PBJ prepositional object (see Section 2.2.2). The situation is different with the verb *verstecken*. With this verb the location is an ADJ optional adjunct and can be left out (see Section 8.7.11 for an extensive discussion).

(95) DELOCATIVE [ $\text{PBJ} \succ \text{ADJ}$ ]

- a. Ich stecke das Geschenk in den Schrank.
- b. \* Ich stecke das Geschenk.
- c. Ich verstecke das Geschenk in dem Schrank.
- d. Ich verstecke das Geschenk.

## 2.7.4.4 Symmetrical object diatheses

Symmetrical object diatheses are rare in German. A CASE CHANGE [ $\text{OBJ} \succ \text{OBJ}$ ] is illustrated in (96) by the alternation between *folgen* ‘to follow’ (with dative) and *verfolgen* ‘to chase’ (with accusative), see Section 8.9.2.

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### (96) CASE CHANGE [OBJ > OBJ]

- a. Ich folge dem Auto.
- b. Ich verfolge das Auto.

A GOVERNED PREPOSITION CHANGE [PBJ > PBJ] does occur in German, but such diatheses have not been explicitly collected in this book. Possible examples are *arbeiten an* ‘to work on’ (97a) changing into *sich durcharbeiten* ‘to work through’ (97b) or *sorgen für* ‘take care of’ (97c) changing into *sich sorgen um* ‘to worry about’ (97d). [2.145]

### (97) GOVERNED PREPOSITION CHANGE [PBJ > PBJ]

- a. Er arbeitet an den Daten.
- b. Er arbeitet sich durch die Daten.
- c. Er sorgt für seine Mutter.
- d. Er sorgt sich um seine Mutter.

An ADJUNCT CHANGE [ADJ > ADJ] is, according to my definitions, not a diathesis at all, as adjuncts are not lexically specific. However, the change between a possessor *dein* ‘your’ (98a) and a non-governed prepositional phrase *von dir* ‘from you’ (98b) can be seen as as a borderline examples, see Section 6.9.3. [2.146]

### (98) ADJUNCT CHANGE [ADJ > ADJ]

- a. Ich erwarte dein Geschenk.
- b. Ich erwarte ein Geschenk von dir.

## 2.7.5 Chained object diatheses

Chains of object diatheses (i.e. chains with the object in the middle of the chain) can always be interpreted as a combination of two isolated object diatheses from the previous section. However, not all theoretically possible combinations are attested (see Figure 2.4). The most frequently attested chained object diatheses are the highlighted variants of OBJECT EXCHANGE (see Sections 2.7.5.1, 2.7.5.4). A few incidental examples of CHAINED CASE CHANGE are also attested (see Section 2.7.5.5). [2.147]

### 2.7.5.1 Object exchange

The highlighted diatheses in Figure 2.4 are collectively called OBJECT EXCHANGE because as part of the role-remapping the accusative marking is exchanged from [2.148]

	To Cased Object [ ... > OBJ > OBJ ]	To Prepositional Object [ ... > OBJ > PBJ ]	To Adjunct [ ... > OBJ > ADJ ]	To Unexpressed [ ... > OBJ > Ø ]
From Cased Object [ OBJ > OBJ > ... ]	<b>Double Case Change</b> [ OBJ > OBJ > OBJ ]	[ OBJ > OBJ > PBJ ]	<b>Antipassive + Case Change</b> [ OBJ > OBJ > ADJ ]	[ OBJ > OBJ > Ø ]
From Prepositional Object [ PBJ > OBJ > ... ]	[ PBJ > OBJ > OBJ ]	[ PBJ > OBJ > PBJ ]	<b>Filled Holonym</b> [ PBJ > OBJ > ADJ ]	<b>Emptied Holonym</b> [ PBJ > OBJ > Ø ]
From Adjunct [ ADJ > OBJ > ... ]	<b>Applicative + Case Change</b> [ ADJ > OBJ > OBJ ]	<b>Object Exchange</b>		
	[ ADJ > OBJ > OBJ ]	[ ADJ > OBJ > PBJ ]	[ ADJ > OBJ > ADJ ]	[ ADJ > OBJ > Ø ]
From Unexpressed [ Ø > OBJ > ... ]	[ Ø > OBJ > OBJ ]	<b>Parted Meronym</b> [ Ø > OBJ > PBJ ]	<b>Joined Meronym</b> [ Ø > OBJ > ADJ ]	[ Ø > OBJ > Ø ]

Figure 2.4: Names for chains of object diathesis

one role to another. These diatheses are used with verbs that involve some kind of part/whole relation between the two roles involved. A typical example (99) is the diathesis between *schmieren* ‘to smear’ and *beschmieren* ‘to spread’ (discussed in detail in Section 8.7.13). In this example an *auf* prepositional phrase turns into a new accusative, while the old accusative is turned into a *mit* prepositional phrase. So, syntactically the role marked as an accusative object is exchanged from *Salbe* ‘ointment’ to *Wunde* ‘wound’. Semantically, the *Wunde* is the ‘whole’ to which the *Salbe* is applied.

## (99) OBJECT EXCHANGE

- a. Ich schmiere die Salbe auf die Wunde.
- b. Ich beschmiere die Wunde mit der Salbe.

[2.14] Different variants of such object exchange show an astonishingly strong correlation between syntactic structure and semantic interpretation. Basically, promotions have the effect that the new object role is a part of the old object role (i.e. the new object is a MERONYM), while demotions have the reverse effect in that the new object role encompasses the old object role (i.e. the new object is a HOLONYM). To appreciate this generalisation it is important to recall how demotions and promotions are defined for chained diatheses. This definition is not trivial because chained diatheses are always a combination of both a promotion and a demotion. So the question is which of the two “wins”.

## 2 The structure of a diathesis

By definition (cf. Section 2.4.2), a chained diathesis is deemed to be an overall demotion when the demotion-part is stronger than the promotion-part, and vice versa. The strength is measured as the size of the “jump” on the MACROROLE HIERARCHY, repeated here in (100). Additionally, the overall chain exhibits varying intensity: the larger the difference in jump size between demotion-part and promotion-part, the more extreme the overall chain.

- (100) MACROROLE HIERARCHY  
 SBJ » OBJ » PBJ » ADJ » Ø

Concretely, the promotion of an object exchange can be either an objective [Ø » OBJ] (“three steps up”), an applicative [ADJ » OBJ] (“two steps up”) or an obligatory-location applicative [PBJ » OBJ] (“one step up”). In reverse, the demotion can be either a deobjective [OBJ » Ø] (“three steps down”), an antipassive [OBJ » ADJ] (“two steps down”) or an obligatory-location antipassive [OBJ » PBJ] (“one step down”). Combining two of these leads to an overall assessment of the chained diathesis. This whole concept of chained demotions/promotions can be visualised by considering the top-right to bottom-left diagonal in Figure 2.4. The top-right corner [OBJ » OBJ » Ø] is the most extreme demotion (“net four down”) and the bottom-left corner [Ø » OBJ » OBJ] is the most extreme promotion (“net four up”). All other possibilities are situated somewhere in between these extremes on this diagonal.

For example, consider again the diathesis from *schmieren* to *beschmieren*, repeated below in (101). It consists of a promotion from a prepositional phrase *auf die Wunde* to an accusative *die Wunde* and a demotion from an accusative *die Salbe* to a prepositional phrase *mit der Salbe*. The promotion starts from an obligatory location (101a,b), i.e. this is an obligatory-locational applicative [PBJ » OBJ]. In contrast, the demotion ends in an optional instrumental phrase (101c,d), i.e. this is an antipassive diathesis [OBJ » ADJ]. Now, the antipassive demotion (“two steps down”) is a bigger jump on the macrorole hierarchy than the obligatory-location promotion (“one step up”), so the whole object exchange [PBJ » OBJ » ADJ] is classified as a demotion, be it a minor one (“net one step down”).

- (101) DEMOTED OBJECT EXCHANGE [PBJ » OBJ » ADJ]  
 a. Ich schmiere die Salbe auf die Wunde.  
 b. \* Ich schmiere die Salbe.  
 c. Ich beschmiere die Wunde mit Salbe.  
 d. Ich beschmiere die Wunde.

According to the above mentioned generalisation, such an overall demotion coincides with the fact that the new object *Wunde* ‘wound’ is a holonym to which

the old meronymic object *Salbe* ‘ointment’ is applied. To be precise, the terms MERONYM and HOLONYM are language-specific classifications as observed in the structure of German. So, not all examples necessarily correspond to any (universal) semantic conceptualisation of the terms holonym/meronym. For example, German verbs that describe an act of covering (e.g. *schmieren* ‘to smear’) or wrapping (e.g. *wickeln* ‘to wrap around’) consistently treat the cover/wrap alike to other meronyms and the covered/wrapped object alike to other holonyms. That is no statement about what it semantically means to be a meronym or holonym. It is just a statement about the distribution of syntactic structures among German verbs as they take part in object exchange.

### 2.7.5.2 Demoted object exchange

[2.154] There are two different kinds of object exchange with demotion, namely the FILLED HOLONYM and the EMPTIED HOLONYM object exchange. These two kinds of exchange correlate with the intensity of the demotion. A minor demotion manifests a filled-holonym object exchange, while a more extreme form of demotion expresses an emptied-holonym object exchange.

[2.155] Typically, a FILLED HOLONYM diathesis is expressed by a minor demotion (“net one step down”), as illustrated with *schmieren/beschmieren* above in (101). Note that in that example, the holonym *Wunde* is not literally ‘filled with’ the meronym *Salbe*. However, with many other examples, like *pflanzen/bepflanzen* ‘to plant’ below (102), the holonym *Garten* ‘garden’ is literally filled with the meronym *Tulpen* ‘tulips’. In accordance with this being a minor overall demotion (“net one step down”), the new accusative object after the object exchange is a filled holonym.

[2.156] Note that with *pflanzen/bepflanzen* (102) the pre-diathesis location phrase *in den Garten* is not obligatory (102a,b), so the resulting diathesis is symmetric [ADJ > OBJ > ADJ]. This is the kind of minor syntactic variation that is indicated in Figure 2.4 with the unnamed boxes in the centre of the highlighted object-exchange domain. Still, this diathesis is clearly an example of a filled-holonym object exchange because the change in prepositions from *in* (with unmarked *pflanzen*) to *mit* (with marked *bepflanzen*) fits in perfectly with other filled-holonym examples (cf. Section 8.7.13).

## 2 The structure of a diathesis

### (102) SYMMETRIC OBJECT EXCHANGE (FILLED HOLONYM) [ADJ > OBJ > ADJ]

- a. Ich pflanze Tulpen in den Garten.
- b. Ich pflanze Tulpen.
- c. Ich bepflanze den Garten mit Tulpen.
- d. Ich bepflanze den Garten.

[2.157]

The second kind of demoted object exchange is the EMPTIED HOLONYM diathesis, expressed with a more extreme demotion (“net two steps down”). This is illustrated in (50) with the diathesis between the verb *klopfen* ‘to pound’ and *ausklopfen* ‘to beat out’ (cf. Section 8.7.12). The unmarked verb *klopfen* (103a) takes an accusative object role that expresses the result of the pounding (*Staub* ‘dust’). The pounded object role (*Mantel* ‘coat’) is expressed as an obligatory location phrase (103b). Crucially, the accusative object role in this construction is a component part (meronym) of the locational object role (holonym). The diathesis from *klopfen* to *ausklopfen* (103c) completely drops the meronym *Staub* from the sentence [OBJ > Ø] and promotes the holonym *Mantel* to accusative [PBJ > OBJ]. The meronymic role *Staub* cannot be expressed anymore at all after the diathesis (103d). In accordance with this large overall demotion (“net two steps down”), the new holonymic accusative object *Mantel* is semantically “emptied” from its old meronymic accusative object *Staub* by the action *klopfen*. So the new accusative object after this object exchange is an emptied holonym.

### (103) DEMOTED OBJECT EXCHANGE (EMPTIED HOLONYM) [PBJ > OBJ > Ø]

- a. Ich klopfe den Staub von meinem Mantel.
- b. \* Ich klopfe den Staub.
- c. Ich klopfe meinen Mantel aus.
- d. \* Ich klopfe meinen Mantel von den Staub aus.

#### 2.7.5.3 Promoted object exchange

There are also two different kinds of object exchange with promotion, namely the JOINED MERONYM and the PARTED MERONYM object exchange. These two kinds of object exchange correlate with the intensity of the promotion. A minor promotion manifests a joined-meronym object exchange, while a more extreme form of promotion expresses a parted-meronym object exchange. Basically, these diatheses are reversals of the two demoted object exchanges discussed in the previous section.

[2.158]



The JOINED MERONYM object exchange occurs with less extreme promotions (“net one step up”). This is illustrated here with the diathesis from *nähen* ‘to sew’ to *festnähen* ‘to fixate by sewing’ (104). The original object role *Bluse* ‘blouse’ (104a) turns into an optional *an* prepositional phrase (104b,c). This part of the chain is an antipassive diathesis [OBJ > ADJ], i.e. “two steps down”. At the same time a new object role *Knopf* ‘button’ is introduced. This role cannot be expressed in the construction before the diathesis (104a). So, this part of the chain is an objective diathesis [∅ > OBJ], i.e. “three steps up”. The promotion is larger than the demotion, so the whole diathesis overall is a promotion, although a minor one, i.e. “net one step up”. As predicted for promotions, the new object *Knopf* semantically is a meronymic part of the original object *Bluse*. Further, in accordance with the promotion being minor, the verb *nähen* describes a situation in which the new object *Knopf* is physically connected to the holonymic *Bluse*. In summary, the new object is a joined meronym.

[2.159]

- (104) PROMOTED OBJECT EXCHANGE (JOINED MERONYM) [∅ > OBJ > ADJ]
- a. Ich habe eine Bluse genäht.
  - b. Ich habe den Knopf an die Bluse festgenäht.
  - c. Ich habe den Knopf festgenäht.

[2.160]

In some examples the joined-meronym object exchange allows for optional prepositional phrases at both sides of the diathesis, resulting in a symmetric diathesis [ADJ > OBJ > ADJ]. For example, this is attested with the diathesis from *massieren* ‘to massage’ (105a,b) to *einmassieren* ‘to massage in’ (105c,d). Still, this diathesis is clearly an example of a joined-meronym object exchange because the change in preposition from *mit* (with unmarked *massieren*) to *in* (with marked *einmassieren*) is completely parallel to all other joined-meronym examples (cf. Section 8.9.1). Semantically, the new accusative object role (*Balsam*, ‘balm’) is a meronym of the old object role (*Muskeln* ‘muscles’), and this new object role is applied to the old object role to become a part of it by the verb *massieren*. So, even though the diathesis is symmetric, the new object is syntactically and semantically a joined meronym.

- (105) SYMMETRIC OBJECT EXCHANGE (JOINED MERONYM) [ADJ > OBJ > ADJ]
- a. Ich habe die Muskeln mit Balsam massiert.
  - b. Ich habe die Muskeln massiert.
  - c. Ich habe den Balsam in die Muskeln einmassiert.
  - d. Ich habe den Balsam einmassiert.

[2.161]

The PARTED MERONYM object exchange occurs with more extreme promotions

(“net two steps up”). For example, the verb *waschen* ‘to wash’ normally takes an accusative object role that is the washee, here *Hose* ‘trousers’ (106a). There is a covert diathesis that introduces a new object role that cannot be expressed earlier, here *Fleck* ‘stain’ (106b). this addition is an objective promotion [ $\emptyset \succ \text{OBJ}$ ], i.e. “three steps up”. At the same time, the original accusative is turned into a locational prepositional phrase and this location phrase cannot be left out (106c). This is an obligatory-location antipassive [ $\text{OBJ} \succ \text{PBj}$ ], i.e. “one step down”. This diathesis is thus an extreme promotion overall, i.e. “net two steps up”. Accordingly, the new meronymic object *Fleck* is semantically a component part of the original holonymic object *Hose* and it is removed from it by the action *waschen*. In summary, the new object is a parted meronym.

(106) PROMOTED OBJECT EXCHANGE (PARTED MERONYM) [ $\emptyset \succ \text{OBJ} \succ \text{PBj}$ ]

- a. Ich wasche meine Hose.
- b. Ich wasche den Fleck aus meiner Hose.
- c. \* Ich wasche den Fleck.

#### 2.7.5.4 Other kinds of object exchange

There are a few other examples of object exchange that do not fit in with the general pattern described above, for example with *zwingen/erzwingen* ‘to force’ (107a,b). This chained diathesis is a remapping of the form [ $\text{PBj} \succ \text{OBJ} \succ \text{ADJ}$ ] because the preposition *zu* is a governed preposition (107c). This diathesis is attested with various verbs of persuasion (cf. Section 8.7.14). The demotion is more prominent than the promotion, so this chain is overall a demotion. Consequently, because it is the person being persuaded that is demoted I call this a PERSUADEE DEMOTION OBJECT EXCHANGE. [2.162]

(107) OBJECT EXCHANGE (PERSUADEE DEMOTION) [ $\text{PBj} \succ \text{OBJ} \succ \text{ADJ}$ ]

- a. Er zwingt ihn zu einem Geständnis.
- b. Er zwingt ihn dazu, ein Geständnis abzulegen.
- c. Er erzwingt ein Geständnis (von ihm).

Another example of an object exchange is illustrated here with the verb *bewundern* ‘to admire’ (108), see Section 6.9.3. This verb (and others like it) show a combination of a possessor-raising applicative promotion [ $\text{ADJ} \succ \text{OBJ}$ ] and a governed antipassive demotion [ $\text{OBJ} \succ \text{PBj}$ ] leading to the object exchange [ $\text{ADJ} \succ \text{OBJ} \succ \text{PBj}$ ]. The promotion is more prominent than the demotion, so this chain is overall a promotion. I propose to call this a POSSESSOR RAISING OBJECT EXCHANGE. [2.163]

## (108) OBJECT EXCHANGE (POSSESSOR RAISING) [ADJ &gt; OBJ &gt; PBJ]

- a. Ich bewundere seine Ehrlichkeit.
- b. Ich bewundere ihn für seine Ehrlichkeit.
- c. Ich bewundere ihn dafür, dass er ehrlich ist.

## 2.7.5.5 Chained case changes

[2.164]

Finally, there are a few object chains involving a change of case, shown at the top and the left of Figure 2.4. Note that a case change of dative/genitive to accusative can be interpreted as a promotion, and the reverse as a demotion, cf. paragraph 2.43 on page 34, but that perspective will not be expanded upon here.

[2.165] Example (109) shows a combination of a dative-to-accusative case change with an antipassive, resulting in a chain [OBJ > OBJ > ADJ]. The verb *schicken* ‘to gift’ takes a recipient in the dative and a patient in the accusative, while the derived *beschenken* ‘to gift’ turns the accusative into a prepositional phrase (i.e. antipassive) and changes the dative *dir* into an accusative *dich* (see Section 8.7.8).

## (109) ANTIPASSIVE+CASE CHANGE [OBJ &gt; OBJ &gt; ADJ]

- a. Ich schenke dir ein Buch.
- b. Ich beschenke dich mit einem Buch.

[2.166]

The reverse situation, i.e. a chain [ADJ > OBJ > OBJ], is attested with the diathesis between *drängen* ‘to urge’ and the derived *aufdrängen* ‘to impose’ (110), see Section 8.8.12. In this example a prepositional phrase changes into an accusative (i.e. applicative), while the accusative *dich* changes to dative *dir*.

## (110) APPLICATIVE+CASE CHANGE [ADJ &gt; OBJ &gt; OBJ]

- a. Ich dränge dich zu einem Abo.
- b. Ich dränge dir ein Abo auf.

Finally, an idiosyncratic diathesis is attested with the verb *rauben* ‘to rob’ (111), see Section 8.9.4. When this verb is changed to *berauben* ‘to rob’ then two case changes happen simultaneously: first a dative-to-accusative change (*dich* becomes *dir*) and second an accusative-to-genitive change (*das Buch* becomes *des Buches*). This is thus an example of a remapping pattern [OBJ > OBJ > OBJ], here called DOUBLE CASE CHANGE.

## (111) DOUBLE CASE CHANGE [OBJ &gt; OBJ &gt; OBJ]

- a. Ich raube dir das Buch.
- b. Ich beraube dich des Buches.



## 3 Summary of major diatheses

### 3.1 German names for German grammar

[3.1] Among the almost 250 diatheses that are distinguished in this book there are many that are frequently attested and that can be used with very many different verbs. In contrast, there are also many diatheses that only occur in very specific circumstances or that might otherwise be considered to be exceptions or incidental instances. Only the major diatheses, those that are of central importance to the grammatical structure of German, will be summarised in this chapter. Such a summary would normally be presented at the end of a book, but because of the often long-winding data-driven details of the subsequent descriptive chapters, I decided to present this summary here at the end of the introductory deliberations. Take it as a quick appetiser of things to come, with ample links to the actual discussion in later chapters. This chapter also provides a sketch of how diathesis could be approached in practical grammars of the German language.

[3.2] To reiterate the basic premise of this book: in the Chapters 5 to 13 I aim to present a complete list of all coherent, and thus monoclausal, clause structures in German (cf. Section 1.3.1 on defining monoclausality). All in all, in those chapters there are more than 300 separate sub-subsections that describe (often minor) variations of monoclausal structures. This diversity is condensed into about 120 major clause alternations as summarised here. Of those, about 80 are diatheses (i.e. clause alternations with role-remapping, discussed in this chapter), while only about 40 are epitheses (i.e. clause alternations without any change in role marking, discussed in the next chapter). So, diathesis (“grammatical voice”) is a much more diverse grammatical phenomenon than epithesis (“tense-aspect-mood marking”). All these counts should be taken with some leeway, because a lot depends on individual decisions about splitting or lumping structures into groups (e.g. how many *lassen+Infinitiv* constructions are counted separately, cf. Section 11.2.5). Although the analysis of German clause alternations might look cleaner when lumping structures into larger groups, that would not reduce the attested diversity, it would only hide the variation at the cost of larger within-group complexity.

### 3 Summary of major diatheses

Besides providing a basic summary, I also propose German names (sometimes based on Latinate terms) for all 120 major derived monoclausal sentence structures. Using suitable names is a central aspect of (scientific) communication. In grammar, names are like instruments that allow us to abstract away from individual details and manipulate classes of utterances that show a specific abstract structure. However, naming is hard and can also lead to miscommunication. When re-using available terminology, the terms are easily recognised and remembered, but they carry the weight of history. Even when detailed definitions are given (as I have tried to do throughout this book), unintended interpretations of previous usage inevitably seep through. In contrast, inventing new names introduces more precision, but the downside is often cumbersome terms that are difficult to remember. [3.3]

In naming diatheses in this book I have tried to strike a balance between precise naming and good readability. For the English names in the detailed discussions in the coming chapters, I have decided in favour of precision. Each phenomenon is newly named with often long descriptive and unique names. In contrast, for the German names in this chapter I try to reuse available terminology as much as possible. When necessary, I propose new names that attempt to evoke a functional description like *Reziprokativ* or *Erlebniskonversiv*. However, the semantic characterisation has not been the main focus of this book, so it might become necessary to rename diatheses in the future once more detailed investigations have been performed. In some cases I have not been able to find a suitable semantic characterisation. For those diatheses I have resorted to using formal characteristics in the name, always written as separate words, like *Reflexiv Erlebniskonversiv* (i.e. an *Erlebniskonversiv* that needs a reflexive pronoun) or *Resultativ Delokativ* (i.e. a *Delokativ* that needs a resultative preverbal). [3.4]

In this chapter, the diatheses are organised in sections according to the grammatical macro-role remapping patterns as introduced in Section 2.7. The different diatheses in each section are thus functionally highly similar, but they are structurally different. Inversely, there are various diatheses that are structurally highly similar, but are nonetheless repeated in separate sections under different names. This is necessary because superficially identical diatheses can have rather different structural repercussions depending on the verbs to which they are applied. This happens for example with different instantiations of the *sein+Partizip* or the *lassen+Infinitiv* constructions. [3.5]

### 3.2 Naming clause types

[3.6] Before diving into the daunting diversity of German diathesis, a short note on German names for different clause types is in order (summarised in Table 3.1). The distinction between sentence (German: SATZ) and clause (German: TEILSATZ) is customary made in the German grammatical literature when a precise description is needed. However, the term *Satz* is often used as a shorthand for both. When subdividing clauses, there is of course a basic distinction between main clause (German: HAUPTSATZ, more precise would be SELBSTÄNDIGER TEILSATZ) and subordinate clause (German: NEBENSATZ or alternatively UNTERGEORDNETER TEILSATZ).

[3.7] Yet, a central thesis of this book is that there is a further subdivision for both main and subordinate clauses. First, a “basic clause” is a clause with a single finite verb in the *Präsens* or *Präteritum*. For German I propose to use the term BASISSATZ, or, to be more precise, GRUNDLEGENDER TEILSATZ. Various kinds of derived clauses can be constructed from a basic clause. For German I propose to call such a derived clause a SPEZIALSATZ, or, to be more precise, ABGELEITETER TEILSATZ.

[3.8] There are two kinds of derived clauses. First, an epithesis is a clause alternation without role-remapping. For German I propose to use either the neologism ÜBERSATZ or the Greek-inspired EPITHESE, or, to be more precise, ERWEITERTER TEILSATZ. Second, a diathesis is a clause alternation with role-remapping. For German I propose to use the neologism WECHSELSATZ or the Greek-inspired DIATHESE, or, to be more precise, UMGESTELLTER TEILSATZ.

Table 3.1: German terminology for clause types

English Term	German Term	Short German Term
Main clause	<i>Selbständiger Teilsatz</i>	<i>Hauptsatz</i>
Subordinate clause	<i>Untergeordneter Teilsatz</i>	<i>Nebensatz</i>
Basic clause	<i>Grundlegender Teilsatz</i>	<i>Basissatz</i>
Derived clause	<i>Abgeleiteter Teilsatz</i>	<i>Spezialsatz</i>
Epithesis	<i>Erweiterter Teilsatz</i>	<i>Übersatz (Epithese)</i>
Diathesis	<i>Umgestellter Teilsatz</i>	<i>Wechselsatz (Diathese)</i>

### 3.3 Insubjective diatheses [SBJ > Ø]

An INSUBJECTIVE is a diathesis that completely removes the role marked as nominative subject without introducing a new subject. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.2, specifically starting at paragraph 2.90 on page 46. [3.9]

#### 3.3.1 *Auslöserentfall*

The unmarked AUSLÖSERENTFALL (full discussion in Section 5.5.1 and subsequent sections) is typically found with dispersion verbs like *stinken* ‘to stink’, *klingeln* ‘to ring’ or *krachen* ‘to crunch’ (1a). These verbs allow for a construction without explicit nominative subject when describing a general situation with unknown cause. An obligatory valency-simulating pronoun *es* is used as a replacement of the nominative subject (1b). [3.10]

- (1) a. Der Müll stinkt.  
b. Hier stinkt es aber.

#### 3.3.2 *Aktionsbewertung*

The AKTIONSBEWERTUNG (full discussion in Section 9.5.1) similarly replaces the nominative subject by a valency-simulating *es*. Additionally, this diathesis obligatorily needs a reflexive pronoun and an adverbial phrase describing an evaluation, like *gut* ‘well’ or *angenehm* ‘pleasantly’. The *Aktionsbewertung* is typically used with agentive intransitive verbs like *leben* ‘to live’ or *tanzen* ‘to dance’ and describes a habitual situation. This diathesis is closely related to the BEWERTUNGSANTIKAUSATIV for transitive verbs (see Section 3.7.4). [3.11]

- (2) a. Wir leben in diesem Haus.  
b. Hier lebt es sich gut.

#### 3.3.3 *Zustandsbewertung (sein+Infinitiv)*

The ZUSTANDBEWERTUNG (full discussion in Section 11.5.3) is a somewhat formulaic construction dropping the nominative subject of an intransitive verb. This construction is constructed with *sein* and an infinitive. Additionally an adverbial phrase describing an evaluation is obligatory, like *gut* ‘well’ or *schlecht* ‘badly’. A valency-simulating pronoun *es* instead of the dropped nominative is mostly not present. This construction expresses an evaluation and it typically used with a location, like with *sitzen* ‘to sit’ (19). [3.12]



- (3) a. Ich sitze zwischen den Stühlen.  
b. Zwischen den Stühlen ist schlecht sitzen.

### 3.3.4 *Möglichkeitsbewertung (lassen+Infinitiv)*

[3.13]

The MÖGLICHKEITSBEWERTUNG (full discussion in Section 11.5.1) consists of the light verb *lassen* with the infinitive of an intransitive verb. This construction obligatory includes a reflexive pronoun and an evaluating adverbial expression like *gut* ‘fine’. A valency-simulating pronoun *es* appears to be optional (4). This construction gives an evaluation about a possible situation. It is closely related to the PERMISSIVPASSIV for transitive verbs (see Section 3.8.6).

- (4) a. Ich arbeite zuhause.  
b. Zuhause lässt (es) sich gut arbeiten.

### 3.3.5 *Unpersönliches Vorgangspassiv (werden+Partizip)*

[3.14]

The UNPERSÖNLICHER VORGANGSPASSIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.1) is a construction consisting of the light verb *werden* with a participle of an intransitive verb. Only AGENTIVE (“unergative”) intransitive verbs like *tanzen* ‘to dance’ (5) or *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ allow for this construction without any nominative subject (not even a valency-simulating *es* is needed). The name “passive” is rather unfitting for this diathesis, but it is retained here because of widespread usage. This construction is closely related to the VORGANGSPASSIV for transitive verbs (see Section 3.8.1).

- (5) a. Die Jungs tanzen.  
b. Jetzt wird getanzt!

### 3.3.6 *Unpersönliches Modalpassiv (sein+zu-Infinitiv)*

[3.15]

The UNPERSÖNLICHER MODALPASSIV (full discussion in Section 12.5.1 and subsequent sections) consists of a light verb *sein* with *zu* and an infinitive. It is found with incidental intransitive verbs, but more typically with verbs with a dative argument (but no accusative) like *helfen* ‘to help’ or *trauen* ‘to trust’ (6). In this diathesis the nominative subject is dropped and cannot be retained in any other form. There is also no valency-simulating *es* present. The name “passive” is actually beside the point for this diathesis, but it is used here because this construction is closely related to the MODALPASSIV (see Section 3.8.4).

- (6) a. Ich traue ihm nicht.  
b. Ihm ist nicht zu trauen.

### 3.4 Desubjective diatheses [SBJ > ADJ]

A DESUBJECTIVE is a diathesis that removes the role marked as nominative subject, though this role can still optionally be expressed as a prepositional phrase. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.2, specifically starting at paragraph 2.94 on page 47. [3.16]

#### 3.4.1 *Möglichkeitsdesubjektiv (geben+zu-Infinitiv)*

The MÖGLICHKEITSDSUBJEKTIV (full discussion in Section 12.5.4) uses a subjectless light verb *geben* with *zu* and an infinitive (7). The removed nominative subject is replaced by a valency-simulating pronoun *es*, so the light verbs are always in the third person singular, resulting in a fixed expression *es gibt*. The removed subject can optionally be retained with a *für* prepositional phrase, though this is less frequent compared to the *gelten+zu-Infinitiv* diathesis (see Section 3.4.2). Any other argument is simply preserved, like the accusative *den Koffer* ‘the suitcase’ in the example below. The *Möglichkeitsdesubjektiv* semantically invokes an option that is available to the original subject, i.e. a modal-like ‘can’ meaning. The same construction *geben+zu-Infinitiv* is also used in a semantically and structurally quite different diathesis, namely the *Möglichkeitskausativ* (see Section 3.11.6). [3.17]

- (7) a. Wir kaufen den Koffer.  
b. In dem Laden gibt es den Koffer <sup>?</sup>(für uns) zu kaufen.

#### 3.4.2 *Notwendigkeitsdesubjektiv (gelten+zu-Infinitiv)*

The NOTWENDIGKEITSDSUBJEKTIV (full discussion in Section 12.5.5) uses a subjectless light verb *gelten* with *zu* and an infinitive (8). The removed nominative subject is replaced by a valency-simulating pronoun *es*, so the light verb *gelten* is always in the third person singular, resulting in fixed expressions *es gilt*. The removed subject can optionally be retained with a *für* prepositional phrase. Any other argument is simply preserved, like the accusative *den Koffer* ‘the suitcase’ in the example below. This construction semantically invokes some kind of (self-)assignment that should be fulfilled, i.e. a modal-like ‘must’ meaning. [3.18]

- (8) a. Wir verlieren den Koffer nicht.  
b. Jetzt gilt es (für uns) den Koffer nicht zu verlieren.

### 3.4.3 Aufforderungsdesubjektiv (*heißen+Infinitiv*)

[3.19]

The AUFFORDERUNGSDSUBJEKTIV (full discussion in Section 11.5.4) consists of the verb *heißen* with an infinitive. The meaning of this constructions is very close to the previous *Notwendigkeitsdesubjektiv* (see Section 3.4.2). The removed nominative subject is replaced by a valency-simulating pronoun *es*, so the light verb *heißen* is always in the third person singular, resulting in fixed expressions *es heißt*. The removed subject can optionally be retained with a *für* prepositional phrase. However, different from *gelten+zu-Infinitiv*, the construction *heißen+Infinitiv* can only be applied to intransitive verbs. Note that there also exists a completely separate causative usage of *heißen+Infinitiv*, but that *Aufforderungs-kausativ* appears to be rather old-fashioned (see Section 3.11.8).

- (9) a. Er redet weiter.  
b. Dann heißt es für ihn weiter reden.

## 3.5 Conciliative diatheses [ADJ › SBJ › Ø]

[3.20]

A CONCILIATIVE is a diathesis that completely removes the role marked as subject and promotes an instrument to be the new subject. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.3.1, specifically starting at paragraph 2.103 on page 51.

### 3.5.1 Instrumentsubjektivierung

[3.21]

The INSTRUMENTSUBJEKTIVIERUNG (full discussion in Section 6.5.4 and subsequent sections) promotes an instrument to nominative subject. For example, the instrument *Schlüssel* ‘key’ of the verb *öffnen* ‘to open’ is expressed with a *mit* prepositional phrase in (10a). Alternatively, it can be expressed with a nominative as in (10b). In that construction, the original agent cannot be expressed anymore. This diathesis looks very similar to the *Kreationssubjektivierung* (see Section 3.6.1), but there are crucial semantic and structural differences (discussed below).

- (10) a. Ich öffne die Tür mit dem Schlüssel.  
b. Der Schlüssel öffnet die Tür.

### 3.6 Fabricative diatheses [PBJ > SBJ > Ø]

A FABRICATIVE is a diathesis that completely removes the role marked as subject and promotes an fabricated entity to be the new subject. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.3.1, specifically starting at paragraph 2.102 on page 50. [3.22]

#### 3.6.1 *Kreationssubjektivierung*

The KREATIONSUBJEKTIVIERUNG (full discussion in Section 6.5.7) superficially looks very similar to the previous *Instrumentssubjektivierung*. In both diatheses a *mit* prepositional phrase is promoted to nominative subject. However, with a verb like *überraschen* ‘to surprise’ (11) the noun in the prepositional phrase, *Aufgabe* ‘task’, does not represent an instrument, but a fabrication by the subject of the sentence, *Lehrer* ‘teacher’. This semantic difference is paralleled by a structural difference, namely that the *mit* prepositional phrase is a governed preposition (11c). Note that the verbs that allow for a *Kreationssubjektivierung* show a substantial overlap with the verbs that allow for the *Reflexiv Erlebniskonversiv* (see Section 3.9.1), though the two groups are not identical. [3.23]

- (11) a. Der Lehrer überrascht mich mit der Aufgabe.  
b. Die Aufgabe überrascht mich.  
c. Der Lehrer überrascht mich damit, dass er die Aufgabe schon korrigiert hat.

#### 3.6.2 *Auslöserssubjektivierung (sein+zum-Infinitiv)*

The AUSLÖSERSUBJEKTIVIERUNG (full discussion in Section 13.5.1) is constructed with the light verb *sein* with a *zum-Infinitiv*. This diathesis can be applied to verbs of emotion with a governed preposition describing the trigger of the emotion. For example, *heulen* ‘to whine’ (12a) uses the governed preposition *über* to describe the trigger, here *Schaden* ‘damage’ (12b). The result of the diathesis is that the trigger of the emotion is promoted to nominative subject (12c). The original subject, i.e. the perceiver of the emotion, cannot be expressed anymore. [3.24]

- (12) a. Ich heule über den Schaden.  
b. Ich heule darüber, dass der Schaden so groß ist.  
c. Der Schaden ist zum Heulen.

### 3.7 Anticausative diatheses [OBJ › SBJ › Ø]

[3.25] An ANTICAUSATIVE is a diathesis that completely removes the role marked as subject and promotes an object to be the new subject. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.3.1, specifically starting at paragraph 2.99 on page 49.

#### 3.7.1 *Antikausativ*

[3.26] The unmarked ANTIKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 5.5.5 and subsequent sections) is attested with verbs like *öffnen* ‘to open’ or *kochen* ‘to cook’. These verbs occur both as transitive (13a) and intransitive (13b) without any further grammatical marking. Crucially, the object of the transitive is the subject of the intransitive. Because this diathesis is unmarked, there is no formal indication of a direction. So, this diathesis could just as well be interpreted as a causative. However, there is a formal difference between verbs that allow for both a *haben* and *sein* in the intransitive (13c,d) and those that only allow for a *sein* in the intransitive. There seems to be an interesting semantic correlate to this formal difference in that the verbs that allow for both *haben* and *sein* seem primarily transitive. Consequentially this group is called ANTIKAUSATIV (this section), while the second group with only *sein* is called KAUSATIV (see Section 3.11.1).

- (13) a. Der Mitarbeiter öffnet den Laden.  
 b. Der Laden öffnet gleich.  
 c. Der Laden hat geöffnet.  
 d. Der Laden ist geöffnet.

#### 3.7.2 *Ortsantikausativ*

[3.27] The unmarked ORTSANTIKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 6.5.10) is similar to the previous unmarked ANTIKAUSATIV. Verbs like *kleben* ‘to glue, to stick’ or *klappen* ‘to fold’ occur both as transitive and intransitive (14a,b) with the object of the transitive being the subject of the intransitive. Likewise, the intransitive is possible with both *haben* and *sein* (14c,d). The only difference is the obligatory presence of a location. Note that there is also a parallel ORTSKAUSATIV (see Section 3.11.2).

- (14) a. Ich habe den Zettel an die Wand geklebt.  
 b. Der Zettel klebt an der Wand.  
 c. Der Zettel hat an der Wand geklebt.  
 d. Der Zettel ist an die Wand geklebt.

### 3.7.3 *Reflexiv Antikausativ*

The REFLEXIV ANTIKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 7.5.2 and subsequent sections) is attested with verbs like *entscheiden* ‘to decide’ or *beschränken* ‘to limit’. Again, these verbs occur both as transitive and intransitive with the transitive object being the subject of the intransitive (15a,b). However, with these verbs the intransitive needs an obligatory reflexive pronoun (15b). The intransitive with reflexive pronoun typically takes *haben* in the perfect (15c). The intransitive perfect with *sein* (15d) can now clearly be identified as a ZUSTANDSPASSIV of the transitive (see Section 3.8.2).

[3.28]

- (15) a. Der Richter entscheidet den Fall.  
b. Der Fall entscheidet sich.  
c. Der Fall hat sich entschieden.  
d. Der Fall ist entschieden.

### 3.7.4 *Bewertungsantikausativ*

The BEWERTUNGSANTIKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 9.5.2 and subsequent sections) is possible with many straightforward transitive verbs, like with *verkaufen* ‘to sell’ or *lesen* ‘to read’ (16a). The anticausative intransitive obligatorily needs a reflexive pronoun, and additionally an obligatory manner adverbial is needed (16b). Just like the previous anticausatives, the intransitive occurs both with *haben* and *sein* in the perfect. However, *haben* is clearly used with the reflexive anticausative construction with obligatory adverbial (16c), while *sein* is used with the ZUSTANDSPASSIV (see Section 3.8.2) of the original transitive, without reflexive pronoun or obligatory adverbial evaluation (16d).

[3.29]

- (16) a. Ich verkaufe das Buch.  
b. Das Buch verkauft sich gut.  
c. Das Buch hat sich gut verkauft.  
d. Das Buch ist verkauft.

### 3.7.5 *Inferenzantikausativ (scheinen/erscheinen+Partizip)*

The INFERENZANTIKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.10) is constructed with one of the light verbs *scheinen* or *erscheinen* with a participle of a transitive verb (17). This construction expresses an evidential inference by the speaker that something is the case. The retention of the original agent as a prepositional

[3.30]

phrase seems to be mostly not possible (46b), so this diathesis is classified as an anticausative here. With intransitive verbs this construction does not show any diathesis and is consequently called PERFEKTINFERENZ (see Section 4.6.2).

- (17) a. Der Pförtner schließt die Tür.  
b. Die Tür scheint \*(von dem Pförtner) geschlossen.

### 3.7.6 *Sinnesantikausativ (aussehen/wirken+Partizip)*

[3.31] The SINNESANTIKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.11) uses the light verbs *aussehen* or *wirken* together with a participle of a transitive verb to form an anticausative diathesis (18). This construction expresses that the speaker has sensory evidence about the state of affairs. The retention of the original subject is very rare, though it might be possible with verbs describing a mental state, like *entspannen* ‘to relax’ (18b). With intransitive verbs this construction does not show any diathesis and is consequently called SINNESEVIDENZ (see Section 4.6.3).

- (18) a. Die Renovierung verändert den Bahnhof.  
Der Bahnhof sieht \*(von der Renovierung) verändert aus.  
b. Die Stille entspannt ihn.  
Er wirkt ?(von der Stille) entspannt.

### 3.7.7 *Darstellungsantikausativ (geben/zeigen+Partizip)*

[3.32] The DARSTELLUNGSANTIKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.12) consists of the light verb *geben* with a participle and an obligatory reflexive pronoun. It expresses a conscious performance to appear in a certain way by the erstwhile accusative. The original nominative cannot be retained. The light verb *zeigen* can be used alternatively to *geben*. Any difference between these two light verbs needs more investigation.

- (19) a. Die Stille entspannt ihn.  
b. Er gibt sich \*(durch die Stille) entspannt.

### 3.7.8 *Erwartungsantikausativ (stehen+zu-Infinitiv)*

[3.33] The ERWARTUNGSANTIKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 12.5.6) uses a light verb *stehen* with *zu* and an infinitive. The original accusative object is promoted to subject and the erstwhile nominative subject cannot be retained, so this clearly is an anticausative diathesis. However, examples with an explicitly accusative

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noun phrase as in (20a) are actually rare. Typically, this diathesis is found with cognitive predicates expressing an expectation, like *befürchten* ‘to fear’, with a *dass* complement clause (20b). Functionally, this complement clause has the same status as an accusative object. Note that complement clauses typically come towards the end of the sentence in German, and then the first position of the sentence often has to be filled with a position-simulating pronoun *es* (which is removed when the first position is filled otherwise).

- (20) a. Ich befürchte einen weiteren Beschäftigungsabbau.  
Ein weiterer Beschäftigungsabbau steht zu befürchten.  
b. Ich befürchte, dass er zu spät kommen wird.  
Es steht zu befürchten, dass er zu spät kommen wird.

#### 3.7.9 Unmöglichkeitentantikausativ (*gehen+zu-Infinitiv*)

The UNMÖGLICHKEITSANTIKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 12.5.7) uses a light verb *gehen* with *zu* and an infinitive. This anticausative diathesis is typical for an informal register, but written examples can be found going back to the 19th century. The construction is typically used with an additional negation (21b), though in contemporary online writing it is also attested without negation (21c). Because of the negation, the typical usage of the *Unmöglichkeitentantikausativ* is to express the impossibility to change something.

[3.34]

- (21) a. Ich lösche die Datei.  
b. Die Datei geht nicht zu löschen.  
c. Die Datei geht zu löschen.

## 3.8 Passive diatheses [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ]

A PASSIVE is a diathesis that removes the role marked as subject and promotes an object to be the new subject. The erstwhile subject can optionally be expressed as a prepositional phrase. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.3.1, specifically starting at paragraph 2.100 on page 49.

[3.35]

#### 3.8.1 Vorgangspassiv (*werden+Partizip*)

The VORGANGSPASSIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.15) is the infamous diathesis consisting of a light verb *werden* with a participle. Passives are very similar to anticausatives in that the transitive object is turned into the intransitive subject

[3.36]



(22). The special characteristic of a passive is that the transitive subject can be optionally retained, typically as a prepositional *von* or *durch* phrase. However, note that this prepositional phrase is normally not used. The same *werden+Partizip* construction leads to a different diathesis with intransitive verbs, namely the *unpersönlicher Passiv* (see Section 3.3.5).

- (22) a. Ich verkaufe den Schrank.  
b. Der Schrank wird verkauft (von mir).

### 3.8.2 Zustandspassiv (*sein+Partizip*)

[3.37]

The ZUSTANDSPASSIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.16) consists of a light verb *sein* with a participle (23). Although this diathesis is traditionally called “passive” in German grammar, the status of the retained agent is problematic and appears to be strongly dependent on the verb (23b,c). It might thus be better to consider this diathesis to be an anticausative. However, because of the long tradition I hold on to the term *Zustandspassiv* and the analysis of it being a passive. The closely related *sein+Partizip* ERLEBNISKONVERSIV (see Section 3.9.2) retains the subject with a governed preposition. Also the *sein+Partizip* PERFEKT as attested with some intransitive verbs is arguably a similar construction, though applied to different verbs (see Section 4.3.1).

- (23) a. Ich verkaufe den Schrank.  
b. Der Schrank ist <sup>?</sup>(von mir) verkauft.  
c. Der Schrank ist <sup>!</sup>(vom Schreiner) gebaut.

### 3.8.3 Fortsetzungspassiv (*bleiben+Partizip*)

[3.38]

The FORTSETZUNGSPASSIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.17) is closely related to the *sein-Zustandspassiv* (see Section 3.8.2), but now the light verb *bleiben* is used with a participle (61). This construction expresses that a reached state is maintained. Like with *sein*, the retention of the original agent with *bleiben* is possible, but often difficult (24b,c). However, not all verbs can be equally used with *sein* and *bleiben*. For example, verbs like *drucken* ‘to print’ or *schreiben* ‘to write’ are fine with the *sein-Zustandspassiv* but not with the *bleiben-Fortsetzungspassiv*. This construction is only attested with transitive verbs. The same *bleiben+Partizip* construction can be used with intransitive verbs, but then it does not induce a diathesis and is called PERFEKTKONTINUATIV (see Section 4.3.9).

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- (24) a. Der Pförtner schließt die Tür.  
b. Die Tür bleibt <sup>?</sup>(durch den Pförtner) geschlossen.  
c. Die Tür bleibt <sup>!</sup>(durch einen Vorhang) verborgen.

#### 3.8.4 *Modalpassiv (sein+zu-Infinitiv)*

The MODALPASSIV (full discussion in Section 12.5.8) is constructed using the light verb *sein* with *zu* and an infinitive. When applied to transitive verbs like *führen* ‘to lead’ (25a) or *lösen* ‘to solve’ (25b) this diathesis promotes the accusative to nominative subject. The erstwhile nominative subject can be retained as a prepositional phrase. This diathesis has two different interpretations. It can indicate either an deontic modality (‘must’) as in (25a) or an ability (‘can’) as in (25b). Note that the subject retention with the preposition *für* is only possible in the ability-interpretation. The closely related *unpersönlicher Modalpassiv* is used with intransitives and only allows for the deontic interpretation (see Section 3.3.6).

[3.39]

- (25) a. Der Besitzer führt den Hund an der Leine.  
Hunde sind an der Leine zu führen (von ihren Besitzern).  
b. Die Schüler lösen die Aufgabe.  
Die Aufgabe ist (für die Schüler) leicht zu lösen.

#### 3.8.5 *Normpassiv (gehören+Partizip)*

The NORMPASSIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.18) consists of the light verb *gehören* with a participle. It is only attested with verbs with accusative objects, like *bestrafen* ‘to punish’ (26). The diathesis expresses that the main verb ought to be applied to the object. The original subject can optionally be retained as a prepositional phrase.

[3.40]

- (26) a. Der Schiedsrichter bestraft den Spieler.  
b. Der Spieler gehört bestraft (durch den Schiedsrichter)

#### 3.8.6 *Permissivpassiv (lassen+Infinitiv)*

The PERMISSIVPASSIV (full discussion in Section 11.5.5) consists of the light verb *lassen* with infinitive and an obligatory reflexive pronoun (27). The agent can be retained with an optional *von* prepositional phrase, so this diathesis is a passive. This diathesis expresses that something is permitted (27a) or that something is possible (27b). A similar construction with *lassen+sich+Infinitiv* can be applied to

[3.41]

intransitive verbs, which leads to a different diathesis, namely the *Möglichkeitsbewertung* (see Section 3.3.4). Also the *Permissivkonversiv* (see Section 3.9.3) and the *Permissivinversiv* (see Section 3.10.4) use the same construction with *lassen*, but they also show different role-remappings.

- (27) a. Die Visagistin schminkt ihn.  
Er lässt sich (von der Visagistin) schminken.  
b. Der Pförtner schließt die Tür.  
Die Tür lässt sich (von dem Pförtner) schließen.

### 3.8.7 *Rezipientenpassiv (bekommen/kriegen/erhalten+Partizip)*

[3.42]

The REZIPIENTENPASSIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.21) has become a mainstay in the German grammatical literature. It consists of the light verb *bekommen* with a participle (alternatively, the light verbs *kriegen* or *erhalten* can be used). With this diathesis, a dative recipient is turned into the nominative subject. Again, the erstwhile nominative can be retained as a prepositional phrase, though it mostly is not used (as with all passives). Note that the same construction can also be used in a different “achievement” interpretation without diathesis, called *Effektiv* here (see Section 4.5.6).

- (28) a. Der Friseur schneidet mir die Haare.  
b. Ich bekomme die Haare geschnitten (vom Friseur).

### 3.8.8 *Pertinenzpassiv (haben+Partizip)*

[3.43]

The PERTINENZPASSIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.22) is a special construction because it looks identical to the *Perfekt* (see Section 4.3.1), often even being ambiguous among the two interpretations. However, the *Pertinenzpassiv* is functionally much closer to the *Rezipientenpassiv*. The new nominative subject *der Minister* ‘the minister’ (29b) is the (dative) experiencer/beneficiary of the cutting (29a). The original agent of the cutting *Friseur* ‘barber’ can only be retained with difficulty, so this diathesis looks closer to an anticausative. However, there is a well-known effect that this *Pertinenzpassiv* becomes much more common when stacked with a modal auxiliary like *wollen* ‘to want’ (29c). In such a stack, the original agent can clearly be retained.

[3.44]

The designation *pertinenz* refers to the fact that the new subject is necessarily the possessor of the accusative object *Haare* ‘hair’. Such inherent possessors turn up in various diatheses, and all instances will be designated with the qualifier

### 3 Summary of major diatheses

*pertinenz*. The most famous one is the PERTINENZDATIV (see Section 3.13.4), but there are various others, like the PERTINENZINVERSIV (see Section 3.10.2) and the ORTSPERTINENZINVERSIV (see Section 3.10.3).

- (29) a. Der Friseur schneidet dem Minister die Haare.  
b. Der Minister hat die Haare geschnitten <sup>?</sup>(durch den Friseur).  
c. Der Minister will die Haare vom Friseur geschnitten haben.

## 3.9 Conversive diatheses [OBJ > SBJ > PBJ]

A CONVERSIVE is a diathesis that removes the role marked as subject and promotes an object to be the new subject. The erstwhile subject can optionally be expressed as a governed prepositional phrase. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.3.1, specifically starting at paragraph 2.101 on page 50.

[3.45]

### 3.9.1 Reflexiv Erlebniskonversiv

The REFLEXIV ERLEBNISKONVERSIV (full discussion in Section 7.5.7) is a diathesis in which a verb, like *empören* ‘to appall’ (30a), can be used both with and without a reflexive pronoun. The effect of adding the reflexive pronoun is a remapping of the accusative to nominative and demoting the erstwhile nominative to a prepositional phrase (30b). The prepositional phrase is a governed preposition (30c). The verbs that allow this diathesis are typically verbs that express an experience. This diathesis is functionally similar to the *sein-Erlebniskonversiv* (see Section 3.9.2) and the *lassen-Permissivkonversiv* (see Section 3.9.3). There are even many verbs that allow for all three diatheses, like *empören* (30d,e). However, not all verbs allow for both diatheses, like *verärgern* (31d,e).

[3.46]

- (30) a. Der Preis empört den Kunden.  
b. Der Kunde empört sich über den hohen Preis.  
c. Der Kunde empört sich darüber, dass der Preis schon wieder gestiegen ist.  
d. Der Kunde ist empört über den hohen Preis.  
e. Der Kunde lässt sich nicht empören vom hohen Preis.

### 3.9.2 *Erlebniskonversiv (sein+Partizip)*

[3.47]

The ERLEBNISKONVERSIV (full discussion in Section 10.5.23) is constructed with the light verb *sein* and a participle. The form of this diathesis is identical to the *Zustandspassiv* (see Section 3.8.2), but there is a crucial difference in the remapping of the original nominative. Verbs that take a *Zustandspassiv*, like *öffnen* ‘to open’ only allow for the retention of the nominative with a *von* prepositional phrase, and only in special circumstances. In contrast, the verbs that take the *Erlebniskonversiv* can regularly retain the agent with a governed preposition. For example, with the verb *verärgern* ‘to displease’ the original nominative can be expressed with an *über* prepositional phrase (31b), which is a governed preposition (31c). Verbs that take the *Erlebniskonversiv* are typically verbs that express an experience, similar to the next other two conversive diatheses, the *Reflexiv Erlebniskonversiv* (31d), see Section 3.9.1 and the *Permissivkonversiv* (40e), see Section 3.9.3.

- (31) a. Die schlechte Nachricht verärgert mich.  
 b. Ich bin verärgert über die schlechte Nachricht.  
 c. Ich bin verärgert darüber, dass die schlechte Nachricht verbreitet wurde.  
 d. \* Ich verärgere mich über die schlechte Nachricht.  
 e. Ich lasse mich nicht durch die schlechte Nachricht verärgern.

### 3.9.3 *Permissivkonversiv (lassen+Infinitiv)*

[3.48]

The PERMISSIVKONVERSIV (full discussion in Section 11.5.7) uses a light verb *lassen* with an infinitive and an obligatory reflexive pronoun. In this diathesis, the original dative is promoted to nominative subject, while the original nominative is demoted to a prepositional phrase, like with the verb *begeistern* ‘to be enthusiastic’ (32a,b). The preposition is a governed preposition (32c). The verbs that allow for this diathesis are highly similar, but not identical, to the verbs that take the *Erlebniskonversiv* (32d), see Section 3.9.2, and the *Reflexiv Erlebniskonversiv* (32e), see Section 3.9.1. However, note the different prepositions in these constructions, as illustrated below.

### 3 Summary of major diatheses

- (32)
- a. Der neue Aufsatz begeistert die Forscherin.
  - b. Die Forscherin lässt sich von dem Aufsatz begeistern.
  - c. Die Forscherin lässt sich davon begeistern, dass der Aufsatz gut geschrieben ist.
  - d. Die Forscherin begeistert sich für den Aufsatz.
  - e. Die Forscherin ist begeistert über den Aufsatz.

#### 3.10 Inversive diatheses [OBJ > SBJ > OBJ]

An INVERSIVE is a diathesis that switches subject and object. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.3.3, specifically starting at paragraph 2.114 on page 54.

[3.49]

##### 3.10.1 *Restinversiv (bleiben+zu-Infinitiv)*

The RESTINVERSIV (full discussion in Section 12.9.1) uses the light verb *bleiben* with *zu* and an infinitive. This diathesis reverses the expression of the subject and object roles, in that the accusative is promoted to a nominative, while the original nominative is demoted to an (optional) dative. Because the demotion is “larger” than the promotion this diathesis can be interpreted as a demoted inersive. Semantically, this diatheses expresses that (some part of) the patient is still left over to be acted on.

[3.50]

- (33)
- a. Ich räume den letzten Schrank ein.
  - b. Dieser letzte Schrank bleibt (mir) noch einzuräumen.

##### 3.10.2 *Pertinenzinversiv (haben+am-Infinitiv)*

The PERTINENZINVERSIV (full discussion in Section 13.9.1) is constructed with the light verb *haben* with an *am-Infinitiv*. This diathesis also reverses the expression of the subject and object roles, though in the different direction from the previous *Restinversiv* (see Section 3.10.1). In this diathesis the dative is promoted to nominative, while the nominative is demoted to accusative (34). Because the promotion is “larger” than the demotion this can be called a promoted inersive. Further, the dative *dem Mieter* ‘tenant’ is necessarily the possessor (*pertinenz*) of the nominative *die Wohnung* ‘apartment’, so it is a *Pertinenzdativ* (see Section 3.13.4). Both in form and meaning this diathesis is strongly connected to the ensuing ORTSPERTINENZINVERSIV (see Section 3.10.3), in which the dative is the possessor of the obligatory location.

[3.51]

- (34) a. Dem Mieter brennt die Wohnung.  
 b. Der Mieter hat die Wohnung am Brennen.

### 3.10.3 *Ortspertinenzinversiv (haben+Infinitiv)*

[3.52]

The ORTSPERTINENZINVERSIV (full discussion in Section 11.9.2) is closely related to the previous *Pertinenzinversiv* (see Section 3.10.2). Again, a dative is promoted to nominative, while the nominative is demoted to accusative. Also in both diatheses, the participant expressed by the dative is necessarily the possessor (*pertinenz*) of another participant. The difference is that with the current *Ortspertinenzinversiv* this other participant is an obligatory location, e.g. *an der Nase* ‘on the nose’ in (35). The dative in this diathesis is thus an *Ortspertinenzdativ* (see Section 3.13.5). An further curious difference to the otherwise highly similar *Pertinenzinversiv* in (34b) is that the infinitive *hängen* does not allow for the preposition *am* in this construction (35c).

- (35) a. Ein Tropfen hängt ihm an der Nase.  
 b. Er hat einen Tropfen an der Nase hängen.  
 c. \* Er hat einen Tropfen an der Nase am Hängen.

### 3.10.4 *Permissivinversiv (lassen+Infinitiv)*

[3.53]

The PERMISSIVINVERSIV (full discussion in Section 11.9.1) is yet another diathesis using the construction *lassen* with obligatory reflexive and infinitive, this time with verbs that take a dative, but no accusative, like *schmecken* ‘to taste’ (36). In this diatheses a dative is promoted to nominative with an obligatory dative reflexive pronoun. The original nominative is demoted to accusative. Because the promotion is “larger” than the demotion this can considered to be a promoted inersive. Among the various *lassen* diatheses, this one is particularly close to the *Permissivpassiv* (see Section 3.8.6) and the *Permissivkonversiv* (see Section 3.9.3).

- (36) a. Der Kuchen schmeckt ihr.  
 b. Sie lässt sich den Kuchen schmecken.

## 3.11 Novative diatheses [ $\emptyset$ > SBJ > OBJ]

[3.54]

A NOVATIVE is a diathesis that introduces a new subject, while demoting the erstwhile subject to an object. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.3.2, specifically starting at paragraph 2.104 on page 51.

#### 3.11.1 *Kausativ*

The unmarked KAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 5.6.2) is found with verbs like *schmelzen* ‘to melt’, *trocknen* ‘to dry’ or *zerbrechen* ‘break’ (37a,b). These verbs both occur as intransitive and as transitive with the intransitive subject being the object of the transitive. The new nominative subject of the transitive is a causer. Because this alternation is unmarked, it is not immediately clear whether such a diathesis is an examples of a *Kausativ* or an *Antikausativ*. There are various indications pointing in the direction of causation (see full discussion). As a formal characteristic for the identification of this category I propose to look at the auxiliaries of the intransitive perfect: anticausatives allow for both *haben* and *sein* (see Section 3.7.1), while causatives only allow for *sein* (37c,d). Various umlaut-causatives like *fallen/fällen* and *biegen/beugen* also belong in this category (full discussion in Section 5.6.3).

[3.55]

- (37) a. Der Krug zerbricht.  
b. Der Junge zerbricht den Krug.  
c. Der Krug ist zerbrochen.  
d. \*Der Krug hat zerbrochen.

#### 3.11.2 *Ortskausativ*

The ORTSKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 6.6.1) is similar to the previous *Kausativ* (see Section 3.11.1), only that verbs like *stürzen* ‘to fall/topple’ (38a,b) obligatory need a location (especially in the caused transitive). Just like the previous *Kausativ*, the current *Ortskausativ* only allows for an intransitive perfect with *sein* (38c,d). There is a parallel *Ortsantikausativ* in which the intransitive allows for both a *sein* and a *haben* perfect (see Section 3.7.2). Various umlaut-causatives like *liegen/legen* ‘to lie/to lay’ and *sitzen/setzen* ‘to sit/to put’ also belong in this category (full discussion in Section 6.6.2).

[3.56]

- (38) a. Der Elefant stürzt ins Wasser.  
b. Ich stürze den Elefanten ins Wasser.  
c. Der Elefant ist ins Wasser gestürzt.  
d. \*Der Elefant hat ins Wasser gestürzt.



### 3.11.3 Präverb Kausativ

[3.57] The PRÄVERB KAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 8.6.1 and subsequent sections) overtly marks the causative by a preverb (39), i.e. either by a verb prefix (e.g. *enden/beenden* ‘to end’) or by a verb particle (e.g. *bruzeln/anbruzeln* ‘to sizzle/to fry’). Preverbs are also frequently used with adjectival stems forming a causative transitive verb, e.g. *matt/ermatten* ‘lacklustre/to tire’ or *fähig/befähigen* ‘capable/to enable’ (full discussion in Section 8.6.3).

- (39) a. Der Wettkampf endet.  
b. Ich beende den Wettkampf.

### 3.11.4 Direktivkausativ (*schicken+Infinitiv*)

[3.58] The DIREKTIVKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 11.6.3) is a novative in which the new subject gives orders rather than directly causing something to happen. This diathesis is constructed with the light verb *schicken* with an infinitive. The meaning of the construction is rather close to the full lexical meaning of *schicken* ‘to send’. However, this construction is coherent, and thus monoclausal (40c).

- (40) a. Er schläft  
b. Ich schicke ihn schlafen.  
c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich ihn schlafen schicke.

### 3.11.5 Permissivkausativ (*lassen+Infinitiv*)

[3.59] The PERMISSIVKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 11.6.2) consists of the light verb *lassen* with an infinitive. This diathesis is widely acknowledged in German grammar. It is often simply called a *Kausativ* but this construction has actually at least two different interpretations, namely a causative (41c) and a permissive (41d). It is widely used in German and there are only few verbs that do not allow for this diathesis (e.g. *gefallen* ‘to like’ or *interessieren* ‘to interest’ cannot be used).

- (41) a. Ich wasche die Kleider.  
b. Sie lässt mich die Kleider waschen.  
c. (= Sie verursacht, dass ich die Kleider wasche.)  
d. (= Sie erlaubt, dass ich die Kleider wasche.)

### 3.11.6 *Möglichkeitskausativ (geben+zu-Infinitiv)*

The MÖGLICHKEITSKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 12.6.1) adds a new subject by using the light verb *geben* with a *zu-Infinitiv*. In this diathesis the erstwhile subject becomes a dative and not an accusative. In many examples the meaning of this diathesis is very close to the meaning of the lexical verb *geben* ‘to give’. For example with the verb *trinken* ‘to drink’ (42a) the construction allows both for a literal interpretation “he gives X to Y for drinking” and for a causative-permissive interpretation “he causes/offers Y to drink X”. The causative-permissive interpretation of *geben+zu-Infinitiv* is more clearly exemplified with verbs that take clausal complements, like *bedenken* ‘to consider’ (42b).

[3.60]

This construction is coherent, and thus monoclausal (42c), so, whatever the precise semantic interpretation, this alternation is structurally clearly a diathesis. Complicating things even more, the *geben+zu-Infinitiv* construction is also used for a semantically and structurally quite different diathesis, namely the *Möglichkeitsdesubjektiv* (see Section 3.4.1).

[3.61]

- (42) a. Das Kind trinkt Milch.  
Er gibt dem Kind Milch zu trinken.  
b. Ich bedenke, dass es schon spät ist.  
Er gibt mir zu bedenken, dass es schon spät ist.  
c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) er dem Kind Milch zu trinken gibt.  
(Es ist bekannt, dass) er mir zu bedenken gibt, dass es schon spät ist.

### 3.11.7 *Fortsetzungskausativ (halten+am-Infinitiv)*

The FORTSETZUNGSKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 13.6.1) uses the light verb *halten* with an *am-Infinitiv*. This diathesis adds a causer to an intransitive verb. It is typically used with the verb *laufen* ‘to run’ (43a), but it is also attested with other agentive intransitive verbs. However, the subject of the intransitive is typically an inanimate object, like *Laden* ‘shop’ in (43a). Additionally, verbs describing heat production like *brennen* ‘to burn’ (43b) are frequently attested with this diathesis. The *halten+am-Infinitiv* diathesis expresses that a process is kept on-going by the newly added causer. The light verb *halten* is also used in the related *Kausativkontinuativ* epithesis (see Section 4.3.11).

[3.62]

- (43) a. Der Laden läuft.  
Er hält den Laden am Laufen.  
b. Das Feuer brennt.  
Der Wind hält das Feuer am Brennen.

### 3.11.8 Aufforderungskausativ (*machen/heißen+Infinitiv*)

[3.63]

The AUFFORDERUNGSKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 11.6.4) is probably the most pure causative of all the various novative diatheses. It uses the light verb *machen* ‘to make’ and adds a causer (44a). It is not in widespread use and often sounds like an English calque (cf. ‘he makes me cry’), though it is probably an old Germanic construction. A highly similar construction uses the light verb *heißen* (44b), though this is old-fashioned (full discussion in Section 11.6.5).

- (44) a. Ich weine.  
Deine Späße machen mich weinen.  
b. Er kniete nieder.  
Der Henker hieß ihn niederknien.

### 3.11.9 Perzeptiv (*sehen/hören/fühlen/spüren+Infinitiv*)

[3.64]

The PERZEPTIV (full discussion in Section 11.6.6 and subsequent sections) is a novative that consists of one of the verbs of sensation *sehen/hören/fühlen/spüren* with an infinitive. The new nominative is an observer/experiencer of the main verb. The erstwhile nominative is turned into an accusative. This diathesis sometimes results in a double accusative construction, viz. when there already was an accusative present (45a,b). This diathesis can be used with all verbs that can be experienced as an observer. Note that these verbs of perception can also be used with an explicit *dass* complement clause (45c), but such constructions are not coherent, and thus there is no diatheses in these constructions.

- (45) a. Der Bäcker backt einen Kuchen.  
b. Ich sehe den Bäcker einen Kuchen backen.  
c. Ich sehe, dass der Bäcker einen Kuchen backt.

### 3.11.10 Opiniativ (*wissen/glauben/sehen/finden+Partizip*)

[3.65]

The OPINIATIV (full discussion in Section 10.6 and subsequent sections) is constructed with one of the light verbs *wissen/glauben/sehen/finden* with a participle. Applied to an patientive intransitive verb like *einschlafen* ‘to fall asleep’ it adds an opinionator who believes with more or less certainty (depending on the light verb that is used) whether the *einschlafen* has occurred or not. The original nominative is changed into an accusative.

- (46) a. Der Säugling schläft ein.  
b. Sie glaubt den Säugling eingeschlafen.  
(= Sie glaubt, dass der Säugling eingeschlafen ist.)

### 3.12 Novative-with-demotion diatheses [ $\emptyset$ > SBJ > ADJ]

A NOVATIVE WITH DEMOTION is a diathesis that introduces a new subject, while demoting the erstwhile subject to a prepositional phrase. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.3.2, specifically starting at paragraph 2.110 on page 53. [3.66]

#### 3.12.1 *Transitiv Opiniativ* (*wissen/glauben/sehen/finden+Partizip*)

The TRANSITIV OPINIATIV (full discussion in Section 10.6.5 and subsequent sections) is the same construction as the previous *Opiniativ* (see Section 3.11.10) but applied to transitive verbs. I have included this as a separate diathesis because with transitive verbs it shows a rather different role-remapping as with intransitive verbs. When used with a transitive verb like *aufheben* ‘to preserve’ (47a) the erstwhile nominative *Archiv* ‘archive’ is demoted to a prepositional adjunct or completely left out (47b). The accusative *Nachlass* ‘inheritance’ remains unchanged. [3.67]

- (47) a. Das Archiv hebt den Nachlass gut auf.  
b. Sie weiß den Nachlass (im Archiv) gut aufgehoben.  
(= Sie weiß, dass der Nachlass (im Archiv) gut aufgehoben ist.)

This *Transitiv Opiniativ* can of course easily be united with the previous *Opiniativ* into a single diathesis by noticing, for example, that both can be rephrased with a complement clause with *sein* and a participle, compare (46b) and (47b). However, when both *Opiniativ* diatheses are united, this implies that the *sein-Perfekt* in (46b), see Section 4.3.1, and the *Zustandspassiv* in (47b), see Section 3.8.2 [3.68] have to be united as well (there is a perfect parallelism here). Now, there is nothing speaking against both these unifications, but exactly the unification of *sein-Perfekt* and *Zustandspassiv* has been rather controversially discussed in the German grammatical literature (see Section 10.2.7 for a discussion). So either both are unified, or both are separated. Because I have separated the *Zustandspassiv* and the *sein-Perfekt* in this summary, I consequently also separate the two *Opiniativ* diatheses.

### 3.12.2 *Passivkausativ (lassen+Infinitiv)*

[3.69]

The PASSIVKAUSATIV (full discussion in Section 11.6.1) can be seen as a variant of the *Permissivkausativ* (see Section 3.11.5). Both use the *lassen+Infinitiv* construction to add a new causer to the sentence. Additionally, in a *Passivkausativ* (48b) the original nominative is demoted to a prepositional phrase (or it is left out completely). Different from the *Permissivkausativ*, the current *Passivkausativ* is only used to express causation. For a complete discussion of all different *lassen+Infinitiv* diatheses, see Section 11.2.5.

- (48) a. Die Wäscherei reinigt den Teppich.  
 b. Der neue Besitzer lässt den Teppich (von der Wäscherei) reinigen.

## 3.13 Applicative diatheses [ADJ > OBJ]

[3.70]

An APPLICATIVE is a diathesis in which a prepositional phrase is promoted to an object. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.4.1. Applicatives in German are typically marked by a preverb or an adverb, though possessor and beneficiary datives are also included under this heading.

### 3.13.1 *Präverb Applikativ*

[3.71]

The PRÄVERB APPLIKATIV (full discussion in Section 8.8.8 and subsequent sections) is a diathesis in which a prepositional phrase of an intransitive verb is turned into an accusative through the addition of a preverb. For example, the alternation from *steigen* to *besteigen* ‘to climb’ additionally induces a change from a preposition phrase with *auf* to an accusative (49a,b). There is a wide variety in preverbs (both *Verbpräfixe* and *Verbpartikel*) and a wide variety of prepositions that show such a diathesis. This diathesis is also attested with governed prepositions, for example with *an* as used with the verb *arbeiten* ‘to work’ (49c). The prepositional phrase turns into an accusative with *erarbeiten* ‘to work something out’ (full discussion in Section 8.8.9).

- (49) a. Ich steige auf den Berg.  
 b. Ich besteige den Berg.  
 c. Ich arbeite an einem Plan.  
     Ich arbeite daran, den Plan zu verbessern.  
 d. Ich erarbeite einen Plan.

### 3.13.2 Resultativ Applikativ

The RESULTATIV APPLIKATIV (full discussion in Section 9.8.1) is also an alternation that turns a prepositional phrase into an accusative, though in this instance the diathesis is induced by a resultative adjective, like *leer*- ‘empty’ or *gesund*- ‘healthy’. When used with an intransitive verb like *fischen* ‘to fish’ (50a) the prepositional phrase is turned into an accusative. The effect of this diathesis is that the new accusative *Teich* ‘pond’ is in the state described by the resultative preverbal *leer*- ‘empty’ as a result of the verbal action *fischen* ‘to fish’ (50b). This diathesis is also attested with governed prepositions, for example with the verb *beten für* ‘to pray for’ (50c,d).

[3.72]

- (50) a. Ich fische im Teich.  
b. Ich fische den Teich leer.  
(= Ich fische, und dadurch ist der Teich leer.)  
c. Ich bete für den Kranken.  
Ich bete dafür, dass der Kranke gesund wird.  
d. Ich bete den Kranken gesund.  
(= Ich bete, und dadurch ist der Kranke gesund.)

### 3.13.3 Präverb Dativ Applikativ

The PRÄVERB DATIV APPLIKATIV (full discussion in Section 8.8.13 and subsequent sections) is an alternation in which the prepositional phrase is turned into a dative (as opposed to an accusative as in the previous diatheses). Although the prepositions in this diathesis are often strongly lexicalised, like *stammen aus* ‘originate from’ (51a), they do never allow for the *daraus, dass...* reformulation that is considered definitional here for them to be governed prepositions (51c).

[3.73]

- (51) a. Ich stamme aus einem Adelsgeschlecht.  
b. Ich entstamme einem Adelsgeschlecht.  
c. \* Ich stamme daraus, dass ich dort geboren bin.

### 3.13.4 Pertinenzdativ

The PERTINENZDATIV (full discussion in Section 5.8.3 and subsequent sections) is a dative that is inherently the possessor of another lexical role. The term *Pertinenz* (from lat. *pertinere* ‘to belong to’) was proposed by Polenz (ref-polenz1969:

[3.74]

160ff.)<sup>1</sup> for this phenomenon and for the closely connected *Ortspertinenzdativ*, as discussed in the next section. I have extended the usage of this term to various other diatheses that involve a possessor of another role, see *Pertinenzpassiv* (Section 3.8.8), *Pertinenzinversiv* (Section 3.10.2) and *Pertinenzakkusativ* (Section 3.21.1). The *Pertinenzdativ* is attested both for the possessor of a nominative subject of intransitives (52a), see Section 5.8.3, and for the possessor of the accusative object of transitives (52b), see Section 5.8.4. As for any *Pertinenz*-relation, it is crucial that the dative is necessarily the possessor of another lexical role. The term “possessor raising” is also often found in the literature to describe this phenomenon.

- (52) a. Meine Hände zittern.  
Mir zittern die Hände.  
b. Ich schneide seine Haare.  
Ich schneide ihm die Haare.

### 3.13.5 *Ortspertinenzdativ*

[3.75]

The ORTSPERTINENZDATIV (full discussion in Section 6.8.11 and subsequent sections) is closely connected to the previous *Pertinenzdativ* (Section 3.13.4). The dative in (53) is likewise obligatorily a possessor of another lexical role, though in this diathesis this other role is an obligatory location. For example, the verb *hängen* ‘to hang’ (53a) necessarily needs a location where the hanging is taking place. The possessor of this location can be replaced by a dative. The obligatory location can also be introduced by another diathesis first, e.g. by a caused-movement diathesis (see Section 3.17.3). For example, the verb *wehen* ‘to blow (of wind)’ can be used with a caused movement, forcing the object (*die Blätter* ‘the leaves’) into an obligatory direction (*in mein Gesicht* ‘in my face’). The possessor of this location can subsequently be turned into a dative by an *Ortspertinenzdativ* diathesis (53b).

- (53) a. Das Hemd hing aus seiner Hose.  
Das Hemd hing ihm aus der Hose.  
b. Es weht.  
Der Wind weht die Blätter in mein Gesicht.  
Der Wind weht mir die Blätter ins Gesicht.

<sup>1</sup>In proposing the term *pertinenz* Polenz was inspired by work by Isačenko using the term in the context of inalienable possession.

### 3.13.6 *Benefaktivdativ*

[3.76]

The BENEFAKTIVDATIV (full discussion in Section 6.8.9) is a dative that alternates with a *für* prepositional phrase describing the beneficiary of an action. For example with the verb *kochen* ‘to cook’ the beneficiary of the cooking can be expressed with a *für* prepositional phrase (54a) or with a dative (54b). Not all beneficiary *für* phrases can be turned into a dative. The *Benefaktivdativ* is only attested with transitive verbs. With intransitives like *arbeiten* ‘to work’ a *für* beneficiary is possible (54c), but a beneficiary dative is not (54d).

- (54) a. Ich koche eine Suppe für dich.  
b. Ich koche dir eine Suppe.  
c. Ich arbeite für dich.  
d. \* Ich arbeite dir.

### 3.13.7 *Beurteilerdativ*

The BEURTEILERDATIV (full discussion in Section 6.8.10) is a dative that expresses an evaluator of an action. Such a dative can only be added together with an evaluation in the form of an adverbial phrase with *zu* ‘too much’ (55a) or *genug* ‘enough’ (55b) and a gradable adjective like *schnell* ‘quick’ or *warm* ‘warm’.

[3.77]

- (55) a. Paul fuhr zu schnell (für den Geschmack von seiner Mutter).  
Paul fuhr seiner Mutter zu schnell.  
b. Das Zimmer war warm genug (für seinen Geschmack).  
Das Zimmer war ihm warm genug.

## 3.14 Antipassive diatheses [OBJ > ADJ]

An ANTIPASSIVE is a diathesis in which an object is demoted to a prepositional phrase. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.4.1. Antipassives in German are typically unmarked or marked by a reflexive pronoun.

[3.78]

### 3.14.1 *Antipassiv*

The unmarked ANTIPASSIV (full discussion in Section 6.7.8 and subsequent sections) is a diathesis in which an accusative argument alternates with a prepositional phrase. This typically occurs without any overt marking other than the antipassive alternation itself. For example, the verb *schießen* ‘to shoot’ can be

[3.79]



used both with an accusative and with an *auf* prepositional phrase (56a). The semantic effect of this diathesis is that the object is less affected when marked as a prepositional phrase. In some instances, like with *glauben an* ‘to believe in’ (56b) the prepositional phrase is a governed preposition (see Section 6.7.12).

- (56) a. Ich schieße den Bären.  
       Ich schieße auf den Bären.  
       b. Ich glaube deine Aussage.  
       Ich glaube an deine Aussage.  
       Ich glaube daran, dass deine Aussage stimmt.

### 3.14.2 Reflexiv Antipassiv

[3.80]

The REFLEXIV ANTIPASSIV (full discussion in Section 7.7.4) is an antipassive in which additionally a reflexive pronoun is added. For example, the verb *beklagen* ‘to lament’ (57) has a lamented object-role *Lärm* ‘noise’ that is expressed either as an accusative (57a) or as a prepositional phrase with *über* (57b). The reflexive pronoun in (57b) is not a self-inflicting reflexive, i.e. the lamenting is not about oneself. These reflexive antipassives always have governed prepositional phrases (57c).

- (57) a. Ich beklage den Lärm.  
       b. Ich beklage mich über den Lärm.  
       c. Ich beklage mich darüber, dass es so laut ist

### 3.14.3 Präverb Reflexiv Antipassiv

[3.81]

The PRÄVERB REFLEXIV ANTIPASSIV (full discussion in Section 8.7.4) is an antipassive with a reflexive pronoun and a preverb. For example, the verb *kalkulieren* ‘to calculate’ (58a) allows for an antipassive diathesis in which an accusative argument is turned into an (optional) prepositional phrase when adding a prefix *ver-* to form *verkalkulieren* ‘to miscalculate’. Additionally, an obligatory accusative reflexive pronoun is part of this diathesis.

- (58) a. Ich kalkuliere die Miete.  
       b. Ich verkalkuliere mich bei der Miete.

### 3 Summary of major diatheses

#### 3.14.4 *Dativ Antipassiv*

[3.82]

The unmarked DATIV ANTIPASSIV (full discussion in Section 6.7.10 and subsequent sections) is a diathesis in which a dative argument alternates with a prepositional phrase. In a few instances this is attested with a dative without accusative, like with *entfliehen* ‘to escape’ (59a). However, this diathesis is more widespread with verbs like *berichten* ‘to report’ (59b) that allow for both an accusative and a dative argument.

- (59) a. Er entflieht dem Gefängnis.  
Er entflieht aus dem Gefängnis.  
b. Er berichtet dem Vorstand die Ergebnisse der Untersuchung.  
Er berichtet die Ergebnisse an den Vorstand.

#### 3.14.5 *Präverb Dativ Antipassiv*

The PRÄVERB DATIV ANTIPASSIV (full discussion in Section 8.7.6) is a diathesis in which a preverb induces the demotion of a dative argument. For example, *schenken* ‘to gift’ (60a) has a dative recipient, while *verschenken* ‘to give away’ (60b) has no dative anymore. The dative can be retained as a prepositional phrase, but it is typically omitted. Such antipassives marked by a preverb mainly occur with verbs that take both a dative and an accusative argument.

[3.83]

- (60) a. Ich schenke dem Kindergarten meine Bücher.  
b. Ich verschenke meine Bücher (an den Kindergarten).

#### 3.14.6 *Reziprokativ*

The REZIPROKATIV (full discussion in Section 7.7.3) is a special kind of antipassive in which an accusative is replaced by a *mit* prepositional phrase and additionally a reflexive pronoun is added, as shown for the verb *treffen* ‘to meet’ in (61). This reflexive pronoun does not have self-inflicting reference, i.e. the meeting is not with oneself. Semantically this diathesis is found with verbs that can be construed as either reciprocal or non-reciprocal. For example, the verb *treffen* ‘to meet’ can be used without reflexive pronoun (61a) meaning something like ‘to bump into someone’, while with a reflexive pronoun the meaning is clearly reciprocal ‘to meet’ (61b).

[3.84]

- (61) a. Ich treffe dich.  
b. Ich treffe mich mit dir.

### 3.15 Objective diatheses [Ø > OBJ]

An OBJECTIVE is a diathesis in which a new object is added. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.4.2, specifically starting at paragraph 2.137 on page 60. [3.85]

#### 3.15.1 *Ergebnisakkusativ*

[3.86]

The unmarked ERGEBNISAKKUSATIV (full discussion in Section 5.8.1) is highly similar to the OPTIONALER AKKUSATIV diathesis (Section 3.16.1), but in reverse. In both diatheses, the same verb can be used with and without an accusative argument (a phenomenon sometimes called “labile” or “ambitransitive”). The special characteristics of the verbs in this section, like *laufen* ‘to walk, to run’ (62), is that they are (a) basically intransitive and (b) the accusative represents the added result of the intransitive action. The difference between such an unmarked added accusative (*Ergebnisakkusativ*, this section) and an unmarked dropped accusative (*Optionaler Akkusativ*, Section 3.16.1) is arguably small, and it remains to be seen whether this separation can be backed up by further distinguishing grammatical characteristics.

- (62) a. Er läuft.  
b. Er läuft den Marathon.

#### 3.15.2 *Resultativ Akkusativ*

[3.87]

The RESULTATIV AKKUSATIV (full discussion in Section 9.8.2) is a diathesis in which the addition of a resultativ preverbal leads to an additional accusative argument. For example, the intransitive *bellen* ‘to bark’ (63a) becomes a transitive *wachbellen* ‘to wake by barking’ (63b) with the addition of the resultative adjective *wach-* ‘awake’. Crucially, the new accusative object (*Kinder* ‘children’) is not expressible without a resultative adjective (like *wach-*) or a preverb (like *an-*, see the next Section 3.15.3). Care has to be taken to distinguish this diathesis from the highly similar *Resultativ Applikativ* (Section 3.13.2).

- (63) a. Der Hund bellt.  
b. Der Hund bellt die Kinder wach.

#### 3.15.3 *Präverb Akkusativ*

The PRÄVERB AKKUSATIV (full discussion in Section 8.8.1 and subsequent sections) is a diathesis in which the addition of a preverb leads to an additional accusative [3.88]

### 3 Summary of major diatheses

argument. For example, the diathesis from *zaubern* ‘to perform magic’ to *verzaubern* ‘to enchant’ (64) adds a completely new role in the accusative.

- (64) a. Sie zaubert.  
b. Sie verzaubert mich.

#### 3.15.4 *Präverb Reflexiv Akkusativ*

The PRÄVERB REFLEXIV AKKUSATIV (full discussion in Section 8.8.5) is a special variant of an objective diathesis in that the addition of the preverb leads to a new accusative argument, but also includes an obligatory reflexive pronoun. The new accusative role is semantically the result of the action of the main verb, which is actually similar to the *Ergebnisakkusativ* (Section 3.15.1) and different from the *Präverb Akkusativ* (Section 3.15.3). For example, the diathesis from *tanzen* ‘to dance’ to *antanzten* ‘to incur from dancing’ (65) adds the incurrence *Muskelkater* ‘sore muscles’ and a dative reflexive pronoun *mir*.

[3.89]

- (65) a. Ich habe gestern viel getanzt.  
b. Ich habe mir gestern einen Muskelkater angetanzt.

#### 3.15.5 *Präverb Dativ*

The PRÄVERB DATIV (full discussion in Section 8.8.6 and subsequent sections) is similar to the previous *Präverb Akkusativ* in that the addition of the preverb also induces a new role, in this diathesis marked with a dative case. This diathesis is attested both with intransitive verbs like *gehen* ‘to walk’ when derived into preverbal *entgehen* ‘to evade’ (66a) and with transitive verbs like *lesen* ‘to read’ when derived into preverbal *vorlesen* ‘to read out’ (66b).

[3.90]

- (66) a. Ich gehe (nach Hause).  
Ich entgehe dem Urteil.  
b. Ich lese ein Buch.  
Ich lese dir ein Buch vor.

### 3.16 Deobjective diatheses [OBJ > Ø]

A DEOBJECTIVE is a diathesis in which an object is removed. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.4.2.

[3.91]

### 3.16.1 *Optionaler Akkusativ*

An unmarked OPTIONALER AKKUSATIV (full discussion in Section 5.7.1) is a diathesis in which an accusative object can be left out without any further change in the construction (often discussed under the heading of “ambitransitive” or “labile” verbs). This is for example attested with the verb *stören* ‘to disturb’ (67).

[3.93] Various different kinds of “labile” verbs have to be distinguished and not all belong in the current category. First, when the accusative object of a verb allows for an *Antipassiv* diathesis (Section 3.14.1), then this argument can also be dropped. However, such antipassives should not also be included here. Second, in some examples the drop of an accusative is induced by an adverbial, which leads to an action-oriented focus, discussed below as the *Aktionsfokus* diathesis (Section 3.16.3). Verbs with such a diathesis should not also be included here. Finally, there is also a highly similar ERGEBNISAKKUSATIV diathesis (Section 3.15.1) that should be distinguished. Once all those diatheses are separated, there turn out to be relatively few truly labile verbs with an *Optionaler Akkusativ*, mainly verbs that can be interpreted both as something one can do as well as something one can be.

- (67) a. Du störst die Veranstaltung.  
b. Du störst.

### 3.16.2 *Optionaler Dativ*

[3.94] The unmarked OPTIONALER DATIV, i.e. the dropping of a dative argument without any further change in the construction, is both attested with nominative-dative verbs like *entkommen* ‘to get away’ (68a), full discussion in Section 5.7.4, and with nominative-accusative-dative verbs like *erzählen* ‘to tell’ (68b), full discussion in Section 5.7.5. Like with *Optionaler Akkusativ* (Section 3.16.1), datives that allow for a dative antipassive (Section 3.14.4) should not also be included here.

- (68) a. Er entkommt seinem Feind.  
Er entkommt.  
b. Ich erzähle dir eine Geschichte.  
Ich erzähle eine Geschichte.

### 3.16.3 *Aktionsfokus*

The AKTIONSFOKUS (full discussion in Section 9.7.1) is another diathesis in which object arguments can be left out to put the focus on the action of the verb itself,

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but only when also adding an adverbial to the sentence. For example, a transitive verb like *sehen* ‘to see’ (69a) cannot be used without an object (69b). The occurrence of a dropped object is only possible here in combination with an adverbial specification (69c). The effect of such a diathesis is that the focus of the utterance is put on the manner in which the action is performed.

- (69) a. Ich sehe das Haus.  
b. \*Ich sehe.  
c. Ich sehe gut.

#### 3.16.4 Endoreflexiv

The ENDOREFLEXIV (full discussion in Section 7.7.1 and subsequent sections) is a special kind of object drop in which a reflexive pronoun is added. Such a diathesis looks superficially very similar to a regular self-inflicting reflexive (Section 4.7.3), but there is a crucial semantic difference. In a self-inflicting reflexive (e.g. ‘he washes himself’) the agent is doing something to him/herself. In contrast, an *Endoreflexiv* describes an action that is performed *with* the body of the agent, not *to* the body of the agent. For example, the verb *äußern* ‘to remark’ (70a) can be used with a reflexive pronoun and without accusative object in the meaning of ‘to express oneself’ (70b).

[3.96]

- (70) a. Er äußert sein Bedauern über den Fall.  
b. Er äußert sich über den Fall.

#### 3.16.5 Präverb Endoreflexiv

The PRÄVERB ENDOREFLEXIV (full discussion in Section 8.7.1) is similar to the previous *Endoreflexiv* (Section 3.16.4) but with the addition of a preverb. For example, the verb *wählen* ‘to choose/to dial’ shows a diathesis with *sich verwählen* ‘to misdial’ (71a) in which the accusative object is dropped. There are also a few very special endoreflexive verbs in which an adverbial is necessary instead of a preverb, for example *fühlen* ‘to feel’ (71b), see Section 9.7.2.

[3.97]

- (71) a. Er wählt die falsche Nummer.  
Er verwählt sich.  
b. Ich fühle den Schmerz.  
Ich fühle mich gut.

### 3.17 Locative diatheses [ $\emptyset \succ \text{PBJ}$ ]

A LOCATIVE DIATHESIS is a diathesis in which an obligatory location phrase is added to the clause. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.4.3. Note that there is no direct grammatical connection between a locative *diathesis* and a locative *case*. Both terms simply use the same modifier because both are somehow related to the marking of location. [3.98]

#### 3.17.1 *Bewegungsart*

The BEWEGUNGSART diathesis (full discussion in Section 6.8.2 and subsequent sections) is a diathesis that is specifically attested with verbs of movement like *tanzen* ‘to dance’ (72). In some contexts, movement verbs take an obligatory location phrase. This obligatory location coincides with the choice of auxiliary in the perfect, i.e. *haben* or *sein*. There is a crucial difference between these two options in that with *sein* in the perfect there is an additional directional phrase necessary (72c,d).

Semantically, this construction expresses primarily a movement, here *durch den Garten* ‘through the garden’, in which the main lexical verb *tanzen* ‘to dance’ designates what kind of movement is performed. In a sense, the main lexical verb functions more like an adverbial designation in such constructions, i.e. *sich tanzend bewegen* ‘to move in a dancing manner’. The same construction can also be used with non-movement verbs, but then an additional reflexive pronoun is necessary (see Section 3.17.2).

- (72) a. Ich habe im Garten getanzt.  
 b. Ich habe getanzt.  
 c. Ich bin durch den Garten getanzt.  
     (= Ich habe mich tanzend durch den Garten bewegt.)  
 d. \* Ich bin getanzt.

#### 3.17.2 *Reflexiv Bewegungsart*

The REFLEXIV BEWEGUNGSART diathesis (full discussion in Section 7.8.1) is the same diathesis as the non-reflexive *Bewegungsart* diathesis in Section 3.17.1 but with an additional reflexive pronoun. This extra reflexive pronoun has to be added for verbs like *zittern* ‘to shiver’ that do not describe a change-of-location (73a,b). With the reflexive pronoun there needs to be an obligatory movement phrase (73c). Semantically, this construction describes an movement (‘making [3.101]

### 3 Summary of major diatheses

the playoffs’) that is achieved (metaphorically) by performing the intransitive verb (i.e. by shivering).

- (73) a. Das Kind zittert.  
b. Die Mannschaft zitterte sich in die Playoffs.  
c. \* Die Mannschaft zittert sich.

#### 3.17.3 *Verursachte Bewegung*

The VERURSACHTE BEWEGUNG diathesis is attested in two variants. With intransitive verbs (full discussion in Section 6.8.4 and subsequent sections) like *schwitzen* ‘to sweat’ (74a) this diathesis adds both an accusative and an obligatory location. Semantically, this diathesis expresses that the verb causes the motion of the new accusative object role to be in the location. With transitive verbs (full discussion in Section 6.8.5) like *befehlen* ‘to command’ the effect is similar, though there is no new accusative added. With an added location the semantic effect is that the verb causes the accusative object to move to the location (74b).

[3.102]

- (74) a. Ich schwitze.  
Ich schwitze einen Fleck in mein Hemd.  
(= Ich schwitze, und dadurch entsteht ein Fleck in meinem Hemd.)  
b. Ich befehle eine Armee.  
Ich befehle die Armee an die Front.  
(= Ich befehle, und dadurch geht die Armee an die Front.)

#### 3.17.4 *Ergänzende Wirkung*

The ERGÄNZENDE WIRKUNG diathesis (full discussion in Section 6.8.6) expresses the result of performing the main verb. For example, a transitive verb like *machen* ‘to make’ can either take an object that is made, e.g. *Aufgaben* ‘tasks’ (75a), or it can be used in a special construction (75b) with an object, like *Wiese* ‘meadow’, that is changed into something else, like *Garten* ‘garden’, by performing the action. The term *Ergänzende Wirkung* originated in the influential educational grammatical work of Karl Ferdinand Becker (ref-becker1833: 81) almost 200 years ago, but never caught on in the German grammatical tradition.

[3.103]

- (75) a. Er macht seine Aufgaben.  
b. Er macht die Wiese zu einem Garten.  
(= Er macht etwas, und dadurch wird die Wiese zu einem Garten.)



### 3.18 Delocative diatheses [PBJ > ADJ]

[3.104]

A DELOCATIVE DIATHESIS is a diathesis in which an obligatory location phrase is made optional and is regularly completely removed from the clause. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.4.3, specifically starting at paragraph 2.143 on page 63.

#### 3.18.1 *Präverb Delokativ*

[3.105]

The PRÄVERB DELOKATIV (full discussion in Section 8.7.9 and subsequent sections) is a diathesis in which an obligatory location loses its obligatoriness by adding a preverb. For example, the diathesis between *steigen aus* and *aussteigen* ‘to get out’ (76) shows a small but crucial difference in that the prepositional phrase *aus dem Auto* loses its obligatory status.

- (76) a. Der Man steigt aus dem Auto.  
 b. \* Der Mann steigt.  
 c. Der Mann steigt aus dem Auto aus.  
 d. Der Mann steigt aus.

#### 3.18.2 *Resultativ Delokativ*

[3.106]

The RESULTATIV DELOKATIV (full discussion in Section 9.7.6 and subsequent sections) is a parallel diathesis to the previous *Präverb Delokativ* (Section 3.18.1). Instead of adding a preverb, this diathesis adds an obligatory resultative adjective, either *los-* ‘loose’, *fest-* ‘tight’ or *frei-* ‘free’. For example, the diathesis between *binden* ‘to tie’ (77a,b) and *festbinden* ‘to fixate’ (77c,d) removes the obligatory status of the locative prepositional phrase.

- (77) a. Ich binde den Hund an die Leine.  
 b. \* Ich binde den Hund.  
 c. Ich binde den Hund an der Leine fest.  
 d. Ich binde den Hund fest.

### 3.19 Promoted object exchanges [Ø > OBJ > PBJ]

[3.107]

A PROMOTED OBJECT EXCHANGE is a chained diathesis in which a new object is introduced, while at the same time an existing object is demoted. The combination

of these two changes is an overall promotion. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.5.1. The newly introduced object is always a component part (meronym) of the original encompassing object (holonym).

#### 3.19.1 *Teil/weg-Objekttausch*

The unmarked TEIL/WEG-OBJEKTTAUSCH diathesis (full discussion in Section 6.8.7) is a chained diathesis. A new role is introduced, marked as accusative, and the erstwhile role marked as accusative is demoted to an obligatory *aus* or *von* prepositional phrase. These two remappings are tightly intertwined and have to occur together. Crucially, the new accusative role is a part of the old accusative role (hence *Teil* in the German name). Additionally, this construction is used to express that something is removed as a result of an action (hence *weg* in the German name). An example is shown in (78) with the verb *waschen* ‘to wash’. This verb can be used with an accusative argument describing the role of the washee, here *Hose* ‘trousers’ (78a). Alternatively, a different role can be introduced as accusative, here *Fleck* ‘stain’ (78b). This new accusative role is necessarily a component part of the former accusative. In this usage, a directional location *aus meiner Hose* ‘from my trousers’ is obligatory present in the sentence (78c). This obligatory location represents the former accusative role, i.e. the washee. Semantically, the new object (*Fleck*) is a part that is removed from the encompassing old object (*Hose*). [3.108]

- (78) a. Ich wasche meine Hose.  
b. Ich wasche den Fleck aus meiner Hose.  
c. \* Ich wasche den Fleck.

#### 3.19.2 *Teil/fest-Objekttausch*

The *Teil/fest-Objekttausch* exists in three closely related variants, (i) as an unmarked “covert” diathesis discussed in this section, (ii) with a preverb discussed in the next section, and (iii) with a resultative adjective discussed in the section after that. Syntactically, in all these diatheses the object is exchanged. Crucially, the old object can be retained as an *in* or *an* prepositional phrase. The new object is always a component part (meronym) of the old encompassing object (holonym), hence the German name *Teil*. Additionally, the new object is physically attached to the old object, hence the German name *fest*. [3.109]

The unmarked TEIL/FEST-OBJEKTTAUSCH (full discussion in Section 6.8.8) is exemplified with *kleben* ‘to glue’ (79). This verb shows a diathesis, but the direction of the alternation is not marked, viz. it is a “covert” diathesis. The verb takes

either just an accusative object (here *Vase* ‘vase’) that is glued together, or an accusative object that is a component part (here *Henkel* ‘handle’), which is glued to the erstwhile accusative object (*Vase*). Thus, the new object after the diathesis *Henkel* is a meronym that is attached to the old holonymic object *Vase*. Completely independent from this diathesis, the verb *kleben* also allows for a covert anticausative (see Section 3.7.2).

- (79) a. Ich klebe die zerbrochene Vase.  
b. Ich klebe einen Henkel an die zerbrochene Vase.

### 3.19.3 Präverb Teil/fest-Objekttausch

[3.111]

The PRÄVERB TEIL/FEST-OBJEKTTAUSCH (full discussion in Section 8.9.1) shows the same diathesis as the previous unmarked one, but now marked with a preverb *ver-*, *be-* or *ein-*. Without a preverb, the verb *massieren* ‘to massage’ (80a) has an accusative object describing the massaged entity (here *Muskel* ‘muscle’). Different from the previous diathesis, the new object to be introduced by the diathesis (here *Salbe* ‘ointment’) can already be expressed here with an optional *mit* prepositional phrase. After the diathesis, the verb *einmassieren* ‘to massage in’ (80b) has the objects exchanged, optionally retaining the old object as a *in* prepositional phrase (80c). The preposition thus changes from *mit* to *in/an*, and this is exactly the reverse of the *Präverb Ganz/voll-Objekttausch* (see Section 3.20.3). After this diathesis has been applied, the new object *Salbe* is a meronym that has become a part of the old holonymic object *Muskel*.

- (80) a. Ich massiere den Muskel (mit einer Salbe).  
b. Ich massiere die Salbe in den Muskel ein.  
c. Ich massiere die Salbe ein.

### 3.19.4 Resultativ Teil/fest-Objekttausch

[3.112]

The RESULTATIV TEIL/FEST OBJEKTTAUSCH (full discussion in Section 9.8.3) is a parallel diathesis to the previously discussed diatheses, but marked with the addition of a resultative preverbal *fest-*. For example, the accusative object *Bluse* ‘blouse’ of the verb *nähen* ‘to sew’ (81a) is replaced with another accusative object *Knopf* ‘button’ with the verb *festnähen* ‘to tie by sewing’ (81b). The original object can be retained with an optional *an* prepositional phrase (81c). Before the diathesis the accusative object describes a whole (*Bluse* ‘blouse’), while after

### 3 Summary of major diatheses

the diathesis the accusatives expresses a component part (*Knopf* ‘button’) that is attached to the whole.

- (81) a. Ich nähe eine Bluse.  
b. Ich nähe den Knopf an der Bluse fest.  
c. Ich nähe den Knopf fest.

## 3.20 Demoted object exchanges [PBJ > OBJ > Ø]

A DEMOTED OBJECT EXCHANGE is a chained diathesis in which an obligatory location phrase is promoted to object, while at the same time the existing object is demoted or even removed. The combination of these two changes is an overall demotion. For details on the definition see Section 2.7.5.1. The new object is always an encompassing entity (holonym) of which the old object is a component part (meronym). [3.113]

### 3.20.1 Präverb Ganz/leer-Objekttausch

The *Ganz/leer-Objekttausch* exists in two closely related variants, with a preverb (this section) or with a resultative preverbal (next section). Syntactically, in both variants the object is exchanged and, crucially, the original object cannot be retained after the diathesis. The prepositional phrase before the diathesis takes the prepositions *aus* or *von*. Semantically, the old object is a part of the new object and is removed from it. Both structurally and semantically this is the reverse of the *Teil/weg-Objekttausch* (Section 3.19.1). [3.114]

The PRÄVERB GANZ/LEER-OBJEKTTAUSCH (full discussion in Section 8.7.12) is marked by various different preverbs (typically, but not exclusively, *aus-* or *ab-*). For example, the verb *klopfen* ‘to pound’ (82a) can take an accusative result, here *Staub* ‘dust’, and then the verb also needs an obligatory location from which the result originates, here *von meinem Mantel* ‘from my coat’ (82b). With a preverb *aus-*, the verb *ausklopfen* ‘to pound thoroughly’ (82c) completely drops the accusative *Staub* and the prepositional object *Mantel* is turned into a new accusative role. Semantically, the old accusative object *Staub* is a component part (meronym) of the new accusative *Mantel* (holonym). Additionally, the old accusative *Staub* is removed from the new accusative *Mantel*. The new accusative is thus a holonym (hence the word *Ganz* in the German name) that is emptied (hence the word *leer* in the German name). [3.115]

- (82) a. Ich klopfe den Staub von meinem Mantel.  
 b. \* Ich klopfe den Staub.  
 c. Ich klopfe meinen Mantel aus.

### 3.20.2 Resultativ Ganz/leer-Objekttausch

[3.116]

The RESULTATIV GANZ/LEER-OBJEKTTAUSCH (full discussion in Section 9.7.4) is basically the same diathesis as the previous one, but marked with a resultative preverbal *leer-* or *frei-* instead of with a preverb. For example, the verb *pumpen* ‘to pump’ can be turned into *leerpumpen* ‘to pump until empty’ (83). Just as above, the role marked as accusative (*Wasser* ‘water’) is completely removed and the obligatory location phrase is promoted to accusative (*Keller* ‘cellar’). Also identically to the previous diathesis, the new accusative object *Keller* is semantically a container from which the former accusative object *Wasser* is removed.

- (83) a. Ichpumpe das Wasser aus dem Keller.  
 b. \* Ichpumpe das Wasser.  
 c. Ichpumpe den Keller leer.

### 3.20.3 Präverb Ganz/voll-Objekttausch

[3.117]

The *Ganz/voll-Objekttausch* exists in two closely related variants, with a preverb (this section) or with a resultative preverbal (next section). Syntactically, in both variants the object is exchanged. Different from the previous diatheses (see Section 3.20.1), the old object can be retained as an optional *mit* prepositional phrase. The prepositional phrase before the diathesis takes the prepositions *in*, *an* or *auf*. Semantically, the new object is a holonym (hence the word *Ganz* in the German name) that is filled with the meronymic old object (hence the word *voll* in the German name).

The PRÄVERB GANZ/VOLL-OBJEKTTAUSCH (full discussion in Section 8.7.13) is marked by various different preverbs. Almost all preverbs occur, though *be-* and *ver-* are particularly frequent. For example, *laden* ‘to load’ (84a,b) takes an accusative object that is loaded (here *Gepäck* ‘luggage’) and an obligatory location onto which it is loaded (here *in den Wagen* ‘into the car’). The diathesis to *beladen* ‘to load onto/into’ turns the locational object (*Wagen*) into a new accusative, while the old accusative (*Gepäck*) is turned into an optional *mit* prepositional phrase (84c,d). Note that the prepositional change from *in/an/auf/um* to

[3.118]

### 3 Summary of major diatheses

*mit* is the reverse of the *Präverb Teil/fest-Objekttausch* (see Section 3.19.3). Semantically, the new object (*Wagen*) is the holonym and it is filled with the old object (*Gepäck*).

- (84) a. Ich lade das Gepäck in den Wagen.  
b. \*Ich lade das Gepäck.  
c. Ich belade den Wagen mit dem Gepäck.  
d. Ich belade den Wagen.

#### 3.20.4 Resultativ Ganz/voll-Objekttausch

The RESULTATIV GANZ/VOLL-OBJEKT TAUSCH (full discussion in Section 9.7.5) is basically the same diathesis as the one in the previous section, but marked with a resultative preverbal *voll-* instead of a preverb. For example, the verb *pumpen* ‘to pump’ can be turned in *vollpumpen* ‘to pump until full’ (85) with the same object exchange. Starting from *pumpen* (85a,b) with an accusative object (*Luft* ‘air’) and an obligatory prepositional location (*Reifen* ‘tire’), the diathesis to *vollpumpen* turns the prepositional phrase into an accusative and the accusative into an optional *mit* prepositional phrase (85c,d). Again, the semantics are such that the new object *Reifen* is a container that is filled with the old object *Luft*.

- (85) a. Ichpumpe Luft in den Reifen.  
b. \*Ichpumpe Luft.  
c. Ichpumpe den Reifen mit Luft voll.  
d. Ichpumpe den Reifen voll.

### 3.21 Other object exchanges [ADJ > OBJ > PBJ]

#### 3.21.1 Pertinenzakkusativ

Completely different from the various kinds of *Objekttausch* discussed previously, the PERTINENZAKKUSATIV (full discussion in Section 6.8.13) is an accusative that alternates with a possessor of another accusative. A verb like *bewundern* ‘to admire’ marks the admired thing, e.g. *Ehrlichkeit* ‘honesty’ as an accusative (86a). After the diathesis, the possessor of this accusative *seine* ‘his’ is raised to accusative *ihn* ‘him’ (86b), at the same time demoting the admired thing to a governed prepositional object with *für* (86c).

3.21 *Other object exchanges* [ADJ › OBJ › PBJ]

- (86) a. Ich bewundere seine Ehrlichkeit.  
b. Ich bewundere ihn für seine Ehrlichkeit.  
c. Ich bewundere ihn dafür, dass er ehrlich ist.





## 4 Summary of major epitheses

### 4.1 Verbal categories reconsidered

[4.1]

Browse any grammatical description of verbal categories in German and terms like *Plusquamperfekt* (1a) or *Futur II* (1b) will surely pass by. There is nothing wrong with those terms, but they just describe very specific combinations of verbal markers that are mostly transparently interpretable (e.g. *Plusquamperfekt* is just a perfect with a past-tense finite verb). In contrast, there are many verbal constructions that are only sparingly discussed in German grammars, if at all. The *pflügen+zu-Infinitiv* habitual (1c) or the *sein+Infinitiv* absentive (1d) are probably the most well-known among those, but they are still not widely acknowledged in general grammars of German.

- (1) a. Wer hatte dir die Adresse gegeben?
- b. Dann wird man Ihnen die Adresse gegeben haben.
- c. Sie pflegt sonntags auszuschlafen.
- d. Ich bin einkaufen.

[4.2]

As a case in point, the Duden grammar spends 20 pages on details of tense marking (ref-duden2009: 496–516), while only a few other verbal constructions are discussed in just four pages (ref-duden2009: 848–852) and some incidental references scattered throughout. This chapter can be read as an attempt at a complete survey of all those remaining German verbal categories, besides tense.

[4.3]

This chapter arose as a byproduct of the main goal of this book, namely listing all German diatheses. To clearly delimit what counts as a diathesis, I also collected constructions that are structurally similar to diathesis, but that do not involve any role remapping. Such a structure is called an EPITHESES and the various instances are listed in-full in the respective .4 sections of the following data chapters. These epitheses express various notions in the grammatical domain commonly designated as TAME, i.e. the marking of tense-aspect-mood-evidentiality. This chapter summarises and organises the major epitheses that I have been able to find. I will also propose Latinate-German names for all of these constructions.

## 4 Summary of major epitheses

This results in an all-encompassing but rather unconventional perspective on the verbal categories of German.

[4.4] Quickly recapitulated, an EPITHESES is a monoclausal construction in which the lexical roles are not remapped in comparison to a basic clause (i.e. a clause with just a single finite lexical verb). For example, a basic clause with the finite verb *erzählen* ‘to tell’ (2a) might have the roles of “teller” (*Großvater*, in the nominative), “tellee” (*Enkelin*, in the dative) and “story told” (*Witz*, in the accusative). A construction like *pflegen+zu-Infinitiv* is an epithesis because when applied to *erzählen* all these roles remain encoded in exactly the same grammatical form (2b). Additionally, this construction is monoclausal because the finite *pflegte* is placed at the end when the sentence is used as a subordinate clause (i.e. the clause is coherent, see Section 1.3.1).

- (2) a. Der Großvater erzählt seiner Enkelin einen Witz.
- b. Der Großvater pflegte seiner Enkelin einen Witz zu erzählen.
- c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) der Großvater seiner Enkelin einen Witz zu erzählen pflegte.

The constructions listed in this chapter are not haphazardly collected out of some infinite pool of possible analytical combinations of German verb forms. Quite to the contrary, the constructions listed here are claimed to be an exhaustive list of all epithetical German verb forms. Only a few rare and/or old-fashioned constructions are left out from this summary (but they can still be found in the following data chapters). The list of major epitheses in this chapter is quite long (about 40 constructions), but manageable. Any 1000-plus-page grammar could easily add a few pages listing them all (or at least the most commonly attested ones). This number of epitheses is also quite a bit less than the number of major diatheses presented in the previous chapter (about 80 constructions). This indicates that from a purely grammatical perspective, diathesis (“grammatical voice”) is about a two-times more elaborate topic than epithesis (“tense-aspect-mood marking”).

## 4.2 Classifying epitheses

The epitheses listed in this chapter map out all grammaticalised verbal categories of the German language. However, it is crucial to realise that not every lexical verb can be combined with each of these constructions. Just as with diatheses,

[4.6]

each epithesis has a limited domain of applicability, i.e. each epithesis has a specific set of verbs to which it can be applied (cf. Section 1.3.4). It is a very worthwhile future endeavour to specify these domains in more detail than I have been able to do here. Additionally, this restricted applicability means that one cannot simply take a random lexical verb and paradigmatically list all different epithetical forms for this verb, like traditional grammars like to do with tense forms. Quite to the contrary, it becomes a matter of lexicographic research to determine for each individual verb which epitheses are possible.

Epitheses mostly express a rather clear semantic content, but they are not obligatorily used to express that content. For example, the *pflegen+Infinitiv* epithesis, as mentioned above, expresses a habitual aspect. However, this construction is far from the only way to express a habitual aspect in German. Habitual aspect will typically be expressed by a verb in the present tense with an adverbial phrase expressing the habitual recurrence, like *regelmäßig* ‘regularly’ or a concrete time-frame with *jeden*, like *jeden Morgen* ‘every morning’. So, the characterisation of *pflegen+Infinitiv* as a habitual verb form is actually only part of the story. What needs to be added in future research is a more detailed description of the kind of contexts in which this construction is actually used, in contrast to other options that are available to the speaker.

[4.8] This desideratum holds for all epitheses discussed here: it is necessary to specify what determines their usage. A famous case in point is the *werden+Infinitiv* construction, which is called *Futur* in the German grammatical tradition (see Section 11.4.9). This construction can indeed express events in the future, so the name *Futur* is not necessarily wrong. However, future events are much more commonly expressed with a verb in the present tense with a future time adverbial. So, a more detailed characterisation of the *werden+Infinitiv* is required to explain under what circumstances it is actually used. A description like “expectation/presumption” is probably less flawed than “future”.

The epithetical constructions listed in this chapter are organised along the lines of the TAME categorisation (tense-aspect-modality-evidentiality). This subdivision is not always clear-cut, it is more of a continuum. This means that the placement of a specific construction in one or the other group is more a matter of practical convenience than of strict definitional categorisation.

TENSE will almost not be mentioned here, mainly because it does not play an important role in German epithesis. The discussion of ASPECT is separated into two kinds: temporal aspect (Section 4.3) and spatial aspect (Section 4.4). MODALITY includes the well-described modal verbs, but also some other less-widely discussed modal constructions (Section 4.5). EVIDENTIALITY deals with the marking of the evidence available to the speaker for the statement made in an utterance.

This turns out to be a very useful category for the analysis of various German epithetical constructions (Section 4.6).

Additionally, I have added a section with epithetical constructions that are functionally alike to a diathesis, but there is no formal remapping of roles. These constructions are on the boundary between epithesis and diathesis. Structurally they are clearly epithetic, because there is no role-remapping. Yet, these constructions express a change in the relation between the participants and the lexical verb, so functionally they belong in the realm of diathesis. For lack of a better term I will call such constructions DIATHETICAL EPITHESES (Section 4.7).

### 4.3 Temporal aspect

The grammatical category of aspect is commonly defined as linguistic marking that specifies the “internal temporal constituency of a situation” (ref-comrie1976: 3). In this sense, the title of this section, TEMPORAL ASPECT, might appear to be tautological. However, this designation is used here in opposition to a different set of constructions that specify the spatial constituency of a situation, SPATIAL ASPECT, described in the next Section 4.4. Temporal aspect in German includes a surprisingly large number of continuative constructions, many of which express different facets of the continuation of a state.

[4.12]

#### 4.3.1 Perfekt (*haben/sein+Partizip*)

The PERFEKT (full discussion in Section 10.4.1 and subsequent sections) is the name from the German tradition for the *haben/sein+Partizip* construction (3). The light verbs *haben* and *sein* are used in almost complete complementary distribution with only few verbs that allow for both. The name *Perfekt* is developing into a misnomer because the *haben/sein+Partizip* construction is clearly not marking perfect aspect (see Section 10.2.6). It appears to be slowly taking over the function of past marking in contemporary German.

[4.13]

- (3) a. Das Kind schläft.  
Das Kind hat geschlafen.  
b. Das Kind schläft ein.  
Das Kind ist eingeschlafen.

There are two diathetical constructions that are structurally similar to the *Perfekt*, namely the *Zustandspassiv* (marked with *sein+Partizip*, see Section 3.8.2) and the *Pertinenzpassiv* (marked with *haben+Partizip*, see Section 3.8.8). From an aspectual point of view, these passive constructions are perfects.

### 4.3.2 *Inchoativ (los-)*

The INCHOATIV (full discussion in Section 9.4.1) consists of the preverbal adjective *los-* added as a separable verb particle with intransitive verbs, like *losradeln* ‘to start biking’ (4). This construction indicates that an activity starts. It is typically used with manner-of-movement verbs and manner-of-speaking verbs. However, it is in general applicable to all agentive intransitives. Originally, the adjective *los* means ‘loose’ in contemporary German. In that meaning it is used in the *Resultativ Delokativ* diathesis (see Section 3.18.2). In contrast, the preverbal inchoative use of *los-* is derived from an older usage meaning ‘free’.

- (4) a. Er radelt täglich zur Schule.  
 b. Er radelt früh los.  
 Er ist früh losgeradelt.

### 4.3.3 *Kontinuativ (weiter-)*

[4.16]

The KONTINUATIV (full discussion in Section 9.4.2) consists of the preverbal adjective *weiter-*, added as a separable verb particle with intransitive and transitive verbs, like *weiterentwickeln* ‘to develop further’ (5). This construction indicates that an activity is being continued. The stem *weiter* is originally the comparative form of the adjective *weit* ‘far’ and it has various adverbial uses in contemporary German, meaning for example ‘spatially further’ or ‘still’. However, these adverbial uses can syntactically be clearly separated from the preverbal continuative aspect marker presented here.

- (5) a. Der Forscher entwickelt eine neue Technik.  
 b. Die Forscherin entwickelt die Technik weiter.  
 Sie hat die Technik weiterentwickelt.

### 4.3.4 *Habitativ (pflegen+zu-Infinitiv)*

[4.17]

The HABITUATIV (full discussion in Section 12.4.1) is an aspectual category that expresses an activity that is performed regularly as a habit. Such an aspect is widespread among the world’s language and in German it can be expressed by using a light verb *pflegen* with a *zu-Infinitiv* (6a,b). The verb *pflegen* has a lexical meaning ‘to nurse, to maintain’, but in this construction this meaning has changed to a grammatical marker of aspect. This grammaticalisation has not only happened semantically, but also structurally. The *pflegen+zu-Infinitiv* construction is clearly monoclausal, as can be seen by the final position of the finite

#### 4 Summary of major epitheses

verb when used as a subordinate clause (6c). An archaic and nowadays mostly ironical alternative to *pflegen* is to use the light verb *belieben* (full discussion in Section 12.4.2).

- (6) a. Sie lacht laut.
- b. Sie pflegt laut zu lachen.
- c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) sie laut zu lachen pflegte.

##### 4.3.5 *Progressiv (sein+am-Infinitiv)*

The PROGRESSIV (full discussion in Section 13.4.1) consists of *sein* with the prepositional *am-Infinitiv*. In this construction the infinitive is clearly a nominalised form of the verb, so it is regularly (though not universally) written with a capital letter in German orthography (7). The *sein+am-Infinitiv* expresses a progressive aspect, though its usage is frowned upon in a formal written register and a simple *Präsens* is preferred, possibly using adverbs for disambiguation of the aspectual structure. In spoken language the *sein+am-Infinitiv* appears to be pervasive, though.

[4.18]

- (7) a. Das Kind jammert.
- b. Das Kind ist am Jammern.

##### 4.3.6 *Mutativprogressiv (sein+im-Infinitiv)*

The MUTATIVPROGRESSIV (full discussion in Section 13.4.2) is a variant of the *Progressiv* (see Section 4.3.5), using the preposition *im* instead of *am*. The *sein+im-Infinitiv* is much less frequent than the *am* progressive. However, the available examples suggest a clear semantic characterisation. The *im* progressive is typically used with verbs that either describe an ongoing process of expansion (8a) or an ongoing process of reduction (8b).

[4.19]

- (8) a. Die eigene Fahrerflotte entsteht.  
Die eigene Fahrerflotte ist im Entstehen
- b. Die Schwellung klingt ab.  
Die Schwellung ist im Abklingen.

##### 4.3.7 *Kontinuativprogressiv (bleiben+am-Infinitiv)*

The KONTINUATIVPROGRESSIV (full discussion in Section 13.4.3) is the first of various continuative constructions that use the light verb *bleiben*. Parallel to the

[4.20]

*Progressiv* with the light verb *sein* (see Section 4.3.5), the *Kontinuativprogressiv* (9) uses the light verb *bleiben* with the *am-Infinitiv* to express that an activity is ongoing (progressive) and remains ongoing (continuative).

- (9) a. Er lebt.  
b. Er bleibt am Leben.

### 4.3.8 Zustandskontinuativ (*bleiben+Infinitiv*)

[4.21]

The ZUSTANDSKONTINUATIV (full discussion in Section 11.4.2) is constructed with *bleiben* and an infinitive. This construction and the next three construction all express different ways in which a state is continued. The current *Zustandskontinuativ* is frequently used with state verbs like *stehen* ‘to stand’, *liegen* ‘to lie’ or *sitzen* ‘to sit’ (10a,b). These combinations are so prominent that their infinitives are usually written as single words in German orthography, i.e. *stehenbleiben*, *liegenbleiben*, *sitzenbleiben*. These constructions are often even listed as single verbs in German dictionaries. Yet, there is no grammatical reason to give these combinations a special status compared to other constructions of *bleiben+Infinitiv* that are usually separated by a space, like for example *wohnen bleiben* ‘to remain living somewhere’(10c).

- (10) a. Er liegt im Bett.  
b. Er bleibt im Bett liegen.  
c. Er bleibt in München wohnen.

### 4.3.9 Perfektkontinuativ (*bleiben+Partizip*)

[4.22]

The PERFEKTKONTINUATIV (full discussion in Section 10.4.10) is constructed with *bleiben* and a participle. It expresses simultaneously that a process is finished (perfect) and that the resulting state continues (continuative). Only participles of intransitive verbs can be used in this construction. Additionally, applicable verbs need to have a *sein* perfect (see Section 4.3.1) and should describe a potentially reversible event, like *verschwinden* ‘to vanish’ (11). When used with transitive verbs this construction results in a passive diathesis, here called the *Fortsetzungspassiv* (see Section 3.8.3).

- (11) a. Der Schlüssel verschwindet.  
b. Der Schlüssel bleibt verschwunden.

#### 4.3.10 *Permissivkontinuativ (lassen+Partizip)*

[4.23]

The PERMISSIVKONTINUATIV (full discussion in Section 10.4.11) uses the light verb *lassen* with a participle (12). It expresses the permission of the nominative subject for the result of a transitive action to continue. The name establishes a connection to the *Permissivkausativ* diathesis (constructed as *lassen+Infinitiv*, see Section 3.11.5), while highlighting the fact that semantically this construction is one the various continuative constructions.

- (12) a. Ich schalte den Fernseher ein.  
b. Ich lasse den Fernseher eingeschaltet.

#### 4.3.11 *Kausativkontinuativ (halten+Partizip)*

The KAUSATIVKONTINUATIV (full discussion in Section 10.4.12) uses the light verb *halten* with a participle (13). It expresses an explicit action by the nominative subject to keep a finished state in place. The same light verb *halten* is also used in the related *Kontinuitätskausativ* (constructed as *halten+am-Infinitiv*, see Section 3.11.7).

[4.24]

- (13) a. Ich schließe die Tür.  
b. Ich halte die Tür geschlossen.

### 4.4 Spatial aspect

The grammatical marking of aspect is commonly defined as linguistic expressions that specify the “internal temporal constituency of a situation” (ref-comrie1976 3). In this sense, the term SPATIAL ASPECT might seem contradictory. However, spatial aspect simply expresses a change in the spatial constituency of an event. In German, there are few “pure” examples of such spatial aspect, like the *Absentiv*. However, most categories described in this section actually combine spatial and temporal aspects. The light verb *gehen* and *kommen* are used here in a few different, but highly similar constructions.

#### 4.4.1 *Absentiv (sein+Infinitiv)*

The ABSENTIV (full discussion in Section 11.4.3) uses *sein* with an infinitive (14b). This construction is a kind of *progressiv* with the additional twist that the nominative participant is absent because s/he is pursuing the activity as described by the verb. An *absentive* is commonly classified as a kind of aspect. However,

[4.26]



different from most aspectual categories it is not the temporal structure of the event that is crucial here, but the spatial structure.

- (14) a. Ich besuche meinen Freund.  
b. Ich bin meinen Freund besuchen.

#### 4.4.2 *Abitiv (gehen/fahren+Infinitiv)*

[4.27]

The ABITIV (from Lat. *abire* ‘to depart’, full discussion in Section 11.4.4) consists of the light verbs *gehen* or *fahren* together with an infinitive (15). This construction express that the subject is leaving to pursue the activity as described by the verb. It is closely related to the *Absentiv* (see Section 4.4.1).

- (15) a. Ich besuche meinen Freund.  
b. Ich gehe/fahre meinen Freund besuchen.

#### 4.4.3 *Aditiv (kommen+Infinitiv)*

[4.28]

The ADITIV (from Lat. *adire* ‘to approach’, full discussion in Section 11.4.5) consists of the light verb *kommen* with an infinitive (16). It conveys that the subject is approaching to pursue an activity, i.e. the reversal of the *Abitiv* (see Section 4.4.2).

- (16) a. Ich besuche meinen Freund.  
b. Ich komme meinen Freund besuchen.

#### 4.4.4 *Absentivfrequentativ (sein+beim-Infinitiv)*

The ABSENTIVFREQUENTATIV (full discussion in Section 13.4.4) is a variant of the *Absentiv* (see Section 4.4.1). It also uses the verb *sein*, but now with a *beim-Infinitiv* (17). It still expresses that the subject is not present (absentive), but there is an extra semantic aspect added, namely that the activity is performed regularly or habitually (frequentative).

[4.29]

Parallel to the previous *Absentiv*, *Abitiv* and *Aditiv* there also exist frequentative variants of all these three constructions using different prepositions in each, namely *sein+beim*, *gehen/fahren+zum* and *kommen+vom* (discussed subsequently).

- (17) a. Ich arbeite.  
b. Ich bin beim Arbeiten.

#### 4.4.5 *Abitivfrequentativ (gehen/fahren+zum-Infinitiv)*

The ABITIVFREQUENTATIV (full discussion in Section 13.4.5) uses *gehen/fahren*, just like the *Abitiv* (see Section 4.4.2), but now with a *zum-Infinitiv* (18). It expresses a movement away (abitive) to pursue an activity that is frequently or habitually performed (frequentative).

- (18) a. Sie schwimmt.  
b. Sie geht zum Schwimmen.

#### 4.4.6 *Aditivfrequentativ (kommen+vom-Infinitiv)*

The ADITIVFREQUENTATIV (full discussion in Section 13.4.6) uses *kommen* with a *vom-Infinitiv* (19) to express the reversal of the *Abitivfrequentativ* (see Section 4.4.5). It conveys a movement approaching a point of reference (aditive) coming from an activity that is frequently or habitually performed (frequentative).

[4.32]

Note that the preposition used with *kommen* is *vom*. There exists also a construction using *kommen* with *zum*, but that one has completely different semantics (see Section 4.4.8).

[4.33]

- (19) a. Er ist einkaufen.  
b. Er kommt vom Einkaufen.

#### 4.4.7 *Aditivprogressiv (kommen+(an-)+Partizip)*

[4.34]

The ADITIVPROGRESSIV (full discussion in Section 10.4.9) expresses both a temporal aspect (progressive) and a spatial aspect (aditive). It uses the light verb *kommen* with a participle (20a) to convey that the subject is approaching while performing a specific kind of movement. A frequent variant uses a participle with the prefix *an-*, even when the finite verb with this prefix does not exist. For example, the verb *anrennen* does not exist, only the participle *angerannt* exist in the construction with the light verb *kommen* (20b). Note that there does not exist any symmetrically opposing abitive construction with *gehen*.

- (20) a. Die Kinder laufen herbei.  
Die Kinder kommen herbeigelaufen.  
b. Die Kinder rennen.  
Die Kinder kommen angerannt.

#### 4.4.8 *Bewegungsende (kommen+zum-Infinitiv)*

The BEWEGUNGSENDE (full discussion in Section 13.4.7) again uses the light verb *kommen* to express a spatial aspect, this time with a *zum-Infinitiv* (21). However, in contrast the previous uses of *kommen*, this construction does not express an approaching movement. The *kommen+zum-Infinitiv* indicates that a movement has come to an end. There does not exist any symmetrically opposing construction with *gehen*.

- (21) a. Das Auto steht vor der Ampel.  
b. Das Auto kommt vor der Ampel zum Stehen.

### 4.5 Modality

[4.36] The grammatical marking of MODALITY expresses a personal stance of the speaker towards the state-of-affairs. In grammars of European languages it is commonly discussed in the context of modal verbs, like *können*, *müssen* or *dürfen*. However, German has various other monoclausal structures to express modality. This includes some categories from the less-trodden paths of grammatical description like the (almost Caesarian) trinity of *Kogativ* ‘to intend’, *Konativ* ‘to try’ and *Effektiv* ‘to succeed’.

#### 4.5.1 *Modalverben*

[4.37] The MODALVERBEN (full discussion in Section 11.4.7) are *dürfen*, *können*, *mögen*, *müssen*, *sollen* and *wollen*. These light verbs are combined with an infinitive (22a). Functionally, the light verbs *brauchen* (22b), see Section 11.4.8, and *werden* (22c), see Section 11.4.9, should probably also be included in this group. Especially the status of *werden+Infinitiv* is widely discussed in the German grammatical literature. It is traditionally analysed as a marker of future tense, but future reference in German is mostly expressed without it. A modal meaning of expectation and/or presumption seems to be a more suitable analysis.

- (22) a. Ich baue ein Haus.  
Ich will ein Haus bauen.  
b. Du brauchst nicht kommen.  
c. Ich werde ein Haus bauen.

### 4.5.2 *Obligativ (haben/brauchen+zu-Infinitiv)*

The OBLIGATIV (full discussion in Section 12.4.5) consist of the light verb *haben* with a *zu-Infinitiv* (23a). This construction is closely related to the English *to have to* construction, both in form and meaning. This epithesis expresses an obligation to perform an activity (i.e. similar to modal *müssen*). The German construction is clearly monoclausal, because the finite verb is positioned at the end of the clause in subordinate position (23b).

- (23) a. Die Schüler lösen die Aufgaben.  
Die Schüler haben die Aufgaben zu lösen.  
b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) die Schüler die Aufgaben zu lösen haben.

A related construction uses the light verb *brauchen* ‘to need’ (full discussion in Section 12.4.6). When *brauchen* is used with a *zu-Infinitiv* a negative element (24a) or a particle like *nur* or *bloß* (24b) has to be present. This construction is monoclausal (24c). Note that *brauchen* can also be used with a bare infinitive without *zu* without any obvious change in meaning (see Section 4.5.1). The meaning of this construction is similar to English *need not*. It expresses ‘not be obliged’, but often it is quite close to ‘should not’ or even ‘ought not’.

[4.39]

- (24) a. Du brauchst nicht zu schreien.  
b. Du brauchst nur zu rufen.  
c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) du nur (zu) rufen brauchst.

### 4.5.3 *Abilitiv (wissen/verstehen+zu-Infinitiv)*

The ABILITIV (full discussion in Section 12.4.3) uses the verb *wissen* with a *zu-Infinitiv* (25a) in a coherent monoclausal construction (25b). The independent lexical verb *wissen* means ‘to know’, but in this construction it expresses the ability to perform an action (i.e. similar to modal *können*). Instead of *wissen* it is also possible to use the verb *verstehen*. Likewise, the verb *verstehen* has a lexical meaning, namely ‘to understand’, but in a construction with *zu-Infinitiv* it is grammaticalised to express ability. There is no obvious difference between *wissen* and *verstehen* when used in this construction. A more formal variant exists with the light verb *vermögen* (full discussion in Section 12.4.4).

[4.40]

- (25) a. Der Lehrer begeistert die Schüler.  
Der Lehrer weiß/versteht die Schüler zu begeistern.  
b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) der Lehrer die Schüler zu begeistern  
weiß/versteht.

#### 4.5.4 *Kogitativ (denken+zu-Infinitiv)*

The KOGITATIV (from Lat. *cogitare* ‘to consider, to intend’, full discussion in Section 12.4.9) uses the verb *denken* with a *zu-Infinitiv* (26a). In this old-fashioned or maybe just slightly poetic construction the verb *denken* has lost its lexical meaning ‘to think’. Instead, it expresses an intention to perform a certain action (i.e. similar to modal *wollen*). In this light-verb usage it is coherent (26b). In its lexical meaning ‘to think’ it is not coherent (26c). This construction is used infrequently.

[4.41]

- (26) a. Ich überrasche ihn.  
       Ich denke ihn zu überraschen.  
       b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich ihn zu überraschen denke.  
       c. Er denkt mich überraschen zu können.  
       (Es ist bekannt, dass) er denkt, mich überraschen zu können.

#### 4.5.5 *Konativ (suchen+zu-Infinitiv)*

The KONATIV (from Lat. *conor* ‘to try’, full discussion in Section 12.4.8) is a category that expresses an attempt at an activity. In German it can be expressed with *suchen+zu-Infinitiv* (27a). In this construction, the meaning of *suchen* is similar to *versuchen* ‘to try’ and not to the lexical meaning of *suchen* ‘to search’. In the meaning of ‘to try’ the construction is coherent (27b), while the semantically similar *versuchen* does not result in a coherent construction (27c). This construction is used infrequently.

[4.42]

- (27) a. Er hilft ihr.  
       Er suchte ihr zu helfen.  
       b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) er ihr zu helfen suchte.  
       c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) er versuchte, ihr zu helfen.

#### 4.5.6 *Effektiv (bekommen/kriegen+Partizip)*

The aspired outcome when intending something (*Kogativ*, see Section 4.5.4) or when trying something (*Konativ*, see Section 4.5.5) is to achieve something. This achievement can be expressed with the EFFEKTIV (from Lat. *effectus* ‘accomplishment’, full discussion in Section 10.4.13), consisting of the light verbs *bekommen* or *kriegen* with a participle (28a). The same construction is also used for the *Rezipientenpassiv* (see Section 3.8.7). It is even possible to construct ambiguous

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sentences that can both have an *Effektiv* and a *Rezipientenpassiv* interpretation (28b).

- (28) a. Der Eigentümer vermietet die Wohnung nicht.  
Der Eigentümer kriegt die Wohnung nicht vermietet.  
b. Der Zahnarzt kriegt den Zahn gezogen.  
(*Effektiv* = Der Zahnarzt schafft es, den Zahn zu ziehen.)  
(*Rezipientenpassiv* = Dem Zahnarzt wird der Zahn gezogen.)

##### 4.5.7 *Fortunativ (haben+gut/leicht+Infinitiv)*

The FORTUNATIV (from Lat. *fortunatus* ‘blessed, lucky’, full discussion in Section 11.4.6) consists of *haben* with an infinitive and an obligatory adverbial. It is only possible with intransitive verbs. The adverbial is almost always positiv, usually *leicht* ‘easy’ (29a) or *gut* ‘well’ (29b). This construction expresses that the subject is in a fortunate situation to perform the action described by the verb. This contrasts to the closely related constructions with *sein* (see Section 3.3.3) and *lassen* (see Section 3.3.4) that occur both with positiv and negativ evaluations.

[4.44]

- (29) a. Er lacht.  
Er hat gut lachen.  
b. Er redet.  
Er hat leicht reden.

## 4.6 Evidentiality

The grammatical marking of EVIDENTIALITY is a linguistic structure by which the speaker indicates the evidence for the stated utterance. It has been observed in languages all over the world. In German, grammaticalised evidentials exist in various variants. As for the German names for these categories, I propose to distinguish between *Inferenz* for inferential evidentials and *Evidenz* for direct evidentials.

[4.45]

##### 4.6.1 *Imperfektinferenz (scheinen+zu-Infinitiv)*

The marking of IMPERFEKTINFERENZ (full discussion in Section 12.4.10) is expressed by the verb *scheinen* with a *zu-Infinitiv* (30a). This construction conveys an inferential evidential, in which the speaker expresses some confidence in the stated event based on a deduction from available information. There is also a

[4.46]

closely related *Perfektinferenz* as discussed in the next Section 4.6.2. The main difference between the two is the perfectivity of the verb. By using the *zu-Infinitiv* the construction is marked as imperfect. The verb *scheinen* has various further uses, among them a lexical meaning expressing ‘to shine’. Crucially, in its evidential usage with a *zu-Infinitiv* this construction is coherently monoclausal (30b).

- (30) a. Der Plan scheitert.  
           Der Plan scheint zu scheitern.  
       b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) der Plan zu scheitern scheint.

#### 4.6.2 *Perfektinferenz (scheinen/erscheinen+Partizip)*

[4.47]

The marking of *PERFEKTINFERENZ* (full discussion in Section 10.4.14) consists of the verbs *scheinen* or *erscheinen* with a participle of an intransitive verb (31a). Typical agentive intransitive verbs like *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ do not allow for this construction (31b). Similar to the previous *Imperfektinferenz* (see Section 4.6.1) it expresses an inferential evidential, in which the speaker indicates confidence in the state-of-affairs based on a deduction from available information. By using the participle the event is marked as perfective. When used with a transitive verb the *(er)scheinen+Partizip* construction leads to an anticausative diathesis called *Inferenzantikausativ* (see Section 3.7.5).

- (31) a. Der Plan scheitert.  
           Der Plan scheint gescheitert.  
       b. \* Das Kind scheint geschlafen.

#### 4.6.3 *Sinnesevidenz (aussehen/wirken+Partizip)*

*SINNESEVIDENZ* (full discussion in Section 10.4.15) is marked by the verbs *aussehen* or *wirken* with a participle of an intransitive verb (32). Typical agentive intransitive verbs like *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ do not allow for this construction (32b). This structure expresses that the speaker has first-hand knowledge based on sensory evidence that the state-of-affairs holds. When used with a transitive verb this construction results in an anticausative diathesis called *Sinnesantikausativ* (see Section 3.7.6).

- (32) a. Er schläft aus.  
           Er wirkt ausgeschlafen.  
       b. \* Er wirkt geschlafen.

#### 4.6.4 Negative Bewertungsevidenz (*drohen+zu-Infinitiv*)

[4.49]

The marking of NEGATIVE BEWERTUNGSEVIDENZ (full discussion in Section 12.4.11) consists of the verb *drohen* with a *zu-Infinitiv* (33a). This construction conveys that the speaker of the utterance has direct evidence for the proposition, while implying a negative evaluation from the speaker's point of view. When used as a speech-act verb *drohen* means 'to threaten' and can also be used with a *zu-Infinitiv*. However, only in its evidential usage will *drohen+zu-Infinitiv* construct coherently (33b). The meaning of 'to threaten' does not result in a coherent construction (49c).

- (33) a. Das Wetter droht schlecht zu werden.  
b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) das Wetter schlecht zu werden droht.  
c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) er droht, das Licht auszuschalten.

#### 4.6.5 Positive Bewertungsevidenz (*versprechen+zu-Infinitiv*)

The marking of POSITIVE BEWERTUNGSEVIDENZ (full discussion in Section 12.4.11) is composed of the verb *versprechen* with a *zu-Infinitiv* (34a). Similar to the previous construction with *drohen*, the verb *versprechen* with a *zu-Infinitiv* also expresses a direct evidential, though now with a positive evaluation. When used as a speech-act verb *versprechen* means 'to promise' and is commonly used with a *zu-Infinitiv*. However, only in its evidential usage will *versprechen+zu-Infinitiv* construct coherently (34b). The meaning of 'to promise' does not result in coherent constructions (34c).

[4.50]

- (34) a. Das Wetter verspricht gut zu werden.  
b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) das Wetter gut zu werden verspricht.  
c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) er verspricht, das Licht auszuschalten.

### 4.7 Diathetical epithesis

By definition (see Section 1.2), diathesis has to include changes to the grammatical marking of the participants. The alternations described in this section do not show any change in the marking of the participants, so, again by definition, they are classified as examples of epithesis. However, functionally these constructions are close to diatheses in that the relation between the participants and the verb is changed in some way. For lack of a better term I call such a construction a DIATHETICAL EPITHESIS.

[4.51]



#### 4.7.1 *Verborgenes Zustandskausativ (kommen+zu-Infinitiv)*

Covert causatives exist in two variants. The first kind, the *VERBORGENER ZUSTANDSKAUSATIV* (full discussion in Section 12.4.12), uses the light verb *kommen* with a *zu-Infinitiv* (35a,b). This construction conveys that there is some unexpressed force or agent that has caused a state to be reached. It can only be used with intransitive state verbs like *stehen* and is obligatorily coherent (35c).

- (35) a. Sie stand neben mir.  
 b. Sie kam neben mir zu stehen.  
 c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) sie neben mir zu stehen kam.

#### 4.7.2 *Verborgenes Rezipientenkausativ (bekommen/kriegen+zu-Infinitiv)*

[4.53]

The *VERBORGENER REZIPIENTENKAUSATIV* (full discussion in Section 12.4.13) uses the light verbs *bekommen* or *kriegen* with a *zu-Infinitiv* (36a,b). Like with *kommen* (see Section 4.7.1), there is an unnamed force or agent that causes the situation to come about. The light verb *bekommen/kriegen* is typically combined with a transitive verb of sensation, like *sehen* ‘to see’, or consumption, like *essen* ‘to eat’. By using this covert causative construction, the nominative subject is semantically depicted as an experiencer of the verb. The centrality of the experiencer role is reminiscent of the *Rezipientenpassiv* (see Section 3.8.7). However, in this construction there is no role-remapping, so it is not a diathesis.

- (36) a. Die Schüler sehen einen Film.  
 b. Die Schüler bekommen/kriegen einen Film zu sehen.  
 c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) die Schüler einen Film zu sehen bekommen/kriegen.

#### 4.7.3 *Selbstbezogenes Reflexiv*

[4.54]

The *SELBSTBEZOGENER REFLEXIV* (full discussion in Section 7.4.5 and subsequent sections) is marked with a reflexive pronoun and can optionally be reinforced by adding *selbst*. This construction is traditionally simply called *Reflexiv* in German grammar (and beyond). However, reflexive pronouns have a bewildering number of different functions, including many diatheses, so a more precise naming is necessary (see Chapter 7 for an extensive discussion). Crucially, the marking of roles does not change in a *Selbstbezogener Reflexiv*, so there is no diathesis.

The *Selbstbezogener Reflexiv* can be identified by the following characteristics:

[4.55]

#### 4 Summary of major epitheses

- (i) There is a reflexive pronoun that can be negated and stressed.
  - (ii) The pronoun *selbst* can optionally be added.
  - (iii) The roles of the verb do not change, i.e. (37b) still contains the roles of “washer” and “washee”.
  - (iv) The reflexive pronoun references an object role (here “washee”).
  - (v) The participant who takes the role of subject (here “washer”) is identical to the participant that is encoded by the reflexive pronoun.
- (37) a. Der Vater wäscht das Kind.  
b. Der Vater wäscht sich (*selbst*).

##### 4.7.4 *Reziprok*

The REZIPROK (full discussion in Section 7.4.14 and subsequent sections) often looks similar to the *Selbstbezogener Reflexiv*. However, there are various characteristics that clearly distinguish the two. The *Reziprok* can be identified by the following characteristics:

- (i) There is a reflexive pronoun or *einander* in the sentence.
  - (ii) When there is a reflexive pronoun, then *gegenseitig* can be added optionally. In contrast, *selbst* is not possible.
  - (iii) The roles of the verb do not change, i.e. (38b) still contains the roles of “crosser” and “crossee”.
  - (iv) The subject is obligatorily plural, as it references the participants of both roles simultaneously.
  - (v) The reflexive pronoun/*einander* marks that both participants take both roles simultaneously.
- (38) a. Die Straßen kreuzen den Fluss.  
b. Die Straßen kreuzen sich (*gegenseitig*).

##### 4.7.5 *Freies Reflexiv*

The FREIER REFLEXIV (full discussion in Section 7.4.1 and subsequent sections) is a somewhat mysterious alternation in German in which a reflexive pronoun can be added without any obvious change in meaning. For example, the verb *ansehen* ‘to look at’ can be used both with reflexive pronoun (39a) and without reflexive pronoun (39b). The difference between these expressions needs more investigation, but intuitively there appears to be a slight difference in the affectedness of the subject-participant.

- (39) a. Ich habe mir das Haus angesehen.  
 b. Ich habe das Haus angesehen.

#### 4.7.6 *Reflexiv Resultativ*

The REFLEXIV RESULTATIV (full discussion in Section 9.4.3) is an alternation that can be used with a subset of all intransitive verbs, for example with *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ (40a). By adding a reflexive pronoun and a resultative preverbal, like *gesund-* ‘healthy’ (40b), the sentence conveys that the subject participant achieves a state (expressed by the preverbal) by performing an action (expressed by the verb). In other words, (40b) means approximately ‘by sleeping I will become healthy’. The combination of *gesund-* with the verb *schlafen* arguably is a new separable verb *gesundschlafen* (40c), syntactically similar to a *Partikelverb* like *einschlafen*.

- (40) a. Ich schlafe.  
 b. Ich schlafe mich gesund.  
 (= Durch zu schlafen werde ich gesund.)  
 c. Ich werde mich gesundschlafen.

#### 4.7.7 *Transitiv Resultativ*

The TRANSITIV RESULTATIV (full discussion in Section 9.4.5) is the transitive counterpart to the previous *Reflexiv Resultativ* (see Section 4.7.6). The only difference is that no reflexive pronoun is necessary with transitive verbs. For example, the verb *pflegen* ‘to nurse’ (41a) can be combined with a resultative *gesund-* ‘healthy’ (41b) to form a new separable verb *gesundpflegen* ‘to heal by nursing’ (41c). The preverbal *gesund-* has a resultative meaning, expressing the effect of the action (*pflegen* ‘to nurse’) on the accusative object (*Mutter* ‘mother’), i.e. ‘by nursing my mother will be healed’.

- (41) a. Ich pflege meine Mutter.  
 b. Ich pflege meine Mutter gesund.  
 (= Durch meine Pflege wird meine Mutter gesund.)  
 c. Ich werde meine Mutter gesundpflegen.

## 4.8 Summary of recurrent light verbs

[4.60]

The light verbs listed in Table 4.1 occur in more than one derived clause construction. Shown in the table is whether these constructions induce epithesis (E) or diathesis (D). The ordering of the rows and columns in the table reflects an approximate top-left to bottom-right cline of the frequency of diathesis. More research is needed to establish whether there is any deeper insights to be gained from this distribution.

Table 4.1: Summary of light verbs that occur in more than one derived clause construction (D = diathesis, E = epithesis)

	<i>Partizip</i>	<i>zu-Infinitiv</i>	<i>Infinitiv</i>	<i>Präpositions- infinitiv</i>
<i>haben</i>	D+E	E	D+E	D
<i>sein</i>	D+E	D	E	D+E
<i>bleiben</i>	D+E	D	E	E
<i>gehen</i>	D	D	E	E
<i>geben</i>	D	D	-	-
<i>sehen</i>	D	-	D	-
<i>werden</i>	D	-	E	-
<i>scheinen</i>	D+E	E	-	-
<i>bekommen</i>	D+E	E	-	-
<i>wissen</i>	D	E	-	-
<i>halten</i>	E	-	-	D
<i>lassen</i>	E	E	D	-
<i>kommen</i>	E	E	E	E

# 5 Case-marking alternations

## 5.1 Introduction

[5.1] Diathesis typically involves variation in the marking of case as governed by the verb, including alternations between case marked arguments and adpositional phrases. The notion of “flagging” was (re)introduced in Haspelmath (ref-haspelmath2005d, 2) as a cover term to capture the intuition that case marking and adpositional marking express very similar functions in linguistic marking. The first two data chapters in this book discuss exactly those kind of marking, viz. case and adpositional marking as governed by a verb. This chapter discusses diatheses involving case-marked constituents, and the next chapter focusses on prepositional constituents.

[5.2] All diatheses in this chapter are COVERT diatheses. Covert case-marking diatheses are characterised by (a) one and the same verb that can be used with different case-marked roles and, crucially, (b) the fact that there is no additional overt morphosyntactic marking of the alternating constructions. Such alternations include, for example, possessor raising like (1a) or anticausative alternations like (1b).

- (1) a. Ich schneide seine Haare.  
      Ich schneide ihm die Haare.
- b. Die Sonne verbrennt den Rasen.  
      Der Rasen verbrennt.

[5.3] The crucial (and somewhat problematic) aspect of such alternations is that there is no formal indication of the presence of a diathesis, except for the marking of the arguments themselves. Prototypical examples of diathesis (as defined in Section 1.2) include some overt linguistic marking that indicates that a diathesis has taken place (i.e. some affix, particle, light verb, or other morphosyntactic means). And indeed, all diatheses that will be discussed in Chapters 7-13 will be of that kind. In contrast, the diatheses discussed in this chapter and the next Chapter 6 are “covert” alternations, or “zero marked” alternations, in that there is no other indication of a diathesis, except for the marking of the arguments themselves (ref-zuniga2019 introduce the term “covert” diathesis for this). The problem with

such covert diatheses is that there is no overt directionality in the alternation – there is no way to distinguish between a base form and a derived form. Both alternants have an equal status as far as the morphosyntax is concerned. Still, I have attempted to infer a direction based on parallels to other diatheses.

The unmarked nature of covert diatheses implies that there is some slight redundancy and fuzziness in presentation. This redundancy arises because, for example, when a verb occurs in four different constructions, then there are logically six different alternations. I have nonetheless decided to approach the descriptive organisation in this chapter from the perspective of such pairwise alternations, because (i) it highlights the possible connections attested between constructions, and (ii) very many verbs only occur in just one or two alternations anyway (with only a smaller subset of verbs appearing across many different constructions).

There are seven diatheses that seem prominent enough to be given a German name. I propose the following names for these:

- [SBJ > Ø] AUSLÖSERENTFALL (see Section 5.5.1 ff.)
- [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] ANTIKAUSATIV (see Section 5.5.5 ff.)
- [Ø > SBJ > OBJ] KAUSATIV (see Section 5.6.2 ff.)
- [Ø > OBJ] ERGEBNISAKKUSATIV (see Section 5.8.1)
- [OBJ > Ø] OPTIONALER AKKUSATIV (see Section 5.7.1 ff.)
- [OBJ > Ø] OPTIONALER DATIV (see Section 5.7.4 ff.)
- [ADJ > OBJ] PERTINENZDATIV (see Section 5.8.3 ff.)

## 5.2 Delimiting case-marked arguments

### 5.2.1 Identifying case marking

The German case marking system is rather straightforward. Noun phrases in German occur in one of four case forms. There are various syncretisms in the case paradigm, which conceal the identity of the case in many sentences. For this reason, I will attempt to use first/second person singular pronouns or masculine singular nouns in constructed examples. These forms can easily be unambiguously identified, as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: German marking of case				
Case	1st	2nd	3rd Masc.	Masc. noun
Nominative	<i>ich</i>	<i>du</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>der Tisch</i>

Case	1st	2nd	3rd Masc.	Masc. noun
Genitive	<i>meiner</i>	<i>deiner</i>	<i>seiner</i>	<i>des Tisches</i>
Dative	<i>mir</i>	<i>dir</i>	<i>ihm</i>	<i>dem Tisch</i>
Accusative	<i>mich</i>	<i>dich</i>	<i>ihn</i>	<i>den Tisch</i>

[5.7] Basically, almost all case-marked constituents are governed arguments. Yet, there are a few situations (to be discussed in detail below) in which overtly case-marked constituents are not arguments (or, alternatively, a very special type of arguments): quantified objects (2a), named objects (2b), cognate objects (2c), lexicalised noun-verb combinations (2d) and adnominal constituents (2e).

- (2) a. Er schläft [den ganzen Tag].  
 b. Er nennt mich [einen Egoisten].  
 c. Er hat [einen gesunden Schlaf] geschlafen.  
 d. Er stirbt [einen qualvollen Tod].  
 e. Ich beschuldige den Verdächtigen [des Diebstahls] von weiteren Gegenständen.

### 5.2.2 Quantified object

[5.8] A special kind of constituent is a quantified object (cf. “Mensuralergänzung”, **ref-eroms2000: 203–204**), exemplified in (3a–e). Quantified objects are overtly marked accusative objects that often contain numerals, like in (3d) or (3e), in which *einen* is not an article, but the numeral *one*. Except for numerals, the quantification can also be instantiated by adjectives, e.g. *ganzen* ‘complete’ in (3a), indefinites, e.g. *jeden* ‘each’ in (3b), or measure phrases, e.g. *zu laut* ‘too noisy’ in (3c).

- (3) a. Er schläft den ganzen Tag. (*wie lange?* ‘how long’)  
 b. Er fällt jeden Tag. (*wann?* ‘when’)  
 c. Er hustet einen Tick zu laut. (*wie?* ‘how’)  
 d. Er ist drei mal gefallen. (*wie oft?* ‘how often’)  
 e. Er steigt einen Stock höher. (*wo?* ‘where’)

[5.9] These quantified constituents are not governed arguments. First, they can easily be left out (all verbs in the examples are typical intransitive verbs). Second, and more importantly, they cannot be replaced by a pronoun nor be questioned

## 5 Case-marking alternations

by a question pronoun (viz. *wen/was*). Instead, they are questioned by adverbial interrogative words as listed at the examples above, indicating that the quantified constituents are adverbial phrases, not arguments. Still, there are a few verbs that obligatorily require such a quantified object, like *kosten* ‘to cost’ or *dauern* ‘to last’. With those verbs, quantified constituents can be considered to be arguments. These verbs will be discussed in Section 5.3.9.

### 5.2.3 Named objects

A special group of verbs can be used to performatively name persons or things. When realised with proper names, such arguments are arguably without case in standard German (4a), but with regular nouns these phrases are clearly accusatives (4b). The result of such accusatively marked names are constructions with two accusative arguments. These arguments are normally questioned by the manner interrogative *wie* ‘how’, though in some situations *was* ‘what’ seems possible (4c). The small group of verbs like *nennen* ‘to name’ that obligatorily takes such arguments will be discussed in Section 5.3.10.

- (4) a. Ich nenne dich [Lukas].  
b. Ich nenne dich [einen Egoisten].  
c. Was nennst du [dein Eigen]?

### 5.2.4 Cognate objects

There is a special construction available for many verbs to add an object that is a nominalisation of the verb itself, exemplified here in (5a,b). [5.11]

- (5) a. Er hat einen gesunden Schlaf geschlafen.  
b. Er hat viele Träume geträumt.

This construction is known as a COGNATE OBJECT construction (e.g. [ref-levin1993](#): 95–96) [5.12], because the object is etymologically related to the verb. In many cases, this cognate object is simply a zero nominalisation (conversion) of the verb stem (e.g. *schlafen* – *der Schlaf*, ‘to sleep – the sleep’), but in some cases different nominalisations like the infinitive are used (e.g. *lächeln* – *das Lächeln*, ‘to smile – the smile’).

Examples like (5a,b) seem to suggest that intransitive verbs like *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ and *träumen* ‘to dream’ allow for accusative arguments. However, besides these cognate objects there are no other accusative arguments allowed with these verbs. Further, such cognate objects seem to be theoretically possible for all verbs,



though often quite some imagination is needed to find a suitable context to use verb and nominalised verb together. Because of their special status, such cognate object nominalisations are not counted as regular arguments here.

### 5.2.5 Lexicalised noun-verb combinations

[5.14] There is a common pattern in German in which nouns are combined with a verb, like *eislaufen* ‘ice skating’. Such constructions are highly reminiscent of the typologically widespread process of noun incorporation. However, in German such noun incorporation only occurs with individual lexeme combinations, so they are probably better interpreted as grammaticalised noun-verb collocations (ref-eisenberg2006: 339ff.; ref-gallmann1999). For a survey of different kinds of noun incorporation see Berik & Gehrke (ref-berik2015). Using their terminology, the German constructions might be analysed as “pseudo” incorporation.

[5.15] Most such combinations are written as separate words in German orthography, e.g. *Wache stehen* ‘stand guard’, so they might look like nominal arguments. However, they normally do not allow for any determiners or modifiers (6a). Only very few fixed combinations allow for an adjective (6b) and/or a determiner (6c).

- (6) a. Er hat (\*das) Blut gehustet.
- b. Er hat bittere Tränen geweint.
- c. Er stirbt einen qualvollen Tod.

The typical examples like *Blut* ‘blood’ in (6a) do not show much indication of case-marking. It is clearly not a genitive (because then it should be *Blutes*), but nominative, dative or accusative are all possible. The few examples with determiners and/or adjectives seem to indicate that these constituents are accusatives. However, even in undoubted accusative examples like (6c) the accusative is not an argument, because it is strange (if not completely ungrammatical) to pronominalise (7a) or question (7b) this accusative. Also, the accusative seems unusable as an answer to a manner question (14c). Just like cognate objects, such nouns in lexicalised noun-verb combinations are not counted as arguments here.

- (7) a. \*Er stirbt es.
- b. \*Was ist er gestorben?
- c. Wie ist er gestorben? ? Einen qualvollen Tod.

### 5.2.6 Adnominal case-marked constituents

Semantically, adnominal constituents can easily be identified as modifiers inside a noun phrase. However, there is no formal difference between adnominal and sentential case-marked constituents, leading possibly to ambiguous sentences like (8a). In this sentence, both the accusative constituent for the accusee *den Verdächtigen* and the genitive constituent for the accusation *des Diebstahls* can be read as arguments being governed by the verb *beschuldigen* ‘to accuse’ (8b). Alternatively, these two constituents can be interpreted as a single complex noun phrase, as can be seen by the possibility to add a further constituent describing a different accusation (8c). Such adnominal constituents are (obviously) not counted as arguments of the main predicate.

- (8) a. Ich beschuldige den Verdächtigen des Diebstahls.  
b. Ich beschuldige [den Verdächtigen] vor Gericht [des Diebstahls].  
c. Ich beschuldige [den Verdächtigen des Diebstahls] auch des Mordes.

## 5.3 Deponent verbs without alternations

Before delving into the actual alternations, I will first present an inventory of verbs that do not show alternation as far as flagging is concerned. These verbs can, and many will, occur in other diatheses as discussed in subsequent chapters, but for the alternations discussed in this chapter (on case-marked arguments) and the next chapter (on prepositional arguments) these verbs are invariable. The most interesting insight from building this collection is that it is not easy at all to find verbs that do not allow for at least some kind of flagging variation.

[5.18]

### — Regular case-marked arguments—

#### 5.3.1 [ – ] No arguments

Some verbs do not need any argument at all, not even a nominative subject. These include the well-known weather verbs like *schneien* ‘to snow’ (9a). However, most weather verb actually allow for some nominative subjects as well (9b), see Section 5.6.1, or accusative arguments (9c), see Section 5.8.2. There do not seem to be any verbs that only allow for constructions without any arguments.

[5.19]

- (9) a. Heute schneit es.  
b. Die Granaten regneten auf uns.  
c. Gestern hat es riesengroße Körner gehagelt.

## 5.3.2 [ N ] Nominative

Some verbs only allow a nominative argument, which necessarily also shows agreement with the finite verb. Such verbs are traditionally called “intransitive”. The verbs discussed in this section are strictly intransitive, in that they do not allow for any other case marked arguments or governed prepositions (see Section 6.2). Intransitive verbs, of course, allow for additional non-governed prepositional phrases, e.g. locational (10a) or temporal (10b), instrumental/comitative with *mit* (10c,d), or beneficiary/goal with *für* (10e,f).

- (10) a. Er reist immer in die Berge.  
 b. Er reist immer am Wochenende.  
 c. Er reist immer mit dem Bus.  
 d. Er reist immer mit seinem Freund.  
 e. Er reist immer für seinen Chef.  
 f. Er reist immer für seine Arbeit.

[5.21] An attempt has been made below to classify the strictly intransitive verbs into broad semantic categories. However, these categories are in no way intended to define the kind of verbs allowed in this class. Yet, the semantic classes give a good indication of the kind of verbs that tend to be strictly intransitive. Note that this list is in no way intended to be exhaustive, but only illustrative.

## Attested verbs

- Movement: *ankommen, ausgehen, eintreffen, rasen (schnell bewegen), reisen, untergehen, verreisen, verschwinden, schlendern, spazieren*
- Bodily function: *niesen, pinkeln, brechen (übergeben), husten*
- Natural process: *ertrinken, scheinen, sprießen, wachsen, schrumpfen*
- Sleeping: *aufstehen, aufwachen, einschlafen*
- Housing: *ausziehen, einziehen, umziehen, wegziehen*
- Noun incorporation: *fernsehen, Autofahren, seiltanzen, bergsteigen, kopfrechnen, notlanden, brustschwimmen, bruchrechnen, eislaufen, kopfstehen, probe-fahren, radfahren, windsurfen*
- Others: *desertieren, enden, hupen, klingen*

### Notes

[5.22]

Some of the verbs of housing allow for accusative arguments in non-housing related meanings, like *ausziehen* ‘to undress’ (11a), *einziehen* ‘to build’ (11b), *aufziehen* ‘to build’ (11c) or *wegziehen* ‘to pull away’ (11d).

- (11) a. Ich ziehe meine Hose aus.  
b. Ich ziehe eine Wand ein.  
c. Ich ziehe die Mauer auf.  
d. Ich ziehe die Karre weg.

### 5.3.3 [ NA ] Nominative+accusative

The verbs in this class are strict transitives: they need a nominative subject argument and an additional accusative argument. Further arguments are not allowed, and no governed prepositions are allowed either. It turns out that this group is not very large, because very many verbs allow for dative arguments (traditionally called “free” datives) or alternations with governed prepositions. For example, an apparently typical transitive verb like *bauen* ‘to build’ allows for a dative to mark the beneficiary of the building, as in *Ich baue dir ein Haus* ‘I will build a house for you’ (see Section 6.8.9). Conversely, there are also many apparently typical transitive verbs that can just as well be used without accusative object, including well-known ambitransitive verbs like *essen* ‘to eat’ (see Section 5.7.1). All such verbs are discussed in their respective sections. Still, even with all those verbs removed, the current set of “pure” transitive verbs can easily be extended and the list given below is not at all intended to be complete.

[5.23]

The number of monomorphemic “strictly” transitive verbs seems to be very limited. Preverbs (see Chapter 8) regularly induce an applicative alternation and subsequently often lexicalise, leading to transitive verbs (12a,b).

[5.24]

- (12) a. Ich schreite über den Teppich.  
b. Ich schreite den Teppich ab.

### Attested verbs

- Monomorphemic: *bilden, brauchen, finden, freuen, grüßen, kennen, kriegen, merken, mögen, pflegen, tanken, wecken*
- With preverbs: *abmessen, abschreiten, abwiegen, angehen, ansehen, ansetzen, begrüßen, beängstigen, behalten, bekommen, beruhigen, beschäftigen, darstellen, entschuldigen, erreichen, umfassen, unterbrechen, verachten, verletzen, verschwenden, zerreißen, zerstören*

## Further examples

- Die Schüler bilden eine Klasse.
- Ich brauche einen Kaffee.
- Der frische Kaffee freut mich.
- Ich merke den Fehler zu spät.
- Ich trenne die Gruppe.
- Ich entschuldige dich (bei der Chorprobe).
- Ich setze das Messer an.
- Ich messe den Abstand ab.
- Ich schreite den roten Teppich ab.
- Ich wiege den Reis ab.
- Ich tanke Benzin.

## 5.3.4 [ ND ] Nominative+dative

[5.25]

The verbs in this class need both a nominative subject and a dative argument, like *trauen* ‘to trust’ (13a). Both arguments are obligatory and cannot be dropped (except in extremely marked meta-linguistic contexts) and no other case-marked arguments or governed prepositions are possible. A noteworthy subset of such nominative+dative verbs are verbs like *unterlaufen* ‘to occur’ (13b), for which human participants can only occur in the dative. Yet, there does not appear to be any structural difference between verbs with (typically) human participants in the nominative, like *trauen*, and verbs with (typically) human participants in the dative, like *unterlaufen*.

- (13) a. Ich traue der Sache nicht.  
b. Mir unterläuft ein Fehler.

There are more nominative+dative verbs in which the dative is not obligatory. Those verbs will be discussed in subsequent sections. Some of these verbs allow for the dative to be completely dropped (see Section 5.7.4) and a few allow for the dative to be replaced by a prepositional phrase (see Section 6.7.10) or by a possessor (see Section 5.8.3).

[5.26]

## Attested verbs

- Human participant only possible in the dative: *bleiben* (*übrig sein*), *einfallen*, *entgehen*, *gefallen*, *gehören*, *gelten*, *glücken*, *einfallen*, *liegen* (*Begabung haben*), *missfallen*, *unterlaufen*, *widerfahren*, *zufallen*, *zustoßen*

## 5 Case-marking alternations

- Possible human participant in the nominative: *ähneln, angehören, begegnen, beipflichten, entgegenkommen, entsprechen, gegenüber treten, glauben (vertrauen), gleichen, imponieren, nacheifern, schaden, stehen, trauen, unterliegen, unterstehen, verfallen, zureden, zuneigen*

### Further examples

- Ich gehöre der Gruppe an.
- Ich begegne einer Überraschung.
- Ich bin dem Konservatismus zugeneigt.
- Ich unterstehe einer Behörde.
- Ich unterliege dem Gegner. ('besiegt werden')
- Die Mode unterliegt dem Zwang der Zeit. ('bestimmt werden')
- Ich glaube dir.
- Der Notausgang entspricht den Vorschriften.
- Die Stadt glich einem Trümmerfeld.
- Die Feuchtigkeit schadete den Möbeln.
- Mir gefällt das Buch.
- Mir fällt eine Lösung ein.
- Mir unterläuft ein Fehler.
- Mir widerfährt ein Unrecht.
- Diese Geister galten mir.
- Ein Unglück ist mir zugestoßen.
- Die Aufgabe ist mir zugefallen.

### Notes

The following verbs also exist as intransitive "only nominative" verbs (see Section 5.3.2), but in a clearly different lexical meanings. <sup>[5.27]</sup>

- (14)
- a. Mir bleibt nur harte Arbeit. Ich bleibe noch eben.
  - b. Mir gehört die Schreibmaschine. Die Schreibmaschine gehört auf den Tisch.
  - c. Mir liegt diese Sportart. Ich liege am Boden.
  - d. Mir steht der Mantel. Ich stehe um die Ecke.
  - e. Der Journalist verfiel dem Alkohol. Das Haus verfiel.

### 5.3.5 [ NG ] Nominative+genitive

There are a few verbs in German that have a genitive argument. These verbs are slowly disappearing from the German language, and many of the verbs that are still around are considered old-fashioned. They are listed for comprehensiveness only, as they do not play an important role in the current German language anymore. The verbs listed here need a genitive argument and there seems to be no possibility for alternations with other case or adpositional marking.

#### Attested verbs

- *entraten, entübrigen, ermangeln, gedenken, harren, walten*

#### Further examples

- Ich muss leider seiner Mitarbeit entraten. ('verzichten')
- Die Methode entübrigt des Putzens.
- Der Versuch ermangelt jeglicher Vernunft.
- Ich gedenke der Toten.
- Er harrete seines Schicksals.
- Er waltet seines Amtes.

### 5.3.6 [ NAD ] Nominative+accusative+dative

This class consists of the classical ditransitive verbs with an obligatory nominative, accusative and dative arguments. It turns out to be extremely hard to find good examples of verbs that always, or at least in the large majority of their uses, overtly show all three arguments. Most apparently ditransitive verbs, like *geben* 'to give', easily allow for the dative to be dropped or replaced by a prepositional phrase (for the verb *geben*, see [ref-devaere2018](#) for an in-depth study). The few remaining obligatorily ditransitive verbs seem to be semantically more specialised verbs, in which a very specific meaning is forcing the overt marking of all three roles, in contrast to the more broader semantic range of a verb like *geben*.

#### Attested verbs

- *abgewöhnen, benehmen, bescheren, schulden, überlassen, verdanken, vorsagen, widmen, zutrauen, schenken*

### Further examples

- Wir haben ihm die Unpünktlichkeit abgewöhnt.
- Der Schreck benimmt ihm den Atem.
- Das Konzert beschert ihm ein Comeback.
- Ich schulde dir eine Antwort.
- ich überlasse dir das Fahrrad.
- Ich sage dir die Antwort vor.
- Ich widme dir das Buch.
- Ich traue dir die Reise zu.
- Ich schenke dir das Auto.

### 5.3.7 [ NAG ] Nominative+accusative+genitive

There are also verbs that allow nominative, accusative and genitive, but those verbs often have a possible alternation dropping the genitive (see Section 5.7.8). In a few cases, the genitive argument seems to be in a process of replacement by an accusative (see Sections 5.9.5, 5.9.6). I have only found a single verb that obligatorily requires case-marked nominative, accusative and genitive arguments, viz. *bezichtigen* ‘to accuse’ (15).

[5.30]

- (15) a. Ich bezichtige dich des Diebstahls.  
b. \* Ich bezichtige dich.  
c. \* Ich bezichtige des Diebstahls.

### Attested verbs

- *bezichtigen*

### 5.3.8 [ NAA ] Nominative+accusative+accusative

[5.31]

There are a few verbs that allow for two accusative objects, like with *lehren* (16a) or *abfragen* (16b). However, all of these verbs also allow for other constructions, either dropping one of the accusative arguments (see Section 5.7.2) or allowing an alternation between an accusative and a dative (see Section 5.9.4). There do not seem to be any verbs that obligatorily need two accusative objects.



- (16) a. Er lehrt mich den Trick.  
b. Er fragt mich den Stoff ab.

Double accusatives further appear with quantified objects (17a), see Section 5.3.9 and with named objects (17b), see Section 5.3.10. Also these verbs regularly allow for one of the accusatives to be dropped (17c,d).

- (17) a. Das Buch kostet mich keinen Pfennig.  
b. Ich nenne dich einen Egoisten.  
c. Das Buch kostet viel.  
d. Er nennt den Namen des Kindes.

[5.33]

In summary, there are only few verbs in German with double accusatives. In general, there seems to be a strong generalisation that the German language disprefers verbs that govern multiple noun phrases in the same case. However, there are a few diatheses that result in multiple accusatives in the same clause (see Section 11.2.3).

### — Adverbial case-marked arguments —

#### 5.3.9 [ NA ] Nominative+quantified object

[5.34]

A special kind of arguments are quantified objects (cf. “Mensuralergänzung”, **ref-eroms2000: 203–204**), exemplified in (18a–e). Quantified objects are overtly marked accusative objects that often contain numerals (like in (18d) or (18e), in which *einen* is not an article, but the numeral one). Except for numerals, the quantification can also be instantiated by adjectives (like *ganzen* in (18a)), indefinites (like *jeden* in (18b)) or measure phrases (like *zu laut* in (6c)).

- (18) a. Er schläft den ganzen Tag. (*wie lange?* ‘how long’)  
b. Er fällt jeden Tag. (*wann?* ‘when’)  
c. Er hustet einen Tick zu laut. (*wie?* ‘how’)  
d. Er ist drei mal gefallen. (*wie oft?* ‘how often’)  
e. Er steigt einen Stock höher. (*wo?* ‘where’)

These quantified constituents are mostly not arguments. First, they can easily be left out (all verbs in the examples above are typical intransitive verbs). Second, and more importantly, they cannot be replaced by a pronoun, nor be questioned by a question pronoun (viz. *wen/was*). Instead, they are questioned by adverbial

## 5 Case-marking alternations

interrogative words as listed at the examples above, indicating that the quantified constituents are adverbial phrases, not governed arguments.

Yet, there is a special class of verbs that appear to obligatorily need such a quantified object, like *kosten* ‘to cost’ (19a), called MEASURE STATIVE DIMENSIONAL VERBS in Gamerschlag (ref-gamerschlag2014: 318). These objects are interrogated by *wie viel?* ‘how much’ (though interrogation with *was* ‘what’ seems also possible with some of them). Though debatable, I tend to classify these accusative constituents as arguments. Whatever the interpretation, whether they are arguments or not, there is something special with these verbs.

A further argument to consider these accusative constituents as something special is that these verbs cannot be passivised, just like typical intransitive verbs (19a). Even with non-quantified objects, these verbs still prohibit passivisation (19b). [5.37]

- (19) a. Die Aussage kostet sie den Wahlsieg.  
b. Ich bin der Herausforderung gewachsen.

An exception to this rule blocking passivisation for quantified objects are the verbs *verdienen* ‘to earn’ and *zahlen* ‘to pay’. They can be used with quantified objects (33b) and with non-quantified objects (20a), similarly to *kosten* above. However, with these verbs passivisation is possible (20c,d), so these verbs are considered to be taking regular accusative objects. [5.38]

- (20) a. Er verdient 50 Euro. Er verdient den Nobelpreis.  
b. Er zahlt (mir) 50 Euro. Er zahlt (mir) die Miete.  
c. Praktisch der gesamte Umsatz wird mit Werbung verdient.  
d. Die Miete wird monatlich gezahlt.

### Attested verbs

- Quantity: *enthalten, fassen* (‘*Fassungsvermögen haben*’), *kosten, rechnen, sparen, vorrücken, wachsen, wiegen, zunehmen*
- Quantity of time: *dauern*

### Further examples

- Der Laster wiegt einen Zentner.  
Wieviel/was wiegt der Laster?
- Der Tisch kostet ein Jahresgehalt.  
Wieviel/was kostet der Tisch?

- Der Knochen wächst einen Millimeter pro Tag.  
Wieviel/\*was wächst der Knochen?
- Ich rechne eine Flasche Wein pro Person.  
Wieviel/?was rechnest du pro Person?
- Er hat zehn Kilo zugenommen.  
Wieviel/\*was hat er zugenommen?
- Sie dürfen [...] den eigenen Spielstein ein Feld vorrücken.<sup>1</sup>

### 5.3.10 [ NAA ] Nominative+accusative+named object

[5.39] A special group of verbs can be used to performatively name persons or things. As proper names, such arguments are arguably without case in standard German (21a), but with regular nouns these phrases are clearly accusatives (21b). The effect are constructions with two accusative arguments. These arguments are normally questioned by the manner interrogative *wie* ‘how’, though in some situations *was* ‘what’ seems possible (21c).

- (21) a. Ich nenne dich [Lukas].  
b. Ich nenne dich [einen Egoisten].  
c. Was nennst du [dein Eigen]?

[5.40] The name in such naming constructions cannot be passivised (22a,b), which also indicates that these accusative arguments have a special status in the grammar of the German language.

- (22) a. Du wirst einen Egoisten genannt.  
b. \* Ein Egoist wird dich genannt.

#### Attested verbs

- *heißen, nennen, schelten, schimpfen, schmähen, taufen*

#### Further examples

- UN-Beamte und internationale Medien heißen den 59-Jährigen weniger schmeichelhaft einen »Psychopathen« oder »Afrikas Miloevi«.<sup>2</sup>
- Er nennt den Gründer der Sowjetunion einen Verräter.<sup>3</sup>
- Sie schelten den A380 schon vor dem ersten Linienflug einen Dinosaurier.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 15.01.2000.

<sup>2</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 24.05.2007, Nr. 22.

<sup>3</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 31.10.2017, online.

<sup>4</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 06.10.2005, Nr. 41.

- Konservative schimpfen den Präsidenten schon einen Sozialisten.<sup>5</sup>

## 5.4 Alternations without diathesis

This section is empty. It is only added here for the numbering to be parallel across chapters. By definition, alternations without diathesis do not exist for covert alternations as discussed in this chapter.

[5.41]

## 5.5 Diatheses with subject demotion

### — [ SBJ > Ø ] — *Auslöserentfall*

#### 5.5.1 [ N | – ] Nominative drop

In German it is typically not possible to have a sentence in which the nominative subject is dropped. For the few verbs that allow the nominative subject to be absent, a valency-simulating pronoun *es* has to be inserted (see Section 2.2.3 for more details on this pronoun). For example, with some intransitive dispersion verbs like *stinken* ‘to stink’ (23a) it is possible to leave out the origin of the dispersion (23b) to indicate the effect without knowledge of the cause.

- (23) a. Der Müll stinkt.  
b. Hier stinkt es aber.

For weather verbs like *wehen* ‘to be windy’ (24) it is arguably not a nominative that is dropped, but a nominative that is optionally added. I will discuss such additions separately (see Section 5.6.1). However, there does not appear to be a clear overt grammatical distinction between a verb like *stinken* that allows for an optional nominative drop and a verb like *wehen* an optional nominative addition.

- (24) a. Es weht.  
b. Der Wind weht.

#### Attested verbs

- Dispersion verbs: *abkühlen, blühen, dampfen, duften, klingeln, knistern, krachen, riechen, spriessen, stinken*

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<sup>5</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 30.04.2009, Nr. 19.

### Further examples

- Der Nachbar klingelt an der Tür.  
An der Tür klingelt es.
- Der Müll riecht.  
Hier riecht es unangenehm.
- Das Wasser kühlt ab.  
Morgen kühlt es ab.
- Das Kochen klappt noch nicht so gut.  
Jetzt klappt es.

### 5.5.2 [ NA | -A ] Nominative drop+accusative

A few additional apparently dropped nominatives are discussed here for completeness' sake. They appear to be highly idiosyncratic. Both examples allow for the nominative to be dropped, but an accusative argument is obligatorily present and cannot be dropped. The first example is the drop of the nominative with the verb *geben* when used in the meaning of 'to produce' (25). Note that there is close connection to another diathesis with a light verb *geben* 'to give' (see Section 12.5.4). The second example of a nominative drop with a retained object is with the verb *brauchen* 'to need' (26).

- (25) a. Die Trauben geben dieses Jahr einen guten Wein.  
b. Dieses Jahr gibt es einen guten Wein.
- (26) a. Ich brauche euch alle.  
b. Es braucht euch alle im Kampf gegen die Diktatur.

### Attested verbs

- *brauchen, geben*

### Further examples

- Der Verkäufer gibt den Lutscher gratis dazu.  
Den Lutscher gibt es gratis dazu.

### 5.5.3 [ ND | -D ] Nominative drop+dative

In a few exceptional examples a verb with a nominative and a dative allows for the nominative to be dropped and replaced by a valency-simulating pronoun *es*, like with *gefallen* ‘to appeal’ (27a,b).

- (27) a. Das Buch gefällt mir.  
b. Hier gefällt es mir gar nicht.

In contrast, in most sentences with a pronoun *es* and a dative the pronoun *es* is either phoric (29a) or position-simulating (29b), both of which do not count as the drop of an argument (cf. Section 2.2.3).

[5.46]

- (28) a. Es galt mir.  
b. Es ist mir ein Unfall widerfahren.

#### Attested verbs

- *gefallen, langen*

#### Further examples

- Mein Gehalt langt mir nicht.  
Jetzt langt es mir aber!

### 5.5.4 [ NG | -G ] Nominative drop+genitive

A few verbs with nominative and genitive arguments allow the nominative to be dropped, but the genitive to be retained, like with *bedürfen* ‘to require’ (29) and *entbehren* ‘to do without’ (30).

- (29) a. Der Kranke bedarf der Ruhe.  
b. Hier bedarf es körperlicher Kraft.
- (30) a. Der Vorwurf entbehrt jeglichen Beweises.  
b. Insofern entbehrt es jeglichen Beweises.

#### Attested verbs

- *bedürfen, entbehren*

— [ OBJ > SBJ > Ø ] — *Antikausativ*5.5.5 [ NA | –N ] *haben* anticausative

A typical anticausative verb allows for both a transitive (31a) and an intransitive construction (31b) in which the intransitive nominative expresses the same participant as the transitive accusative. This is attested in German with verbs like *beginnen* ‘to start’ (31). However, because this diathesis is formally unmarked it is difficult to decide whether this should be classified as an anticausative or as a causative (cf. ref-scheibl2006: 355).

[5.49] Whatever the ultimate best analysis will be, it is important to realise that there are two different classes of verbs in German. With verbs like *beginnen* the perfect of the intransitive exists with both auxiliaries *sein* (31c) and *haben* (31d). In contrast, with verbs like *zerbrechen* ‘to break’ the intransitive perfect only allows for *sein* (see Section 5.6.2 for an extensive discussion). These two classes of verbs should be distinguished and I propose to consider the *beginnen*-class as an anticausative diathesis (this section) and interpret the *zerbrechen*-class as a causative diathesis (see Section 5.6.2).

Semantically, the intransitive *haben*-construction in (31d) seems to be the regular perfect of the intransitive (31b). The intransitive *sein*-construction in (31c) is probably best analysed as the *Zustandspassiv* (see Section 10.5.16) of the transitive (31a). The temporal structure of the two intransitive participle constructions agrees with this proposal. As argued in Section 10.2.6, the *Zustandspassiv* is result-oriented and as such not compatible with gradual time specification, like *schrittweise* ‘gradually’ (31c,d). Note that the adverbial *schrittweise* would be possible in the *ist begonnen worden* construction. However, though superficially similar, that is clearly a different construction (see Section 10.5.16 for a detailed discussion).

- (31) a. Er beginnt den Krieg.  
       b. Der Krieg beginnt.  
       c. Der Krieg ist (\*schrittweise) begonnen.  
       d. Der Krieg hat (schrittweise) begonnen.

**Attested verbs**

- *abnehmen, abreißen, abstoßen, anfangen, anhalten, aufmachen, backen, baden, beginnen, bewegen, braten, bremsen, duschen, fliegen, kochen, landen, läuten, öffnen, rauchen, schließen, spielen (Tonträger), starten, stoppen, umdrehen, umgeben, wiegen, zählen, zünden*

### Further examples

- Ich koche den Kaffee.  
Der Kaffee hat gekocht.  
Der Kaffee ist gekocht.
- Er landet das Flugzeug.  
Das Flugzeug hat gelandet.  
Das Flugzeug ist gelandet.
- Ich habe die Bombe gezündet.  
Die Bombe hat gezündet.  
Die Bombe ist gezündet.
- Der Mitarbeiter macht den Laden auf.  
Der Laden hat aufgemacht.  
Der Laden ist aufgemacht.
- Ich rauche eine Zigarette.  
Das Feuer hat geraucht.  
Die Zigarette ist geraucht.
- Ich wiege den Patienten vor und nach der Behandlung.  
Der Patient hat 50 Kilo gewogen.  
Der Patient ist schon gewogen.
- Ich habe das Werk angefangen.  
Der Film hat angefangen.  
Das Werk ist angefangen, aber nicht vollendet.
- Er zählt mich zu den Menschen.  
Ich habe zu den Menschen gezählt.  
Die Tage sind gezählt.
- Ich habe das Boot umgedreht.  
Das Boot hat vor dem Hafen umgedreht.  
Das Boot ist umgedreht.
- Ich habe das Boot abgestoßen.  
Die Fähre hat abgestoßen. Das Boot ist abgestoßen.<sup>6</sup>
- Ich habe die Platte gespielt.  
Die Platte hat gespielt. Die Platte ist gespielt.

### Notes

A causative reading seems to be available with *duschen* ‘to take a shower’ (32a).<sup>[51]</sup> With an accusative this verb means ‘to give someone else a shower’ (32b). How-

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<sup>6</sup>DWDS: <https://www.dwds.de/wb/abstoßen>, accessed on 25 March 2022.



ever, both intransitive perfekt auxiliaries *haben* and *sein* are possible (32c,d), so I classify this alternation here with the anticausatives (and not with the causatives). A parallel situation arises with *baden* ‘to bathe’.

- (32) a. Ich dusche.  
 b. Ich dusche den Elefanten.  
 c. Ich habe geduscht.  
 d. Der Elefant ist geduscht.

[5.52] The verb *abnehmen* is possibly better analysed as two different lexemes, either with the meaning ‘to take away’ (33a) or ‘to reduce’ (33b).

- (33) a. Ich habe (dir) den Ausweis abgenommen.  
 Der Ausweis ist (dir) abgenommen.  
 b. Der Regen hat abgenommen.

[5.53] Similarly, the verb *anhalten* has two different meanings. In the meaning ‘to stop’ this verb can clearly be used both transitively and intransitively with a *haben*-Perfekt (34a). However, the *sein*-Zustandspassiv is not possible (34b). The lexeme *anhalten* has another meaning, viz. ‘to admonish’ which does allow for a *sein*-Zustandspassiv (34c), but not for an intransitive *haben*-Perfekt.

- (34) a. Ich habe den Bus angehalten.  
 Der Bus hat angehalten.  
 b. \*Der Bus ist angehalten.  
 c. Ich habe meinen Sohn angehalten, pünktlich zu sein.  
 Mein Sohn ist angehalten, pünktlich zu sein.

[5.54] The verbs *öffnen* ‘to open’ and *schließen* ‘to close’ appear here in a special usage, for example when related to the opening and closing of a *Laden* ‘shop’ (35a). In that context an unmarked anticausative can be used (17b). In contrast, with other objects like *Tür* ‘door’ (35c) the anticausative needs an obligatory reflexive pronoun (35d), see Section 7.5.2. The exact conditions governing this difference need more research.

- (35) a. Der Mitarbeiter öffnet den Laden.  
 Der Laden ist geöffnet.  
 b. Der Laden öffnet.  
 Der Laden hat geöffnet.  
 c. Er öffnet die Tür.

## 5 Case-marking alternations

Die Tür ist geöffnet.

d. Die Tür öffnet sich.

Die Tür hat sich geöffnet

### 5.5.6 [ NAD | -ND ] *haben* anticausative+dative

The verb *anhängen* literally (but not commonly) means ‘to attach to’ (36a). However, more widespread is the metaphorical extension with a meaning of ‘to put a burden on somebody’ with the ‘somebody’ encoded in the dative case (36b). In this meaning it can be used intransitively (36c) and the dative cannot be dropped (36d). Note that there is variation in the form of the participle (*angehängt* vs. *angehangen*), which is a vestige of causative morphology (see paragraph 6.52 on page 201). Also note that the auxiliary *sein* does not seem to be possible in the intransitive (36e), so this verb does not align with other vestiges of causative morphology in German (see Section 5.6.3).

- (36) a. Das ist der Titel einer Abhandlung, die er dem “ABC der Anschauung” angehängt hat.<sup>7</sup>  
b. Ich habe meinem Widersacher einen Prozess angehängt.  
c. Er hat einer Illusion angehangen.  
d. \* Ich habe angehangen.  
e. \* Er ist einer Illusion angehangen.

#### Attested verbs

- *anhängen*

## 5.6 Diatheses with promotion to subject

— [ Ø > SBJ ] —

### 5.6.1 [ - | N ] Weather agents

With some weather verbs like *wehen* ‘to be windy’ it seems to be semantically rather obvious that the addition of an agent (81b) is an extension of a basically

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<sup>7</sup>DWDS: Blättner, Fritz: Geschichte der Pädagogik, Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer 1961 [1951], S. 202.

avalent verb (37a). However, formally there is no difference between an unmarked “nominative addition” as discussed in this section and an unmarked “nominative drop” as discussed in Section 5.5.1. One possible avenue to distinguish these two classes is to consider the range of possible nominative agents. For verbs like *wehen* there appears to be only a small closed class of options for the nominative.

- (37) a. Es weht.  
b. Der Wind weht.

Such additions of an agent like with *wehen* appear to be rare. It is crucial to distinguish agent-like subjects that are the originators of the phenomenon expressed by the verb, like *Wind* ‘wind’ in (37b), from patient-like subjects that are propelled by the phenomenon, like *Blätter* ‘leaves’ (38a). These patient-like nominatives can be easily identified because a location phrase is necessary (38b). These constructions are discussed in Section 6.8.3. Another diathesis adding arguments to weather verbs is the addition of objects, discussed in Section 5.8.2.

- (38) a. Die Blätter wehen durch die Luft.  
b. \* Die Blätter wehen.

#### Attested verbs

- *dunkeln, regnen, stürmen, tauen, wehen*

#### Further examples

- Der Regen regnet täglich.
- Das Wetter stürmt.
- Der Schnee taut.
- Der Abend dunkelt.

— [ Ø > SBJ > OBJ ] — *Kausativ*

#### 5.6.2 [ -N | NA ] *sein* causative

A typical causative verb like *zerbrechen* ‘to break’ allows for both an intransitive (39a) and a transitive construction (39d), in which the participant in the intransitive nominative (here *Krug* ‘jar’) is the same as the participant in the transitive accusative.

## 5 Case-marking alternations

- (39) a. Der Krug zerbricht.  
b. Der Krug ist zerbrochen.  
c. \*Der Krug hat zerbrochen.  
d. Der Junge zerbricht den Krug.

The crucial characteristic of the causative verbs discussed in this section is that they only allow for a perfect with *sein* in the intransitive (39b,c). This differentiates these verbs from verbs like *kochen* ‘to cook’ that allow for both *haben* and *sein* in the intransitive perfect (40). I propose to analyse verbs like *zerbrechen* with only *sein* in the intransitive as causatives (this section), while verbs like *kochen* with both *haben* and *sein* in the intransitive are classified as anticausatives (see Section 5.5.5).

- (40) a. Der Kaffee kocht.  
b. Der Kaffee ist gekocht.  
c. Der Kaffee hat gekocht.  
d. Der Junge kocht den Kaffee.

Note that the intransitive perfekt with *sein* is strongly reminiscent of an anticausative construction known in German linguistics as the *Zustandspassiv* (see Section 10.5.16). However, that construction is available for a much larger group of predicates like *bauen* ‘to build’ (41). Crucially different from *zerbrechen*, a verb like *bauen* does not allow for the anticausative to occur in the present tense (41a). The resulting three classes of verbs can be distinguished by comparing the grammaticality judgements of the four constructions listed here for the verbs *zerbrechen* (39), *kochen* (40) and *bauen* (41).

[5.60]

- (41) a. \*Das Haus baut.  
b. Das Haus ist gebaut.  
c. \*Das Haus hat gebaut.  
d. Der Junge baut ein Haus.

Although there is no overt derivational direction in German between an unmarked anticausative like *kochen* and an unmarked causative like *zerbrechen*, there are a few indications substantiating this analysis. First, many verbs with only *sein* in the intransitive have preverbs like *zer-* and such preverbal derivations are typically causatives, resulting in transitive constructions (see Chapter 8 on preverbal diatheses). Crucially, almost all verbs in the current causative class

[5.61]

are attested both with and without preverb with often only minimal differences in meaning, e.g. compare *brechen* ‘to break’ in (42) with *zerbrechen* ‘to break’ in (40).

- (42) a. Der Stock bricht.  
 b. Ich breche den Stock.  
 c. Der Stock ist gebrochen.  
 d. \*Der Stock hat gebrochen.

[5.6] Second, there are very many (though not exclusively) verbs denoting natural processes in this class, like *altern* ‘to age’ or *verderben* ‘to rot’, which can be argued semantically to be basically intransitive.

### Attested verbs

- Verbs with likewise causative preverb variants: *biegen* (*einbiegen*), *bleichen* (*erbleichen*, *verbleichen*), *bräunen* (*anbräunen*), *brechen* (*abbrechen*, *zerbrechen*), *brennen* (*abbrennen*, *niederbrennen*, *verbrennen*), *fahren* (*überfahren*), *fliegen* (*einfliegen*), *frieren* (*einfrieren*), *klappen* (*aufklappen*, *zuklappen*), *knicken* (*abknicken*, *einknicken*), *reißen* (*abreißen*, *einreißen*, *zerreißen*), *rollen* (*ausrollen*), *staunen* (*erstaunen*), *stürzen* (*umstürzen*), *tauen* (*auftauen*), *treten* (*antreten*, *wegtreten*), *trocknen* (*austrocknen*), *wirbeln* (*aufwirbeln*)
- Preverbal verbs from adjectival roots: *abkühlen*, *ermatten*, *verrohen*, *abstumpfen*
- Preverbal verbs from nominal roots: *erzürnen*, *verdunsten*, *zersplittern*
- Others: *altern*, *ersticken*, *ertrinken*, *fliehen*, *heilen*, *reifen*, *schrumpfen*, *verderben*, *verqualmen*, *vorrücken*, *zuschneien*

### Further examples

- Die Regierung stürzt/ist gestürzt.  
 Die Streitkräfte stürzen die Regierung.
- Der Zug fährt/ist gefahren.  
 Er fährt das Auto nach Hause.
- Der Mast knickt/ist geknickt.  
 Die Welle knickt den Mast des Bootes.
- Der Schnee taut/ist getaut.  
 Die Lava taut das Eis.
- Die Eiswürfel schmelzen/sind geschmolzen.  
 Die Arbeiter schmelzen 26,31 Tonnen Stahl je Stunde.

## 5 Case-marking alternations

- Die deutsche Gesellschaft altert/ist gealtert.  
Der Kummer altert sie.
- Die Papiere verbrennen/sind verbrannt.  
Er verbrennt die Papiere.
- Die Luft kühlt durch den Regen ab. Die Luft ist abgekühlt.  
Der Regen kühlt die Luft ab.
- Der Stamm knickt ein/ist eingeknickt.  
Der Sturm knickt die Äste und Stämme ein.
- Das Dorf brennt bis auf die Grundmauern nieder. Das Dorf ist niedergebrannt.  
Die Soldaten brennen das Dorf nieder.
- Ich trete an. Ich bin zum Dienst angetreten.  
Ich trete den Urlaub an.
- Er erzürnte sehr über die Nachricht. Er ist erzürnt.  
Die Rede erzürnt mich.
- Wir fahren mit der Fähre über. Wir sind übergefahren.  
Die Fähre fährt uns über.
- Die Wunde heilt/ist geheilt.  
Der Doktor heilt die Wunde.
- Die Zigarren verqualmen den Raum.  
Der Raum verqualmt.
- Der Handel schrumpft.  
Daewoo schrumpfte den Hubraum des alten 1,6-Liter-Kadett-Motors und erhielt ihm seine 75 PS.<sup>8</sup>

### Notes

The verbs *zuschneien* ‘to block by snow’ (43a) and *reifen* ‘to mature’ (43b) only <sup>[5.63]</sup> appear to be possible as transitives with weather agents (see Section 5.6.1).

- (43) a. Der Garten ist zugeschneit. Der Garten schneit zu.  
Der Schnee hat den Garten zugeschneit.
- b. Die Frucht reift. Die Frucht ist gereift.  
Die Sonne hat die Frucht gereift.

The verb *fliehen* ‘to flee’ can be used transitively, but this seems to be unusual (44a). The intransitive and transitive uses of *wegtreten* seem to be rather far apart semantically, meaning ‘to step away’ vs. ‘to kick away’ (44b). <sup>[5.64]</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 18.03.1995.

- (44) a. Er floh vor dem Feind.  
Er floh ihren Blick.  
b. Ich bin (von der Tür) weggetreten.  
Ich habe den Ball weggetreten.

### 5.6.3 [ -N | NA ] *Umlaut* causative

[5.65] Originally based on the Germanic suffix *-jan*, which turned into an umlaut, some verbs have an intransitive (e.g. *fallen* ‘to fall’) and a transitive causative (e.g. *fällen* ‘to fell’) only separated by a vowel-quality difference (45).

- (45) a. Der Baum ist gefallen.  
b. Ich habe den Baum gefällt.

#### Attested verbs

- *biegen/beugen, fallen/fällen, saugen/säugen, sinken/senken, springen/sprengen*

#### Further examples

- Das Schiff sinkt.  
Ich senke die Fahne.
- Der Hund springt.  
Ich sprengte das Gebäude.
- Das Kind saugt.  
Die Mutter säugt das Kind.

### 5.6.4 [ -N | NA ] *Umlaut* adjectival causative

[5.66] The process to form a causative with the suffix *-jan* also applied to adjectival predicates. There are still a few remnants of such pairs found in contemporary German, in which the old suffix is retained as an umlaut (46). More cases are available with additional preverbs, see Section 8.6.3.

- (46) a. Die Kiste ist schwarz.  
b. Ich schwärzte den Text.

## 5 Case-marking alternations

### Attested verbs

- *voll/füllen, glatt/glätten, hart/härten, kurz/kürzen, schwarz/schwärzen, warm/wärmen*

— [ OBJ > SBJ ] —

### 5.6.5 [ A | N ] Accusative-to-nominative promotion

Some verbs with experiencer subjects needed an accusative subject in older stages of German (cf. **ref-nubling2006**: 103–104), but these verbs either were completely lost, like *dürsten* ‘to be thirsty’ (47a), or the accusative tends to be replaced by a nominative, like with *frieren* ‘to be cold’ (47b,c). The verb *frieren* with a human experiencer is currently in the middle of this transition, allowing for both constructions.

- (47) a. Mich düstet.  
b. Mich friert.  
c. Ich friere.

### Attested verbs

- *frieren*

## 5.7 Diatheses with object demotion

This section concerns those alternations in which a non-nominative case-marked argument can be removed or demoted. When considered in this direction (e.g. “an accusative is removed/demoted”), then such alternations are known as antipassives. Conversely, when this same alternation is analysed reversely (e.g. “an accusative is added/promoted”) then such alternations are known as applicatives. Because this chapter deals with unmarked “covert” alternations, there is no structural difference between these two situations. Rather, they are two different ways to look at the same phenomenon. Still, I have tried to classify diathesis into either of these two options based on (debatable) semantic arguments and parallels to other diatheses with overt derivations.

[5.68]



– [ OBJ > Ø ] – *Optionaler Akkusativ*

## 5.7.1 [ NA | N– ] Accusative drop

[5.69] Drops, or covert antipassives, i.e. the removal of an accusative object, is a well-known phenomenon under the name of ambitransitive or labile verbs, exemplified here with *stören* ‘to interrupt’ (19).

- (48) a. Du störst die Veranstaltung.  
b. Du störst.

[5.70] This phenomenon is often exemplified with the verb *essen* ‘to eat’ (49a,b). However, *essen* will not be considered an example of a strict accusative drop here, because the object can also be turned into a prepositional phrase (49c). All such prepositional antipassives also allow a bare antipassive expression, so they will not be repeated here (see Section 6.7.8).

- (49) a. Ich esse einen Apfel.  
b. Ich esse.  
c. Ich esse von dem Apfel.

[5.71] Also, there are verbs with an accusative and a dative argument (50a) that allow both to be dropped (50b,c). These are also discussed elsewhere and will not be repeated here as examples of an accusative drop (see Section 6.7.11).

- (50) a. Ich backe dir einen Kuchen.  
b. Ich backe einen Kuchen.  
c. Ich backe.

Similarly, dropping of an accusative argument is very widespread when focus is placed on the action itself. In such contexts the addition of an adverbial construction is necessary (51). Such verbs do not belong to the present group of accusative drop verbs (see Section 9.7.1).

- (51) a. Ich sehe das Haus.  
b. ?Ich sehe.  
c. Ich sehe gut.

What is left is an apparently small group of transitive verbs that allow for the accusative to be dropped – and that neither allow for a (free) dative, nor for a

## 5 Case-marking alternations

prepositional antipassive. These verbs are formally similar to verbs that allow for an accusative to be added (see Section 5.8.1). The only difference between adding or removing an accusative is an (admittedly rather vague) semantic intuition about whether the intransitive or the transitive meaning is more “basic”.

### Attested verbs

- *angreifen, feiern, nerven, regieren, stören, studieren, wählen*

### Further examples

- Er regiert das Land.  
Die Vernunft regiert hier.
- Er studiert den Fahrplan.  
Er studiert von früh bis abends.
- Der deutsche Staatssekretär nervt den malischen Minister.  
Du nervst.

### 5.7.2 [ NAA | NA– ] Accusative drop+accusative

Most verbs that allow for two accusative arguments allow for one of these arguments to be dropped (52a,b). In some situations even both can be dropped (52c).

- (52)
- a. Er lehrt mich den Trick.
  - b. Er lehrt den Koran.
  - c. Er lehrt an einer Hochschule.

Double accusatives also regularly appear with quantified objects (53a), see Section 5.3.9, and named objects (53b), see Section 5.3.10. Also these verbs regularly allow for one of the accusatives to be dropped (53c,d).

- (53)
- a. Das Buch kostet mich keinen Pfennig.
  - b. Ich nenne dich einen Egoisten.
  - c. Das Buch kostet viel.
  - d. Er nennt den Namen des Kindes.

### Attested verbs

- *abfragen, lehren*

## Further examples

- Die alte Dame fragt den Schüler Englischvokabeln ab.<sup>9</sup>

## Notes

[5.76]

The verb *unterrichten* ‘to instruct’ also allows for two different accusative objects, either referring to the recipient of the instruction (54a) or the object of the instruction (115b). However, these two accusative objects do not seem to occur together easily. When the recipient is in the accusative, the object of instruction typically is encoded as a prepositional phrase (54c). When the object is in the accusative, the recipient is normally not expressed. Interestingly, both these accusative objects can be passivised (54d,e). Note that the verb *unterrichten* can also mean ‘to notify’. However, that meaning has different roles discussed in Section 6.3.2.

- (54) a. Ich unterrichte dich.  
 b. Ich unterrichte den Koran.  
 c. Ich unterrichte dich im Koran.  
 d. Du wirst (von mir) unterrichtet.  
 e. Der Koran wird (von mir) unterrichtet.

## 5.7.3 [ NAD | N-D ] Accusative drop+dative

[5.77]

This is the pattern as attested with the verb *danken* ‘to thank’ as exemplified in (55a-c). The accusative can be left out, but only when the dative is retained. The dative cannot be dropped. This pattern seems to be extremely rare. There seems to be a generalisation that the accusative can normally not be dropped before also a governed dative is dropped (see also Section 6.7). From informal discussion, it appears that the sentence in (55a) is rejected by many German speakers, but it is clearly attested.

- (55) a. Ich danke dem Arzt mein Leben.<sup>10</sup>  
 b. Ich danke dem Arzt.  
 c. \* Ich danke mein Leben.

This pattern of *danken* might have arisen out of a confusion of *danken* with *verdanken*. The verb *danken* allows for a governed preposition *für* instead of the accusative (56a). In contrast, *verdanken* needs an accusative and a dative (56b-d).

[5.78]

<sup>9</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 19.11.2009, Nr. 48.

<sup>10</sup>Adapted from DWDS dictionary at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/danken>, accessed 5 April 2022.

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- (56) a. Ich danke dir für mein Leben.  
b. Ich verdanke dir mein Leben.  
c. \*Ich verdanke dir.  
d. \*Ich verdanke mein Leben.

### Attested verbs

- *danken*

### — [ OBJ > Ø ] — *Optionaler Dativ*

#### 5.7.4 [ ND | N- ] Dative drop

Verbs that take a dative, but do not allow for an accusative, are well attested, though not very frequent in German. Some of these verbs do not allow the dative to be dropped (see Section 5.3.4) and a few allow for the dative to be replaced by a prepositional phrase (see Section 6.7.10) or by a possessor (see Section 5.8.3). [5.79]

[5.80] In this section only verbs are listed for which the only alternative for the dative is a complete drop, like *entkommen* ‘to escape’ (57a). Some of the verbs in this class only allow for inanimate subjects, like *gelingen* ‘to succeed’ (57b).

- (57) a. Er entkommt (seinem Feind).  
b. Die Torte gelingt (mir).

### Attested verbs

- Obligatory inanimate subject: *beiliegen, bevorstehen, einleuchten, gelingen, geschehen, passieren, schmecken, sitzen (passen)*
- Possibly animate subject: *auffallen, beitreten, entkommen, entweichen, erscheinen, fehlen, folgen, gratulieren, helfen, unterliegen, weglaufen, zuhören, zulaufen*

### Further examples

- Ihre Fehler fallen (mir) auf.
- Das Formular liegt (dem Schreiben) bei.
- Ich trete (dem Verein) bei.
- Das Spiel steht (mir) bevor.
- Zwei Unterschriften fehlen (mir).
- Der Hund folgt (mir).

- Der Unfall geschieht (mir).
- Er gratuliert (mir).
- Er hilft (mir).
- Der Pudding schmeckt (mir).
- Er läuft (mir) weg.
- Ich höre (dir) zu.
- Die Katze ist (mir) zugelaufen.
- Der Mantel sitzt (mir) gut.

### 5.7.5 [ NAD | NA– ] Dative drop+accusative

Ditransitive verbs like *verbieten* ‘to prohibit’ (58a-c), that allow for the dative but not the accusative to be dropped, are common. Semantically, this diathesis seems to be restricted to performative verbs, typically verbs of verbal communication.

- (58) a. Ich verbiete dir das Rauchen.  
b. \*Ich verbiete dir.  
c. Ich verbiete das Rauchen.

#### Attested verbs

- Verbal performatives: *aussprechen, befehlen, beschreiben, beweisen, bieten, empfehlen, erlauben, erzählen, gestehen, gestatten, mitteilen, nahelegen, nennen, verbieten, verraten, verschreiben, versprechen, verweigern, vorschlagen, vorschreiben, wünschen*
- Non-verbal performatives: *reichen, vorführen, vormachen, zahlen*

#### Further examples

- Ich spreche (dir) den Dank aller Kollegen aus.
- Ich erzähle (dir) eine Geschichte.
- Ich nenne (dir) den Namen.
- Ich verschreibe (dir) die Cortisontabletten.
- Der Chef versprach (mir) eine Lösung.
- Der Dompteur führt (mir) eine gemischte Raubtiergruppe vor.
- Ich mache (dir) die Tanzschritte vor.
- Die Gesetze schreiben (dir) eine solche Überprüfung vor.
- Ich wünsche (dir) ein schönes Leben.
- Ich befehle (dir) Gehorsamkeit.

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- Ich schlage (dir) ein Kompromiss vor.
- Ich beweise (dir) meine Unschuld.
- Ich lege dir den Rücktritt nahe.  
Das Foto legt seine Schuld nahe.

### Notes

The verb *nahelegen* is used without dative in combination with an inanimate <sup>[5.82]</sup> subject (59a), but with dative in case of an animate subject (59b).

- (59) a. Das Foto hat seine Verwicklung in das Doping-System nahegelegt.  
b. Der Trainer hat ihm das Doping nahegelegt.

### 5.7.6 [ NAD | N-- ] Dative drop+accusative drop

Although it is not impossible, it seems to be rather unusual for “real” ditransitive verbs like *vorlesen* ‘to read aloud’ (60a) to allow for either the accusative (60b) or the dative (60c) to be dropped.

- (60) a. Ich lese dir ein Buch vor.  
b. Ich lese dir vor.  
c. Ich lese ein Buch vor.

### Attested verbs

- *vorlesen*

### 5.7.7 [ NG | N- ] Genitive drop

This theoretically possible diathesis is listed here only for the sake of completeness, as there do not seem to be any genuine examples attested in contemporary German. Genitive arguments without accusative are extremely unusual. They appear to be vanishing from the German language (see Section 5.3.5). Also genitive antipassives are practically unattested (see Section 6.7.14). Genitive arguments with an additional accusative argument seem to be slightly more common (see Section 5.7.8 and 6.7.15).

### 5.7.8 [ NAG | NA– ] Genitive drop+accusative

Given that there are already very few verbs with genitive arguments in German, it is no surprise that there appear to be only a handful of genitive ditransitives, i.e. verbs that can occur with nominative, accusative and genitive arguments. On closer inspection, almost all such verbs allow for alternative constructions in which the genitive argument is changed (for the only known exception, see Section 5.3.7). The verbs listed in the current class allow for the complete drop of the genitive argument, like with *würdigen* ‘to acknowledge’ (61). Some further verbs with genitive and accusative arguments allow for a *von* prepositional phrase instead of a genitive (see Section 6.7.15).

- (61) a. Er würdigte den Vorschlag einer eingehenden Prüfung.  
 b. Er würdigt den Vorschlag.

#### Attested verbs

- *anklagen, belehren, berauben, besinnen, überführen, würdigen*

#### Further examples

- Ich klage dich des Diebstahls an.  
 Ich klage dich an.
- Ich belehre dich eines Besseren.  
 Ich belehre dich.
- Ich überführe den Mörder eines Verbrechens.  
 Ich werde den Mörder überführen.
- Ich beraube dich deiner Rechte.  
 Er beraubt dich.

## 5.8 Diatheses with promotion to object

[5.86] In this chapter, I have tried to distinguish between the demotion of an object (antipassive or drop, see Section 5.7) and the promotion of an accusative (applicative or addition, this section). However, for “covert” diatheses I cannot find any substantial difference between these phenomena, except for a faint semantic impression that covert applicatives do not imply an accusative object (but allow it), while bare antipassives imply an accusative object (but allow it to be dropped). It remains a clear desideratum to put this intuitive differentiation on stricter grammatical footing.

– [ Ø > OBJ ] – *Ergebnisakkusativ*

5.8.1 [ N– | NA ] Added result

There are various kinds of objects that can be added to apparent intransitives as a result. For example: a competitive entity in sports (62a), the result of an action (62b), the name of the result of an action (62c) and possibly many others (62d,e).

- (62) a. Er ist/hat den Marathon gelaufen.  
b. Er ist/hat den Salto gesprungen.  
c. Er hat den Tango getanzt.  
d. Er hat den Staub geatmet.  
e. Er hat den Tatort geschaut.

A similar phenomenon is attested with manner-of-speaking verbs like *stottern* ‘to stutter’ (63a). Such verbs can take an accusative object with a meaning like ‘to utter something in a stuttering manner’ (63b). Note that by adding a possessed prepositional phrase (63c), see Section 6.8.4, it is even possible to use a possessor-dative alternation (63d), see Section 6.8.12, leading to an apparently “intransitive” verb with a dative, accusative and an obligatory location argument.

- (63) a. Er stotterte vor Aufregung  
b. Er stotterte eine Entschuldigung.  
c. Ich flüsterte die Lösung in sein Ohr.  
d. Ich flüsterte ihm die Lösung ins Ohr.

These verbs are formally similar to verbs that allow for an accusative to be dropped (see Section 5.7.1). The only difference between these two classes is a (rather vague) semantic intuition about whether the intransitive or the transitive meaning is more “basic”. As a rule-of-thumb the verbs in this section have an object that is the result of the action as described by the verb (hence the German name *ERGEBNISAKKUSATIV*). Whether this is a useful separation has to be determined by future research.

[5.89]

**Attested verbs**

- Manner-of-movement: *fliehen, hetzen, laufen, schwimmen, springen, tanzen*
- Manner-of-speaking: *brüllen, flüstern, grölen, johlen, murmeln, schreien, singen, stottern*
- Others: *atmen, leben, schauen, spielen*



### Further examples

- Er ist/hat die 400 Meter geschwommen.
- Er hat ein Lied gesungen.
- Er hat einen Walzer gespielt.
- Ich lebe die Freiheit.
- Die Fans grölen die Hymne.
- Das Publikum johlte Beifall.
- Ich flüstere die Lösung.
- Er murmelt die Antwort.
- Ich brüllte die Antwort.
- Er floh ihren Blick.

### 5.8.2 [ – | A ] Weather result

Some verbs that allow for the nominative to be absent (see Section 5.6.1) can have an accusative object without a nominative, although this possibility seems to be strongly limited to weather phenomena (64a) and is often used metaphorically (64b).

[5.90]

- (64) a. Gestern hat es riesengroße Körner gehagelt.  
 b. Im Jahre 1932 hagelte es einen Schauer neuer Gesetze.  
 Es schneit Absagen.

### Attested verbs

- Weather verbs: *schneien*, *hageln*, *regnen*

### Further examples

- Es schneit.  
 Gestern hat es dicke Flocken geschneit.
- Es regnet.  
 Gestern hat es nur einzelne Tropfen geregnet.

### – [ ADJ > OBJ ] – *Pertinenzdativ*

### 5.8.3 [ Ng | ND ] Possessor-of-nominative to dative experiencer

For some verbs, the dative is an alternative expression of the possessor of the nominative (65a,b). Crucially, the participant is the same person in these two

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expressions, as can be seen by the possibility of (65c) but the impossibility of (65d).

- (65) a. Mir brennen die Füße.  
b. Meine Füße brennen.  
c. Meine Füße brennen mir.  
d. \*Meine Füße brennen dir.

### Attested verbs

- Bodily sensations: *bluten, brennen, frieren, drücken, jucken, klopfen, rasen* (Emotion), *schmerzen, schwellen, stechen, tränen, zittern, wachsen, weh tun*
- Natural processes: *anbrennen, blühen, brechen, rosten, stinken, überkochen, verblühen, verfaulen, verrosten, verwelken, zufrieren, rauchen*
- Others: *langen*

### Further examples

- Meine Füße brennen. Mir brennen die Füße.
- Meine Nase friert. Mir friert die Nase.
- Mein Kopf juckt. Mir juckt der Kopf.
- Mein Bein schmerzt. Mir schmerzt das Bein.
- Meine Augen tränen. Mir tränen die Augen.
- Meine Hände zittern. Mir zittern die Hände.
- Mein Bein tut weh. Mir tut das Bein weh.
- Meine Blumen blühen. Mir blühen die Blumen.
- Mein Zaun rostet. Mir rostet der Zaun.
- Meine Socken stinken. Mir stinken die Socken.
- Meine Schuhe drücken. Mir drücken die Schuhe.
- Mein Herz klopft. Mir klopft das Herz.
- Mein Kopf rast. Mir rast der Kopf.
- Meine Füße schwellen. Mir schwellen die Füße.
- Mein Herz blutet. Mir blutet das Herz.
- Mein Gehalt langt nicht. Mir langt das Gehalt nicht.
- Mein Krug bricht. Mir bricht der Krug.
- Mein Kopf raucht. Mir raucht der Kopf.
- Mein Bart wächst. Mir wächst der Bart.

## Notes

Coreference (i.e. “reflexive double marking”) is possible (66a), but in the third person this does not lead to a reflexive pronoun *sich* (66b,c):

[5.92]

- (66) a. Mir stinken meine Socken.  
 b. Ihm stinken seine Socken.  
 c. \* Sich stinken seine Socken.

[5.93] It might seem that bare causative verbs like *abbrennen* ‘to burn down’ (cf. Section 5.6.2), also allow for this alternation (67a,b). However, there is no necessary coreference between the dative and the possessor in these cases (67c). This characteristic is crucial for distinguishing different classes of verbs.

- (67) a. Das Haus brennt mir ab.  
 b. Mein Haus brennt ab.  
 c. Mein Haus brennt dir ab.

## 5.8.4 [ NAg | NAD ] Possessor-of-accusative to dative experiencer

[5.94] A widespread dative alternation is the so-called possessor-to-dative raising. Specifically, with some ditransitive datives the dative can be reformulated as the possessor of the accusative (68a,b).

- (68) a. Ich schneide ihm die Haare.  
 b. Ich schneide seine Haare.

[5.95] This alternation occurs with all verbs with the *von* and *für* dative antipassive (see Section 6.7.11). Additionally, there are many verbs in the realm of destruction and repair that allow for this diathesis.

For some verbs there is a possible ambiguity of the datives, like in (69a) and (70a). There is a difference between the interpretation as a *für* beneficiary alternant ‘on your behalf’ (69b), (70b), see Section 6.8.9, and the interpretation as a possessive alternant (69c), (70c), as discussed in this section.

- (69) a. Ich koche dir die Suppe.  
 b. Ich koche die Suppe für dich.  
 (Das ist mein Plan, vielleicht kriegst du die Suppe aber nie.)  
 c. Ich koche deine Suppe.

## 5 Case-marking alternations

(d.h. die Suppe, die du bestellt hast)

- (70) a. Ich beantworte dir die Frage.  
b. Ich beantworte die Frage für dich.  
(weil du willst, dass ich das mache)  
c. Ich beantworte deine Frage.  
(d.h. die Frage, die du gestellt hast)

### Attested verbs

- Body tending: *heilen, kämmen, kratzen, küssen, maniküren, rasieren, streicheln, verbinden*
- Injury: *auskugeln, brechen, verdrehen, verrenken, zerquetschen*
- Destruction: *amputieren, beenden, beschädigen, kündigen, ruinieren, schneiden, unterbrechen, versalzen, zerbrechen, zerknittern, zertreten*
- Repair: *aktualisieren, korrigieren, reparieren*
- Others: *ausstellen, beantworten, dressieren, packen*

### Further examples

- Ich beschädige dir das Auto.  
Ich beschädige dein Auto.
- Ich versalze dir die Suppe.  
Ich versalze deine Suppe.
- Ich habe mir das Bein gebrochen.  
Ich habe mein Bein gebrochen.
- Ich ruiniere dir die Feier.  
Ich ruiniere deine Feier.
- Ich beende/kündige dir den Vertrag.  
Ich beende/kündige deinen Vertrag.

## 5.9 Symmetrical diatheses

— [ OBJ > SBJ > OBJ ] —

### 5.9.1 [ NA | AN ] Accusative/accusative inersive

The verb *erwarten* ‘to expect’ has an exceptional valency alternation in that the accusative and nominative arguments can be reversed with a very similar mean-

[5.97]

ing (71a,b). There is a slight difference in meaning between ‘to expect’ (71a) and ‘to be imminent’ (71b).

- (71) a. Er erwartet einen Test.  
b. Der Test erwartet ihn.

This alternation is possibly best interpreted as the effect of two different metaphorical extensions of *warten* ‘to wait for’. The first extension is from ‘to wait for’ (72a) to ‘to expect’ (72b). The second usage of *warten* is typically found with inanimate subjects, meaning roughly ‘to be ready for the object’s arrival’ (72c). In this second meaning the metaphorical extension leads to the meaning ‘to be imminent’ (72d).

- (72) a. Ich warte auf den Test.  
b. Ich erwarte den Test.  
c. Zuhause wartet ein Geschenk auf dich.  
d. Ein Geschenk erwartet dich.

#### Attested verbs

- *erwarten*

#### 5.9.2 [ NA | DN ] Accusative/dative inersive

The verb *nutzen* either means ‘to use’ (73a) or ‘to benefit’ (73b) with almost reversed argument marking.

- (73) a. Der Arbeiter nutzt den Hebel.  
b. Der Hebel nutzt dem Arbeiter wenig.

I know of only a few verbs with this very special passive-like diathesis. There are a few more cases of this alternation with reflexive marking (cf. Section 7.9.1). Note that the alternant with the dative (73b) needs a very special adverbial, typically *nichts*, *was*, or *wenig* (i.e. negative polarity).

#### Attested verbs

- *nutzen*, *schmecken*

## 5 Case-marking alternations

### Further examples

- Ich schmecke den Knoblauch nicht.  
Knoblauch schmeckt mir nicht.

### — [ OBJ > OBJ ] —

Some verbs allow for the same role expressed with different case marking. These seem to be all incidental cases, mostly verbs in the midst of a diachronic change.

#### 5.9.3 [ A | D ] Accusative-to-dative

A few experiencer verbs with an original accusative argument are currently considered rather old-fashioned in German (74a). Instead of the original accusative they sometimes are attested with a dative (74b). Note that some of these verbs also have a governed preposition (74c) and a reflexive alternation (74d), see also Section 7.6.1.

- (74)
- a. Mich graut.
  - b. Mir graut.
  - c. Mich ekelt vor dem Spinat.
  - d. Ich eke mich vor dem Essen.

#### Attested verbs

- *ekeln, grauen, gruseln, schauern, schwindeln*

#### 5.9.4 [ NAA | NAD ] Accusative-to-dative+accusative

Some verbs that allow for two accusative objects appear to disambiguate this situation by optionally changing one of the accusative arguments to a dative (75a,b).

- (75)
- a. Er lehrt mich den Trick.
  - b. Er lehrt mir den Trick.

#### Attested verbs

- *kosten, lehren, nennen*

### Further examples

- Ich nenne dich einen Egoisten.  
Ich nenne dir drei Möglichkeiten.
- Das Buch kostet mich keinen Pfennig.  
Das wird mir noch viel kosten.

### Notes

The verb *nennen* seems to have a rather clear semantic difference between ‘to name’ (with two accusative arguments) and ‘to mention’ (with an accusative and a dative argument).

### 5.9.5 [ NG | NA ] Genitive-to-accusative

[5.105] The verb *achten* ‘to watch for, to respect’ has an old-fashioned alternative possibility to take a genitive argument, but only as a negative polarity element. Most examples have an explicit negation, but examples with *niemand* ‘nobody’ or *gering* ‘a bit’ are also attested (see examples below). The more widespread usage is with an accusative argument (also without negation).

- (76) a. Man achtete unser nicht.<sup>11</sup>  
b. Man achtete uns nicht.

### Attested verbs

- *achten*

### Further examples

- Es ist gut zu Markte zu gehen bei ihnen, denn sie achten des Reichtums und Goldbesitzes gar gering.<sup>12</sup>
- Niemand achtete des gähnenden Abgrundes.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup>DWDS: <https://www.dwds.de/wb/achten>, accessed 14 April 2022.

<sup>12</sup>DWDS: Perutz, Leo: Die dritte Kugel, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt 1988 [1915], S. 36.

<sup>13</sup>DWDS: May, Karl: Winnetou IV, Berlin: Neues Leben 1993 [1910], S. 435.

### 5.9.6 [ NGA | NAD ] Genitive-to-accusative+accusative-to-dative

[5.106]

The verb *versichern* ‘to assure’ appears to be a combination of the previous two alternations. The apparently older usage with accusative and genitive (77a) exists with an alternative construction with dative and accusative (77b). This “double swap” was possible because most sentences with *versichern* have a subordinate clause instead of a clear genitive/accusative (77c,d). The theoretical intermediate stages (with genitive/dative or double accusative) are unattested (77e,f).

- (77)
- a. Ich versichere dich meines Vertrauens.
  - b. Ich versichere dir mein Vertrauen.
  - c. Ich versichere dich, dass ich dir vertraue.
  - d. Ich versichere dir, dass ich dir vertraue.
  - e. \* Ich versichere dich mein Vertrauen.
  - f. \* Ich versichere dir meines Vertrauens.

#### Attested verbs

- *versichern*



# 6 Prepositional alternations

## 6.1 Introduction

Prepositional phrases play a crucial role in many diatheses throughout this book. This chapter catalogues only the covert (“unmarked”) alternations that involve a change in pure flagging, i.e. between case-marked constituents and prepositional phrases. Many more such diatheses will be discussed in subsequent chapters, but those alternations display additional overt marking, like reflexive pronouns, verb prefixes, or light verbs.

[6.2]

As surveyed in this chapter, there are many different covert alternations that involve prepositions, like antipassives (1a), see Section 6.7.8, anticausatives (1b), see Section 6.5.4, applicatives (1c), see Section 6.9.2, and many more.

- (1) a. Ich schlürfe meinen Tee.  
Ich schlürfe an meinem Tee.
- b. Er quietscht mit den Reifen.  
Die Reifen quietschen.
- c. Er füllt Schnaps in die Flasche.  
Er füllt die Flasche mit Schnaps.

There are also various diatheses that introduce obligatory local prepositional phrases, like causatives (2a), see Section 6.5.10, caused-motion objectives (2b), see Section 6.8.4, and raised possessors (2c) see Section 6.8.11.

- (2) a. Der Pullover hängt im Schrank.  
Ich hänge den Pullover in den Schrank.
- b. Der Wind weht.  
Der Wind weht die Blätter durch die Luft.
- c. Er schaut über meine Schulter.  
Er schaut mir über die Schulter.

Prepositional phrases in German are partly governed arguments and partly non-governed adverbial phrases. This distinction is not overtly marked and leads

to recurrent ambiguity, e.g. between *warten auf* ‘to wait for something’ and *warten auf* ‘to wait while being on top of something’ (3). It is of central importance to clearly delimit governed from non-governed prepositions, as discussed extensively in Section 6.2.

(3) Der König wartet auf seinem alten Thron auf seinen neuen Thron.

There are fifteen diatheses that seem prominent enough to be given a German<sup>[5]</sup> name. I propose the following names for these:

- [ADJ > SBJ > Ø] INSTRUMENTSUBJEKTIVIERUNG (see Section 6.5.4 ff.)
- [PBJ > SBJ > Ø] KREATIONSUBJEKTIVIERUNG (see Section 6.5.7 ff.)
- [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] ORTSANTIKAUSATIV (see Section 6.5.10)
- [Ø > SBJ > OBJ] ORTSKAUSATIV (see Section 6.6.1 ff.)
- [Ø > PBJ] BEWEGUNGSART (see Section 6.8.2 ff.)
- [Ø > PBJ] VERURSACHTE BEWEGUNG (see Section 6.8.4 ff.)
- [Ø > PBJ] ERGÄNZENDE WIRKUNG (see Section 6.8.6)
- [Ø > OBJ > PBJ] TEIL/WEG-OBJEKTTAUSCH (see Section 6.8.7)
- [Ø > OBJ > PBJ] TEIL/FEST-OBJEKTTAUSCH (see Section 6.8.8)
- [ADJ > OBJ] BENEFAKTIVDATIV (see Section 6.8.9)
- [ADJ > OBJ] BEURTEILERDATIV (see Section 6.8.10)
- [ADJ > OBJ] ORTSPERTINENZDATIV (see Section 6.8.11 ff.)
- [ADJ > OBJ > PBJ] PERTINENZAKKUSATIV (see Section 6.8.13)
- [OBJ > ADJ] ANTIPASSIV (see Section 6.7.8 ff.)
- [OBJ > ADJ] DATIV ANTIPASSIV (see Section 6.7.10 ff.)

## 6.2 Delimiting governed prepositional phrases

### 6.2.1 Identifying governed prepositions

As a general rule (with only few exceptions, see below) I propose to define prepositional phrases as lexically governed arguments when they allow for a paraphrase of the form *da(r)-preposition, dass* CLAUSE (cf. [ref-engelen1986](#): 110–112). For example, the verb *warten* ‘to await’ has a possible governed preposition *auf* designating the object that is waited for (4a). In this reading, (4a) can be paraphrased by (4b) with a *darauf, dass* subordinate clause. This combination *warten auf* can best be considered a fixed collocation, to be translated into English as ‘waiting for’. However, the preposition *auf* can also have its adverbial local meaning ‘on top of’ (4c). This leads to another interpretation in which the prepositional phrase is not a governed preposition but an adverbial phrase with a local

meaning, paraphrased in (4d). These two readings can even be combined (4e), with an interesting difference in case marking between the two prepositional phrases.

- (4) a. Der König wartet auf seinen neuen Thron.
- b. Der König wartet darauf, dass sein neuer Thron kommt.
- c. Der König wartet auf seinem alten Thron.
- d. Der König wartet, während er auf seinem alten Thron sitzt.
- e. Der König wartet auf seinem alten Thron auf seinen neuen Thron.

[6.7] The possibility of a *da(r)+Präposition*, *dass* paraphrase for governed prepositional phrases has a parallel in question-constructions with *wo(r)+Preposition* (5a). In contrast, the local interpretation of a prepositional phrase is questioned with a bare question word *wo* (5b).

- (5) a. Worauf wartet der König?
- b. Wo wartet der König?

[6.8] Some prepositional phrases without the option of a *da(r)+Präposition*, *dass* paraphrase still have a special status as an argument-like role of a verb, namely when they can be substituted by a case-marked constituent. This is typical for antipassive alternations like (6a), in which the accusative role *den Bären* can alternatively be expressed by a prepositional phrase *auf den Bären* with a difference in affectedness of the object, see Section 6.7.8. In this situation the prepositional phrase cannot be replaced by a *darauf*, *dass* phrase, so it is not a governed preposition. However, because of the alternation with a case marked constituent, this participant (viz. *Bär*) is still an argument. Not all prepositional phrases allow such an alternation, notably most local expressions do not (6b). However, there are also some distinctly local expressions that still allow for an antipassive alternation (6c). In general, the semantic content is not a suitable definition of argument status.

- (6) a. Ich schieße auf den Bären.  
      Ich schieße den Bären.
- b. Ich sitze auf dem Stuhl.  
      \* Ich sitze den Stuhl.
- c. Ich reite auf dem Pferd.  
      Ich reite das Pferd.

## 6.2.2 Identifying non-governed prepositions

Non-governed prepositional phrases are typically adverbial phrases, describing either a local (7a), temporal (7b), manner (7c) or purpose/causal (7d) situation. In some contexts, such adverbial prepositional phrases do not have an article after the preposition, like in *gegen Abend* ‘early evening’, *aus Gold* ‘golden’, or *mit größter Sorgfalt* ‘carefully’.

- (7) a. Ich arbeite in dem Arbeitszimmer.
- b. Ich arbeite vor dem Frühstück.
- c. Ich arbeite aus Leidenschaft.
- d. Ich arbeite wegen des Regens.

Adverbial non-governed prepositional phrases can easily be identified by considering (i) how this information can be questioned and (ii) by which proforms or adverbs the information can be replaced (41). However, there are various special considerations to be discussed in the following section. Specifically, a few prepositional phrases allow for the question/replacement tests listed below (so the tests suggest they are non-governed), but they also allow for a *da(r)+Präposition*, *dass* paraphrase (so the test suggests they are governed). This happens with purposive *für*, see Section 6.2.5, and causal *von/durch*, see Section 6.2.6. It seems to make most sense to consider these to be non-governed adverbial phrases.

[6.10]

- (8) Identifying non-governed prepositional phrases
  - a. Local prepositional phrases:
    - are questioned by *wo/wohin/woher?* ‘where’,
    - are replaceable by proforms *hier/da/dort* ‘here/there’,
    - are replaceable by local adverbs like *zu Hause* ‘at home’ or *draußen* ‘outside’.
  - b. Temporal prepositional phrases:
    - are questioned by *wann?* ‘when’,
    - are replaceable by proforms *dann/damals* ‘then’,
    - are replaceable by temporal adverbs like *gestern* ‘yesterday’ or *morgen* ‘tomorrow’.
  - c. Manner prepositional phrases:
    - are questioned by *wie?* ‘how’,
    - are replaceable by proforms *so* ‘thus’,
    - are replaceable by manner adverbs like *schnell* ‘quickly’ or *viel* ‘a lot’.
  - d. Purpose/cause prepositional phrases:

are questioned by *warum?* ‘why’,  
are replaceable by proforms *deshalb/darum* ‘therefore’.

### 6.2.3 Location prepositional phrases

[6.11] As a general rule, location prepositional phrases are not governed by a verb. However, there are a few verbs that obligatory need a local preposition (9), see Section 6.3.4 and 7.3.4.

- (9) a. Er steckt den Zettel in die Tasche.  
b. \* Er steckt den Zettel.  
c. Ich befinde mich in dem Haus.  
d. \* Ich befinde mich.

[6.12] Less common are verbs that obligatory need a local preposition (10a,b) that alternatively can be exchanged for a temporal one (10c).

- (10) a. Der Unfall ereignete sich an der Kreuzung.  
b. \* Der Unfall ereignete sich.  
c. Der Unfall ereignete sich vor Sonnenuntergang.

Some locations become obligatory through diatheses, for example with datives that are introduced by raising possessors (11), see Section 6.8.11, or dynamic manner-of movement prepositional phrases (12), see Section 6.8.2.

[6.13]

- (11) a. Der Ball fällt (auf den Boden).  
b. Der Ball fällt dem Spieler vor die Füße.  
c. \* Der Ball fällt dem Spieler.
- (12) a. Ich habe (in dem Garten) getanzt.  
b. Ich bin durch den Garten getanzt.  
c. \* Ich bin getanzt.

### 6.2.4 Comitative/instrumental *mit* and *ohne*

The prepositions *mit* ‘with’ and its negative counterpart *ohne* ‘without’ have a special status in German. With human participants they have a COMITATIVE interpretation (13). These are questioned with *mit wem*. With non-human participants an INSTRUMENTAL reading is provoked (14). These are questioned with

womit. Except for this different interrogative, the comitative interpretation can also be identified by the possibility to add *zusammen*, which is not possible in the instrumental reading.

- (13) a. Ich arbeite mit meinem Freund.  
b. Mit wem arbeitest du?  
c. Ich arbeite zusammen mit meinem Freund.
- (14) a. Ich arbeite mit einem Hammer.  
b. Womit arbeitest du?  
c. \*Ich arbeite zusammen mit einem Hammer.

Both of these reading are non-governed prepositional phrases because the *damit, dass* periphrasis is not possible (15). Another characteristic of such non-governed *mit* is that it can be replaced by the negative *ohne*, of course with a negated meaning (16).

[6.15]

- (15) a. \*Ich arbeite damit, dass er hilft.  
b. \*Ich arbeite damit, dass es funktioniert.
- (16) a. Ich arbeite ohne meinen Freund.  
b. Ich arbeite ohne einen Hammer.

The non-governed comitative and instrumental interpretation of *mit* can be added to practically every verb, given a sensible context. In those contexts, the comitative and instrumental roles are not lexical roles, in the sense that they describe a role that is not specific for the main verb of the sentence. However, many verbs have a *mit* prepositional phrase that expresses a lexeme-specific role. With those verbs the *mit* phrase is an argument. This occurs in the following situations (with some verbs allowing for multiple options):

[6.16]

- Verbs, like *kämpfen* ‘to fight’ (17a), for which the *mit* prepositional phrase is a governed preposition, i.e. it can be replaced by a *damit, dass* complement clause and it is difficult to drop, see Sections 6.3.1, 6.5.7, 6.7.12 and with reflexive pronouns in Section 7.5.7.
- Verbs, like *überraschen* ‘to surprise’ (17b), for which the *mit* prepositional phrase shows an alternation with a nominative subject, see Sections 6.5.5, 6.5.4, 6.5.7 and with reflexive pronouns in Section 7.5.7.

- Verbs, like *füllen* ‘to fill’ (17c), for which the *mit* prepositional phrase shows an alternation with an accusative object, see Sections 6.7.12, 6.7.8.5, 6.7.8.6, 6.9.2, with reflexive pronouns in Section 7.7.3 and with preverbs in Sections 8.7.8, 8.8.8, 8.7.13
- Verbs, like *einigen* ‘to agree’ (17d), for which the *mit* prepositional phrase expresses a lexical-specific reciprocal role as indicated by the option to use *miteinander*, see Section 6.3.6, 6.7.8.6 and with reflexive pronouns in Section 7.3.3, 7.7.3.

- (17) a. Ich kämpfe mit der Krankheit.  
Ich kämpfe damit, dass ich dauernd krank bin.
- b. Du überrascht mich mit dem Geschenk.  
Das Geschenk überrascht mich.
- c. Er füllt die Flasche mit Schnaps.  
Er füllt den Schnaps in die Flasche.
- d. Ich einige mich mit dir.  
Wir einigen uns miteinander.

### 6.2.5 Purposive/beneficiary *für*

[6.17]

The preposition *für* has a BENEFICIARY reading with human participants and a more general PURPOSIVE interpretation with non-human participants. Beneficiary *für* often appears in alternation with a dative (18a,b), see Section 6.7.11. However, a beneficiary *für* is possible with many more verbs as an adverbial phrase (18c), with such a dative alternation being impossible (18d).

- (18) a. Ich kaufe ein Buch für dich.
- b. Ich kaufe dir ein Buch.
- c. Ich arbeite für dich.
- d. \*Ich arbeite dir

Adverbial purposive *für* can be used with almost all verbs and can be identified by the possibility to be paraphrased by an *um zu-Infinitiv* phrase (19a,b). In this usage, it is also possible to use the paraphrase *dafür, dass* (19c). This is an obvious exception to the claim that this paraphrase identifies governed prepositions.

- (19) a. Ich arbeite für ein besseres Leben.
- b. Ich arbeite um ein besseres Leben zu bekommen.
- c. Ich arbeite dafür, dass ich ein besseres Leben bekomme.

### 6.2.6 Causal *durch* and *von*

[6.19]

The preposition *durch*, roughly meaning ‘through’ in its spatial meaning (20a), has a widespread adverbial usage describing a CAUSE (20b). In this non-governed adverbial usage it is often still possible to use the paraphrase *dadurch, dass* (20c). Together with purposive *für* from the previous section, this is a second exception to the claim that this *da*- paraphrase is an indication of governed usage.

- (20) a. Ich laufe durch den Regen.  
b. Ich verspäte mich durch den Regen.  
c. Ich verspäte mich dadurch, dass es regnet.

The preposition *von*, roughly meaning ‘from’ in its spatial meaning (21a), can also be used for a cause (21b). In this non-governed causal usage it is likewise possible to use the paraphrase *davon, dass* (21c). This is the third (and last) exception to the test that the *da*- paraphrase is an indication of governed usage.

[6.20]

- (21) a. Sie kommt von dem Arzt.  
b. Sie erwachte von dem Regen.  
c. Sie erwachte davon, dass es regnete.

This causal *durch* and *von* are also found in passives (22a) as a way to express the demoted agent. Actually, this usage of *von* and *durch* in passives can be seen as an instance of a regular causal usage (22) and might thus not be an integral part of the passive construction (see Section 10.5.15 on the *werden* passive).

- (22) a. Der Sturm zerstörte das Haus.  
b. Das Haus wurde zerstört durch den Sturm.  
c. Das Haus wurde dadurch zerstört, dass es vernachlässigt wurde.

### 6.2.7 Adnominal prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases can of course also be used adnominally, i.e. they modify another noun phrase. In such situations they are not governed by the verb. In some rare examples there is potential ambiguity between a governed and an adnominal prepositional phrase (132a,b).

- (23) a. In seinem Korb knabbert [der Hund] [an der Leine].  
b. In seinem Korb knabbert [der Hund an der Leine].



## 6.3 Deponent verbs without alternations

There are a few verbs that necessarily need a governed preposition. The number of such obligatory verb-preposition combinations is surprisingly small in German. Most governed prepositional phrases can easily be dropped or show other alternations (as discussed in the remainder of this chapter). Most verbs that obligatorily occur together with a preposition have developed a special meaning for the verb+preposition combination, like *kommen auf* ‘to conceive’ vs. *kommen* ‘to come’ (24a,b) and *brechen mit* ‘to cease relations’ vs. *brechen* ‘to break’ (24c,d).

- (24) a. Ich komme nicht auf die Lösung.  
 b. Ich komme gleich nach Hause.  
 c. Er bricht mit seiner Vergangenheit.  
 d. Er bricht das Brot.

[6.24] Only very few verbs seem to have an obligatory preposition and no other meaning without the preposition, like *appellieren* ‘to appeal’ (25a,b) and *gewöhnen* ‘to accustom’ (25c,d).

- (25) a. Er appelliert an dein Gewissen.  
 b. \*Er appelliert.  
 c. Er gewöhnt seinen Sohn an den Geschmack.  
 d. \*Er gewöhnt seinen Sohn.

### 6.3.1 [ NP ] Governed preposition

[6.25] This section summarises verbs that obligatorily need a governed preposition. Some examples, like *bauen* ‘to build’ (26a) have multiple meanings. When they are listed here, then the claim is that the usage with a preposition induces a different lexical meaning, like *bauen auf* ‘to count on’ (26b). This preposition is a governed preposition (26c).

- (26) a. Ich baue ein Haus.  
 b. Ich baue auf deine Unterstützung.  
 c. Ich baue darauf, dass du mich unterstützt.

Not all collocations of verbs with a preposition are governed phrases. For example, *stehen vor* (27a) and *stehen zu* (27b) are governed, while *stehen zur Diskussion* (27c) is not.

## 6 Prepositional alternations

- (27) a. Die Firma stand vor der Übergabe an einen Manager.  
Der Planet Krypton steht kurz davor, zu explodieren.
- b. Ich stehe zu meiner Zusage.  
Ich stehe dazu, daß wir nicht statistikorientiert arbeiten.<sup>1</sup>
- c. Das Problem steht zur Diskussion.  
\* Das Problem steht dazu, daß ...

### Attested verbs

- an : *appellieren*
- auf : *achten (aufpassen), bauen, bestehen, hoffen, kommen, vertrauen*
- aus : *bestehen*
- bei : *bleiben*
- für : *sprechen*
- mit : *brechen (sich abwenden), kämpfen, spielen*
- über : *handeln*
- von : *handeln, kommen*
- vor : *stehen*
- zu : *kommen, neigen, passen, stehen*

### Further examples

- Ich bestehe auf eine Hochzeit.
- Ich achte auf die Kinder.
- Sie bleibt bei ihrer Überzeugung.
- Mein Körper besteht aus Knochen.
- Die Verhältnisse sprechen für ein baldiges Ende.
- Der Schaden kam von dem Sturm.
- Ich kämpfe mit der Krankheit.
- Ich spiele mit dem Gedanken.
- Sie bricht mit ihrer Familie.
- Die Farbe passt zu dir.

### Notes

The combination *handeln über* is attested (28a), but infrequent. Instead *handeln von* seems to be preferred (28b). Separately, the combination *kommen zu* ‘to achieve’ has negative polarity (28c).

[6.27]

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<sup>1</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 05.11.1996.

- (28) a. Ihre Texte handeln über Dinge, die sie jetzt beschäftigen.<sup>2</sup>  
b. Das Buch handelt von der Vergangenheit.  
c. Wir kommen nicht zu einem Ergebnis.

### 6.3.2 [ NAP ] Governed preposition+accusative

[6.2] Some verbs, like *erinnern* ‘to remind’ (29), combine a governed preposition with an accusative argument.

- (29) a. Ich erinnere dich an den Termin.  
b. Ich erinnere dich daran, dass du einen Termin hast.

#### Attested verbs

- an : *erinnern, gewöhnen, wenden*
- über : *aufklären, unterrichten*
- für : *ausgeben (bezeichnen)*
- mit : *begründen*

#### Further examples

- Er gewöhnt seinen Sohn an den Geschmack.
- Er hat viel Arbeit an das Haus gewandt.<sup>3</sup>
- Er hat mich über die Lage aufgeklärt.
- Sie gab ihren Sohn für einen Künstler aus.
- Ich begründe meine schlechte Leistung mit einer Krankheit.
- Die Zeitung unterrichtet die Leser über die neuesten Ereignisse.

### 6.3.3 [ NL ] Obligatory local preposition

Some verbs appear to have an obligatory location argument, like *wohnen* ‘to live’ (30), cf. also the examples in the classes “Extent” and “Location” in Gamerschlag (ref-gamerschlag2014: 319–321).

- (30) a. Sie wohnt in Berlin.  
b. \* Sie wohnt.

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<sup>2</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 21.12.2005, Nr. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Attested at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/wenden>, accessed 18 April 2022.

### Attested verbs

- *entspringen, münden, sein (sich befinden), spielen (zutragen), wohnen, übernachten, zeigen*

### Further examples

- Der Wegweiser zeigt nach Norden.
- Der Fluss entspringt aus den Bergen.
- Der Rhein mündet in die Nordsee.
- Der Film spielt in Italien.
- Ich bin in der Küche.

### 6.3.4 [ NAL ] Obligatory local preposition+accusative

The most obvious verbs in this class are historical ablaut causatives like *legen* ‘to lay, to put down’ (31b) of posture verbs like *liegen* ‘to lie’ (31a). More examples are attested with obligatory reflexive pronoun, see Section 7.3.4. [6.30]

- (31) a. Der Hund liegt im Korb.  
b. Er legt den Hund in den Korb.

### Attested verbs

- Verbs with ablaut causatives: *legen, setzen, stellen*
- Verbs forcing something away: *drängen, scheuchen, schütten, treiben*
- Others: *ketten, schnallen, verbringen*

### Further examples

- Ich stecke einen Schatz in ein Versteck.
- Ich scheuche die Mücken aus dem Haus.
- Ich rücke die Stühle zur Seite.
- Ich treibe die Kühe auf die Wiese.
- Ich dränge ihn in die Ecke.
- Ich verbringe meine Ferien in Italien.
- Ich kette den Hund an seiner Hütte.

### 6.3.5 [ NP ] Accusative *es*+governed preposition

The verb *belassen bei* ‘to rest a matter with’ (32) appears to have an obligatorily empty accusative pronoun *es*. Such non-phoric pronouns *es* mostly appears as a fall-back mechanism for missing subjects (see Section 2.2.3). However, with this verb it is used for a missing object. It does not seem to be possible to use any phoric object with this verb. [6.31]

- (32) a. Die Polizistin belässt es bei einer Verwarnung.  
 b. Die Polizistin belässt es dabei, mich zu verwarnen.

#### Attested verbs

- auf : *absehen*
- bei : *belassen*

#### Further examples

- Ich habe es auf ihn abgesehen.
- Ich belasse es bei einer Warnung.

### 6.3.6 [ Np ] Bare reciprocal *mit*

A few verbs have a special obligatory reciprocal role marked with the preposition *mit* (cf. ref-wierner2007: 497), e.g. *kooperieren* ‘to cooperate’ (33a), which can normally not be used with a singular subject without the *mit* phrase (33b). Such verbs can be identified by the alternative formulation with a plural subject and the reciprocal marker *miteinander* (33c), but not with *sich* (33d). It is possible to add an additional comitative prepositional phrase *zusammen mit*, but not as an alternative for the reciprocal role (33e). [6.32]

- (33) a. Karl kooperiert mit Anna.  
 b. \*Karl kooperiert.  
 c. Karl und Anna kooperieren miteinander.  
 d. \*Karl und Anna kooperieren sich.  
 e. Karl kooperiert mit Anna [zusammen mit seinem Freund].

### Attested verbs

- *anstoßen (zuprosten), debattieren, diskutieren, fechten, kämpfen, kommunizieren, konkurrieren, kooperieren, korrespondieren, ringen, rivalisieren, spielen, streiten, unterhandeln, verhandeln, wetteifern*

### Further examples

- Karl debattiert mit Anna.  
Karl und Anna debattieren miteinander.
- Karl streitet mit Anna.  
Karl und Anna streiten miteinander.
- Karl hat mit seinem Freund angestoßen.  
Karl und sein Freund haben miteinander angestoßen.

## 6.4 Alternations without diathesis

This section is empty. It is only added here for the numbering to be parallel across chapters. By definition, alternations without diathesis do not exist for covert alternations as discussed in this chapter. In other chapters this section will be well represented by many examples. [6.33]

## 6.5 Diatheses with subject demotion

— [ SBJ > Ø ] —

### 6.5.1 [ NP | -P ] Nominative drop+governed preposition

With verbs like *abhängen von* ‘depend on’ the nominative can be dropped, and a valency-simulating pronoun *es* is inserted (34a,b). This pronoun *es* is not referential with verbs like this. For an apparently similar verb like *zeugen von* ‘to be evidence of’ this is different (34c,d): with this verb the pronoun *es* can only be interpreted referentially (“phoric”), so it does not belong in this class. [6.34]

- (34)
- a. Mein Leben hängt von dir ab.
  - b. Jetzt hängt es ganz von dir ab.
  - c. Das Resultat zeugt von deinem Einsatz.
  - d. Es zeugt von deinem Einsatz.

### Attested verbs

- von : *abhängen, wimmeln*
- zu : *kommen*
- an : *hapern*
- bei : *hapern*

### Further examples

- Der Platz wimmelt von Kindern.  
Hier wimmelt es von Kindern.
- Ich komme zu einem harmlosen Ergebnis.  
Gestern kam es zu einem Streit.

### Notes

[6.35] Some dictionaries list *hapern an* ‘to be lacking’ as having obligatory *es* (35a). However, in corpora there are various examples with a nominative subject (35b,c).

- (35) a. Es hapert an der Versorgung.<sup>4</sup>  
 b. Denn der Vergleich hapert immer.<sup>5</sup>  
 c. Eine mögliche Wiedergeburt der Grünen [...] hapert an drei Stellen.<sup>6</sup>  
 d. Nur bei den Bässen hapert der Nachschub.<sup>7</sup>

— [ SBJ > ADJ ] —

#### 6.5.2 [ ND | pD ] Nominative demotion+dative

Incidental verbs with nominative and dative arguments allow the nominative to be changed into a prepositional phrase with *an*, while at the same time the dative will be retained, like with *fehlen* ‘to lack’ (36a,b). The result is a construction without nominative, so a pronoun *es* is inserted.

- (36) a. Das Geld fehlt ihm.  
 b. Ihm fehlt es an Geld.

<sup>4</sup> Attested at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/hapern>, accessed 23 April 2022.

<sup>5</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 29.12.2010, Nr. 52.

<sup>6</sup> DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 26.03.2001.

<sup>7</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 19.03.1993, Nr. 12.

**Attested verbs**

- an : *fehlen, mangeln*

**Further examples**

- Leider mangelt ihm jeglicher Stolz.  
Ihm mangelt es an Stolz.

**6.5.3 [ N- | pD ] Nominative demotion+dative addition**

Some verbs take a nominative argument with non-sentient arguments (37a), but a dative experiencer can only be used with the nominative demoted (37b). This only seems to occur with predicative constructions with copula *sein*. Maybe this diathesis is better analysed as a stack of two separate changes: a dropping of the nominative and an addition of the dative, with (37c) being an intermediate construction. [6.37]

- (37) a. Der Sommer ist kalt.  
b. Mir ist kalt (im Sommer).  
c. Es ist kalt (im Sommer).

**Attested verbs**

- *kalt sein, langweilig sein, zum Heulen sein*

**Further examples**

- Mir ist zum Heulen im Sommer.  
Der Sommer ist zum Heulen.
- Mir ist langweilig im Sommer.  
Der Sommer ist langweilig.

— [ ADJ > SBJ > Ø ] — *Instrumentsubjektivierung*

**6.5.4 [ Np | -N ] Intransitive conciliative**

A CONCILIATIVE (from Lat. *conciliator*, ‘intermediary/mediator’) is a diathesis in which an instrument-like artefact is promoted to nominative subject. This instrument is an intermediate that is used by an agent to reach a certain goal. For



intransitive verbs a (non-governed) prepositional constituent alternates with a nominative subject (38a,b).

- (38) a. Er klappert mit der Tür.  
b. Die Tür klappert.

With some verbs the old nominative can be retained as genitive possessor of the new nominative (39b). Because of this possessor, the alternation is referred to by Levin (ref-levin1993: 77) as “Possessor Subject”. However, the old nominative and genitive possessor need not be the same participant (39c), so this should not be seen as a definitional characteristic. The possessor (if present) in turn can show an alternation with a dative for some verbs (39d), see Section 5.8.3.

- (39) a. Ich passe in den Anzug.  
b. Mein Anzug passt.  
c. Ich passe in deinen Anzug.  
d. Mir passt der Anzug.

#### Attested verbs

- mit : (noise production) *klappern, klingeln, quietschen, rasseln, rattern*
- an : *zunehmen*
- in : *passen*

#### Further examples

- Er quietscht mit den Reifen.  
Die Reifen quietschen.
- Er rasselt mit den Ketten.  
Die Ketten rasseln.
- Wir ratterten mit dem Bus ins Inselinnere.  
Der Bus ratterte ins Inselinnere.
- Der Sturm nimmt an Stärke zu.  
Die Stärke des Sturmes nimmt zu.

#### 6.5.5 [ NpA | -NA ] Transitive conciliative

[6.40] This diathesis removes the agent and promotes the *mit* instrument to a nominative (40a,b). The accusative argument remains unchanged. With some verbs the

original nominative can be retained as possessor of the new nominative. However, just like with the previous alternation, this characteristic is not definitional for this diathesis.

- (40) a. Der Doktor heilt die Wunde mit einer Salbe.  
b. Die Salbe des Doktors heilt die Wunde.

The instrumental *mit* phrase is a real non-governed instrument, i.e. an inanimate artefact that is used by the agent to achieve a certain goal. A further structural argument for the status as instrument is that the preposition *mit* can be replaced by *ohne*. This defines the differentiation between this diathesis and a fabricative (see Section 6.5.7). In a fabricative, the *mit* phrase (i) is a governed preposition, i.e. it can be replaced by a sentence starting with *damit*, *dass*, (ii) designates something that the agent has fabricated, and (iii) cannot be replaced by *ohne*.

[6.41]

### Attested verbs

- Instruments of destruction: *mahlen, schneiden, zerbrechen, zerschneiden, zerstören*
- Instruments of killing and healing: *ersticken, heilen, töten, umbringen*
- Instruments of physical action: *beladen, füllen, öffnen, schließen*
- Instruments of adornment: *anleuchten, bedecken, gliedern, schmücken, verschmutzen, verstopfen*

### Further examples

- Ich treffe den Nagel mit einem Hammer.  
Der Hammer trifft einen Nagel.
- Ich öffne die Tür mit dem Schlüssel.  
Der Schlüssel öffnet die Tür.
- Ich zerstöre das Gebäude mit einer Bombe.  
Meine Bombe zerstört das Gebäude.
- Ich fülle meinen Magen mit Reis.  
Der Reis füllt meinen Magen.
- Ich schmücke den Baum mit Kugeln.  
Die Kugeln schmücken den Baum.
- Ich verstopfe den Durchfluss mit Steinen.  
Die Steine verstopfen den Durchfluss.

- Ich verschmutze die Küche mit dem Sand unter meinen Schuhen.  
Der Sand verschmutzt die Küche.
- Der Mörder erstickt den Mann mit einem Kissen.  
Das Kissen erstickt den Mann.
- Der Mörder tötet den Mann mit einem Messer.  
Das Messer tötet den Mann.
- Du leuchtest mich an mit der Lampe.  
Die Lampe leuchtet mich an.
- Ich bedecke den Tisch mit einem Tuch.  
Das Tuch bedeckt den Tisch.
- Ich mahle die Kaffeebohnen mit der Maschine.  
Die Maschine mahlt die Kaffeebohnen.
- Ich gliedere den Garten mit Baumreihen.  
Baumreihen gliedern den Garten.

### Notes

[6.42] Not all instruments allow for this diathesis (41). This difference suggests that there are at least two different kinds of instruments (cf. **ref-hooste2018**).

- (41)
- a. Ich belade den Laster mit einem Kran.
  - b. Der Kran belädt den Laster.
  - c. Ich belade den Laster mit meinen Händen.
  - d. \* Meine Hände beladen den Laster.

### 6.5.6 [ NpA | -Np ] Ingredient conciliative

[6.43] This alternation takes a (non-governed) prepositional phrase and turns it into a nominative. However, different from the previous anticausatives, the original nominative agent cannot be retained, and the original accusative is transformed into a prepositional phrase with *nach*.

- (42)
- a. Ich schmecke Pfefferminze in der Suppe.
  - b. Die Suppe schmeckt nach Pfefferminze.

### Attested verbs

- *riechen, schmecken*

### Further examples

- Ich rieche Blume im Parfüm.  
Der Parfüm riecht nach Blume.

### – [ PBJ > SBJ > Ø ] – *Kreationssubjektivierung*

#### 6.5.7 [ NPA | –NA ] Transitive fabricative

A FABRICATIVE (from Lat *fabrica*, ‘plan, trick, workmanship’) is a diathesis that superficially looks very similar to a conciliative (Section 6.5.4) because in both diatheses a *mit* prepositional phrase is promoted to nominative subject. The central difference is that in a fabricative diathesis the *mit* prepositional phrase is a governed preposition. This structural difference has a parallel semantic difference in that the fabricative *mit* phrase is an object that is produced by the agent.

This diathesis occurs (among others) with verbs of emotional interactions like *überraschen* ‘to surprise’ (43a). To understand this diathesis, a distinction is needed between the role of the “fabricator”, who produces the thing that evokes the emotion (here: *Lehrer*, ‘teacher’) and the role of the “fabricated product”, which induces the emotion (here: *Aufgabe*, ‘assignment’). The fabricator can be expressed with an adnominal genitive (“possessor”) of the product (43a,b). The *mit* prepositional phrase expressing the fabricated product in (99a) is a governed preposition (43c). As a result of the diathesis, the fabricated product is promoted to nominative subject and the fabricator is removed from the expression (43a,b). The experiencer in the accusative *mich* remains unchanged.

- (43) a. Der Lehrer überraschst mich mit seiner Aufgabe.  
b. Die Aufgabe (des Lehrers) überrascht mich.  
c. Der Lehrer überrascht mich damit, dass er die Aufgabe schon korrigiert hat.

There is a large overlap (but also an interesting difference) between the verbs that allow for this diathesis and the verbs that allow for a reflexive variant (44c), see Section 7.5.7. Some verbs, like *ärgern* ‘to irritate’ in (44) allow for both diatheses, but other verbs only take part in one or the other diathesis.

- (44) a. Du ärgerst mich mit deinen Witzen.  
b. Deine Witze ärgern mich.  
c. Ich ärgere mich über deine Witze.

### Attested verbs

- Verbs of emotional interaction: *ärgern, belustigen, begeistern, empören, erfreuen, erheitern, erschrecken, erstaunen, stören, trösten, überraschen, unterhalten, verblüffen, verwirren, quälen*
- Verbs of relaxation: *beruhigen, entspannen*
- Verbs of influence: *beschäftigen, bewirken*
- Verbs of proof: *bestätigen, beweisen, erklären, rechtfertigen*

### Further examples

- Die Späße des Komikers belustigten das Publikum.  
Der Komiker belustigte das Publikum mit seinen Späßen.
- Der Blumenstrauß erfreut den Mann.  
Ich erfreue den Mann mit einem Blumenstrauß.
- Deine Aussagen verwirren mich.  
Ich verwirre dich mit meinen Aussagen.
- Der Lärm des Zuges ärgert mich.  
Der Zug ärgert mich mit seinem Lärm.
- Deine Witze beschäftigen/entspannen mich.  
Du beschäftigst/entspannst mich mit deinen Witzen.
- Der Brief des Entführers erschreckt mich.  
Der Entführer erschreckt mich mit einem Brief.
- Der Brief beweist/bestätigt/erklärt/rechtfertigt meine Unschuld.  
Ich beweise/bestätige/erkläre/rechtfertige meine Unschuld mit dem Brief.

### Notes

[6.47] For a detailed discussion of the verb *erschrecken* and possible morphophonological differences between the two alternants, see Plank & Lahiri (ref-plank2015: 29–31).

### 6.5.8 [ NP | –N ] Intransitive fabricative

[6.48] The verb *drängen* ‘to urge’ (45) shows a special diathesis which is a variant of the previous fabricative. In this case, the role expressed with the governed preposition *auf* (45a,b) is turned into a nominative with a meaning of ‘to be urgent’ (45c).

- (45) a. Ich dränge auf eine Änderung.  
b. Ich dränge darauf, dass die Regelung geändert wird.  
c. Die Änderung drängt.

**Attested verbs**

- *drängen*

**6.5.9 [ NPD | –ND ] Fabricative+dative**

The verb *drohen* ‘to threaten’ (46) exhibits a fabricative diathesis with an additional dative argument. The governed preposition *mit* (46a,b) can be turned into a nominative (46c).

- (46) a. Er droht mir mit Entlassung.  
b. Er droht mir damit, dass ich entlassen werde.  
c. Die Entlassung droht mir.

**Attested verbs**

- *drohen*

– [ OBJ > SBJ > Ø ] – *Ortsantikausativ*

**6.5.10 [ NAL | –NL ] *haben* Anticausative+location**

Some verbs allow for both an intransitive stative location (47a) and caused location (47b) construction. I analyse these verbs as anticausatives (cf. Section 5.5.5 for a similar diathesis without an obligatory location phrase).

- (47) a. Ich hänge den Pullover in den Schrank.  
b. Der Pullover hängt im Schrank.

These verbs use a *haben* perfect both in the intransitive and transitive usage (48a,b). The *Zustandspassiv* of the transitive is also possible, leading to another intransitive construction with the auxiliary *sein* (48c). This is clearly a *Zustandspassiv* because it cannot be combined with a gradual time specification like *allmählich* ‘gradually’ (cf. Section 10.2.6).

- (48) a. Ich habe den Teller an den Tisch geklebt.  
b. Der Teller hat (allmählich) am Tisch geklebt.  
c. Der Teller ist (\*allmählich) am Tisch geklebt.

### Attested verbs

- *hängen, klappen, kleben, lehnen, stecken*

### Further examples

- Ich habe das Buch in meine Tasche gesteckt.  
Das Buch steckt in meiner Tasche.
- Ich klebe den Zettel an die Tür.  
Der Zettel klebt an der Tür.
- Ich lehne den Besen an den Zaun.  
Der Besen lehnt am Zaun.
- Ich stecke den Brief in den Briefkasten.  
Der Brief steckt im Briefkasten.
- Er klappt den Sitz nach hinten.  
Der Sitz klappt nach hinten. Der Sitz ist nach hinten geklappt.

### Notes

[6.52]

The verb *hängen* still shows the difference between transitive causative and intransitive stative usage through different forms of the past *hing* vs. *hängte* (49a,b) and the participle *gehangen* vs. *gehängt* (49c,d). Many speakers of German do not appear to have clear intuitions about any difference between these two inflectional alternatives anymore (see also [ref-plank2015: 32–33](#)).

- (49) a. Der Pullover hing im Schrank.  
b. ? Ich hängte den Pullover in den Schrank.  
c. Der Pullover hat im Schrank gehangen.  
d. Ich habe den Pullover in den Schrank gehängt.

#### 6.5.11 [ NA– | –NP ] *haben* Anticausative+preposition addition

[6.53]

The verb *deuten* (50) shows a special diathesis in which the accusative is turned into a nominative, but only with an additional obligatory *auf* prepositional phrase (50a,b). The preposition *auf* is a governed preposition (50b,c). Although clearly related, these two uses of *deuten* are semantically already quite far apart, meaning approximately ‘to interpret’ (50a) vs. ‘to forebode’ (50b).

- (50) a. Ich deute den Traum.  
b. Der Traum deutet auf nichts Gutes.  
c. Der Traum deutet darauf, dass morgen alles wieder gut sein wird.

**Attested verbs**

- *deuten*

## 6.6 Diatheses with promotion to subject

– [ Ø > SBJ > OBJ ] – *Ortskausativ*

### 6.6.1 [ –NL | NAL ] *sein* Causative+location

Though superficially similar to the *haben* anticausatives (see Section 6.5.10), the verbs in this section are different in that they only have the option of a *sein* perfect for the intransitive (51a,b). The transitive causative diathesis takes *haben* in the perfect (51c).

- (51) a. Der Elefant ist ins Wasser gestürzt.  
b. \* Der Elefant hat ins Wasser gestürzt.  
c. Ich habe den Elefanten ins Wasser gestürzt.

This alternation is strongly reminiscent of the *Zustandspassiv* (see Section 10.5.16) but there is a crucial difference in that with *stürzen* ‘to plunge’ both the transitive (52a,b) and the intransitive (52c,d) can occur in the present tense. This is crucially different from regular transitive verbs with a *Zustandspassiv*, like *putzen* ‘to clean’ (53), for which an intransitive present is not possible (53d).

- (52) a. Ich habe den Elefanten ins Wasser gestürzt.  
b. Ich stürze den Elefanten ins Wasser.  
c. Der Elefant ist ins Wasser gestürzt.  
d. Der Elefant stürzt ins Wasser.
- (53) a. Ich habe den Tisch geputzt.  
b. Ich putze den Tisch.  
c. Der Tisch ist geputzt.  
d. \* Der Tisch putzt.

**Attested verbs**

- *fahren, hetzen, rücken, stürzen, treiben, ziehen*



### Further examples

- Der Hund ist durch den Wald gehetzt.  
Der Hund hat den Hasen durch den Wald gehetzt.
- Er ist nach Australien gezogen.  
Das hohe Gehalt hat ihn nach Australien gezogen.
- Wir sind nach Hause gefahren.  
Er hat uns nach Hause gefahren.
- Der Ballon ist nach Westen getrieben.  
Ich habe ihn aus dem Haus getrieben.
- Die Soldaten rücken in die Kaserne.<sup>8</sup>  
Ich rücke den Tisch zur Seite.

### Notes

The alternation with the verb *rücken* ‘to move over’ and *ziehen* ‘to pull’ are rather idiosyncratic. Possibly, these alternations constructions are better seen as different verbs.

### 6.6.2 [ –NL | NAL ] *Umlaut* Causative+location

Vestiges of the old Germanic causative suffix *-jan* can still be found in some verb pairs in contemporary German, as illustrated with the pair *liegen/legen* ‘to lie/to lay’ (54). The verbs in this section obligatorily need a location. Similar causative verb pairs without obligatory location are discussion in Section 5.6.3.

- (54) a. Der Hund liegt in dem Korb.  
b. Ich lege den Hund in den Korb.

### Attested verbs

- *liegen/legen, schwimmen/schwemmen, sitzen/setzen, stehen/stellen*

### Further examples

- Das Pferd schwimmt im Fluss.  
Er schwemmte die Pferde im Fluss.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Attested on <https://www.dwds.de/wb/ruecken>, accessed 23 April 2022.

<sup>9</sup>Attested on <https://www.dwds.de/wb/schwemmen>, accessed 23 April 2022. This usage appears to be old-fashioned.

## 6.7 Diatheses with object demotion

There are two different kinds of object demotions that involve prepositional phrases. First, there are many verbs with governed prepositions (55a,b) that allow for the governed prepositional phrase to be dropped (55c).

- (55) a. Ich träume von dir.  
b. Ich träume davon, dass ich dich treffe.  
c. Ich träume.

Second, there are prepositional antipassives in which a case-marked argument alternates with a prepositional phrase (56a,b). Note that with antipassives this prepositional phrase cannot be reformulated with a *da(r)+preposition*, *dass* phrase (56c).

[6.59]

- (56) a. Ich schieße den Bären.  
b. Ich schieße auf den Bären.  
c. \* Ich schieße darauf, dass der Bär kommt.

There are just a few deobjective “drop”-alternations that are missing, and these missing alternations suggest an interesting generalisation. Missing are the alternations [NAP | N-P], [NPD | N-D] and (from the previous chapter) [NAD | N-D]. These apparently dispreferred alternations suggest that a dative argument has to be dropped before a governed preposition can be dropped, and likewise, a governed preposition has to be dropped before an accusative argument can be dropped, i.e. there is a deobjective hierarchy (57a).

- (57) Deobjective hierarchy: dative > preposition > accusative

A similar generalisation can be made for antipassives. If a verb has various case marked objects, then dative and genitive objects can have an antipassive alternation. In contrast, an accusative can only have antipassive alternation when there are no genitive or dative arguments. Note that the drop hierarchy and the antipassive hierarchy are not contradictory, but there is currently insufficient evidence to claim that they are the same hierarchy.

- (58) Antipassive hierarchy: dative/genitive > accusative

Some verbs allow for both a dative and an accusative antipassive. There appears to be recurrent restrictions on the co-occurrence of accusative and dative

prepositional alternations, with attested patterns as shown for *schießen* ‘to shoot’ in (59a-f) and *schreiben* ‘to write’ (59a-f). The generalisation seems to be (i) that the accusative cannot be demoted into a preposition when there is still a dative around and (ii) dative and accusative can only be both demoted to a preposition if one of the prepositions is *für* (this is a further indication that the *für*-to-dative diatheses are better analysed as promotions, see Section 6.8.9).

- (59) a. Ich schieße dir den Bären. [NAD]  
 b. Ich schieße für dich. [N-P]  
 c. Ich schieße auf den Bären. [NP-]  
 d. Ich schieße den Bären für dich. [NAP]  
 e. \* Ich schieße dir auf den Bären. [NPD]  
 f. Ich schieße für dich auf den Bären. [NPP]
- (60) a. Ich schreibe dir den Brief. [NAD]  
 b. Ich schreibe an dich. [N-P]  
 c. Ich schreibe an dem Brief. [NP-]  
 d. Ich schreibe den Brief an dich. [NAP]  
 e. \* Ich schreibe dir an dem Brief. [NPD]  
 f. \* Ich schreibe an dich an dem Brief. [NPP]

— [ PBJ > Ø ] —

### 6.7.1 [ NP | N- ] Governed preposition drop

Governed prepositions that can be dropped are frequent. There are even various verbs that allow for different governed prepositions, like *sprechen über* and *sprechen von* in (61a,b).

- (61) a. Die Leute sprechen über die Wahl.  
 Die Leute sprechen darüber, dass es einen neuen Präsidenten gibt.  
 b. Der Reporter spricht von einem historischen Ereignis.  
 Der Reporter spricht davon, dass es ein historisches Ereignis ist.

#### Attested verbs

- über : (object of control) *siegen, triumphieren*
- über : (content of report) *lügen, reden, sprechen, schweigen*

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- über : (content of cognitive process) *denken, meditieren, nachdenken*
- über : (object of emotional reaction) *klagen, lachen, schimpfen, staunen, streiten, weinen*
- von : (content of report) *reden, sprechen*
- von : (content of cognitive process) *träumen*
- auf : (object of expectation) *drängen, hoffen, rechnen, verzichten, warten*
- auf : (object of emotional reaction) *schimpfen*
- nach : (object of smell/taste) *duften, riechen, stinken, schnüffeln, schmecken*
- vor : (object of emotional reaction) *platzen, rasen (Emotion), schreien*
- an : *arbeiten, denken, scheitern, sterben, teilnehmen, zweifeln*
- um : *streiten*

### Further examples

- Ich rede über die Angelegenheit.
- Ich spreche von den Plänen.
- Ich rede von den Plänen.
- Ich träume von Ferien.
- Ich höre von den Plänen.
- Ich nehme an der Feier teil.
- Ich sterbe an einer Grippe.
- Ich zweifle an meinen Fähigkeiten.
- Ich dränge auf eine Feier.
- Ich hoffe auf deine Feier.
- Ich rechne auf dich.
- Ich verzichte auf eine Feier.
- Ich warte auf eine Feier.
- Ich schimpfe auf dich.
- Der Müll stinkt nach Fisch.
- Ich streite um meine Freiheit.
- Ich rase vor Begeisterung.  
Mein Kopf rast.
- Ich platze vor Neugier.  
Der Ballon platzt.

### 6.7.2 [ NAP | NA- ] Governed preposition drop+accusative

Some verbs allow for the governed preposition to be dropped, but not the accusative argument (47a–c). [6.64]

- (62) a. Ich bereite dich auf die Klausur vor.  
 b. Ich bereite dich vor.  
 c. \* Ich bereite auf die Klausur vor.

#### Attested verbs

- über : *behaupten, herrschen, erfahren*
- an : *beteiligen, erkennen, hindern, rächen*
- zu : *treffen*
- auf : *vorbereiten*
- von : *unterscheiden, verlangen*

#### Further examples

- Ich behaupte das Gegenteil über die Angelegenheit.
- Ich hindere dich am Essen.
- Ich beteilige dich an dem Gewinn.
- Ich erkenne dich an dem Geruch.
- Ich räche das Verbrechen an dir.
- Ich bereite dich auf die Klausur vor.
- Ich treffe dich zu einem Glas Wein.
- Ich unterscheide A von B.
- Ich verlange Gehorsamkeit von dir.
- Ich erfahre Neuigkeiten über die Versammlung.
- Es herrscht Übereinstimmung über die Frage.

#### 6.7.3 [ NL | N- ] Location preposition drop

A special variant of a dropped preposition of is the removal of an obligatory location phrase. For example, the verb *steigen* ‘to mount’ has an obligatory location phrase when used with an agentive subject (63a,b). The analysis that the subject is agentive is reinforced by the impossibility for the participle to be used attributively without the location phrase (63c,d), cf. Section 10.2.4.

- (63) a. Der Mann steigt aus dem Auto.  
 b. \* Der Mann steigt.  
 c. Der aus dem Auto gestiegene Mann [...].  
 d. \* Der gestiegene Mann [...].

[6.65] Crucially, the verb *steigen* can also be used without a location phrase in the

## 6 Prepositional alternations

meaning ‘to rise’ (64a) with various inanimate subjects.<sup>10</sup> In such uses the participle can be used attributively (64b).

- (64) a. Die Temperatur steigt.  
b. Die gestiegene Temperatur [...].

The verbs that allow for such a diathesis have a clear difference in meaning between the two uses, one more agentive and the other more patientive (cf. Section 10.2.5).

[6.67]

- *eilen*: ‘to hurry’ vs. ‘to be urgent’
- *laufen*: ‘to walk’ vs. ‘to be in progress’
- *steigen*: ‘to mount’ vs. ‘to rise’
- *stehen*: ‘to stand’ vs. ‘to be stopped’
- *ziehen*: ‘to pull’ vs ‘to brew’

### Attested verbs

- *eilen, laufen, steigen, stehen, ziehen*

### Further examples

- Ich ziehe am Seil.  
Der Tee zieht.
- Ich stehe in der Wohnung.  
Die Uhr steht.
- Ich bin nach Hause gelaufen.  
Das Spiel ist gelaufen.
- Ich eile nach Hause. Der Brief eilt.

### 6.7.4 [ NAL | NA- ] Location preposition drop+accusative

[6.68] The verb *durchziehen* needs a location phrase when used in the meaning ‘to pull through’ (65a), but not when it is used in the meaning ‘to see through’ (65b).

- (65) a. Ich habe den Faden durch das Nadelöhr durchgezogen.  
b. ? Ich habe den Faden durchgezogen.  
c. Ich habe die Reform durchgezogen.

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<sup>10</sup>I thank Jens Fleischhauer for this observation.

### Attested verbs

- *durchziehen*

— [ OBJ > Ø ] —

### 6.7.5 [ NAP | N–P ] Accusative drop+governed preposition

[6.69] Different from the previous alternation, these verbs allow for both the preposition and the accusative to be dropped (66a–c).

- (66)
- a. Ich warne dich vor den Gefahren.
  - b. Ich warne dich.
  - c. Ich warne vor den Gefahren.

### Attested verbs

- über : (Content of report) *erzählen, hören, informieren, schreiben*
- von : (Origin of report) *erfahren, hören*
- vor : (Protection) *schützen, warnen*

### Further examples

- Ich informiere (die Anwesenden) über die Angelegenheit.
- Ich erzähle (die Geschichte) über die Angelegenheit.
- Ich schütze (die Menschheit) vor den Gefahren.
- Ich warne (dich) vor den Gefahren.

### 6.7.6 [ NDP | N–P ] Dative drop+governed preposition

[6.70] With a dative argument, some verbs allow for the dative to be dropped, but the preposition to be retained (67a–c). This is the opposite structure as attested with accusative drop, as discussed above.

- (67)
- a. Ich rate dir zum Verkauf.
  - b. \* Ich rate dir.
  - c. Ich rate zum Verkauf.

**Attested verbs**

- zu : *raten*
- über : *berichten, erzählen*
- von : *berichten, erzählen*

**Further examples**

- Ich berichte/erzähle (dir) über die Angelegenheit.
- Ich berichte/erzähle (dir) von der Versammlung.

**6.7.7 [ NDP | N-- ] Dative drop+governed preposition drop**

Some verbs allow for both the dative and the preposition to be dropped, though mostly not both at the same time (68). Also note that the dative appears to be always the possessor of the referent in the prepositional phrase, so these drops might alternatively be analysed as a stack of two different diatheses, viz. a possessor raising [NP- | NPG | NPD] and a preposition drop [NPD | N-D].

[6.71]

- (68)
- a. Ich gratuliere dir zu deinem Geburtstag.
  - b. Ich gratuliere dir.
  - c. Ich gratuliere zu deinem Geburtstag.
  - d. ? Ich gratuliere.

**Attested verbs**

- zu : *gratulieren*
- bei : *zuschauen*
- für : *danken*
- auf : *antworten*

**Further examples**

- Ich gratuliere (dir) zu deinem Geburtstag.
- Ich schaue (dir) zu beim Kochen.
- Er dankt (mir) für den Wein.
- Er antwortet (dir) auf deine Frage.



— [ OBJ > ADJ ] — *Antipassiv*

## 6.7.8 [ NA | Np ] Accusative antipassive

A commonly occurring diathesis in German is an ANTIPASSIVE, in which an accusative object can be reformulated as a prepositional phrase. In such alternations, the construction with the prepositional phrase typically indicates a less transitive situation, e.g. one in which the object is less affected (69a) or the action only partially completed (69b). Note that this alternation does not work in the other direction, i.e. when a verb occurs with a prepositional phrase, then it is mostly not the case that it can be used with the same referent as an accusative (69c).

- (69) a. Ich schieße den Bären.  
       Ich schieße auf den Bären.  
       b. Ich baue ein Haus.  
       Ich baue an einem Haus.  
       c. Ich sitze auf dem Stuhl.  
       \* Ich sitze den Stuhl.

[6.73] There appear to be only a small selection of prepositions that can be used in such alternations, which will be discussed in turn in subsequent subsections.

- *an* : Partially completed action and/or bodily contact with object
- *auf* : Action in the direction of object or object as musical instrument
- *aus* : Object of reading
- *in* : Partially completed action inside object
- *mit* : Object as instrument or reciprocal activity
- *nach* : Less affected object of action in the direction of object
- *von* : Partial usage of object
- *über* : Object of control, communication, or cognitive content
- *zu* : Direction

It is important to realise that many verbs allow for more than one of these alternations, depending on the reading of the verb/object combination, illustrated here with the verb *spielen*, ‘to play’ (70a,b). With the same verb, there might even be readings that do not allow for any prepositional alternation (70c-e). [6.74]

- (70) a. Er spielt die Geige.  
       Er spielt auf der Geige.  
       b. Er spielt den letzten Akt.

- Er spielt in dem letzten Akt.
- c. Er spielt Billard.
  - d. Er spielt einen Walzer.
  - e. Er spielt den Narren.

Some verbs, like *beklagen* ‘to complain’ (71), additionally take a reflexive pronoun with an antipassive alternation (see Section 7.7.4). It is an open question why some verbs need such an additional reflexive pronoun in an antipassive diathesis.

- (71) a. Ich beklage den Lärm.  
b. Ich beklage mich über den Lärm.

An antipassive diathesis has to be distinguished from differential object marking. [6.76] With differential object marking (DOM) the marking of the object is determined by the object itself, typically by animacy. For example, the German verb *beißen* ‘to bite’ takes an accusative object with animate objects (72a), while inanimate object need a prepositional phrase (72b). Similar effect are attested with *zwicken* ‘to pinch’, *schlagen* ‘to hit’, *treten* ‘to kick’ and possibly *kratzen* ‘to scratch’ (ref-fleischhauer2018). It seems to be a promising avenue of research to explain differential object marking as the result of a grammaticalised antipassive diathesis.

- (72) a. Der Hund biss den Jungen.  
? Der Hund biss in den Jungen.  
b. Der Hund biss in den Knochen.  
\* Der Hund biss den Knochen.

#### 6.7.8.1 *an* Antipassive

Accusative objects that alternate with an *an* prepositional phrase indicate partially completed actions, like with *bauen an* ‘to be busy building’ (73a) and is also typically used when there is bodily contact to the object, like with *schlecken an* ‘to lick’ (73b). [6.77]

- (73) a. Ich baue ein Haus.  
Ich baue an einem Haus.  
b. Ich schlecke mein Eis.  
Ich schlecke an meinem Eis.

### Attested verbs

- Bodily contact: *fühlen, knabbern, kratzen, lutschen, riechen, saugen, schnüffeln, schlecken, schlürfen, schnuppern, stoßen, üben, ziehen, zupfen*
- Partial object construction: *basteln, bauen, graben, malen, nähen, stricken, schreiben*
- Gain/loss: *gewinnen, verdienen, verlieren*

### Further examples

- Ich knabbere meinen Keks.  
Ich knabbere an meinem Keks.
- Ich schlürfe meinen Tee.  
Ich schlürfe an meinem Tee.
- Ich fühle deinen heißen Kopf.  
Ich fühle an deinem heißen Kopf.
- Ich rieche die Blume.  
Ich rieche an der Blume.
- Ich zupfe die Saite.  
Ich zupfe an einer Saite
- Ich male ein Bild.  
Ich male an einem Bild.
- Ich schreibe einen Roman.  
Ich schreibe an einem Roman.
- Ich grabe ein Loch.  
Ich grabe an einem Loch.
- Wir schnuppern den guten Bratenduft.  
Der Hund schnuppert an den Abfällen.

### Notes

[6.78]

The verb *kratzen* ‘to scratch’ appears to lose the possibility to be used with an accusative inanimate object. Examples with an accusative like (74a) are only attested in older German texts and sound strange in current German. It sounds much better with a dative possessor (74b), see Section 5.8.4. With animate objects an accusative seems to be still possible (74c), so this verb appears to be developing in the direction of showing differential object marking. With inanimate objects a prepositional phrase with *an* is preferred (74d).

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- (74) a. Er kratzte den Kopf.<sup>11</sup>  
b. Ich kratze mir den Kopf.  
c. Die Katze kratzt mich.  
d. Die Katze kratzt an der Tür.

[6.79] For the verb *verdienen* ‘to earn’ it is unclear whether these two uses should maybe better be categorised as different meanings (75a,b).

- (75) a. Er verdient den Nobelpreis.  
b. Er verdient an dem Geschäft

Note the absence of a determiner in the following examples (76).

[6.80]

- (76) a. Ich gewinne Sicherheit.  
Ich gewinne an Sicherheit.  
b. Wir verlieren Höhe.  
Wir verlieren an Höhe.

### 6.7.8.2 *auf* Antipassive

[6.81] Accusative objects that alternate with an *auf* prepositional phrase indicate partially affected objects, either with actions on top of an object, like with *reiten* ‘to ride’ (77a), or with a finished action in the direction of an object, like with *schießen* ‘to shoot’ (77b). Also verbs denoting the playing of musical instruments, like *blasen* ‘to blow’ (77c), show this alternation.

- (77) a. Er reitet das Pferd.  
Er reitet auf dem Pferd.  
b. Ich schieße den Bären.  
Ich schieße auf den Bären.  
c. Ich blase die Trompete.  
Ich blase auf der Trompete.

### Attested verbs

- Action on top of object: *reiten*
- Contact: *jagen, kauen, schießen, treten*
- Playing musical instruments: *blasen, schlagen, spielen, üben*
- Personal interaction: *hören, sprechen, treffen (begegnen)*

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<sup>11</sup>DWDS: Hauptmann, Gerhart: *Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint*, Berlin: Aufbau-Verl. 1962(1910), S. 318.

### Further examples

- Ich schlage die Trommel.  
Ich schlage auf die Trommel.
- Ich spiele Klavier.  
Ich spiele auf dem Klavier.
- Ich kaue mein Brot.  
Ich kaue auf meinem Brot.
- Ich treffe Anna.  
Ich treffe auf Anna.

### Notes

[6.82] The following verbs show considerable semantic shift in this alternation: *hören* ‘to hear’ vs. ‘to obey’ (78a), *achten* ‘to respect’ vs. ‘to look after’ (78b) and *sprechen* ‘be able to speak a foreign language’ vs. ‘to speak in a foreign language’ (78c).

- (78) a. Ich habe sie gehört.  
Ich habe auf sie gehört.
- b. Ich achte dich.  
Ich achte auf dich. c Ich spreche Englisch.  
Ich spreche auf Englisch.

#### 6.7.8.3 *aus* Antipassive

This alternation seems to be typical for objects of reading, like *vorlesen* ‘to read aloud’ (79).

- (79) a. Ich lese das Buch vor.  
b. Ich lese aus dem Buch vor.

### Attested verbs

- *lesen, vorlesen, zitieren*

#### 6.7.8.4 *in* Antipassive

Accusative objects that alternate with an *in* prepositional phrase seem to be rather uncommon. It only occurs when the action includes an aspect of occurring inside of an object. The prepositional alternate indicates partial completion of the action, like with *lesen* ‘to read’ (80).

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- (80) a. Ich lese das Buch.  
b. Ich lese in dem Buch.

### Attested verbs

- *bestehen* (*Erfolg haben*), *entscheiden*, *lesen*, *gewinnen*, *korrigieren*, *schneiden*, *spielen*, *stürmen* (*Angriff*), *treffen* (*Ziel*)

### Further examples

- Ich bestehe die Prüfung.  
Ich bestehe in der Prüfung.
- Ich gewinne das Spiel.  
Ich gewinne in dem Spiel.
- Ich treffe das Tor.  
Ich treffe in das Tor.
- Er spielt den letzten Akt.  
Er spielt in dem letzten Akt.
- Ich korrigiere die Arbeit.  
Ich korrigiere in der Arbeit.
- Ich entscheide den Fall.  
Ich entscheide in dem Fall.
- Ich schneide meinen Finger.  
Ich schneide in meinen Finger.

### Notes

With the verb *stürmen* in the meaning ‘to attack’ there is a good argument to be made for an applicative diathesis instead of an antipassive. First, the verb *stürmen* arguably is a weather verb ‘to storm’ (81a) which can be used in a manner-of-movement diathesis (81b), see Section 6.8.3. From this usage it is only a small step to the meaning ‘to attack’ with an accusative (81c). Second, this is probably the only verb among all the antipassives listed here that changed the light verb in the perfect between *haben* and *sein* (81b,c). This verb is still listed here among the antipassives because I do not have any other verbs that show the same applicative-like diathesis to put it into a completely new subsection.

- (81) a. Es stürmt draußen.  
b. Die Soldaten sind in den Saal gestürmt.  
c. Die Soldaten haben das Kastell gestürmt.

6.7.8.5 *mit* Instrumental antipassive

Accusative objects that alternate with a *mit* prepositional phrase indicate partially affected objects, typically those that can be construed as an instrument, like with *schießen* ‘to shoot’ (82a), or an instrument of transport, like with *fliegen* ‘to fly’ (82b). [6.86]

- (82) a. Ich schieße eine Kugel.  
           Ich schieße mit einer Kugel.  
       b. Ich fliege das Flugzeug.  
           Ich fliege mit dem Flugzeug.

## Attested verbs

- Instrument: *handeln, schießen, werfen*
- Instrument of transport: *fahren, fliegen, rangieren, segeln*

## Further examples

- Ich werfe den Dreck.  
    Ich werfe mit Dreck.
- Ich handele Aktien.  
    Ich handele mit Aktien.
- Ich rangiere den Wagen.  
    Ich rangiere mit dem Wagen.
- Er segelt eine Jolle.  
    Er segelt mit einer Jolle
- Er fährt einen Laster.  
    Er fährt mit seinem Laster in die Berge.

6.7.8.6 *mit* Reciprocal antipassive

[6.87]

A very small group of verbs show an antipassive in which the *mit* prepositional phrase is a reciprocal role, like with *sprechen* ‘to speak’ (83). This role can be identified by the possibility to add *miteinander* (cf. Section 6.3.6 for verbs with a similar role, but without the antipassive alternation).

- (83) a. Ich spreche den Abteilungsleiter.  
       b. Ich spreche mit dem Abteilungsleiter.  
       c. Der Abteilungsleiter und ich sprechen miteinander.

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### Attested verbs

- *sprechen*

#### 6.7.8.7 *nach* Antipassive

Accusative objects that alternate with a *nach* prepositional phrase indicate an uncompleted purposeful action in the direction of an object (cf. ref-proost2009), like with *suchen* ‘to search’ (84).

[6.88]

- (84) a. Ich suche den Ring.  
b. Ich suche nach dem Ring.

### Attested verbs

- Attempted action towards: *fühlen, greifen, schlagen, rufen, sehen, suchen, treten*
- Object of hunting: *angeln, fischen, jagen*

### Further examples

- Ich sehe dich.  
Ich sehe nach dir.
- Ich trete den Ball.  
Ich trete nach dem Ball.
- Ich rufe dich.  
Ich rufe nach dir.
- Er fühlt seine Brieftasche.  
Er fühlt nach seiner Brieftasche.

#### 6.7.8.8 *von* Antipassive

Accusative objects that alternate with a *von* prepositional phrase occur typically with consumption verbs, indicating that the consumption is only partially completed, like with *essen* ‘to eat’ (85a). Also actions that designate a transaction of an (part of an) object, like with *stehlen* ‘to steal’ (85b). In some contexts the verbs *wissen* ‘to know’ (85c) and *hören* ‘to hear’ (85d) also show this alternation.

[6.89]

- (85) a. Ich esse einen Apfel.  
Ich esse von dem Apfel.  
b. Ich stehle die Blumen.



- Ich stehle von den Blumen.
- c. Ich weiß deine Telefonnummer.  
Ich weiß von dem Schmuck, der gestohlen wurde.
- d. Ich höre den Kampf in der Ferne.  
Ich höre von dem Kampf in den Nachrichten.

### Attested verbs

- Eat a part of: *essen, fressen, naschen, kosten, knabbern, probieren, trinken, versuchen*
- Know a part of: *hören, verstehen, wissen*
- Hand over a part of: *anbieten, aushändigen, besorgen, bringen, geben, liefern, schicken, schenken, senden, überreichen, überweisen, verkaufen*
- Take away a part of: *abknöpfen, abnehmen, ausspannen, enteignen, entfernen, entleihen, entnehmen, entwenden, entziehen, klauen, nehmen, rauben, stehlen, wegnehmen*

### Further examples

- Ich nasche ein paar Beeren.  
Ich nasche von den Beeren.
- Ich koste den Wein.  
Ich koste von dem Wein.
- Ich trinke den Wein.  
Ich trinke von dem Wein.
- Ich kaufe Trauben.  
Ich kaufe von den Trauben.
- Ich verstehe Chemie gut.  
Ich verstehe viel von Chemie.
- Er probiert/versucht die Torte.  
Er probiert/versucht von der Torte.

#### 6.7.8.9 über Antipassive

[6.90] The *über* antipassive is used with some verbs of control, like *bestimmen* ‘to decide’ (86).

- (86) a. Ich bestimme die Reihenfolge.  
b. Ich bestimme über die Reihenfolge.

### Attested verbs

- Object of control: *bestimmen, entscheiden, verfügen*
- Object of cognitive process: *reflektieren*
- Object of communication: *diskutieren*

### Further examples

- Wir diskutieren das Vorschlag.  
Wir diskutieren über den Vorschlag.
- Diese Schlacht entschied den Ausgang des Krieges.  
Dieser Augenblick entschied über das ganze Leben<sup>12</sup>

### Notes

The verb *verfügen* has two rather different meanings in the antipassive diathesis, viz. ‘to mandate’ with an accusative (87a) and ‘to have control over’ with a prepositional phrase (87b) [6.91]

- (87) a. Ich verfüge einen Einreisestopp.  
b. Ich verfüge über viel Geld.

#### 6.7.8.10 zu Antipassive

The antipassive variant with *zu* is somewhat troublesome as all examples known to me are quite idiosyncratic, like *finden* ‘to find’ (88). Maybe it is better to consider these diatheses as separate lexicalised constructions. However, I think the examples listed here are interesting enough to consider this as a possible diathesis.

- (88) a. Sie findet ihn.  
b. Sie konnte blind und taub sein, aber sie fand zu ihm.<sup>13</sup>

### Attested verbs

- *halten, werden, finden*

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<sup>12</sup> Attested at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/entscheiden>, accessed 27 April 2022.

<sup>13</sup> DWDS: Kopetzky, Steffen: Grand Tour, Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn 2002, S. 239.

**Further examples**

- Ich halte dich.  
Ich halte zu dir.
- Ich werde später Bäcker.  
Ich werde noch zum Bäcker.

**6.7.9 [ NLA | NLp ] Accusative antipassive+location**

[6.93] With some verbs, like *drücken* ‘to press’ (89a), a locative prepositional phrase is obligatorily present. The accusative instrument *Finger* ‘finger’ can be changed to an optional *mit* prepositional phrase (89b), but the location cannot be removed (89c). A similar situation occurs with *stoßen* ‘to jab’ (90), though the *mit* instrument cannot (easily) be removed in this case either.

- (89) a. Er drückt seinen Finger auf den Knopf.  
b. Er drückt auf den Knopf (mit seinem Finger).  
c. \* Er drückt den Finger.
- (90) a. Er stößt das Messer in die Wunde.  
b. Er stößt in die Wunde mit dem Messer.  
c. \* Er stößt das Messer.

**Attested verbs**

- *drücken, stoßen*

**— [ OBJ > ADJ ] — *Dativ Antipassiv*****6.7.10 [ ND | Np ] Dative antipassive**

It seems to be somewhat unusual for verbs with dative but without accusative to allow for a prepositional expression of the dative, like with *entfliehen* ‘to flee’ (91). There are just a handful of cases with the prepositions as listed below. The meaning of these prepositional phrases seem to be very close to the locational meaning (e.g. *aus* is used for arguments moving out of something, etc.). Note that such a dative antipassive is much more common with verbs that also have an accusative argument (see Section 6.7.11). [6.94]

- (91) a. Ich entfliehe dem Gefängnis.  
b. Ich entfliehe aus dem Gefängnis.

### Attested verbs

- auf : *folgen*
- aus : (movement out of) *entkommen, entfliehen, entschlüpfen, entspringen, entwischen*
- für : (on behalf of) *bedeuten, bevorstehen, bleiben*
- über : *gebieten*
- vor : (movement away from) *fliehen, flüchten, weichen*
- zu : (belonging to) *dienen, gehören, passen*

### Further examples

- Die Demonstranten wichen der Polizei.  
Und er wich vor keiner Drohung, keiner Gewalt.<sup>14</sup>
- Der Hut passt ihm.  
Der Hut passt zu ihm.
- Unsere Arbeit dient dem Fortschritt.  
Unsere Arbeit dient zur Meinungsbildung.
- Ich gebiete dir.  
Ich gebiete über dich.
- Er bedeutet mir viel.  
Er bedeutet viel für mich.
- Das Examen steht mir bevor.  
Das Examen steht für mich bevor.
- Es blieben dem Bergsteiger noch zwei Schokoriegel.  
Da sie zu spät kamen, blieben für sie nur die hinteren Bänke
- Ich folge dem Einbrecher.  
Sonnenschein folgt auf Regen.
- Ich vertraue ihm.  
Ich vertraue auf seine Ehrlichkeit.
- Die Bürger flohen dem Krieg.  
Sie flohen vor dem Krieg.
- Der schnellfüßige Käfer ist lichtscheu und flieht dem Geräusch.<sup>15</sup>

#### 6.7.11 [ NAD | NAp ] Dative antipassive+accusative

With an additional accusative argument it is widespread for dative arguments to have an alternative expression in the form of a prepositional phrase. However,

[6.95]

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<sup>14</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 15.05.1981, Nr. 21.

<sup>15</sup>DWDS: Die Landfrau, 12.09.1925.

it is rather difficult to characterise the semantic difference between two such alternating expressions (cf. **ref-devaere2018**) for an investigation for the verb *geben* and the large literature on the English dative alternation). There are only a few monosyllabic prepositions that can be used for this alternation:

- *an* : Moving towards
- *von* : Removing from
- *vor* : Hiding from
- *zu* : Moving towards

### 6.7.11.1 *an* Ditransitive dative alternation

[6.96]

The replacement of a dative with an *an* prepositional phrase is a common alternation (cf. Adler 2011). For a detailed analysis of this alternation with the verb *geben*, see De Vaere et al. (**ref-devaere2018**). In all cases there is some kind of giving of the accusative object to the dative object implied. Various verbs in this class also allow for a *zu* dative alternation (Section 6.7.11.4).

#### Attested verbs

- Giving object to dative: *abgeben, abtreten, anbieten, anvertrauen, aushändigen, borgen, geben, leihen, liefern, schicken, schenken, senden, spenden, übergeben, überreichen, überweisen, vergeben, vererben, verkaufen, vermachen, vermieten*
- Giving message to dative: *berichten, erklären, erteilen, faxen, mailen, schreiben, vorlegen, vorstellen*
- Others: *anpassen*

#### Further examples

- Er berichtet dem Vorstand alles.  
Er berichtet alles an den Vorstand.
- Ich schicke meiner Mutter Blumen.  
Ich schicke Blumen an meine Mutter.
- Ich schreibe dir einen Brief.  
Ich schreibe einen Brief an dich.
- Er verkaufte dem Kunden das Auto.  
Er verkaufte das Auto an den Kunden.
- Ich passe die Hose deinem Bein an.  
Ich passe die Hose an dein Bein an.

### 6.7.11.2 *von* Ditransitive dative alternation

The *von* dative antipassive is typically used with verbs that express a removal of an accusative object from the dative object, like with *klauen* ‘to steel’ (92).

- (92) a. Ich klaue dir die Blumen.  
b. Ich klaue die Blumen von dir.

#### Attested verbs

- Removing object from dative: *abknöpfen, abnehmen, ausspannen, borgen, enteignen, entfernen, entleihen, entleihen, entnehmen, entwenden, klauen, nehmen, rauben, stehlen, wegnehmen*

### 6.7.11.3 *vor* Ditransitive dative alternation

The *vor* dative antipassive is typically used with verbs expressing an action that hides the accusative object from the dative object, like with *verschweigen* ‘to conceal’ (93). All examples known to me have the prefix *ver-* [6.98]

- (93) a. Ich verschweige dir das Geheimnis.  
b. Ich verschweige das Geheimnis vor dir.

#### Attested verbs

- Hiding object from dative: *verbergen, verheimlichen, verschweigen*

### 6.7.11.4 *zu* Ditransitive dative alternation

The *zu* dative antipassive is typically used with verbs expressing the movement of the accusative object to the dative object, like with *bringen* ‘to bring’ (94). [6.99]

- (94) a. Ich bringe dir die Waren.  
b. Ich bringe die Waren zu dir.

#### Attested verbs

- Moving object towards dative: *besorgen, bringen, liefern, schicken, schleudern, senden, werfen*
- Imaginary object moving towards dative: *sagen, zuordnen*

**Further examples**

- Ich liefere dir die Waren.  
Ich liefere die Waren zu dir.
- Ich sage dir einen Satz.  
Ich sage einen Satz zu dir.
- Ich ordne das Verb einer Gruppe zu.  
Ich ordne das Verb zu einer Gruppe zu.

— [ OBJ &gt; PBJ ] —

**6.7.12 [ NA | NP ] Accusative governed antipassive**

[6.100]

The verb *beginnen* ‘to begin’ illustrates an accusative antipassive (95a,b). Different from the previously discussed accusative antipassives (see Section 6.7.8), in this example the *mit* prepositional phrase is a governed preposition (95c). All verbs in this section have antipassives with governed prepositions. Note that the verb *beginnen* also shows a different, completely independent, anticausative diathesis (see Section 5.5.5) in which the accusative is promoted to nominative (95d).

- (95) a. Ich beginne die Arbeit.  
b. Ich beginne mit der Arbeit.  
c. Ich beginne damit, dass ich die Stifte ordne.  
d. Die Arbeit beginnt.

**Attested verbs**

- mit : *anfangen, beginnen, rechnen, zögern*
- an : *glauben (für Wahr halten), leiden*
- nach : *verlangen*
- für : *büßen, garantieren, leben*

**Further examples**

- Ich fange mein Studium an.  
Ich fange mit meinem Studium an.
- Ich rechne eine Flasche Wein pro Person.  
Ich rechne mit einer Flasche Wein pro Person

## 6 Prepositional alternations

- Ich zögere mit den Maßnahmen.  
Ich zögere damit, Maßnahmen zu ergreifen.
- Ich büße meine Missetat.  
Ich büße für meine Missetat.
- Ich garantiere den Erfolg.  
Ich garantiere für den Erfolg.
- Ich lebe meinen Beruf.  
Ich lebe für meinen Beruf.
- Ich glaube deine Aussage.  
Ich glaube an deiner Aussage.

### Notes

Note the absence of a determiner for the accusative with *leiden* ‘to suffer’ (96).

[6.101]

- (96) a. Ich leide große Schmerzen.  
b. Ich leide an einer Krankheit.

### 6.7.13 [ ND | NP ] Dative governed antipassive

[6.102]

The verb *vertrauen* ‘to trust’ (97) is currently the only known example of a verb showing a dative antipassive with a governed preposition.

- (97) a. Ich vertraue dir.  
b. Ich vertraue auf dich.  
c. Ich vertraue darauf, dass du die Arbeit machst.

### Attested verbs

- auf : *vertrauen*

### 6.7.14 [ NG | NP ] Genitive governed antipassive

Some old-fashioned genitive arguments can be replaced by a governed preposition. Yet, this seems to be highly unusual for genitives without accusatives. The only known case is *denken* ‘to remember’ (98a,b). Note that the prepositional phrase is governed (98c).

- (98) a. Ich denke der vergangenen Jahre.  
b. Ich denke an die vergangenen Jahre.  
c. Ich denke daran, dass ich Milch kaufen muss.



**Attested verbs**

- an : *denken*

**6.7.15 [ NAG | NAP ] Genitive governed antipassive+accusative**

[6.104]

The genitive ditransitives in this group allow for an alternative formulation of the genitive argument as a prepositional phrase with *von*. Given a suitable context, such prepositional phrases can in most cases be left out.

[6.105]

As genitive arguments are generally disappearing in German, many verbs in this section are also losing the possibility to occur with a genitive, leaving the antipassive alternant as the only option. For example, the verb *erinnern* ‘to remind’ could be used with a genitive until ±1850 (99a). Today, the prepositional *an* antipassive seems to be only possibility (99b). Note that the prepositions with the verbs in this section are governed prepositions (99c).

- (99) a. Ich erinnere dich des Versprechens.  
 b. Ich erinnere dich an das Versprechen.  
 c. Ich erinnere dich daran, dass du Milch kaufen sollst.

**Attested verbs**

- Separate from: *befreien, entbinden, entheben, verweisen*

**Further examples**

- Ich entbinde dich deiner Pflicht.  
Ich entbinde dich von deiner Pflicht.
- Ich enthebe dich deines Amtes.  
Ich enthebe dich von deinem Amt.
- Ich verweise dich des Spielfeldes.  
Ich verweise dich von dem Spielfeld.
- Ich befreie dich des Regenten.  
Ich befreie dich von dem Regenten.

**Notes**

The verb *entbinden* can be used as an intransitive verb with a meaning of ‘to give birth’. However, in the meaning ‘to absolve’ as discussed here it seems not to be possible to completely drop the genitive or *von* phrase. This also seems to hold

for *entheben* ‘to depose’ and *verweisen* ‘to expel’. The usage of *befreien* ‘to free’ with a genitive seems to have been lost in the 19th Century (100).

- (100) Das allgemeine Völkerrecht befreit die Person des feindlichen Regenten.<sup>16</sup>

## 6.8 Diatheses with promotion to object

– [ Ø > OBJ ] –

### 6.8.1 [ –P | DP ] Dative addition+governed preposition

This alternation allows for either a dative to be present or not with verbs that have no nominative argument, but with a governed preposition, like *liegen an* ‘to depend on’ (101). Consequently, a valency-simulating pronoun *es* is present in all alternants. The only example I have been able to find without a valency-simulating *es* is (101d).

- (101) a. Es liegt am Geld.  
b. Es liegt mir viel am Geld.  
c. Es liegt mir viel daran, dass du es erfährst.  
d. Mir liegt viel an deiner Anwesenheit.

#### Attested verbs

- auf : *ankommen*
- um : *gehen*
- an : *fehlen, liegen*

#### Further examples

- Es kommt auf die Eleganz an.  
Mir kommt es auf die Eleganz an.
- Es geht um ihre Identität.  
Den Polen geht es um ihre Identität.
- Es fehlt an Geld.  
Ihm fehlt es an Geld.

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<sup>16</sup>DWDS: Klüber, Johann Ludwig: Europäisches Völkerrecht. Bd. 2. Stuttgart, 1821.

– [ Ø > PBJ ] – *Bewegungsart*

## 6.8.2 [ N– | NL ] Manner of movement

Many movement verbs, like *tanzen* ‘to dance’ (102), allow for the following two kinds of constructions. First, a regular intransitive construction expressing the movement with an optional location (102a) and, second, a construction with an obligatory local prepositional phrase in which the movement verb expresses the manner of movement (102b). Syntactically, there is a crucial difference between these two constructions in that the perfect auxiliary changes between *haben* (102a) and *sein* (102b), see also Section 10.4.3. The local prepositional phrase cannot be left out in the construction with *sein* (102c).

- (102) a. Ich habe (in dem Garten) getanzt.  
 b. Ich bin durch den Garten getanzt.  
     (= Ich habe mich tanzend durch den Garten bewegt.)  
 c. \*Ich bin getanzt.

[6.109] This alternation is typically used to explain the difference between using a dative or an accusative with the so-called *Wechselpräpositionen* like *in* or *auf*. For example, the verb *klettern* ‘to climb’ can be used with *auf*+dative (103a) and with *auf*+accusative (103b). With the dative the action takes place at the location (‘climbing while being on top of the mountain’). In contrast, with the accusative there is a movement that changes location (‘climbing with the goal to reach the mountain’).

- (103) a. Ich klettere auf dem Berg.  
     Ich habe gestern (auf dem Berg) geklettert.  
 b. Ich klettere auf den Berg.  
     Ich bin gestern \*(auf den Berg) geklettert.

[6.110] However, syntactically and semantically there is much more going on than simply a difference in case marking with some prepositions. As proposed here, there is a diathesis between using a movement verb like *schwanken* ‘to swing, to waver’ in two different ways:

- (i) either it is used to describe:
- the activity of performing a movement (104a)
  - with perfect auxiliary *haben* (104b)

- with an optional location phrase at which the activity is taking place (104c).
- which cannot be used attributively (104d)
- which allows for gradual time specification (104e).

(ii) or it is used to describe:

- the manner of movement that leads to a change of position (105a)
- with a perfect auxiliary *sein* (105b)
- with an obligatory location phrase that describes the new position after the movement (105c)
- which can be used attributively (104d)
- which allows for gradual time specification (104e).

With regard to the (d) options: as expected for an opposition between *haben+Partizip* and *sein+Partizip* there is a correlation with the possibility to use the participle as an attributive adjective (see Section 10.2.4). However, concerning the (e) options, there is no correlation with the possibility to add gradual time specification. This suggests that this *sein+Partizip* construction is a real perfect and not some kind of *Zustandspassiv* (see Section 10.2.6).

[6.111]

- (104) a. Das Boot schwankt im Wind.  
 b. Das Boot hat im Wind geschwankt.  
 c. Das Boot hat geschwankt.  
 d. \* Das im Wind geschwankte Boot ist gesunken.  
 e. Das Boot hat allmählich im Wind geschwankt.
- (105) a. Der Betrunkene schwankt in die Kneipe.  
 b. Der Betrunkene ist in die Kneipe geschwankt.  
 c. \* Der Betrunkene ist geschwankt.  
 d. Der in die Kneipe geschwankte Betrunkene ist gestürzt.  
 e. Der Betrunkene ist allmählich in die Kneipe geschwankt.

This diathesis is productively used with verbs that describe some kind of movement. However, it is also attested with a few non-movement verbs (or at least atypical movement verbs), like *triefen* ‘to drip’ (106a). This verb can also be used to describe the manner of movement in the case of a liquid (106b).

[6.112]

- (106) a. Sein Mantel hat getrieft (vor Nässe).  
b. Das Wasser ist vom Dach getrieft.

A very similar, but crucially different diathesis exists with other non-movement verbs like *schwitzen* ‘to sweat’ (107). With such verbs an additional reflexive pronoun is necessary (see Section 7.8.1 for an extensive discussion).

- (107) a. Die Köche schwitzen.  
b. Die herumwieselnden Köche schwitzen sich durch verschiedene Runden.<sup>17</sup>

### Attested verbs

- Movement verbs: *fahren, fliegen, hüpfen, klettern, kriechen, laufen, reisen,reiten, rennen, rutschen, schleichen, schlingern, schwanken, schweben, schwimmen, segeln, stampfen, tanzen, wackeln, wandern*, etc.
- Atypical movement verbs: *einbrechen, irren, triefen*

### Further examples

- Ich habe gestampft.  
Ich bin durch den Garten gestampft/geschwankt/getanzt.
- Der Pinguin hat mit dem Kopf gewackelt.  
Der Pinguin ist durch meine Beine gewackelt.
- Die Diebe haben eingebrochen.  
Die Diebe sind in den Tresor eingebrochen.
- Ich habe (mich) geirrt.  
Ich bin durch die dunkle Wohnung geirrt.

### 6.8.3 [ -- | NL ] Weather-like manner-of-movement

[6.114] Many weather verbs like *wehen* ‘to blow’ (108) allow for a nominative subject that is moving in a weather-like manner, often induced by a weather phenomenon. In such constructions the location phrase seems obligatory.

- (108) a. Es weht.  
b. Die Blätter wehen durch die Luft.

There appears to be a slight semantic difference between examples in which the nominative subject is a patient-like argument of the weather phenomenon,

<sup>17</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 20.04.2016 (online).

like in (108), and examples in which an action is performed in a way reminiscent of the weather phenomenon, like in (109).

- (109) a. Es stürmt.  
b. Sie stürmten in den Saal.

#### Attested verbs

- *blitzen, donnern, hageln, regnen, stürmen, wehen*

#### Further examples

- Die Bomben hagelten auf die Stadt.
- Seine Zähne blitzten in der Sonne.
- Die Motoren donnerten durch die Stadt.

#### — [ Ø > PBJ ] — *Verursachte Bewegung*

In the analysis of resultative constructions, there is a recurrent suggestion in the literature to distinguish between “cause to go” and “cause to become” semantics (e.g. ref-mcintyre2003: 120). I will use the designation “caused motion” for the former and “performative result” for the latter here. [6.116]

#### 6.8.4 [ N— | NAL ] Intransitive caused motion

With some apparently intransitive verbs there exist special constructions with an accusative argument and an obligatorily present prepositional phrase. For example, the verb *klopfen* ‘to knock’ is regularly used as an intransitive (110a) possibly with an *an* prepositional phrase (110b). Accusative arguments are normally not possible, except for a very few special nouns related to music (110c). [6.117]

However, the verb *klopfen* is very regularly used in construction like (110d) with an accusative and a prepositional phrase. Both have to occur together, as leaving out either the prepositional phrase (110e) or the accusative (110f) is not possible. This prepositional phrase is a locative and not a governed argument, because it cannot be replaced by a *davon*, *dass* phrase.

The meaning of this special construction (110d) is also special. The meaning is something like: by doing the action of the intransitive verb, nominative causes accusative to move in the direction described by the prepositional phrase (110g), cf. Goldberg’s (ref-goldberg2006: 73) famous caused-motion example *She sneezed the foam off the cappuccino*.

Note that with possessor raising (see Section 6.8.12) it is even possible to add an additional dative argument, leading to an “intransitive” verb *klopfen* with an obligatory dative, accusative and prepositional argument (110h). This dative can also be turned into a reflexive (110i).

- (110) a. Das Herz klopft ganz regelmäßig.  
 b. Er klopft an der Tür.  
 c. Er klopft den Takt.  
 d. Er klopft den Schnee von seinen Schuhen.  
 e. \* Er klopft den Schnee.  
 f. \* Er klopft von seinen Schuhen.  
 g. Durch klopfen sorgte er dafür, dass der Schnee von seinen Schuhen ging.  
 h. Er klopft mir den Schnee von den (meinen) Schuhen.  
 i. Er klopft sich den Schnee von den Schuhen.

[6.121] This construction is closely related constructions with resultative preverbal like *leer-* ‘empty’ in (154), see also Section 9.8.2.

- (111) Er klopft den Aschenbecher leer.

#### Attested verbs

- Bodily process: *heulen, husten, klopfen, pusten, pumpen, schlafen, schwitzen, spucken, stampfen*
- Weather verbs: *regnen, wehen*
- Others: *graben (aus), klingeln, schwindeln*

#### Further examples

- Er klopft den Schnee von seinen Schuhen.
- Der Wind weht die Blätter durch die Luft.
- Ich huste dir meine Schwindsucht ins Gesicht.
- Der Sturm regnete den Schmutz von den Dächern.
- Sie pustet den Staub vom Tisch.
- Er spuckte die Kirschkerne ins Gras.
- Ich schlafe den Rausch aus meinem Kopf.
- Ich schwitze einen Fleck in mein Hemd.
- Er klingelt mich aus dem Bett.

- Er schwindelt ihn auf die Liste.
- Sie gräbt die Kartoffeln aus dem Boden.
- Das Herz pumpt das Blut durch den Körper.
- Das allgemeine politische Klima weht den Illegalen ins Gesicht.<sup>18</sup>
- Der Zeitgeist weht den üblichen Akustikschrott in die Besucherohren.<sup>19</sup>
- Die frische Brise kämmt die Palmen und weht den Flugsand auf die Promenade.<sup>20</sup>
- Man rückt und rutscht nicht dauernd auf seinem Stuhl hin und her, man vermeidet es, die anderen Besucher mit seinen langen Beinen zu behelligen, oder hustet den in der nächsten Reihe Sitzenden nicht ungeniert in den Nacken.<sup>21</sup>
- Ich huste den letzten Bissen Leberkäse auf den Rasen.<sup>22</sup>
- Man taute in der Sauna seine durchfrorenen Glieder auf und schwitzte den Schmutz aus den Poren.<sup>23</sup>
- Der Meister war da, stampfte den Schnee von den Schuhen.<sup>24</sup>

## Notes

This construction is also found in fixed (metaphorical) expressions (112).

[6.122]

- (112) a. Er trinkt seine Freunde unter den Tisch.  
b. Er spielt den Gegner an die Wand.  
c. Der Student im vierten Stock schläft mal wieder ein Loch in den Tag.<sup>25</sup>

### 6.8.5 [ NA– | NAL ] Transitive caused motion

Similar to intransitive caused movement (see Section 6.8.4), some transitive verbs like *befehlen* ‘to order’ (113a) alternate with a caused motion construction (113b). Note that there also exists a slightly different construction (without diathesis) with a dative after the preposition *an* (113c). In this example the prepositional

<sup>18</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 30.07.2010 (online).

<sup>19</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.03.1996 (online).

<sup>20</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 04.05.1990 (online).

<sup>21</sup>DWDS: Oheim, Gertrud: Einmaleins des guten Tons, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann 1957, S. 296.

<sup>22</sup>DWDS: Lehner, Angela: Vater Unser, Berlin: Hanser 2019.

<sup>23</sup>DWDS: Fresenius, Hanna: Sauna, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt 1987, S. 15.

<sup>24</sup>DWDS: Weismantel, Leo: Die höllische Trinität, Berlin: Union-Verlag 1966, S. 54.

<sup>25</sup>Attested online at [https://universal\\_lexikon.de-academic.com/232141/Ein\\_Loch\\_in\\_den\\_Tag\\_schlafen](https://universal_lexikon.de-academic.com/232141/Ein_Loch_in_den_Tag_schlafen), accessed 25 Juli 2022.



phrase simply expresses the location in which the action is taking place, or, alternatively it is an adnominal phrase. In both these interpretations there is no valency alternation.

- (113) a. Ich befehle eine Armee.  
 b. Ich befehle die Armee an die Front.  
 (= Ich befehle, und das Resultat ist: die Armee ist an der Front.)  
 c. Ich befehle die Armee an der Front.  
 (= Ich befehle die Armee, während ich an der Front bin.)  
 (= Ich befehle die Armee, die an der Front ist.)

#### Attested verbs

- *befehlen, dirigieren, graben, hetzen, jagen, peitschen, schneiden, ziehen*

#### Further examples

- Ich dirigiere das Orchester.  
Ich dirigiere den Wagen zum Bahnhof
- Der Bauer hat den Pflug gezogen.  
Ich habe den Faden durch das Nadelöhr gezogen.
- Ich jage den Hund.  
Ich jage den Hund aus dem Zimmer.
- Ich hetze den Hund.  
Ich hetze den Hund auf dich.
- Ich grabe ein Loch.  
Die Skifahrer gruben Spuren in den Schnee.
- Ich schneide meine Nägel.  
Ich schneide den Apfel in Stücke.
- Der Kutscher peitschte das Pferd.  
Ein Tornado peitscht Tausende von Haien aus dem Meer.

— [ Ø > PBJ ] — *Ergänzende Wirkung*

#### 6.8.6 [ NA– | NAP ] Performative result

A slightly different variant of a diathesis describing a result is attested with various performative verbs that take a regular accusative, like *machen* ‘to make/create’ (114a). As an alternative structure, these verbs also allow for a construction with an accusative and a prepositional phrase (114b). Note that the prepositional

phrase cannot be left out in these constructions. The meaning of such constructions is parallel to the previous diathesis in that the performative verb causes the result. Such constructions were named quite aptly “Ergänzende Wirkung” all the way back in the influential educational grammatical work of Karl Ferdinand Becker (ref-becker1833: 81) almost 200 years ago.

- (114) a. Er macht die Aufgaben.  
b. Er macht die Wiese zu einem Garten.  
(= Er macht etwas, und das Ergebnis ist: Die Wiese ist ein Garten.)

### Attested verbs

- zu : *erklären, machen*
- für : *halten, erklären*
- als : *ansehen, benennen, betrachten, bezeichnen, empfinden, empfehlen, vorschlagen, wünschen*

### Further examples

- Sie erklärte das Problem.  
Sie erklärte die Behauptung für eine Lüge.
- Ich betrachte dich.  
Ich betrachte dich als einen Freund.
- Ich sehe dich an.  
Ich sehe dich als einen Freund an.
- Ich schlage einen Kompromiss vor.  
Er schlug den Abgeordneten Kai Wegner als Generalsekretär vor.<sup>26</sup>
- Ich empfehle diese Kandidatin.  
Andrea Fischer empfahl sich den Delegierten als Politikerin.<sup>27</sup>

### Notes

For some verbs there appears to be a rather clear lexicalisation of the meaning of the verb between the two alternants, i.e. it is questionable, whether the alternant should still be considered to be the same verb with *halten*, meaning either ‘to hold’ or ‘to consider’ (115a) and *erklären*, meaning either ‘to explain’ or ‘to declare’ (115b).

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<sup>26</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 26.05.2003.

<sup>27</sup> DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 19.01.2002.

- (115) a. Ich halte das Schwert.  
 Ich halte dich für einen Scharlatan.  
 b. Sie erklärte die Lösung.  
 Sie erklärte den Kandidaten zum Geschäftsführer.

[6.126]

The verb *wünschen* ‘to wish’ can be used in a construction with *als* (116a) and it was possible with *zu* (116b). However, both options seem to be much more common with an additional reflexive pronoun (116c,d).

- (116) a. Kaum etwas wünscht die Fraktionsspitze mehr als Ruhe an der fraktionsinternen Gesundheitsfront.<sup>28</sup>  
 b. Ihre Majestät wünscht den Freiherrn von Stein zum Rathgeber des Königs?<sup>29</sup>  
 c. Nur 36 Prozent wünschen sich den SPD-Parteichef als Kanzler.<sup>30</sup>  
 d. Dr. Malan wünschte sich den vierundsiebzigjährigen Meneer Havenga zum Nachfolger.<sup>31</sup>

— [ Ø > OBJ > PBJ ] — *Teil Objekttausch*

6.8.7 [ NA– | NLA ] Partitive separated object  
*(Teil/weg-Objekttausch)*

[6.127]

This alternation occurs with some transitive verbs like *waschen* ‘to wash’ (117a,b), cf. the “wipe” alternation in English from Levin (ref-levin1993: 53). Note that the accusatives at both sides of the alternation do not refer to the same roles: there is a new object introduced with this diathesis. The original accusative *Hose* ‘trousers’ (117a) is recast as a location (117b), which is obligatory (117c). A new accusative *Fleck* ‘stain’ is introduced as the result of the action. Typically the result is actually the removal of something, like *Fleck* ‘stain’ in (117).

- (117) a. Ich wasche meine Hose.  
 b. Ich wasche den Fleck aus meiner Hose.

<sup>28</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 25.11.2004.

<sup>29</sup>DWDS: Alexis, Willibald: Ruhe ist die erste Bürgerpflicht oder Vor fünfzig Jahren. Bd. 5. Berlin, 1852.

<sup>30</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 09.03.2016 (online).

<sup>31</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 16.12.1954, Nr. 50.

(= Durch das Waschen meiner Hose Sorge ich dafür, dass der Fleck heraus kommt.)

- c. \* Ich wasche den Fleck.

The result of this diathesis (117b) is a caused-motion construction, similar to the diatheses as described in Sections 6.8.4, 6.8.5. However, this is a completely different diathesis because the object is changed. The new accusative object always is a part of the original object (called a “partitive” interpretation in [ref-levin1993](#) 53), hence the term *Teil* in the German name. The exact reverse diathesis is attested with preverbs (see Section 8.7.12).

These verbs, like *kämmen* ‘to comb’ (118a,b) also allow for subsequent alternation, namely (118c) to raise a possessor from the prepositional phrase to a dative (see Section 6.8.12), and then even make this dative self-inflicting reflexive (118d)

[6.129]

- (118) a. Er kämmt deine Haare.  
b. Er kämmt die Läuse aus deinen Haaren.  
c. Er kämmt dir die Läuse aus den Haaren.  
d. Er kämmt sich die Läuse aus den Haaren.

### Attested verbs

- *bügeln, bürsten, filtern, kämmen, lesen (aussortieren), polieren, putzen, quetschen, reiben, rupfen, schrubben, sieben, spülen, waschen, wischen*

### Further examples

- Er polierte die Gabel.  
Er polierte den Fleck von der Gabel.
- Er wischte den Tisch.  
Er wischte das Wasser von dem Tisch.
- Er filterte das Wasser.  
Er filterte den Schmutz aus dem Wasser.
- Ich bügle das Hemd.  
Ich bügle die Falten aus dem Hemd.
- Er schrubbt den Rinnstein.  
Nur eine Kehrmaschine schrubbt den Schmutz aus dem Rinnstein.<sup>32</sup>
- Er rupft die Enten.  
Er rupft die Federn von den Enten.

<sup>32</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 21.07.1999.

- Sie putzt seine Lippen.  
Leo W. heult und hustet, Melanie putzt den Schleim von seinen Lippen.<sup>33</sup>

### 6.8.8 [ NA– | NLA ] Partitive joined object (*Teil/fest-Objekttausch*)

Similar to the previous diathesis, but somewhat less common, some verbs allow for an unmarked partitive construction with a reversed semantics. Instead of removing a part, a part is added to a whole. For example, with *nähen* ‘to sew’ the accusative object is either the thing being sewn, *Hose* ‘trousers’ (119a), or a part being attached to something else, *Knopf* ‘button’ (119b). The original object can be retained as a prepositional phrase with *an*.

- (119) a. Er näht eine Hose.  
b. Er näht einen Knopf an seine Hose.

This diathesis is closely related to a similar diathesis with preverbs (see Section 8.9.1) and to the diathesis with the resultative preverbial *fest*- (see Section 9.8.3) exemplified here with the verb *kitten* ‘to cement’ (120).

- (120) a. Ich kitte die zerbrochene Tasse.  
b. Ich kitte den Henkel fest.

#### Attested verbs

- Attachment: *kitten, kleben, leimen, nähen*
- Insertion: *brechen, hacken, sägen, schneiden*

#### Further examples

- Er klebt die zerbrochene Vase.  
Er klebt ein Aufkleber an die Vase.
- Sie leimt die zerbrochene Spielsachen.  
Nun begann sie die Arbeit wieder, leimte das Türmlein an die Kirche und suchte die Hölzchen für das Dach zusammen.<sup>34</sup>
- Ich schneide den Teppich.  
Ich schneide ein Loch in den Teppich.
- Ich breche den Felsen.  
Ich breche einen Durchgang in den Felsen.

<sup>33</sup>DWDS: Zeit Magazin, 04.12.2008, Nr. 50.

<sup>34</sup>DWDS: Ganghofer, Ludwig: Der Dorfapostel, Stuttgart: Adolf Bonz 1917 (1900), S. 42.

- Er hackt das Holz.  
Er hackt ein Loch in das Eis.

– [ ADJ > OBJ ] – *Benefaktivdativ*

6.8.9 [ NAp | NAD ] Beneficiary dative

The alternation of a dative with a *für* prepositional phrase is very widespread [6.132] (121a,b). It can be used with verbs that can be performed on behalf of somebody else (i.e. a BENEFICIARY, sometimes called DATIVUS COMMODI). In German grammar it is sometimes referred to as a “free dative” because it can be easily dropped completely. As Eisenberg (ref-eisenberg2006a: 298) remarks, such datives are widespread, but cannot be used with all verbs and are thus a phenomenon that can be used for the sub-classification of verbs. Also note that this diathesis should be strongly differentiated from other “free datives”, specifically possessor datives (see especially Section 5.8.4, but also 6.8.11)

- (121) a. Ich koche dir eine Suppe.  
b. Ich koche eine Suppe für dich.

Note that it is almost always possible to add a *für* beneficiary phrase to a sentence (122a), but these do not always have a dative alternant (122b). With transitive verbs it turns out not so easy to find good examples where this alternation is impossible, because with most verbs datives seem to be possible though often only with some creative freedom, e.g. (122c–e). Only those verbs that clearly allow for both alternatives are of interest here.

- (122) a. Ich arbeite für den Chef.  
b. \* Ich arbeite dem Chef.  
c. Ich gewinne das Geld für dich.  
d. ? Ich gewinne dir das Geld.  
e. Gib mir eine Waffe und ich gewinne dir jeden Krieg.<sup>35</sup>

**Attested verbs**

- Holding object: *abholen, halten, holen, mitnehmen, tragen*
- Object production: *aufzeichnen, ausstellen, bauen, beschaffen, besorgen, brechen, einblenden, erobern, garantieren, graben, kaufen, malen, mieten, suchen*

<sup>35</sup> Attested online at <http://www.kriegssinfonie.ch/2018/08/paradox/>, accessed 10 January 2019.

- Object manipulation: *abbrechen, abreißen, aktualisieren, anhalten, aufstellen, einbauen, korrigieren, kürzen, messen, öffnen, reparieren, schließen, stimmen, stoppen, versperren, zukleben*
- Food production: *angeln, fischen, jagen, kauen, schießen, töten*
- Household tending: *aufwärmen, ausbessern, bleichen, erneuern, backen, bügeln, gießen, kochen, nähen, ordnen, packen, pflegen, putzen, reinigen, reparieren, waschen, wischen*

### Further examples

- Ich stelle dir einen Pass aus.  
Ich stelle für dich einen Pass aus.
- Ich halte dir den Kaffee.  
Ich halte den Kaffee für dich.
- Er stimmt mir den Kontrabass.  
Er stimmt den Kontrabass für mich.<sup>36</sup>
- Ich töte dir den Hasen.  
Ich töte den Hasen für dich.
- Ich garantiere dir den Erfolg.  
Ich garantiere den Erfolg für dich.

### — [ ADJ > OBJ ] — *Beurteilerdativ*

#### 6.8.10 [ Np | ND ] Judgement dative

[6.134]

A dative can be introduced together with an obligatory *zu/genug* phrase in the interpretation of an evaluator *für den Geschmack von* (also known as *dativus iudicantis*, e.g. **ref-hole2014**: 6–7, 172–176). It is typically used with intransitive verbs (123a), though transitive construction seem possible (123b). More research is needed to establish any restrictions for the kind of verbs with which this dative can be used.

- (123) a. Paul fuhr zu schnell für den Geschmack von seiner Mutter.  
Paul fuhr seiner Mutter zu schnell.
- b. Der Student beantwortete die Frage nicht schnell genug für den Geschmack der Professorin.  
Der Student beantwortete der Professorin die Frage nicht schnell genug.

<sup>36</sup>The verb *stimmen* here means ‘to tune an instrument’, a different meaning from *stimmen* ‘to vote’ that does not allow for this diathesis.

### Further examples

- Der Zug kommt dir zu früh an.  
Der Zug kommt zu früh an für deinen Geschmack.
- Ich lüge dir zu viel.  
Ich lüge zu viel für deinen Geschmack.

### — [ ADJ > OBJ ] — *Ortspertinenzdativ*

#### 6.8.11 [ NLg | NLD ] Possessor-of-location to dative experiencer

[6.135] Some datives can be expressed alternatively as a possessor inside a prepositional phrase. This happens with some verbs that can be used intransitively (124a) or with a dative (124b). However, this dative cannot be used without an additional prepositional phrase (124c). In these cases, the dative can be alternatively expressed as the possessor of the prepositional object (124d).

- (124)
- a. Der Affe saß ruhig.
  - b. Der Affe saß ihm auf der Schulter.
  - c. \* Der Affe saß ihm ruhig.
  - d. Der Affe saß auf seiner Schulter.

### Attested verbs

- Bodily contact: *beißen, boxen, fallen, klopfen, laufen, schauen, stechen, steigen, zwicken*
- Position: *hängen, liegen, stehen, stecken, sitzen*

### Further examples

- Der Regen läuft mir in die Schuhe.  
Der Regen läuft in meine Schuhe.
- Das Wasser steht mir bis zum Bauch.  
Das Wasser steht bis zu meinem Bauch.
- Er schaut mir über die Schulter.  
Er schaut über meine Schulter
- Das Hemd hing ihm aus der Hose.  
Das Hemd hing aus seiner Hose.
- Ich steige dir auf die Füße.  
Ich steige auf deine Füße.



- Ich falle dir vor die Füße.  
Ich falle vor deine Füßen.
- Ich klopfe dir auf die Schulter.  
Ich klopfe auf deine Schulter.
- Die Biene sticht mir in den Arm.  
Die Biene sticht in meinen Arm.
- Ich zwicke dir in die Wange.  
Ich zwicke in deine Wange.

### Notes

[6.136]

The verb *beißen* ‘to bite’ can be used transitively with an animate accusative argument (125a), or with the dative alternation (125b), leading to two different options to encode the object of the biting, cf. accusative *ihn* (125a) with dative *ihm* (125b).

- (125) a. Der Hund hat ihn gebissen.  
Der Hund hat *ihn* ins Bein gebissen.
- b. Der Hund hat in sein Bein gebissen.  
Der Hund hat *ihm* ins Bein gebissen.

### 6.8.12 [ NALg | NALD ] Possessor-of-location to dative experiencer+accusative

[6.137]

Similar to the previous alternation, the verbs in this group also alternate the possessor of the prepositional phrase with a dative. However, differently from the previous group, these verbs also have an accusative argument. These verbs are either causative alternants of the verbs from the previous group or verbs that already have had a caused-motion diathesis (see Section 6.8.4).

- (126) a. Ich lege den Brief auf deinen Schreibtisch.  
b. Ich lege dir den Brief auf den Schreibtisch.

### Attested verbs

- Causative position verbs: *hängen, häufen, kleben, klopfen, lehnen, legen, stellen, stecken, setzen*
- Bodily actions: *flüstern, husten, spucken*
- Transitive caused location: *brechen, bügeln, erwarten, filtern, jagen, kämmen, polieren, schneiden, waschen, wischen*

### Further examples

- Ich setze das Kind auf deinen Schoß.  
Ich setze dir das Kind auf den Schoß.
- Ich hänge den Pullover in deinen Schrank.  
Ich hänge dir den Pullover in den Schrank.
- Ich klebe einen Zettel auf deine Tür.  
Ich klebe dir einen Zettel auf die Tür.
- Ich lehne den Besen an deinen Zaun.  
Ich lehne dir den Besen an den Zaun.
- Ich klopfe den Schnee von deinem Mantel.  
Ich klopfe dir den Schnee von dem Mantel.
- Ich huste meine Schwindsucht in dein Gesicht.  
Ich huste dir meine Schwindsucht ins Gesicht.
- Ich spucke den Kern in deine Suppe.  
Ich spucke dir den Kern in die Suppe.
- Er poliert den Fleck von deiner Gabel.  
Er poliert dir den Fleck von der Gabel.
- Er filtert den Schmutz aus deinem Wasser.  
Er filtert dir den Schmutz aus dem Wasser.
- Er wischt das Wasser von deinem Tisch.  
Er wischt dir das Wasser von dem Tisch.
- Er kämmt die Läuse aus deinen Haaren.  
Er kämmt dir die Läuse aus den Haaren.
- Ich schneide ein Loch in deinen Teppich.  
Ich schneide dir ein Loch in den Teppich.
- Ich bügle die Falten aus deinem Hemd.  
Ich bügle dir die Falten aus dem Hemd.
- Ich breche eine Tür in deine Wand.  
Ich breche dir eine Tür in die Wand.
- Ich wasche den Fleck aus deiner Hose.  
Ich wasche dir den Fleck aus der Hose.
- Er flüstert den Code in mein Ohr.  
Er flüstert mir den Code ins Ohr.
- Er häufte mir das ganze Kleingeld in die Hand.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>DWDS: Böll, Wort 133.

## Notes

This construction is frequently used metaphorically (127).

[6.138]

- (127) a. Er fragt mir ein Loch in den Bauch.  
b. Ich jage dir den Anwalt auf den Hals.

— [ ADJ > OBJ > PBJ ] — *Pertinenzakkusativ*

### 6.8.13 [ NAg | NPA ] Possessor-of-accusative applicative

This alternation is the German equivalents of the “Possessor Object” alternation in English from Levin (ref-levin1993: 73). The possessor of an accusative becomes an accusative and the erstwhile accusative is demoted to a prepositional phrase. The preposition (typically *für*) appears to be a governed preposition.

- (128) a. Ich bewundere seine Ehrlichkeit.  
b. Ich bewundere ihn für/wegen seine/r Ehrlichkeit.  
c. Ich bewundere ihn dafür, dass er ehrlich ist.

## Attested verbs

- Emotional stance: *achten (Respekt), bewundern, feiern, lieben, loben, hassen, unterstützen, verurteilen*

## Further examples

- Ich lobe den Schüler für seinen Fleiß.  
Ich lobe den Fleiß des Schülers.
- Ich entschuldige den Dieb für seine Tat.  
Ich entschuldige die Tat des Diebes.
- Die Delegierten feiern ihn für sein Nein zum Irak-Krieg.  
Die Delegierten feiern sein Nein zum Irak-Krieg.

— [ ADJ > OBJ + Ø > OBJ ] —

### 6.8.14 [ Np- | NAA ] Naming result

This alternation appears as a parallel to the double accusative of *nennen* ‘to name’ (see Section 5.3.10) for other naming verbs.

- (129) a. Sie schimpft auf mich.  
b. Sie schimpft mich einen Narren

**Attested verbs**

- *schimpfen, fluchen*

**Further examples**

- Er sitzt immer am selben Platz bei Bier und Schnaps, flucht mich einen Tagedieb, einen Affen, Bananenfresser, einen, der schon längstens in eine Arbeitserziehungsanstalt gehöre.<sup>38</sup>

## 6.9 Symmetrical diatheses

— [ ADJ > SBJ > ADJ ] —

### 6.9.1 [ Np | pN ] Commutative

The verb *wimmeln* ‘to swarm/teem’ (10) has two different constructional possibilities that seem structurally completely reversed without any overt marking.

[6.141]

- (130) a. Die Kinder wimmeln auf den Platz.  
b. Der Platz wimmelt von Kindern.

**Attested verbs**

- *wimmeln*

— [ ADJ > OBJ > ADJ ] —

### 6.9.2 [ NAp | NpA ] Chained applicative/antipassive

In German, chained applicatives are typically attested with verbal prefixes like *be-* (131a) or verbal particles like *ein-* (131b), see Section 8.7.13. In such alternations, the role that is marked with the accusative case changes. An accusatively marked argument is typically more affected than a prepositional object, so changing which role is marked in the accusative also changes the perspective of the action (similar to what happens with antipassives, see Section 6.7.8).

- (131) a. Ich werfe Dreck auf dich.

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<sup>38</sup> Attested online at <http://www.gruppe-4-w.de/forum/viewtopic.php?f=21&t=2047#p19030>, accessed 29 July 2019.

Ich bewerfe dich mit Dreck.

- b. Ich wickle das Tuch um den Arm.  
 Ich wickle den Arm in dem Tuch ein.

With a few verbs this alternation is attested without a verbal prefix or particle. With some verbs of filling, like *füllen* ‘to fill’ (132a) this unmarked diathesis is completely parallel to the *befüllen* (see Section 8.7.13), but without any overt marking. An accusative object, here *Schnaps* ‘liquor’ (132a) is replaced with an optional *mit* prepositional phrase (132c), cf. the English “spray/load” alternation from Levin (ref-levin1993: 50–51). This alternation is closely related to the *mit* antipassive (see Section 6.7.8.5). In addition to this *mit* antipassive, there is an applicative diathesis that turns an obligatory location into an accusative, here *Flasche* ‘bottle’.

- (132) a. Er füllt den Schnaps in die Flasche.  
 b. \*Er füllt den Schnaps.  
 c. Er füllt die Flasche mit Schnaps.  
 d. Er füllt die Flasche.

Some verbs of cutting and breaking, like *schneiden* ‘to cut’ (133a) allow for an unmarked exchange of the object to be dissected, *Blatt* ‘sheet’, with the parts that are the result of the dissection, *Streifen* ‘bands’ (133b). These verbs can occur both with and without the prefix *zer-*, see Section 8.7.11. Note that these verbs allow for another highly similar diathesis that introduces another kind of new object that is a part of the whole object, *Loch* ‘hole’ (133c), see Section 6.8.7.

- (133) a. Ich schneide das Blatt zu Streifen.  
 b. Ich schneide Streifen aus dem Blatt.  
 c. Ich schneide ein Loch in dem Blatt.

#### Attested verbs

- filling: *füllen*, *gießen*, *stopfen*
- dissection: *brechen*, *hacken*, *sägen*, *schneiden*
- others: *schießen*, *vergleichen*

#### Further examples

- Er stopft Federn in die Kissen.  
 Er stopft die Kissen (mit Federn).

## 6 Prepositional alternations

- Er gießt Wasser auf die Blumen.  
Er gießt die Blumen (mit Wasser).
- Ich breche Stücke aus der Wand.  
Ich breche die Wand in Stücke.
- Ich säge Bretter aus dem Baum.  
Ich säge den Baum zu Brettern.

### Notes

For the verb *schießen* ‘to shoot’ this alternation (134a,b) is possible better analysed as a combination of two accusative antipassives. It is also possible to express both roles as prepositional phrases (134c). This is not possible with the other verbs in this group.

- (134) a. Ich schieße eine Kugel auf den Bären.  
b. Ich schieße den Bären mit einer Kugel.  
c. Ich schieße mit einer Kugel auf den Bären

The verb *vergleichen* ‘to compare’ allows for the flipping of roles (135a,b). This alternation is slightly different from the other verbs in this class as there is no location involved.

- (135) a. Er vergleicht mich mit einem Affen.  
b. Er vergleicht einen Affen mit mir.

— [ ADJ > ADJ ] —

### 6.9.3 [ NAg | NAp ] Possessor-of-accusative to preposition

Another raised possessor is the alternation in which the possessor of an accusative can be expressed alternatively with a prepositional phrase (136a,b). This is called an “Attribute Object Alternation” in Levin (ref-levin1993: 74).

- (136) a. Ich bewundere seine Ehrlichkeit.  
b. Ich bewundere die Ehrlichkeit bei ihm.

### Attested verbs

- *bekämpfen, bemerken, bewundern, erwarten*

**Further examples**

- Ich bemerke bei ihm eine Langeweile.  
Ich bemerke seine Langeweile.
- Ich bekämpfe bei ihm den Schmerz.  
Ich bekämpfe seinen Schmerz.
- Ich erwarte von dir einen Besuch.  
Ich erwarte deinen Besuch.





## 7 Reflexive pronoun alternations

### 7.1 Introduction

[7.1] In German, reflexive pronouns are easily identified in the third person as *sich*. One of the functions of reflexive pronouns is to indicate reflexive reference, i.e. to mark the identity of two different roles of the verb. But reflexive pronouns have many other functions in German. When using the grammatical term “reflexive” a distinction has to be made between self-inflicting REFLEXIVE REFERENCE and other uses of REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS.

Reflexive reference is typically illustrated with a verb like *waschen* ‘to wash’ (1a). This verb has two roles, the “washer” and the “washee”. Crucially, with self-inflicting reflexive reference using *sich* (1b) these two different roles are still expressed in the sentence. The reflexive pronoun *sich* in (1b) only indicates that the two roles are performed by the same participant, opposing it *ihn* to (1a) in which the two roles are performed by different participants. With the reflexive pronoun in (1b), both roles are still overtly present, so there is no reduction of the valency and there is no grammatical remapping of roles, and thus there is no diathesis in German.

- (1) a. Er wäscht ihn.  
b. Er wäscht sich.

From a typological perspective, there is arguably a difference in this respect between languages with a reflexive pronoun strategy, like German, and languages that use a verbal derivation technique for marking self-inflicting reflexive reference (cf. [ref-dixon2014](#): 172ff.). For such languages with a derivational strategy, the verb is being marked as “self-inflicting” and one role is completely dropped. In such languages, it is probably better to analyse self-inflicting reflexive reference as a kind of diathesis.

In German, the reflexive pronoun is also used in many other constructions, and most of those show some kind of diathesis, for example an anticausative *sich* in (2a), see Section 7.5.2 or an antipassive *sich* in (2b), see Section 7.7.4. In these examples, the reflexive pronoun *sich* is not filling any role, but it is marking

[7.3]

the valency alternation itself. There is a long tradition to call such constructions MIDDLE/MEDIUM or *Medialkonstruktion* in German. However, there turns out to be very many different kinds of “middle” alternations, so I prefer to be more precise in separating and naming them here in this chapter (see also **ref-kunze1997**). To prevent confusion, I will simply not use the term “middle” at all.

- (2) a. Ich schließe den Schrank.  
Der Schrank schließt sich.
- b. Ich beklage den Lärm.  
Ich beklage mich über den Lärm.

There exist various verbs that do not have a reflexive alternation, but they always obligatorily need a reflexive pronoun, for example *sich verspäten* ‘to be late’ (3a) and *sich aneignen* ‘to appropriate’ (3b). Such obligatorily reflexive verbs are astonishingly common, as discussed in Section 7.3.

[7.5]

- (3) a. Die S-Bahn hat sich wieder einmal verspätet.
- b. Ich habe mir eine neue Sprache angeeignet.

In this chapter, only diatheses are discussed that exclusively differ as to the addition of a reflexive pronoun. There are actually even more diatheses involving reflexive pronouns that will be discussed in subsequent chapters. In those diatheses there is more than one morphosyntactic change. For example, with some verbs the addition of a preverb also induces the addition of a reflexive pronouns (4a), see Section 8.7.10. There is also the famous German anticausative diatheses that combines a reflexive pronoun with a manner adverbial (4b), see Section 9.5.2. Also widely discussed in German grammar is the combination of a reflexive pronoun with the light verb *lassen* (4c), see Section 11.2.5. Less widely discussed is a diathesis that combines a reflexive pronoun with the light verbs *geben* (4d), see Section 10.5.12.

[7.6]

- (4) a. Der Hund ist nach Hause gelaufen.  
Der Hund hat sich im Wald verlaufen.
- b. Ich verkaufe das Buch.  
Das Buch verkauft sich gut.
- c. Ich schließe den Schrank.  
Der Schrank schließt sich leicht.
- d. Er schlug seine Mitbewerber.  
Seine Mitbewerber geben sich geschlagen.

[7.7]

Amidst the large variety of diatheses with reflexive pronouns, there are a few generalisations that stand out:

- Diatheses with reflexive pronouns are valency-reducing alternations (main counterexamples in Section 7.8.1, idiosyncratic counterexamples in Section 7.6.1).
- Diatheses with reflexive pronouns exclusively use the accusative reflexive pronoun, never the dative (idiosyncratic counterexamples in Section 7.9.3, and there is a productive dative reflexive pattern with *lassen*, see Section 11.9.1)■
- For obligatory reflexive verbs, dative reflexive pronouns are only possible when an accusative argument is present (idiosyncratic counterexamples in Section 7.3.7).
- For self-inflicting reflexive reference, dative reflexive pronouns are only possible when an accusative argument is present (counterexamples in Section 7.4.6 and 7.4.12).

[7.8]

There are six diatheses in this chapter that seem prominent enough to be given a German name. I propose the following names for these:

- [OBJ > Ø] ENDOREFLEXIV (see Section 7.7.1 ff.)
- [OBJ > ADJ] REZIPROKATIV (see Section 7.7.3)
- [OBJ > PBJ] REFLEXIV ANTIPASSIV (see Section 7.7.4)
- [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] REFLEXIV ANTIKAUSATIV (see Section 7.5.2 ff.)
- [OBJ > SBJ > PBJ] REFLEXIV ERLEBNISKONVERSIV (see Section 7.5.7)
- [Ø > PBJ] REFLEXIV BEWEGUNGSART (see Section 7.8.1)

[7.9]

As noted above, there are many more prominent diatheses that involve a reflexive pronoun, but these are fixed stacks together with other marking (preverbs, adverbials or light verbs). They will be discussed in later chapters. For convenience, the main reflexive fixed stacks are listed here with reference to their full discussion:

- [OBJ > Ø] PRÄVERB ENDOREFLEXIV (see Section 8.7.1)
- [SBJ > Ø] AKTIONSBEWERTUNG (see Section 9.5.1)
- [SBJ > Ø] MÖGLICHKEITSBEWERTUNG (see Section 11.5.1)
- [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] DARSTELLUNGSANTIKAUSATIV (see Section 10.5.12)
- [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ] PERMISSIVPASSIV (see Section 11.5.5)
- [OBJ > SBJ > PBJ] PERMISSIVKONVERSIV (see Section 11.5.7)
- [OBJ > SBJ > OBJ] PERMISSIVINVERSIV (see Section 11.9.1)
- [OBJ > ADJ] PRÄVERB REFLEXIV ANTIPASSIV (see Section 8.7.4)
- [Ø > OBJ] PRÄVERB REFLEXIV AKKUSATIV (see Section 8.8.5 ff.)

## 7.2 Characteristics of reflexive pronouns

### 7.2.1 Identifying reflexive pronouns

In most situations, the German reflexive pronouns are identical to the regular pronouns as shown in Table 7.1. Only in the 3rd person there exists a special reflexive pronoun *sich*, both for the singular and the plural. For this reason, I will illustrate reflexive constructions mostly using 3rd person masculine nouns or pronouns with the overtly reflexive pronoun *sich*. As a shorthand, I will often use the word *sich* as a technical term in the meaning “reflexive pronoun”.

Table 7.1: German reflexive pronouns

Case	1 Sing.	2 Sing.	3 Sing.	1 Plur.	2 Plur.	3 Plur.
Dative	<i>mir</i>	<i>dir</i>	<i>sich</i>	<i>uns</i>	<i>euch</i>	<i>sich</i>
Accusative	<i>mich</i>	<i>dich</i>	<i>sich</i>	<i>uns</i>	<i>euch</i>	<i>sich</i>

In contrast, the difference between a dative and an accusative reflexive pronoun is only visible in the 1st and 2nd person singular, so to show the case marking I will use examples with such subjects. In general, the accusative *sich* is much more common than the dative *sich*. There seems to be a very strong tendency (though not without exceptions) for the dative reflexive pronoun only to be possible when there is a further accusative argument present in the sentence. Further, the dative reflexive pronoun does not occur in any of the diatheses discussed in this chapter. All non-self-inflicting uses of *sich* are in the accusative.

### 7.2.2 Coreference always with nominative

The pronoun *sich* always refers to the nominative subject (5a), except in some situations embedded inside another diathesis (5b,c).

- (5) a. Ich wasche mich.  
b. Er lässt mich mich waschen.  
c. Laß mich mich an dir ergetzen.<sup>1</sup>

With light-verb constructions, intended coreference with the nominative subject cannot be marked with *sich* anymore. For example, (6a) is ambiguous in that

<sup>1</sup>DWDS: Tucholsky, Kurt: Zwischen den Schlachten. In: Kurt Tucholsky, Werke - Briefe - Materialien, Berlin: Directmedia Publ. 2000 [1919].

the pronoun *ihn* could both be coreferential with the nominative *er* or not. The intended meaning of the reflexive *sich* in (6b) is an attempt to force a coreferential reading, which seems impossible to me.

- (6) a. Er lässt mich ihn waschen.
- b. \* Er lässt mich sich waschen.

There are a few verbs that seem to allow for coreference with a non-nominative argument (cf. **ref-duden2009**: 273–274). These are very unusual, with (7b) being strange, though not impossible. Example (8) clearly shows the problematic status of such reflexive pronouns. The word order in (8a) only leaves the possibility of *sich* referring to the nominative subject. In contrast, the unusual word order in (8b) makes it difficult to interpret the sentence, with both referential options of *sich* being possible: *sich* can refer here both to the nominative *sie* and to the dative *ihrem Freund*.

- (7) a. Ich habe ihn über den Zustand aufgeklärt.
- b. ? Ich habe ihn über sich (selbst) aufgeklärt.
- (8) a. Sie zeigt sich ihrem Freund.
- b. ? Sie zeigt ihrem Freund sich (selbst).

### 7.2.3 Coreference without reflexive pronoun

The reflexive pronoun *sich* undoubtedly plays a role in disambiguating reference in the third person. However, ambiguity remains with genitives (9a), which do not have a lexicalised reflexive pronoun in German. As a result, (9a) can both be interpreted as disjointed reference (9b) and as coreference (9c).

- (9) a. Er wäscht seine Haare.
- b. Er wäscht ihm die Haare.
- c. Er wäscht sich die Haare.

Genitive arguments are vanishing from the German language, so it is difficult to find examples of a proper genitive argument coreferent with the nominative subject. An old-fashioned sounding example is given in (10).

- (10) Ich erinnere mich meiner, wie ich, Dich liebend.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 09.06.1961, Nr. 24.

### 7.2.4 Double coreference

As already seen in the previous example (10), three coreferents are also possible (11a). With both an accusative and a dative coreferent (96b) things get really interesting in the third person, as both will turn into *sich*, leading to a confusing sequence of two *sich* reflexive pronouns (11c).

- (11) a. Morgen putze ich mir meine Schuhe.  
b. Ich schreibe Gedichte, weil ich mich mir (selbst) erklären will.  
c. Sie will sich sich selbst erklären.

## 7.3 Deponent verbs without alternations

A small group of verbs obligatorily needs a reflexive pronoun coreferencing the nominative subject. My best guess is that such verbs originally also allowed constructions without this obligatory coreferencing *sich* pronoun, but for some reason that usage without *sich* got out-of-use. In various cases this ongoing development can be observed in current German. For example, coreferent usage with *bemühen* ‘to bother’ (12a) or *beziehen* ‘to relate to’ (13a) appear to be more frequent compared to their non-coreferencing usage in (12b,c) and (13b), respectively.

[7.18]

- (12) a. Ich bemühe mich.  
b. ? Ich bemühe dich.  
c. Leider kann ich es nicht ganz auswendig, sonst brauchte ich dich nicht zu bemühen.<sup>3</sup>
- (13) a. Ich beziehe mich auf das Gespräch.  
b. Er bezieht die Verdächtigung auf sein ungewöhnliches Benehmen.

Among the verbs with obligatory *sich*, the following valency patterns are commonly attested:

- Nominative+accusative *sich* (Section 7.3.1)
- Nominative+accusative *sich*+governed preposition (Section 7.3.2)
- Nominative+accusative *sich*+genitive (Section 7.3.6)
- Nominative+dative *sich*+accusative (Section 7.3.8)

In contrast, verbs with the following valency patterns are unattested, or only attested rarely in special collocations:

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<sup>3</sup>DWDS: E. Strauß Spiegel 45.

- Nominative+dative *sich* (Section 7.3.7)
- Nominative+dative *sich*+governed preposition (no known examples)
- Nominative+dative *sich*+genitive (no known examples)
- Nominative+accusative *sich*+dative (Section 7.3.5)

Comparing these two groups, the generalisation can be formulated that obligatory dative *sich* is only possible when there is an accusative argument present and an obligatory accusative *sich* is not possible with a dative argument present.

### — Obligatory accusative reflexive pronouns —

#### 7.3.1 [ N ] Obligatory accusative reflexive

[7.22] Various verbs describing behaviour, like *verirren* ‘to get lost’ (14a), need an obligatory reflexive pronoun. Depending on the analysis, a large group of intransitive verbs with a resultative preverbial, like *totlachen* ‘to laugh extremely’ (107b), can also be included here (cf. Section 9.4.3).

- (14) a. Vier Wanderer haben sich im Gebirge verirrt.  
b. Sie haben sich totgelacht.

#### Attested verbs

- Behaviour: *abmühen, abrackern, abstrampeln, aufführen, aufrappeln, beeilen, benehmen, betrinken, besaufen, bücken, daranmachen, davonstehlen, durchlavieren, durchmogeln, durchwursteln, echauffieren, einigeln, erhängen, ermannen, fortbilden, gedulden, herausreden, hervortun, hinauswagen, sputen*
- (Erratic) behaviour with *ver-*: *verfahren, verhalten, verhaspeln, verirren, verkalkulieren, verlaufen, verplappern, verschreiben (falsch schreiben), verspäten, verspekulieren, versprechen (falsch sprechen), verrennen, vertun, verwählen, verzählen*
- Bodily process: *akklimatisieren, erkälten, räuspern, verkühlen, übergeben, wohlfühlen*
- Natural process: *abregnen, anfinden, bauchen, behaaren, bewahrheiten, bewölken, eintrüben, entspinnen, ereignen, herauskristallisieren, jähren, rentieren, verästeln, verfärben, verpuppen, verzweigen, zutragen*

#### Further examples

- Die Autofahrer, die im Stau stehen, müssen sich gedulden.

- Die S-Bahn hat sich wieder einmal verspätet.
- Die Wolken haben sich abgeregnet.
- Die Segel bauchen sich im Winde.<sup>4</sup>
- Auf der A8 hat sich ein Unfall ereignet.
- Die neugeborenen Katzen behaaren sich allmählich.<sup>5</sup>

### 7.3.2 [ NP ] Obligatory accusative reflexive+governed preposition

A widespread phenomenon are verbs with an obligatory accusative *sich* with a governed preposition (see Section 6.2 on defining governed prepositions), like *entschließen zu* ‘to decide’ (15a,b). The verbs are listed below according to the preposition they govern.

[7.23]

- (15) a. Ich entschlief mich zu einer Reise.  
b. Ich entschlief mich dazu, eine Reise zu machen.

#### Attested verbs

- an : *anpirschen, anschmiegen, beteiligen, festbeißen, halten*
- auf : *beziehen, freuen, konzentrieren, verlassen*
- durch : *äussern*
- für : *aussprechen, bedanken, eignen, entschuldigen, revanchieren, schämen*
- gegen : *sträuben, verschwören*
- in : *einfühlen, einhören, einkuscheln, einleben, einlesen, fügen, hineindenken, hineinversetzen, schicken (fügen), vergucken, verlieben, versuchen*
- mit : *abfinden, abgeben, abmühen, abquälen, auskennen, beeilen, befassen, begnügen, behelfen, beschäftigen, schwertun, zufriedengeben*
- nach : *erkundigen, sehnen, umsehen*
- über : *beschweren, einig sein, erkundigen, ereifern, kaputtlachen, mokieren*
- um : *balgen, bemühen, bewerben, mühen*
- von : *drücken, erholen, lossagen*
- vor : *schämen, verbeugen, verneigen*
- zu : *bequemen, eignen, entscheiden, entschließen, gesellen, versteigen*

#### Further examples

- Das Parlament befasst sich mit dem neuen Gesetz.

<sup>4</sup>dwds dictionary, attested online at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/bauchen>, accessed 25 December 2022.

<sup>5</sup>dwds dictionary, attested online at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/behaaren>, accessed 27 July 2022.



- Ich erhole mich von der Anstrengung.
- Der Tourist erkundigt sich bei der Information nach dem Weg.
- Er fügte sich in sein Schicksal.
- Die Studenten sträuben sich gegen die Erhöhung der Studiengebühren.
- Das Brett eignet sich nicht zu/für diese Arbeit.
- Er versuchte sich in dieser Rolle.
- Ich habe mich mit der Arbeit abgequält.
- Ich begeben mich an die Arbeit
- Ich beeile mich mit dem Brief.
- Ich halte mich an die Abmachungen.
- Die Krankheit äußert sich durch den Ausschlag.
- Mit dieser Aufgabe tue ich mich schwer.
- Erst auf Medienanfragen bequemte sie sich zu einer Antwort.<sup>6</sup>

### Notes

[7.24]

The verb *sich verlassen* ‘to rely on’ (16a) has a completely different meaning from *verlassen ohne sich*, which means ‘to leave’ (16b).

- (16) a. Ich verlasse mich auf dich.  
b. Ich verlasse dich.

[7.25] The verb *aussprechen* ‘to pronounce’ (17a) has a rather different meaning from *sich aussprechen*, which can mean ‘to argue for’ with a preposition *für* (17b) or ‘speak about disagreements’ with a comitative *mit* (17c)

- (17) a. Ich spreche die Worte aus.  
b. Ich spreche mich für Erneuerungen aus.  
c. Ich spreche mich mit dir aus.

Although they are clearly cognates, the verb *abgeben* ‘to give away’ (18a) has a rather different meaning from *sich abgeben mit* ‘to mess around’ (18b). Likewise, *drücken* ‘to encumber’ (18c) is semantically rather far away from the cognate *sich drücken vor* ‘to duck out of something’ (18d).

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<sup>6</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 17.11.2010, Nr. 46.

- (18) a. Ich habe den Brief abgegeben.  
b. Ich habe mich mit ihm abgegeben.  
c. Sorgen drücken mich.  
d. Ich drücke mich vor der Gefahr.

The verb *sich schicken* ‘to acquiesce’ is an old-fashioned meaning of *schicken* ‘to send’. Another usage of the same verb stem typically occurs with *es* and negative polarity, *es schickt sich nicht* meaning ‘to be not suitable\*’.

### 7.3.3 [ Np ] Obligatory accusative reflexive+*mit* (*reciproca tantum*)

A special group of verbs in this class are verbs with an reciprocal *mit* preposition, like with *einigen* ‘to reach an agreement’ in (19). On first notice, the *mit* phrase might look like a comitative argument as used with *betrinken* ‘to get drunk’ in (20). However, as shown by the grammaticality judgements in those two examples, the *mit* phrases with both verbs have different characteristics.

Just like comitative phrases, reciprocal *mit* phrases are not governed prepositions, compare (19b) and (20b), see also Section 6.2.4. However, different from comitative phrases, reciprocal *mit* phrases do not allow for the addition of *zusammen* (19c), nor can *with* be replaced by *ohne* (19d). The addition of *zusammen* and the replacement with *ohne* is possible with comitative *mit* (20c,d).

- (19) a. Ich habe mich mit meinem Nachbarn geeinigt.  
b. \* Ich habe mich damit geeinigt, dass der Nachbar geht.  
c. \* Ich habe mich zusammen mit meinem Nachbarn geeinigt.  
d. \* Ich habe mich ohne meinen Nachbarn geeignet.
- (20) a. Ich habe mich mit meinem Nachbarn betrunken.  
b. \* Ich habe mich damit betrunken, dass der Nachbar geht.  
c. Ich habe mich zusammen mit meinem Nachbarn betrunken.  
d. Ich habe mich ohne meinen Nachbar betrunken.

Verbs with reciprocal *mit* are sometimes called “real” reciprocals (or RECIP-ROCA TANTUM, ref-wiemer2007: 467–468) because they can be considered to be inherently reciprocal, although they still can have a singular subject (see Section 7.4.14 for the reciprocal constructions with plural subjects).

There are many verbs with the prefix *ver-* in this class. Interestingly, many are derived from nominal stems, e.g. *sich verbrüdern* ‘to fraternise’ is derived from the noun *Bruder* ‘brother’, see Section 8.6.4.

### Attested verbs

- Obtain agreement: *alliiieren, anfreunden, aussprechen, beratschlagen, bere-den, einigen, solidarisieren, unterhalten (sprechen), verabreden, verbrüdern, verbünden, verklemmen, verloben, verschwören, vertragen*
- Obtain disagreement: *anlegen, duellieren, überwerfen, verfeinden, verkrachen*■

### Further examples

- Sie hat sich mit ihrem Mann überworfen.
- Ich lege mich mit ihm an. ('Ich streite mit ihm')
- Das große rechte Speichenrad meines Wagens verklemmte sich mit dem linken des Nachbarwagens.<sup>7</sup>

### Notes

Various reciprocal *mit* verbs also exist without reflexive pronoun, but only in a different lexical meaning, e.g. *vertragen* means 'to tolerate something inanimate' without a reflexive pronoun, but 'to get along with a human' with a reflexive pronoun.

### 7.3.4 [ NL ] Obligatory accusative reflexive+local preposition

[7.33]

A few verbs with obligatory *sich* additionally need an obligatory local prepositional phrase, like *sich befinden* 'to be located' (21).

- (21) a. Das Rathaus befindet sich am Marktplatz.  
b. \* Das Rathaus befindet sich.

### Attested verbs

- *aalen, ansiedeln, anstellen, aufhalten (befinden), befinden, begeben, einfres-sen, einschleichen, ergießen, fläzen, fressen, niederlassen, scheren, suhlen, um-sehen, verkriechen, verschanzen, zubewegen, zurechtfinden*

### Further examples

- Ich halte mich in der Vestibule auf.
- Ich aale mich in der Sonne.

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<sup>7</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 14.08.1958, Nr. 33.

## 7 Reflexive pronoun alternations

- Der Schmutz hatte sich tief in die bröckligen Wände eingefressen.
- Er schert sich nach Hause.
- Die Reifen fressen sich in den Schnee.

### Notes

The obligatory reflexive verb *sich aufhalten* ‘to be located’ is possibly distantly related in meaning to the non-reflexive verb *aufhalten* ‘to stop something’ discussed in Section 7.5.7. [7.34]

### 7.3.5 [ ND ] Obligatory accusative reflexive+dative

This pattern with an obligatory accusative reflexive with a dative is exceedingly rare. The attested example appear somewhat old-fashioned, like *sich hingeben* ‘to indulge oneself’ (22). There are a few more verbs in which the dative is optional (see Section 7.3.10). Semantically, these verbs are closely related to the verbs showing a dative passive diathesis (see Section 7.9.1). [7.35]

(22) Ich hab mich der Aufgabe hingegeben.

#### Attested verbs

- *anschließen, beugen (fügen), fügen, hingeben (eifrig widmen), unterwerfen, widersetzen, zugesellen*

#### Further examples

- Europa beugt sich dem Willen der USA.
- Ich widersetze mich dem Befehl.
- Ich werde mich deinem Vorschlag anschließen.
- In Scharen gesellt sie sich häufig dem Hausgeflügel zu.<sup>8</sup>

### 7.3.6 [ NG ] Obligatory accusative reflexive+genitive

Accusative *sich* combined with an obligatory genitive argument is clearly attested, although all these uses are rather old-fashioned, like with *sich entledigen* ‘to ditch’ (23). [7.36]

(23) Ich entledige mich meines Gegners.

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<sup>8</sup>DWDS: Natzmer, Gert von: Tierstaaten und Tiergesellschaften, Berlin: Safari-Verl. 1967, S. 209.

### Attested verbs

- *bedienen, befließen, bemächtigen, bemüßigen, berauben, entäußern, enthalten, entledigen, entsinnen, erfreuen, erwehren*

### Further examples

- Ich habe mich des Sparens befließigt.
- Ich habe mich der Herrschaft bemächtigt.
- Ich habe mich des Alkohols enthalten.
- Ich habe mich dieser Methode bedient.
- Ich erfreue mich bester Gesundheit.

### — Obligatory dative reflexive pronouns —

#### 7.3.7 [ N ] Obligatory dative reflexive

[7.37]

It is exceedingly rare to have a dative *sich* without other arguments. A possible example is the (arguably lexicalised) collocation *sich Mühe geben* ‘to make an effort’ (24a). Also, the verb *behelfen* ‘to manage’ is apparently becoming acceptable with a dative reflexive pronoun in online communication (ref-strecker2017).

- (24) a. Ich gebe mir Mühe.  
b. Ich behelfe mich (mir).

### Attested verbs

- *behelfen, Mühe geben*

#### 7.3.8 [ NA ] Obligatory dative reflexive+accusative

[7.38]

A dative *sich* with an obligatory accusative appear to be reasonably frequent. Note that the meaning of almost all these verbs include some kind of (cognitive) appropriation, like with *vorstellen* ‘to image’ (25a). The prefix *er-* occurs recurrently with the meaning ‘to appropriate something successfully’, like with *erspielen* ‘to win by playing’ (25b).

- (25) a. Ich stelle mir das Ergebnis vor.  
b. Ich erspiele mir einen Gewinn.

### Attested verbs

- Appropriation verbs: *aneignen*, *anmaßen*, *ertanzen*, *ergeigen*, *erkämpfen*, *ermalen*, *ersingen*, *erspielen*, *langen*
- Verbs of cognitive appropriation: *abgewöhnen*, *abquälen* (*erarbeiten*), *aneignen*, *angewöhnen*, *ausdenken*, *denken*, *einbilden*, *merken*, *vorstellen* (*denken*)
- Others: *verbitten*, *vornehmen*

### Further examples

- Ich denke mir das Ergebnis aus.
- Er langte sich ein Glas.<sup>9</sup>
- Ich muss mir jede Zeile abquälen.

### Notes

The verb *denken* only occurs in this structure in the rather old-fashioned usage with the meaning ‘to imagine’ (26). [7.39]

(26) Ich denke mir den Vorgang in folgender Weise.<sup>10</sup>

The verb *merken* only occurs in this structure in the meaning ‘to remember’ (27a), and not in the usage of *bemerken* (27b) or *anmerken* (27c). [7.40]

- (27) a. Ich merke mir deine Telefonnummer.  
b. Ich (be)merke seine Absicht.  
c. Du darfst dir das nicht (an)merken lassen.

The verb *vorstellen* also has two rather different meanings. In this construction with an obligatory dative *sich* it means ‘to imagine’ (28a). The other meaning ‘to introduce’ (30b,c) has a possible accusative reflexive (see Section 7.4.5).

- (28) a. Ich stelle mir den Konsul vor.  
b. Ich stelle mich dem Konsul vor.  
c. Ich stelle dich dem Konsul vor.

The verb *abquälen* has two rather different meanings. Only the meaning ‘to work hard for something’ (29a) shows this construction with an obligatory dative *sich*.

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<sup>9</sup>DWDS attested at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/langen>, accessed 28 July 2022.

<sup>10</sup>DWDS: Weismann, August: *Das Keimplasma. Eine Theorie der Vererbung*. Jena, 1892.

- (29) a. Ich muss mir jede Zeile abquälen. ('erarbeiten')  
 b. Ich habe mich mit der Arbeit abgequält. ('plagen')

— Diatheses of obligatory reflexive verbs —

[7.43]

Verbs with obligatory *sich* can be seen as just regular lexicalised verbs, which in turn are applicable to any of the alternations discussed in the previous two chapters. Curiously, such alternations seem to be rather rare. The attested cases will be discussed in this section. Arguably, these diatheses belong together with the diatheses from the previous two chapters

7.3.9 [ NP | -P ] Obligatory accusative reflexive+nominative drop

[7.44]

The collocation *sich drehen um* 'to concern' can be used both with a regular nominative subject (30a) and without (30b). This usage of this verb is clearly metaphorically derived from the local meaning 'to revolve around' (30c), but in that usage the dropping of the nominative is not possible. This diathesis is the same as the drop described in Section 6.5.1.

- (30) a. Der Streit dreht sich um das 1998 erworbene Firmengelände.  
 b. In diesem Streit dreht es sich um das 1998 erworbene Firmengelände.  
 c. Der Mond dreht sich um die Erde.  
 d. \* Bei dem Mond dreht es sich um die Erde.

Attested verbs

- *drehen*

7.3.10 [ ND | N- ] Obligatory accusative reflexive+dative drop

A small group of obligatorily intransitive *sich* verbs allow for a dative to be dropped, like with *ergeben* 'to capitulate' (31). This diathesis is the same as the drop described in Section 5.7.4 but with an additional reflexive pronoun in both alternants. The verbs in this class establish some further examples of the unusual situation of an accusative *sich* with a dative argument (see also Section 7.3.5).

- (31) a. Die Rebellen ergeben sich.  
 b. Die Rebellen ergeben sich der Polizei.

### Attested verbs

- Subordinate: *ergeben, fügen*
- Oppose: *emanzipieren, widersetzen*

### Further examples

- Er widersetzte sich.  
Er widersetzte sich dem Vater.
- Er fügte sich (trotz vieler Bedenken).  
Er fügte sich dem Willen seines Vaters.

### Notes

The verb *ergeben* ‘to capitulate’ is different from the prepositional passive *ergeben* <sup>[7.46]</sup> ‘to result in’. The meaning *ergeben* ‘to capitulate’ used to allow a regular (non-reflexive) accusative argument with a meaning similar to modern *übergeben* ‘turn over’ (32). In contemporary German this is not possible anymore.

(32) Ich ergebe ihn der süßen Gnade unsers Herrn Jesu Christi.<sup>11</sup>

### 7.3.11 [ ND | NP ] Obligatory accusative reflexive+dative antipassive

In some of the verbs with an accusative *sich* and dative argument (33a), the dative <sup>[7.47]</sup> can be replaced by a (governed) prepositional phrase (33b,c). This diathesis is the same as described in Section 6.7.10 for verbs without reflexive marking.

- (33) a. Ich füge mich dem Gesetz.  
b. Ich füge mich in mein Schicksal.  
c. Die machistische Gesellschaft hat sich nicht geändert und die meisten Frauen fügen sich darin.<sup>12</sup>

### Attested verbs

- Submission: *anbiedern, anschmeicheln, beugen, fügen*

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<sup>11</sup>DWDS: Scriver, Christian: Das Verlohrne und wiedergefundene Schöfflein. Magdeburg, 1672.

<sup>12</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.11.2013, Nr. 44.



### Further examples

- Ich beuge mich seinem Willen.  
Ich beuge mich vor seinem Willen.
- Ich füge mich deinem Willen.  
Ich füge mich nach deinem Willen.
- Er hatte sich (bei) ihm angebiedert.
- [...] wie sich die politische Klasse (bei) der fußballbegeisterten Masse anzuschmeicheln versucht.<sup>13</sup>

### 7.3.12 [ NG | NP ] Obligatory accusative reflexive+genitive antipassive

[7.48]

Some obligatorily *sich* verbs with a genitive argument allow for the genitive argument to be replaced by a (governed) prepositional phrase, like with *erinnern* ‘to remember’ (34a,b), just like the antipassives in Section 6.7.15.

- (34) a. Ich erinnere dich des Versprechens. (until ±1850 with genitive)  
b. Ich erinnere dich an das Versprechen.

[7.49]

Most of these constructions with a genitive are old-fashioned or even completely out of use, like with *denken* ‘to commemorate’ (35). Note that these prepositional phrases all seem to be governed prepositions (89c)

- (35) a. Ich denke der vergangenen Jahre.  
b. Ich denke an die vergangenen Jahre.  
c. Ich denke daran, dass du morgen Geburtstag hast.

### Attested verbs

- *über* : *erfreuen, freuen, schämen, vergewissern*
- *mit* : *brüsten*
- *auf* : *besinnen*
- *zu* : *erreisen, erfrechen*

### Further examples

- Ich schäme mich meines Vergehens.  
Ich schäme mich für mein Vergehen.

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<sup>13</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 04.07.2010, Nr. 27.

- Sie brüstet sich ihrer Vergangenheit.  
Sie brüstet sich mit ihrem großen Freundeskreis.
- Ich besinne mich eines Besseren.  
Das Volk muss sich auf seine Kraft besinnen.
- Sie besann sich ihrer Aufgabe.  
Sie besann sich auf ihre Aufgabe.
- Er erfrechte sich der Beleidigung des Vaters.  
Er erfrechte sich zu einer solchen Beleidigung.
- Er erdreistet sich der Lüge.  
Mit welchem Ziel denn hätten wir uns dazu erdreisten können?<sup>14</sup>
- Sie hat sich seiner Zuverlässigkeit vergewissert.  
Sie hat sich über seine Zuverlässigkeit vergewissert.

## 7.4 Alternations without diathesis

There are three different kinds of alternations involving reflexive pronouns that do not involve any changing of roles (i.e. there is no diathesis). The well-known reflexive constructions (Section 7.4.5ff.) and reciprocal constructions (Section 7.4.14ff.) are among them. Less widely acknowledged, there are also some verbs that allow for a “free” reflexive pronoun, to which I will turn first. [7.50]

### — Free reflexive pronouns —

Some verbs allow for both a construction with and without *sich*, but there is no difference in the valency between these two constructions. The difference in meaning between the two alternants is small and is in need for more in-depth study in all cases presented below. The name “free” as used here is probably a misnomer, as the choice is not a completely free choice. However, the difference is small enough to be extremely difficult to determine. Note also that for these verbs a “free” dative reflexive pronoun only occurs when a full accusative argument is present. [7.51]

This alternation is almost completely ignored in the German grammatical literature. An early discussion of the phenomenon is found in Stötzel (ref-stotzel1970: 174–177) and a short note is presented in Wiemer & Nedjalkov (ref-wiemer2007: 498). It is also possible that the occurrence of a “free” reflexive is a dialectal phenomenon, see e.g. the apparent extension of reflexive usage in Austrian German as observed in Ziegler (ref-ziegler2010). [7.52]

<sup>14</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.09.1977, Nr. 39.

## 7.4.1 [ N | N ] Free accusative reflexive

The semantic difference between these two alternants of the verbs in this group deserves further investigation. The verb *knien* ‘to kneel’ in (36) suggests that there might be a difference in dynamics: the construction without reflexive pronoun is more typical for a state, while the construction with reflexive pronoun is used typically to describe a change of state. However, this difference does not seem to hold for all examples. The reflexive pronoun clearly is not part of a reflexive construction as the verb is intransitive (36c).

- (36) a. Er kniet auf dem Kissen.  
 b. Er kniet sich auf das Kissen.  
 c. \* Er kniet ihn auf das Kissen.

[7.54]

Covert anticausatives, like with  *duschen* ‘to shower’ (see Section 5.5.5), might seem to have a “free” reflexive (37a,b). However, the construction with *sich* in (37b) is just a self-inflicting reflexive of the transitive (37c).

- (37) a. Ich habe geduscht.  
 b. Ich habe mich geduscht.  
 c. Ich habe den Elefanten geduscht.

[7.55]

Similarly, reflexive anticausatives, like *abkühlen* ‘to cool’ (see Section 7.5.2), might seem to have a “free” reflexive (38a). However, the two possibilities are clearly distinguished by a different perfect auxiliary (38b). Also a transitive variant is possible (38c). This all indicates that a verb like *abkühlen* is a reflexive anticausative, and the intransitive construction without *sich* is an anticausative of the transitive (see Section 10.5.16).

- (38) a. Die Luft kühlt (sich) ab.  
 b. Die Luft ist abgekühlt.  
     Die Luft hat sich abgekühlt.  
 c. Der Regen hat die Luft abgekühlt.

## Attested verbs

- *ausruhen, ausschlafen, drehen, erbrechen, halten (Zustand), hinknien, irren, knien, lohnen*

### Further examples

- Ich ruhe aus.  
Ich ruhe mich aus.
- Ich habe geirrt.  
Ich habe mich geirrt.
- Ich habe hingekniet.  
Ich habe mich hingekniet.
- Er hat ausgeschlafen.  
Er hat sich ausgeschlafen.
- Der Kranke hat mehrmals erbrochen.  
Der Betrunkene hat sich erbrochen.
- Die Arbeit lohnt.  
Die Arbeit lohnt sich.
- Geheimnisse halten sich lange.<sup>15</sup>  
Denn Bronzeskulpturen halten lange.<sup>16</sup>

### Notes

The verb *ausruhen* ‘to rest’ until very recently was commonly used without *sich*, [7.56] but this is slightly awkward in contemporary German (39a). Constructions without *sich* are still widespread in non-finite and subordinate uses (47b-d).

- (39) a. ? Sie ruht aus.  
b. Sie blieb stehen um auszuruhen.  
c. Sie musste ausruhen.  
d. Ich sehe, dass sie ausruht.

The verb *irren* ‘to be wrong’ without reflexive pronoun also seems to be old-fashioned (40). [7.57]

- (40) Es irrt der Mensch so lang er strebt.<sup>17</sup>

The verb *drehen* ‘to turn’ is an interesting case that needs more research. It can be used transitively (41a) and with a reflexive anticausative diathesis (41b), see Section 7.5.2. However, there are also various contexts in which the anticausative can be used without a reflexive (41c). In my experience, many German speakers

<sup>15</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 06.05.1995.

<sup>16</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 26.11.1994.

<sup>17</sup>DWDS: Goethe, Faust: Prolog 317.

consider such examples without reflexive to be wrong, but they are clearly attested. Something similar happens with *hinknien* ‘to kneel down’ (41d)

- (41) a. Ich drehe die Kurbel.  
 b. Die Räder drehen sich wieder.<sup>18</sup>  
 c. Die beiden Räder drehen dann gleichmäßig.<sup>19</sup>  
 d. Jedes Mal, wenn man etwas Böses gemacht hatte, musste man für eine gewisse Zeit auf eine Bank hinknien.<sup>20</sup>

#### 7.4.2 [ NP | NP ] Free accusative reflexive+governed preposition

[7.59] Although there is definitively a different “feel” between *streiten* ‘to quarrel’ with and without *sich* (42), the difference is difficult to pin down. The sentence without *sich* seems to be more static, describing a fixed situation (42a), while the variant with *sich* is more dynamic (42b). However, whether this is not an accurate description of the (fine) difference between these alternants for all verbs listed below.

- (42) a. Ich streite mit dir um die Wurst.  
 b. Ich streite mich mit dir um die Wurst.

[7.60] Covert causatives (see Section 6.5.10 and 6.6.1) might seem to have a “free” *sich*, like with *stürzen* ‘to tumble’ (43a,b). However, this is not the case, because the construction with *sich* (43b) is just the self-inflicting reflexive construction of the transitive (43c).

- (43) a. Ich stürze ins Wasser.  
 b. Ich stürze mich ins Wasser.  
 c. Ich stürze den Elefanten ins Wasser.

#### Attested verbs

- Verbs of quarrel: *balgen*, *boxen*, *raufen*, *streiten*, *zanken*
- Others: *abwecheln*, *beraten*, *entscheiden*, *erstaunen*, *sorgen*, *überlappen*

<sup>18</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 09.02.2011 (online).

<sup>19</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.01.2016, Nr. 02.

<sup>20</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 01.06.2001.

### Further examples

- Ich bin über das IOC baff erstaunt.<sup>21</sup>  
[Er] erstaunt sich über den langen Anreiseweg.<sup>22</sup>
- Ein Großteil der Norweger entscheidet für einen solchen Stromtarif.<sup>23</sup>  
Ich entscheide mich für den Angriff.
- M.P. boxt sich mit einem alten Weggefährten.<sup>24</sup>
- Die Zone überlappt mit dem eigenen Überwachungsgürtel.<sup>25</sup>  
Die Zone überlappt sich mit schon lange bestehenden Luftüberwachungs-  
gebieten Japans.<sup>26</sup>

### Notes

The verb *sorgen* has a different meaning in the two alternants: without reflexive it means ‘to take care of’ (44a) and with reflexive ‘to worry’ (44b). The verb also changes preposition with the addition of *sich* (44a,b). Both prepositions are governed prepositions (44c,d). Such an alternation between different governed prepositions might be considered a whole new class of diatheses not yet consequently acknowledged in this study.

[7.61]

- (44) a. Er sorgt für seine Mutter.  
b. Er sorgt sich um seine Mutter.  
c. Er sorgt dafür, dass es seiner Mutter gut geht.  
d. Er sorgt sich darum, dass es seiner Mutter gut geht.

### 7.4.3 [ ND | ND ] Free accusative reflexive+dative

The verb *zuneigen* ‘to tend towards’ (45) is the only known example of a free reflexive with an additional dative argument.

[7.62]

- (45) a. Ich neige dieser Ansicht seit langem zu.  
b. Später hat er sich dem Sozialismus zugeneigt.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.11.2017 (online).

<sup>22</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.10.1985, Nr. 43.

<sup>23</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 11.09.2012, Nr. 37.

<sup>24</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 24.10.1997, Nr. 44.

<sup>25</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.12.2013, Nr. 50.

<sup>26</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 03.12.2013 (online).

<sup>27</sup>Attested online at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/zuneigen>, accessed 2 August 2022.

**Attested verbs**

- *zuneigen*

**7.4.4 [ NA | NA ] Beneficiary dative reflexive+accusative**

So-called beneficiary datives (46a,b) are widespread in German (see Section 6.8.9). Such a dative can in most cases also be used reflexively (46c). Comparing (46a) with (46c) seems to suggest a free reflexive *sich* in the dative. However, this example is just a combination of a beneficiary dative and the regular self-inflicting reflexive usage.

- (46) a. Ich habe ein Haus gebaut.  
 b. Ich habe ihm (= für ihn) ein Haus gebaut.  
 c. Ich habe mir ein Haus gebaut.

[7.64]

In contrast, the verb *ansehen* ‘observe’ also allows for a construction with and without reflexive pronoun (47a,c), but it is not possible to use a non-coreferential dative (47b). Such verbs are much less common and will be listed here. All these verbs currently known to me have preverbs, with *er-* being particularly frequent (see Chapter 8).

- (47) a. Ich habe das Haus angesehen.  
 b. \* Ich habe ihm das Haus angesehen.  
 c. Ich habe mir das Haus angesehen.

**Attested verbs**

- *anhören, ansehen, ausdenken, erbetteln, erdenken, erhandeln, erkämpfen, erschwimmen, ersehnen, ersparen (Geld), erspielen, erwandern, überlegen, verdienen, wünschen*

**Further examples**

- Ich verdiene ein Vermögen mit Werbung.  
 Ich verdiene mir ein Vermögen mit Werbung.
- Ich höre die Musik an.  
 Ich höre mir deinen Vorschlag an.
- Er überlegte die Wirkung.  
 Er überlegte sich eine Lösung.

- Die Mannschaft hat den Sieg erspielt.  
Die Mannschaft hat sich den Sieg erspielt
- Ich erhandle ein Vorrecht.  
Ich erhandle mir ein Vorrecht.
- Die USA wünschen ein europäisches Fluggastdaten-Register.<sup>28</sup>  
Ich wünsche mir ein Fahrrad.
- Könnte ja sein, dass gerade niemand etwas Neues erdenkt und erfindet.<sup>29</sup>  
Das genügt den Theoretikern jedoch, sich vier Arten von schwarzen Löchern zu erdenken.<sup>30</sup>
- Schwerkranke ersehnen solche Botschaften.<sup>31</sup>  
Sie ersehnen sich menschlich zugewandte und gerechte Gesten der Erkenntnis.<sup>32</sup>
- Das erste EM-Gold für die Gastgeber erschwamm Adam Peaty.<sup>33</sup>  
Zumindest Völker erschwimmt sich jährlich einen fünfstelligen Betrag.<sup>34</sup>
- Er erwanderte seine neue Heimat.<sup>35</sup>  
Sie erwandert sich die Atlantikküste.<sup>36</sup>
- Die Armee hat den Sieg erkämpft.  
Der Sportler hat sich den ersten Platz erkämpft.

## Notes

[7.65] The verb *ausdenken* ‘to contrive’ without reflexive pronoun appears to be old-fashioned (48).

(48) Da dachte er eine List aus.<sup>37</sup>

The verb *ersparen* ‘to save money’ has a free reflexive (49a,b). The same verb can also mean ‘to spare somebody something’. In that meaning it takes dative and accusative arguments (49c).

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<sup>28</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.09.2015 (online).

<sup>29</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.09.2017, Nr. 37.

<sup>30</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 27.08.1971, Nr. 35.

<sup>31</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.04.2017, Nr. 10.

<sup>32</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 19.03.1999.

<sup>33</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 17.05.2016 (online).

<sup>34</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 16.03.2000.

<sup>35</sup>DWDS: Zeit Magazin, 20.09.2012, Nr. 39.

<sup>36</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 24.05.2007, Nr. 22.

<sup>37</sup>DWDS: Grimm *Simeliberg*.



- (49) a. Er hat viel von seinem Verdienst erspart.<sup>38</sup>  
 b. Ich habe mir etwas erspart.<sup>39</sup>  
 c. Er hat mir jede Menge Arbeit erspart.

### — Self-inflicted reflexive alternations —

To test for the presence of the self-inflicting reflexive construction, there are various syntactic characteristics to look out for. First, it is always possible to add the intensifier *selbst* to the reflexive pronoun (50a). Further, the pronoun *sich* can be negated (50b) and stressed (50c). These characteristics do not hold for any of the diatheses marked by *sich* as discussed later in this chapter.

- (50) a. Er sieht sich (selbst).  
 b. Er sieht nicht sich selbst.  
 c. Er sieht nur sich selbst.

#### 7.4.5 [ NA | Na ] Self-inflicting accusative reflexive

This construction is often seen as the prototypical self-inflicting reflexive: a transitive verb with a nominative and an accusative argument allows for the accusative to be replaced by a reflexive pronoun, indicating that the action is performed on the nominative subject itself (51a,b). This alternation is possible for very many verbs that can have both an animate nominative and accusative argument.

- (51) a. Ich wasche das Auto.  
 b. Ich wasche mich (selbst).

The list of verbs presented here can easily be extended with more examples. However, care has to be taken not to include verbs with highly similar antipassive alternations (see Section 7.7.4) like with *fürchten* ‘to fear’ (52a,b) or anticausative alternations (see Section 7.5.2) like with *freuen* ‘to be happy’ (52c,d).

<sup>38</sup> Attested online at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/ersparen>, accessed 29 July 2022.

<sup>39</sup> Attested online at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/ersparen>, accessed 29 July 2022.

## 7 Reflexive pronoun alternations

- (52) a. Er fürchtet den Ausgang des Verfahrens.  
b. Er fürchtet sich vor dem Ausgang des Verfahrens.  
c. Dein Erfolg freut ihn.  
d. Er freut sich über deinen Erfolg

The crucial difference between a self-inflicting reflexive construction and these other alternations is that with self-inflicting reflexives the argument is simply replaced by the reflexive pronoun, or, in other words, the reflexive pronoun *sich* itself is the argument. So, with verbs like *waschen* ‘to wash’ in (51a,b) above, there is both an agent (the “washer”) and a patient (the “washee”) of the verb. These two roles can be filled by one and the same participant, as marked by the reflexive pronoun. This is not the case with antipassive and anticausative in (52b,d). This can be seen by the possibility to retain the original argument as a prepositional phrase in these cases. The pronoun *sich* does not replace any argument here (for more discussion about these alternations, see the respective sections below).

### Attested verbs

- Emotions: *hassen, kennen, loben, mögen, rühmen, verachten*
- Bodily care: *abmessen, abwiegen, anziehen, ausziehen, baden, bürsten, duschen, kämmen, kratzen, pflegen, rasieren, schminken, verletzen, waschen, wiegen*
- Body position: *aufrichten, beugen, hinlegen, hinsetzen, hinstellen, strecken, stoßen, umdrehen, wenden*
- Perception: *ansehen, fühlen, hören, sehen*
- Work: *beschäftigen, bewerben, vorstellen*
- Others: *aufhängen, erschießen, schützen*

### Further examples

- Ich bewerbe den Wein bei den Kunden.  
Der Student bewirbt sich (selbst) bei vielen Universitäten.
- Er hat den Teilnehmer hingesetzt/hingelegt/hingestellt.  
Sie hat sich (selbst) hingesetzt/hingelegt/hingestellt.
- Ich schütze die Menschheit vor den Gefahren.  
Ich schütze mich (selbst) vor den Gefahren.

## Notes

The verb *stoßen* ‘to push’ has an interesting change in preferred prepositional adjunct between non-reflexive (53a) and reflexive usage (53b), in accordance to the change in verb semantics. Pushing something else will normally result in a movement, e.g. into or out of somewhere. Conversely, pushing oneself will typically be against something. The *Zustandspassiv* (see Section 10.5.16) again changes the direction of movement and accordingly the preposition (53c). However, these conventional implicatures can be overridden by a suitable context (53d,e).

- (53) a. Er stößt mich in den Teich.  
 b. Ich stoße mich am Tisch.  
 c. Ich bin auf ihn gestoßen.  
 d. Er stößt mich an die Wand.  
 e. Ich stosse mich in die Tiefe meiner Finsternis, um meine Finsternis zu erkennen<sup>40</sup>

## 7.4.6 [ ND | Nd ] Self-inflicting dative reflexive

Verbs with a dative argument can be used reflexively, although such usage often has a rather poetic or humorous touch to it (54a-c). The verbs listed here can surely be extended when (even) more poetic freedom is allowed. However, this construction does not appear to be very frequent.

- (54) a. Ich begegne mir selbst mit größter Achtung.  
 b. Ich antworte mir dann mal selber.  
 c. Ich gleiche mir nicht einen Augenblick.<sup>41</sup>

## Attested verbs

- *antworten, begegnen, gefallen, gleichen, helfen, missfallen, schaden, etc.*

<sup>40</sup> Attested online at <http://bluemountain.princeton.edu/bluemtn/?a=d&d=bmtnabg19231201-01.2.2&>, accessed 10 January 2019.

<sup>41</sup> DWDS: Goethe: Schertz, List und Rache. Note that the accusative *einen Augenblick* is not a governed argument, but a temporal quantified object, see Section 5.3.9.

### Further examples

- Ich gefalle dir.  
Ich gefalle mir.
- Ich schade dir.  
Ich schade mir.
- Ich helfe dir.  
Ich helfe mir.

#### 7.4.7 [ NP | Np ] Self-inflicting prepositional reflexive

Self-inflicting *sich* is widespread in governed prepositional phrases (55a,b). Probably, all governed prepositional phrases that can have a human participant allow for such a reflexive pronouns. Note that the accusative vs. dative case of the reflexive pronoun is governed by the preposition.

- (55) a. Karl kämpft mit dem Hund.  
b. Karl kämpft mit sich.
- (56) a. Ich spreche von dir.  
b. Ich spreche von mir.  
c. Er spricht von sich.

### Attested verbs

- *kämpfen, sprechen*, etc.

#### 7.4.8 [ NAD | NAd ] Self-inflicting dative reflexive+accusative

For ditransitive verbs that allow for a nominative, accusative and dative argument it is extremely common to allow for a self-inflicting reflexive pronoun in the dative, like with *schenken* ‘to gift’ (57a,b). Only an illustrative selection of such verbs are listed in this section. [7.74]

- (57) a. Ich schenke ihm eine Tafel Schokolade.  
b. Ich schenke mir (selbst) eine Tafel Schokolade.

With verbs that allow for the possessor-of-accusative dative alternation (‘possessor datives’, see Section 5.8.4) this dative reflexive can lead to sentences with [7.75]

three coreferent words, like with *putzen* ‘to clean’ (58a) or *zerbrechen* ‘to break’ (58b).

- (58) a. Ich putze mir meine Schuhe.  
b. Er versalzt sich seine Suppe.

There is also a crucial opposition between an accusative (59c) and dative reflexive (59d) in such examples. This opposition is attested with verbs like *waschen* that allow both for an animate accusative (59a) and for the possessor-of-accusative dative alternation (59b). Both the accusative and the dative argument can be replaced by a reflexive pronoun. Care has to be taken not to confuse these two alternations in the third person, because the same pronoun *sich* is used for both accusative (59e) and dative (59f).

- (59) a. Ich wasche dich.  
b. Ich wasche dir den Rücken.  
c. Ich wasche mich.  
d. Ich wasche mir den Rücken.  
e. Er wäscht sich. (= accusative *sich*)  
f. Er wäscht sich den Rücken. (= dative *sich*)

### Attested verbs

- Granting: *beweisen, erlauben, gestatten, gönnen, verbieten, verschreiben, versprechen, wünschen*
- Giving: *geben, kaufen, holen, schenken, schicken, senden, 'überlegen, 'überwerfen*
- Messaging: *erklären, erzählen, mailen, sagen, schreiben*
- Others: *einprägen*
- Verbs with *für* beneficiary dative alternation (see Section 6.8.9, e.g. *backen, putzen*)
- Verbs with possessor-of-accusative dative alternation (see Section 5.8.4, e.g. *versalzen, zerbrechen*)

### Further examples

- Ich gestatte mir noch einen Keks.
- Ich sage es mir immer wieder.
- Ich präge mir diese Lektion ein.

- Ich habe mir eine Decke übergelegt/übergeworfen.
- Ich drücke mir den Hörer ans Ohr.
- Ich putze mir meine Schuhe.

#### 7.4.9 [ NAD | NaD ] Self-inflicting accusative reflexive+dative

In contrast to the previous dative reflexive construction, it is possible, but uncommon for ditransitive verbs to allow for an accusative reflexive, like with *unterordnen* ‘to subordinate’ (60a,b). The verbs listed below are surely not all that allow for this construction, but it is a rather restricted phenomenon and there do not seem to be very many more verbs of this kind. Note the close similarity of these verbs to verbs with a ditransitive anticausative reflexives in Section 7.5.3, which are easily confused.

- (60) a. Ich ordne meine Pläne deinen Wünschen unter.  
b. Ich ordne mich dem Kollektiv unter.

In specific contexts, some ditransitive verbs allow for either a dative reflexive (61a) or an accusative reflexive (61b), or even both (61c). Theoretically, this should lead to a quite astonishing constructions with two times *sich* in the third person (54d), which seem to be mostly incomprehensible. However, note the attested example in (61e).

[7.78]

- (61) a. Ich erkläre es mir so.  
b. Ich erkläre mich dir.  
c. Ich schreibe Gedichte, denn ich will mich mir selbst erklären.  
d. (Es ist bekannt, dass) sie sich sich selbst erklären will.  
e. Objektivität und eigenständiges Weltbewußtsein erlangt der Mensch nicht dadurch, daß er seinen Willen zum Handeln aufgibt und seine Wertungen suspendiert, sondern dadurch, daß er sich sich selbst gegenüberstellt und prüft.<sup>42</sup>

[7.79] Many of these verbs seem to have a rather special meaning with a reflexive pronoun. They also seem to be close to the verbs with an endoreflexive diathesis (see Section 7.7.1).

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<sup>42</sup>DWDS: Mannheim, Karl: Ideologie und Utopie, Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann 1929, S. 43.

### Attested verbs

- Subordinate: *anpassen, anschließen, aufdrängen, hingeben, unterordnen, unterwerfen, verschreiben, weihen, widmen, zuneigen*
- Oppose: *entgegensetzen, entgegenstellen, gegenüberstellen, verweigern*
- Disclose: *anschließen, anvertrauen, aussetzen, erklären, präsentieren, vorstellen (präsentieren), zeigen*

### Further examples

- Das Land gibt seine besten Männer dem Kriege hin.  
Ich gebe mich dem Geliebten hin.
- Ich wende dem Nachbar den Rücken zu.  
Ich wende mich dem Nachbar zu.
- Ich habe dich der Gefahr ausgesetzt.  
Ich setze mich einer Gefahr aus.
- Er zeigt dem Boten den Brief.  
Er zeigte sich dem Boten.
- Ich passe den Bürgersteig dem Plan an.  
Ich passe mich dem Plan an.
- Er setzte dem Unglück etwas hingegen.  
Er setzte sich dem Unglück entgegen.
- Er hatte seinen Kopf ihr zugeneigt.  
Er hatte sich ihr in Liebe zugeneigt.
- Ich stelle ihr meine Lebensauffassung entgegen.  
Ich stelle mich dem Streben entgegen.
- Er hat der alten Interpretation eine neue Wendung entgegengesetzt.  
Er hat sich der traditionellen Interpretation entgegengesetzt.
- Ich verschreibe dir die Medikamente.  
Ich verschreibe mich dem Teufel.
- Er widmet den heutigen Tag der Arbeit.  
Er widmet sich der Arbeit.
- Ich schließe der Schule ein Internat an.  
Ich schließe mich dem Trauerzug an.
- Ich verweigere ihm die Einreise.  
Ich verweigere mich ihm.

## Notes

[7.80] The verb *vorstellen* has two different meanings. In this alternation it means ‘to introduce’ (62a,b). The other meaning ‘to imagine’ (62c) has an obligatory dative reflexive (see Section 7.3.8).

- (62) a. Ich stelle ihn dem Konsul vor.  
b. Ich stelle mich dem Konsul vor.  
c. Ich stelle mir den Konsul vor.

### 7.4.10 [ NAG | NaG ] Self-inflicting accusative reflexive+genitive

Genitive arguments are rare overall, so consequently there are also only very few examples of reflexive alternations, like with *bezichtigen* ‘to accuse’ (63). Note that it does not seem to be possible for the genitive argument to be reflexive.

[7.81]

- (63) a. Er bezichtigt mich des Mordes.  
b. Ich bezichtigte mich erfundener phantastischer Staatsverbrechen.

## Attested verbs

- *bezichtigen*, etc.

### 7.4.11 [ NAP | NAp ] Self-inflicting preposition reflexive+accusative

Just for completeness sake, reflexive pronouns are possible inside prepositional arguments with verbs that also take an accusative argument, like *hinstellen* ‘to put down’ (64).

[7.82]

- (64) a. Er hat einen Topf neben ihm hingestellt.  
b. Er hat einen Topf neben sich hingestellt.

## Attested verbs

- *hinstellen*, etc.



## 7.4.12 [ NLD | NLd ] Self-inflicting dative reflexive+location

Dative experiencers stemming from possessor raising (see Section 6.8.11) can also be self-inflicting (65a,b), leading to possible dative reflexive pronouns with an obligatory location phrase, like with *klopfen* ‘to pound’ (65c,d). [7.83]

- (65) a. Ich klopfe dir auf die Schulter.  
 b. Ich klopfe mir auf die Schulter.  
 c. Er klopft sich auf die Schulter.  
 d. \* Er klopft sich.

## Attested verbs

- *klopfen*, etc.

## 7.4.13 [ NALD | NALd ] Self-inflicting dative reflexive+accusative+location

The verbs in this section are intransitive verbs (66a) that allow for both a caused-motion diathesis (66b), see Section 6.8.4 and a possessor-to-dative alternation (66c), see Section 6.8.12, leading possibly to a dative reflexive *sich* pronoun (66d). [7.84]

Although this diathesis does appear to be a regular stack of different diatheses, the intermediate caused-motion construction (66b) seems odd. Also, the resulting construction appears to be frequently taking an *aus* prepositional phrase (66d), though there does not seem to be any syntactic reason for this preference. In summary, there appears to be something idiomatic going on in this construction warranting more research.

- (66) a. Ich heule.  
 b. ? Ich heule die Augen aus meinem Kopf.  
 c. Ich heule mir die Augen aus dem Kopf.  
 d. Das Kind heult sich die Augen aus dem Kopf.

## Attested verbs

- *heulen*, *husten*, *jagen rempeln*, *schreien*, *tanzen*, *trinken*, etc.

### Further examples

- Unkontrollierbar von einer Seite zur anderen schaukelte das Kleinkind und heulte sich die Augen aus dem Kopf, als Rupa Joshi den Raum betrat.<sup>43</sup>
- Sven Hannawald schreit sich die Seele aus dem Leib.<sup>44</sup>
- An einem Abend in Davos sitzt ein Amerikaner chinesischer Herkunft in einem dunklen Pub und trinkt sich die Sorgen von der Seele.<sup>45</sup>
- Er jagte sich den ganzen Scheiß in den Arm.<sup>46</sup>
- Sie tanzen/schreien sich die Seele aus dem Leib.
- Sie rempeln sich die Pakete aus der Hand.
- Er trank sich den Stress aus dem Körper.
- Er hustet sich die Seele aus dem Leib.

### — Reciprocal alternations —

The pronoun *sich* also has a potential reciprocal reading in which two participants perform an action mutually, like with *anfeuern* ‘to encourage’ (67). An extensive discussion of this phenomenon in German can be found in Wiemer & Nedjalkov (ref-wiemer2007).

- (67) a. Karl feuert Anna an.  
 b. Karl und Anna feuern sich (gegenseitig) an.  
 c. Karl und Anna feuern einander an.

Such a reciprocal construction necessarily needs a plural subject and can be identified by the possibility to add *gegenseitig* (67b). There is an older construction to express reciprocity in German by using *einander* (67c) instead of *sich gegenseitig* (see ref-wiemer2007: 478ff. for an in depth discussion). This construction with *einander* typically does not use *sich*, though the combination *sich [...] miteinander* is possible, but very rare (ref-wiemer2007: 476–477). Note that reciprocity inside a prepositional phrase can only be expressed by using *einander* (ref-wiemer2007: 482–485).

[7.87]

<sup>43</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 11.05.2015, Nr. 19.

<sup>44</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.01.2018 (online).

<sup>45</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 20.01.2017 (online).

<sup>46</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 01.03.1997.

#### 7.4.14 [ NA | Na ] Accusative reciprocal

The most typical reciprocal construction arises from a regular transitive verb with a human object, like *achten* ‘to respect’ (68a). Such a reciprocal construction is called “canonical” by Wiemer & Nedjalkov (ref-wiemer2007: 468–470). Almost all such verbs are in principle ambiguous between a reciprocal and a reflexive reading. The intended reciprocal reading can be forced by adding *gegenseitig* (68c). Some verbs, like *achten*, seem to prefer a reciprocal reading. Such verbs typically do not allow for a singular subject (68b) and *gegenseitig* seems superfluous here (68c).

- (68) a. Karl achtet Anna.  
       b. ? Karl achtet sich.  
       c. Karl und Anna achten sich (gegenseitig).

[7.89] Other verbs, like *pflügen* ‘to care for’ (69a), prefer a reflexive reading, so a singular subject is fine (69b) and *gegenseitig* is necessary to get a reciprocal reading (69c).

- (69) a. Karl pflegt Anna.  
       b. Karl pflegt sich.  
       c. Karl und Anna pflegen sich gegenseitig.

#### Attested verbs

- *achten, anfeuern, begrüßen, bekämpfen, belügen, bemerken, beruhigen, beschäftigen, brauchen, erwarten, finden, grüßen, glauben, hassen, hören, kennen, kreuzen, lieben, loben, mögen, pflegen, prügeln, schlagen, sehen, stören, suchen, treffen, treten, verachten, verdächtigen, verstehen, vertragen, wecken*, etc.

#### Further examples

- Der Weg kreuzt die Landstraße.  
   Die Straßen kreuzen sich.
- Karl glaubt Anna.  
   Karl und Anna glauben sich.

## Notes

[7.90]

The verb *beschäftigen* is used here in the meaning of ‘to employ’ (70a) not ‘to engage’ (70b).

- (70) a. Karl und Anna beschäftigen sich gegenseitig in ihren jeweiligen Firmen.  
b. Karl und Anna beschäftigen sich miteinander.

### 7.4.15 [ NAG | NaG ] Accusative reciprocal+genitive

Just for completeness sake, let it be noted that there are also accusative reciprocal constructions with a further genitive argument, like with *anklagen* ‘to accuse’ (71). In contrast, accusative reciprocals with an additional dative argument are not attested; only the reverse, see Section 7.4.18.

[7.91]

- (71) a. Karl klagt Anna des Diebstahls an.  
b. Karl und Anna klagen sich (gegenseitig) des Diebstahls an.

#### Attested verbs

- *anklagen*, etc.

### 7.4.16 [ NAP | NaP ] Accusative reciprocal+preposition

Likewise, accusative reciprocals with a governed preposition are also possible, like with *vorbereiten auf* ‘to prepare for’ (72).

[7.92]

- (72) a. Karl bereitet Anna auf den Auftritt vor.  
b. Karl und Anna bereiten sich (gegenseitig) auf den Auftritt vor.

#### Attested verbs

- *vorbereiten*, etc.

### 7.4.17 [ ND | Nd ] Dative reciprocal

Because a reciprocal is necessary plural subject, the difference between an accusative or dative reciprocal *sich* is never visible. Although there are verbs with dative arguments that can be used reciprocally, this cannot occur in the 1st or

2nd person singular, which are the only circumstances in which a difference between dative and accusative is overtly marked. There seems to be only a limited set of dative verbs that allow for a reciprocal construction, though the preverb *zu-* rather productively results in new examples (ref-wiemer2007: 470).

- (73) a. Karl vertraut dem Jungen.  
 b. Karl und der Junge vertrauen sich (gegenseitig).  
 c. Wir vertrauen uns (gegenseitig).

#### Attested verbs

- *ähneln, antworten, beistehen, begegnen, danken, entgegen kommen, entgegen, entsprechen, folgen, gefallen, gegenüber treten, gleichen, gratulieren, helfen, imponieren, missfallen, nacheifern, schaden, vertrauen*
- Preverb *zu-*: *zuarbeiten, zuhören, zulachen, zulächeln, zunicken, zuprosten, zusehen, zuschauen, zustimmen, zutrinken, zuwinken, zuzwinkern*

#### Further examples

- Ich stehe dir bei.  
 Wir stehen uns bei.
- Ich lache dir zu.  
 Wir lachen uns zu.

#### 7.4.18 [ NAD | NAd ] Dative reciprocal+accusative

[7.95] Verbs with a dative and an accusative argument typically have a human dative argument, like with *schenken* ‘to gift’ (74). With such verbs a dative reflexive *sich* can both have a reciprocal reading (74b) and a reflexive reading (74c).

- (74) a. Karl schenkt seinem Freund einen Kuchen.  
 b. Karl und sein Freund schenken sich gegenseitig einen Kuchen.  
 c. Karl und sein Freund schenken sich selbst einen Kuchen.

[7.95] There also are ditransitive verbs with an accusative reflexive, like *entziehen* ‘to withdraw’ (75), see Section 7.4.9. However, with such verbs a reciprocal reading seems to be impossible. So, there do not seem to be ditransitive verbs with an accusative reciprocal.

- (75) a. Karl entzieht Anna das Wort.  
 b. Karl und Anna entziehen sich (selbst) der Verfolgung.  
 c. \*Karl und Anna entziehen sich gegenseitig der Verfolgung.

### Attested verbs

- *schicken, backen*, etc.

### Further examples

- Karl backt dem Jungen einen Kuchen.  
Karl und der Junge backen sich (gegenseitig) einen Kuchen.

#### 7.4.19 [ Np | Np ] **einander** preposition reciprocal

Reciprocal construction can be marked both by *sich* (*gegenseitig*) or *einander*. However, when the reciprocal argument is inside a prepositional phrase then only *einander* is possible. For example, the verb *warten auf* ‘to wait for’ (76a) can be used reciprocally by combining *auf* with *einander*, which is written as one word *aufeinander* in German orthography (76b).

- (76) a. Karl wartet auf Anna.  
b. Karl und Anna warten aufeinander.

It is possible to combine *sich* with a preposition and *einander*, but only with verbs that already require *sich* like *sich einigen mit* ‘to reach an agreement’ (77).

- (77) a. Karl einigt sich mit Anna.  
b. Karl und Anna einigen sich miteinander.

### Attested verbs

- Possibly all verbs with a human participant inside a prepositional phrase, both governed and non-governed: e.g. *warten auf, zugehen auf, sich einigen mit, sich verlieben in, sich trennen von*, etc.

### Further examples

- Karl geht auf Anna zu.  
Karl und Anna gehen aufeinander zu.
- Karl verliebt sich in Anna.  
Karl und Anna verlieben sich ineinander.
- Karl trennt sich von Anna.  
Karl und Anna trennen sich voneinander.

## 7.5 Diatheses with subject demotion

— [ SBJ > Ø ] —

### 7.5.1 [ NP | –P ] Reflexive nominative drop

This idiosyncratic diathesis with the verb *handeln* ‘to treat of’ (78a,b) drops the nominative and consequently a non-phoric *es* is inserted. Note that the preposition changes from *von* to *um*, but they are both governed prepositions (78c,d).

- (78) a. Das Buch handelt von Linguistik.  
 b. Bei diesem Buch handelt es sich um ein Linguistikbuch.  
 c. Das Buch handelt davon, dass er eine Weltreise macht.  
 d. In diesem Buch handelt es sich darum, dass er eine Weltreise macht.

#### Attested verbs

- *handeln*

#### Further examples

- In beiden Fällen handelt es sich um Briefromane.<sup>47</sup>

— [ OBJ > SBJ > Ø ] — *Reflexiv Antikausativ*

### 7.5.2 [ NA | –N ] Reflexive anticausative

A widespread phenomenon is the use of reflexive pronouns to mark an anticausative diathesis. For example, when a reflexive pronoun is used with a verb like *schließen* ‘to close’ (79a) then it does not have a self-inflicting meaning. This can be shown by the impossibility to add *selbst* (79b). This reflexive pronoun induces an “invisible hand” reading, expressing that the event happened by itself. This can be shown by the sensibility of adding a phrase like *von alleine* ‘by itself’ (79c). The pronoun *sich* is always in the accusative in this diathesis. This alternation appears to be more frequent in the perfect (79d), because then there is no focus on the action, but on the resulting state.

- (79) a. Ich schließe die Tür.

<sup>47</sup>DWDS: Schwanitz, Dietrich: Bildung, Frankfurt a. M.: Eichborn 1999, S. 17.

- Die Tür schließt sich.
- b. \*Die Tür schließt sich selbst.
- c. Die Tür schließt sich von alleine.
- d. Die Tür hat sich von alleine geschlossen.

A *durch* phrase seems sometimes possible to retain the agent, showing a similarity to a passive diathesis (ref-zifonun2003: 72). However, this only seems to be possible in special contexts (80a,b). Most verbs with a reflexive anticausative do not allow for a retention of the subject (80c,d).

- (80) a. Der Preisverfall erhöhte den Warenabsatz.
- b. Der Warenabsatz erhöhte sich durch den Preisverfall.
- c. Der Mann zeigte seine Wut.
- d. \*Seine Wut zeigte sich durch den Mann.

There is some discussion in the literature (ref-schafer2007: 35ff.; ref-kurogo2016) about the difference between verbs that use an unmarked anticausative, like *landen* ‘to land’ (81), see Section 5.5.5, and those that take a reflexive anticausative, like *schließen* ‘to close’ as discussed in this section (79). The answer to this question remains open, in my opinion. By providing long lists of verbs for each category, I hope to invigorate more research into this direction that goes beyond just incidental examples.

[7.101]

- (81) a. Der Pilot landet das Flugzeug.
- b. Das Flugzeug landet (\*sich).

### Attested verbs

- Change of position: *ändern, auftun, bewegen, drehen, lockern, öffnen, schließen, senken, spalten, teilen, umgeben, verschieben, versammeln*
- Change of dimension: *abschwächen, ansammeln, ansparen, ausbreiten, ausdehnen, beschleunigen, beschränken, entfalten, erhöhen, erweitern, steigern, verändern, verbessern, verbreiten, verdoppeln, verengen, vergrößern, verkleinern, verkürzen, verlangsamen, verlängern, vermehren, verringern, verstärken, verteuern*
- Change of physical state: *abkühlen, ablagern, ablösen, abnutzen, abschalten, abschwächen, abseilen, auflösen, aufwärmen, ausschalten, beziehen, brechen (Wellen), erleuchten, einfügen, einschalten, eindrücken, entzünden, erwärmen, färben, festigen, festhaken, festfahren, füllen, gliedern, komplizieren*



*leeren, runden, röten, verändern, verbessern, vereinfachen, verhaken, verkomplizieren, verschlechtern, verwandeln, wärmen*

- Others: *aufklären, befriedigen, bessern, bestätigen, konstituieren, lohnen, wiederholen, zeigen*

### Further examples

- Ich schließe den Schrank.  
Der Schrank schließt sich.
- Sie hat ein neues Kapitel in dem Buch eingefügt.  
Das Kapitel hat sich harmonisch in das Buch eingefügt.
- Das Ergebnis lohnt den Aufwand.  
Der Aufwand lohnt sich.
- Ich beschränke seinen Einfluss.  
Sein Einfluss beschränkt sich auf Deutschland.
- Der Frühling verwandelt die Landschaft.  
Die Landschaft verwandelt sich.
- Ich konstituiere eine neue Disziplin.  
Die neue Disziplin konstituiert sich.
- Der Vertrag festigt unsere Beziehung.  
Unsere Beziehung hat sich gefestigt.
- Ich entscheide den Fall.  
Der Fall entscheidet sich.
- Die Polizei hat die Tür eingedrückt.  
Mit hörbarem Krach drückte sich der gewölbte Zinkdeckel unter Herrn Kortüms Gewicht ein.<sup>48</sup>
- Der Sturm hat den Wald verändert.  
Der Wald hat sich verändert.
- Wir haben (im Laufe der Jahre) etwas Geld angespart.  
Etwas Geld hat sich (im Laufe der Jahre) angespart.
- Ich habe das Tuch abgenutzt.  
Der Besen hat sich abgenutzt.
- Das Kind verhakt seine Finger.  
Seine Finger verhaken sich.
- Man kann Lebensmittel ansammeln, Werkzeuge, Waffen, Kapital und politische Gefolgschaften.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup>DWDS: Kluge, Kurt: Der Herr Kortüm. Leinfelden b. Stuttgart: Engelhornverlag Adolf Spemann. [o. J.] [1955].

<sup>49</sup>DWDS: Weizsäcker, Carl Friedrich von: Bewußtseinswandel, München: Hanser 1988, S. 37.

- Die Lebensmittel sammelten sich an.
- Er bestätigt die Nachricht.  
Die Nachricht bestätigt sich.
  - Wir wollen das Problem nicht (noch mehr) (ver)komplizieren.  
Die Lage hat sich in den letzten Tagen (ver)kompliziert.
  - Er erfüllt meine Wünsche.  
Meine Wünsche erfüllen sich.
  - Ich drehe die Kurbel.  
Die Kurbel dreht sich.
  - Die Felsenküste bricht die Wellen.  
Die Wellen brechen sich an der Felsenküste.
  - Die Flammen röteten die Gesichter der Umstehenden. Im Herbst rötet sich das Laub der Bäume.
  - Ein Blick auf die Tabelle besserte seine Laune zusätzlich auf.<sup>50</sup>  
Seine Laune bessert sich zusehends.
  - Er rundet seine Lippen.  
Seine Lippen runden sich.
  - Er hat sich mit einem Mitarbeiterstab umgeben.
  - Hohe Transportkosten verteuern die Preise. Die Preise verteuern sich.
  - Ich erleuchte die Bühne.  
Die Bühne erleuchtet sich.

## Notes

The verb *beziehen* has various rather different meanings. For the anticausative alternation it means ‘to cover’ (82a), with the anticausative having a specific meaning concerning the weather (82b). [7.102]

- (82) a. Ich beziehe das Bett mit einem Laken.  
b. Der Himmel hat sich mit Wolken bezogen.

The verb *wärmen* ‘to heat’ shows two different diatheses. First an anticausative diathesis, leading to an accusative reflexive pronoun (83a). Second, a possessor raising diathesis that, which is additionally used self-inflicting, leading to a dative reflexive pronoun (83b).

- (83) a. Der Pullover wärmt mich.

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<sup>50</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 15.02.2016 (online).

Ich wärme mich (mit dem Pullover).

- b. Ich wärme deine Finger.  
Ich wärme dir die Finger.  
Ich wärme mir die Finger.

### 7.5.3 [ NAD | –ND ] Reflexive anticausative+dative

[7.104]

Some ditransitives allow for an anticausative marked with an accusative reflexive pronoun (84).

- (84) a. Er bietet mir neue Perspektiven.  
b. Neue Perspektiven bieten sich mir.

This diathesis is not possible for reflexive anticausative verbs (see Section 7.5.2) that have an additional beneficiary dative (see Section 6.8.9), like with *schließen* ‘to close’ (85a,b) or *erfüllen* ‘to satisfy’ (85c,d).

- (85) a. Ich schließe dir (= für dich) den Schrank.  
b. \* Der Schrank schließt sich dir.  
c. Er erfüllt mir (= für mich) meine Wünsche.  
d. \* Meine Wünsche erfüllen sich mir.

#### Attested verbs

- *anbieten, aufdrängen, bieten, einprägen, entziehen, empfehlen, erklären, erschließen, eröffnen, nähern*

#### Further examples

- Er näherte seine Hand dem Lichtschalter.  
Seine Hand näherte sich dem Lichtschalter.
- Die Anleitung erklärt dem Benutzer den Bauplan.  
Der Bauplan erklärt sich dem Benutzer ganz von alleine.
- Ich empfehle dem Gast die Teilnahme nicht.  
Die Teilnahme empfiehlt sich dem Gast nicht unbedingt.
- Ich präge dem Kind diese Lektion ein.  
Diese Lektion prägt sich dem Kind ein.
- Er drängt mir eine Theorie auf.  
Die Überzeugung drängt sich mir auf.

- Ich eröffnete ihm die Ausstellung.  
Beste Aussichten eröffneten sich ihm.
- Das Register erschließt ihm den Inhalt.  
Der Inhalt hat sich ihm erschlossen.
- Ich biete dir eine Lösung an.  
Eine Lösung bietet sich dir an.
- Er entzieht mir das Wort.  
Ich entziehe mich meiner Pflicht.

#### 7.5.4 [ NAL | –NL ] Reflexive anticausative+location

Some (but not all) verbs with a caused-motion alternation (Section 6.8.5), like *ziehen* ‘to pull’ (86a,b) allow for a reflexive anticausative (4c). This results in an accusative reflexive pronoun with an obligatory location phrase. Leaving out the location is ungrammatical (86d). [7.106]

- (86)
- a. Der Bauer hat den Pflug gezogen.
  - b. Ich habe den Faden durch das Nadelöhr gezogen.
  - c. Die Straße hat sich früher durch das Dorf gezogen.
  - d. \* Die Straße hat sich gezogen.

#### Attested verbs

- *bohren, eingraben, gliedern, häufen, saugen, ziehen*

#### Further examples

- Er häufte die Geschenke auf den Tisch.  
Die Geschenke häuften sich auf den Tisch.
- Er hat einen Strauch ins Erdreich eingegraben.  
Die Frösche graben sich in den Schlamm ein.
- Der Bauarbeiter bohrt den Presslufthammer in den Asphalt.  
Der Pressluftbohrer bohrt sich in den Asphalt.
- Er hatte das Buch in einzelne Kapitel gegliedert.  
Das Buch gliedert sich in drei Kapitel.
- Er saugt den Rauch in seine Lunge.  
Der Wein saugt sich in das Taschentuch.

### 7.5.5 [ NAP | –NP ] Reflexive anticausative+governed preposition

Less widespread, some verbs with an accusative and a governed preposition, like *erinnern* ‘to remind’ (87a) allow for an anticausative marked with a reflexive pronoun (87b). With the prepositions are governed prepositions (87c).

- (87) a. Das Lied erinnert den Mann an den Krieg.  
 b. Der Mann erinnert sich an den Krieg.  
 c. Der Mann erinnert sich daran, dass er einen Termin beim Arzt hat.

#### Attested verbs

- *an* : *erinnern, gewöhnen*
- *auf* : *lenken*

#### Further examples

- Ich habe die Kinder an Ordnung gewöhnt.  
 Die Kinder haben sich an Ordnung gewöhnt.
- Der Zeuge lenkt den Verdacht auf den Ehemann.  
 Der Verdacht lenkte sich auf den Ehemann.

### 7.5.6 [ NAp | –Np] Reflexive anticausative+non-governed preposition

Verbs in this section, like *verbinden* ‘to connect’, allow for an anticausative diathesis (88a,b). However, they additionally need a prepositional phrase, either with *mit* or *von*. These prepositional phrases are not governed, but can not (easily) be left out (88c,d). There is a close affinity with *miteinander* reciprocals (88e), see Section 7.4.19.

- (88) a. Ich verbinde die Lampe mit dem Stromnetz.  
 b. Die Lampe verbindet sich nicht mit dem Stromnetz.  
 c. \* Ich verbinde die Lampe.  
 d. \* Die Lampe verbindet sich.  
 e. Die Lampe und das Stromnetz verbinden sich nicht miteinander.

#### Attested verbs

- *mit* : *verbinden, vermischen, versöhnen*
- *mit/von* : *ernähren, nähren*
- *von* : *trennen, unterscheiden*

### Further examples

- Meine Mutter nährt mich mit Milch.  
Ich nähre mich mit (von) Milch.
- Meine Mutter ernährt mich mit Früchten.  
Ich ernähre mich mit (von) den Früchten.
- Ich vermische das Wasser mit dem Saft.  
Das Wasser vermischt sich mit dem Saft.
- Ich trenne die Lampe vom Stromnetz.  
Die Lampe trennt sich dauernd vom Stromnetz.
- Die Liebe verbindet Karl mit Anna.  
Karl verbindet sich mit Anna.
- Seine Haarfarbe unterscheidet ihn von seinem Bruder.  
Er unterscheidet sich von seinem Bruder (durch seine Haarfarbe).

### — [ OBJ > SBJ > PBJ ] — *Reflexiv Erlebniskonversiv*

#### 7.5.7 [ NA | PN ] Reflexive conversive

These verbs are similar to previous reflexive anticausatives, but the *von alleine* reading is not possible. Additionally, the original nominative can be retained as a prepositional phrase (89a,b). All these prepositional phrases are governed prepositions (89c). Interestingly, there appears to be a wide variety of prepositions that are governed by the various verbs that allow for this diathesis.

- (89)
- a. Der Preis empört den Kunden.
  - b. Der Kunde empört sich über den Preis.
  - c. Der Kunde empört sich darüber, dass der Preis schon wieder gestiegen ist.

With many of these verbs the role of the reflexive argument appears to be more of an experiencer than a real agent, typically with the prepositions *an*, *bei*, *für*, *um* and *über*. A German name like REFLEXIV ERLEBNISKONVERSIV might thus be suitable for this diathesis (cf. Section 10.5.23 for the ERLEBNISKONVERSIV without reflexive pronouns). Although there are many experiencer verbs in this category, this pattern cannot be reversed: far from all verbs that semantically have an experiencer exhibit this diathesis, e.g. *frustrieren* ‘to frustrate’ or *nerven* ‘to annoy’ do not allow this diathesis (90). Wiskandt ([ref-wiskandt2022](#): 253–255) proposes that the experiencer verbs with this diathesis imply some kind of consciousness

and have less affected experiencers. However, such semantic explanations are probably always post-hoc and never causal (cf. Section 1.3.4).

- (90) a. Die Verspätung frustriert/nervt ihn.  
b. \* Er frustriert/nervt sich über die Verspätung.

[7.111] Note that the *werden* passive is not possible for some of these verbs (91a), though an impersonal passive of the reflexive conversive is mostly possible (91b).

- (91) a. \* Der Kunde wird empört durch den Preis.  
b. Über die Zerstörung der Schöpfung [...] wird sich empört.<sup>51</sup>

For the verbs with a *durch* alternation, like *lösen* ‘to release’ (92), there exist an interesting opposition between the reflexive conversive (92b) and the *werden* passive (92c). [7.112]

- (92) a. Dieser Saft hat den Schleim gelöst.  
b. Der Schleim hat sich durch diesen Saft gelöst.  
c. Der Schleim wird durch diesen Saft gelöst.

### Attested verbs

- Experiencer verbs:

- an : *belustigen, stören, erfreuen, erheitern*
- bei : *anstrengen, beruhigen, entspannen, langweilen, quälen, unterhalten*
- für : *faszinieren, motivieren, interessieren*
- um : *bekümmern, kümmern*
- über : *amüsieren, aufregen, ärgern, begeistern, beschweren, beunruhigen, empören, entsetzen, erschrecken, erstaunen, erzürnen, freuen, grämen, wundern*

- Other verbs:

- aus : *bilden, entwickeln, ergeben, speisen*
- durch : *auszeichnen, entspannen, lösen, mildern, verraten*
- in : *spiegeln, widerspiegeln*
- mit : *aufhalten, beschäftigen, schmücken, überlagern*
- von : *nähren, verabschieden*

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<sup>51</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 24.11.2003.

### Further examples

- Sein Benehmen amüsiert mich.  
Ich habe mich amüsiert über sein Benehmen.
- Der Klang freut den Komponisten.  
Der Komponist freut sich über den Klang.
- Der Anblick entsetzt mich.  
Ich entsetze mich über dem Anblick.
- Die Musik erfreut mich.  
Ich habe mich an der Musik erfreut.
- Der Lärm ärgert mich.  
Ich ärgere mich über den Lärm.
- Der Lärm regt mich auf.  
Ich rege mich über den Lärm auf.
- Die gute Note freut mich.  
Ich freue mich über die gute Note.
- Sein Verschwinden wundert mich gar nicht.  
Ich wundere mich gar nicht über sein Verschwinden.
- Mathematik interessiert mich.  
Ich interessiere mich für Mathematik.
- Die Leute kümmern mich nicht.  
Ich kümmere mich nicht um die Leute.
- Sein Benehmen stört mich.  
Ich störe mich an seinem Benehmen.
- Die Band unterhält das Publikum.  
Der Autor Holger Kreitling fühlte sich gut unterhalten beim Auftritt der Band tags darauf in Berlin.<sup>52</sup>
- Diese Musik beruhigt mich.  
Ich beruhige mich bei dieser Musik.
- Das Sprechen strengt ihn an.  
Er strengt sich an bei dem Sprechen.
- Die Gedanken trösten mich.  
Ich tröste mich mit den Gedanken.
- Die Einzelheiten halten mich auf.  
Ich halte mich auf mit den Einzelheiten.
- Die Transaktionen ergaben einen hohen Gewinn.  
Ein hoher Gewinn ergab sich bei den Transaktionen.

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<sup>52</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.02.2008, Nr. 08.



- Die Frage ergab interessante Probleme.  
Interessante Probleme ergaben sich aus der Frage.
- Vier Ecken bilden ein Viereck.  
Ein Viereck bildet sich aus vier Ecken.
- Das Holz entwickelt einen starken Qualm.  
Der Qualm entwickelt sich aus dem Holz.
- Die Nachricht hat mich erschreckt.  
Ich habe mich über die Nachricht erschreckt.
- Die Vorstellung belustigt das Publikum.  
Das Publikum belustigt sich an der Vorstellung.
- Der Tee entspannt mich.  
Ich entspanne mich durch/bei den Tee.
- Der Dialekt verrät dich.  
Du verrätst dich durch deinen Dialekt.
- Das Problem beschäftigt mich.  
Ich beschäftige mich mit dem Problem.
- Große Selbstständigkeit zeichnet ihn aus.  
Er zeichnet sich aus durch große Selbstständigkeit.
- Die Milch nährt mich.  
Ich nähre mich von Milch.
- Das Wasser spiegelt den Baum.  
Der Baum spiegelt sich im Wasser.
- Die Kette schmückt den Baum.  
Er schmückt sich mit einer Kette.
- Die Frage ergibt interessante Probleme.  
Interessante Probleme ergeben sich aus der Frage.
- Der Referenzstrahl überlagert den Pulslaser.  
Der Pulslaser überlagert sich dabei mit einem Referenzstrahl.
- Der Anblick entsetzte sie.  
Bei diesem Anblick entsetzte sie sich.
- Leichte Fragen langweilen mich.  
Ich langweile mich bei leichte Fragen.
- Die Rede erzürnt mich.  
Ich erzürne mich über die Rede.
- Die gute Nachricht erheitert mich.  
Ich erheitere mich an dem Anblick.
- Das Geld speist seine Macht.  
Seine Macht speist sich daraus, dass er Dinge erledigt.

## Notes

- [7.113] The verb *sich verabschieden* (93a) might also be thought of as an antipassive (93b). However, it is possibly better seen as an anticausative, related to (93c). The reason is that the agent of (93a) and the patient of (93c) are both typically the participant who is leaving.

- (93) a. Ich verabschiede mich von ihm.  
b. Ich verabschiede ihn.  
c. Er verabschiedet mich.

The verb *beschweren* has slightly different meanings: in the transitive it means ‘to burden’ (94a), while the reflexive conversive means ‘to complain’ (94b).

- (94) a. Heimweh beschwert mein Gemüt.  
b. Ich beschwere mich über das Alter.

— [ PBJ > SBJ > ADJ ] —

### 7.5.8 [ NP | pN ] Reflexive prepositional passive

This diathesis with *rechnen* ‘to calculate’ (95) appears to be an idiosyncratic pattern. The governed preposition *mit* (95a,b) is turned into a reflexive nominative subject, while the erstwhile subject is turned into an optional *für* phrase (95c).

- (95) a. Ich rechne mit einem guten Ergebnis.  
b. Ich rechne damit, dass alles gut wird.  
c. Das Ergebnis rechnet sich (für mich).

## Attested verbs

- *rechnen*

## 7.6 Diatheses with promotion to subject

### 7.6.1 [ AP | NP ] Reflexive accusative-to-nominative

Reflexive diatheses are generally not used for promotion of arguments. The diathesis presented here is probably best seen as a diachronic quirk, showing that every linguistic generalisation can be overruled by incidental developments of language change.

These accusative-to-nominative alternations are ongoing replacements of old-fashioned constructions, like with *ekeln* ‘to disgust’ (96). The presence of a reflexive pronoun can probably best be interpreted as a side-effect of the old accusative being supplemented by a new nominative. Note that a dative is also attested instead of an accusative (see Section 5.9.3).

- (96) a. Mich ekelt (es) vor dem Spinat.  
b. Ich ekele mich vor dem Spinat.

#### Attested verbs

- *ekeln*, *grauen*

#### Further examples

- Mich graut es vor der Kälte.  
Ich graue mich vor der Kälte.

## 7.7 Diatheses with object demotion

### — [ OBJ > Ø ] — *Endoreflexiv*

#### 7.7.1 [ NA | N- ] Reflexive accusative drop

[7.118] On first notice, examples like *sich äußern* ‘to speak out’ (97a,b) look very much like a self-inflicted (“reflexive”) alternation (see Section 7.4.5). However, in this case the reflexive *sich* pronoun in (97b) does not have the same role as the accusative argument in (97a). This can be shown syntactically by the impossibility of the coordination in (97c).

- (97) a. Er äußert sein Bedauern über den Fall.  
b. Er äußert sich über den Fall.  
c. \* Er äußert sich und sein Bedauern über den Fall.

[7.119] The term AUTOCAUSATIVE is used by Geniušienė (ref-geniusiene1987: 183–184, 198–200; see also ref-wiemer2007: 464) to describe this particular usage of a reflexive pronoun. Haspelmath (ref-haspelmath1987: 27–28) calls it ENDOREFLEXIVE. I prefer the term endoreflexive as it mnemonically includes the term “reflexive”. Cross-linguistically, endoreflexives are typically found with verbs that describe an action that is performed with the body, like *verstecken* ‘to hide’ (98).

However, for the German verb *verstecken* it remains an open question whether these constructions are really different from self-inflicted reflexive constructions. Specifically, the coordination seems to be perfectly possible (98c-e).

- (98) a. Er versteckt das Geschenk.  
 b. Er versteckt sich.  
 c. Er versteckt sich und das Geschenk.  
 d. Politiker verstecken sich und ihre Botschaften hinter verschwurbelten Sätzen.<sup>53</sup>  
 e. Sie verstecken sich und ihre Waffen.<sup>54</sup>

The endoreflexive diathesis most clearly emerges with verbs that describe hurting the body, like *verbrennen* ‘to burn’ (99) or *schneiden* ‘to cut’. The usage of these verbs with a reflexive pronoun normally implies that the body is partially inflicted, i.e. only a part of the body is burned or cut. For this reason, the conjunction in (99c) is strange and would only make sense in a context in which somebody would burn himself completely (cf. Elias Canetti’s novel *Die Blendung*).

[7.120]

- (99) a. Er verbrennt das Buch.  
 b. Er verbrennt sich.  
 c. \* Er verbrennt sich und das Buch.

### Attested verbs

- *abduschen, abhetzen, abwenden, anlehnen, anziehen, aufrichten, ausziehen, äußern, bewegen, entblößen, erheben, hinlegen, hinsetzen, hinstellen, neigen, recken, räkeln, schneiden, strecken, täuschen, verbrennen, verkleiden, verschlafen, verschlucken, zuneigen*

### Further examples

- Er verschluckt die Tabletten.  
 Er verschluckt sich.
- Er zieht seine Schuhe an.  
 Er zieht sich an.
- Er neigt den Kopf zur Seite.  
 Er neigt sich zur Seite.

<sup>53</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 30.11.2009, Nr. 49.

<sup>54</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 31.10.2001, Nr. 45.

- Er streckt seine Arme.  
Er streckt sich.
- Er wendet die Augen ab.  
Er hat sich von der Welt abgewandt.
- Er richtet den Stuhl auf.  
Er richtet sich auf.
- Er duscht das Salz ab.  
Er duscht sich ab.
- Er hetzte das Pferd ab.  
Er hetzte sich ab.
- Er täuscht mich.  
Er täuscht sich.
- Er hatte seinen Kopf ihr zugeneigt.  
Er hatte sich ihr zugeneigt

## Notes

[7.121] The verb *äußern* ‘to express’ has a slightly different meaning depending on the animacy of the subject. With a human subject it normally signifies a verbal utterance (100a,b), while with non-human subjects (who cannot speak) it more generally means ‘to show’ (100c). Crucially, with non-human subjects the reflexive diathesis is obligatory (100d).

- (100) a. Er äußert sein Bedauern über den Unfall.  
b. Er äußert sich über den Unfall.  
c. Die Krankheit äußert sich durch das Fieber.  
d. \* Die Krankheit äußert den Fieber.

[7.122] It appears that the reflexive *sich verschlafen* (101) is getting old-fashioned. Many German speakers reject such a construction.

- (101) Ach, Johanna, ich glaube, ich habe mich verschlafen.<sup>55</sup>

### 7.7.2 [ NAL | N–L ] Reflexive accusative drop+locative

[7.123] Similar to the previous endoreflexive alternation, the alternation with *werfen* ‘to throw’ (102a,b) acts on the body. However, additionally a location phrase needs to be present (102c). However, the reflexive construction (102b) looks very much

<sup>55</sup>DWDS: Fontane, Theodor: Effi Briest. Berlin, 1896.

like self-inflicted reflexive reference in this example. Indeed, the conjunction test proposed in the previous section seems to be perfectly possible here (102d). It needs more research to decide whether this alternation is to be considered as a separate diathesis, or whether this is just regular self-inflicting reflexive reference.

- (102) a. Er wirft die Kleider aufs Bett.  
b. Er wirft sich aufs Bett.  
c. \* Er wirft sich.  
d. Die Frauen warfen sich und ihre Kinder vor mein Pferd und baten um Hilfe.<sup>56</sup>

### Attested verbs

- *fokussieren, konzentrieren, pressen, legen, setzen, stellen, werfen*

### Further examples

- Sie presste die Hand auf das Herz.  
Sie presste sich an die Hauswand.

### Notes

The verbs *fokussieren* and *konzentrieren* ‘to concentrate, to focus’ are slightly out-of-place among the other verbs in this group. They also have an *auf* prepositional phrase, but they do not have a locative meaning. It still is a governed preposition though (103).

- (103) a. Ich konzentriere meine Energie auf das Spiel.  
b. Ich konzentriere mich auf das Spiel.  
c. Ich konzentriere mich darauf, das Spiel zu gewinnen.

### — [ OBJ > ADJ ] — *Reziprokativ*

#### 7.7.3 [ NA | Np ] Reciprocal antipassive

Reflexive antipassive verbs like *treffen* ‘to meet’ (104a,b) change an accusative argument to a non-governed prepositional phrase with *mit* (104c). Semantically,

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<sup>56</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.03.2005, Nr. 13.

this diathesis changes the action from a one-sided perspective towards a more reciprocal perspective. The resulting construction of this diathesis is reminiscent of the “real reciprocal” construction (see Section 7.3.3).

- (104) a. Ich treffe dich.  
 b. Ich treffe mich mit dir.  
 c. \* Ich treffe mich damit, dass du krank bist.

#### Attested verbs

- *befreunden, prügeln, schlagen, treffen, verstehen*

#### Further examples

- Ich schlage dich.  
 Ich schlage mich mit dir.
- Ich verstehe dich.  
 Ich verstehe mich gut mit dir.
- Ich prügle ihn.  
 Ich prügle mich mit ihm.

#### Notes

[7.126] The verb *befreunden* ‘to become friends’ (105a) seems to have become acceptable with a bare accusative only recently in the context of social media, probably as a direct calque from English ‘to befriend’ (105b). Semantically, the difference between a one-sided and two-sided perspective found with the other verbs in this class is not relevant here.

- (105) a. Ich befreunde mich mit ihm.  
 b. Du befreundest ihn.<sup>57</sup>

— [ OBJ > PBJ ] — *Reflexiv Antipassiv*

#### 7.7.4 [ NA | NP ] Reflexive governed antipassive

[7.127] The *sich* counterpart of the transitive *beklagen* ‘to lament’ (106a,b) is somewhat alike to an intransitive action that has a reflexive pronoun attached. There is no

<sup>57</sup> Attested online at <http://hundewelt.info/affenpinscher/>, accessed 2 August 2022.

semantic “self-inflicting” reflexivity whatsoever in the expression, i.e. the complaining in (106b) does not mean ‘I complain about myself’ (i.e. adding *selbst* is not possible). The complaint is still about *Lärm* ‘noise’.

Formally, the object of the complaint is demoted from an accusative (106a), which is obligatory (106c), to a prepositional phrase (106b) that can be dropped (106d). Note that without the prepositional phrase (106d) the expression is indeed ambiguous between a real reflexive meaning (‘I complain about myself’) and a non-reflexive reading (‘I am complaining’). All prepositional phrases of the verbs in this section are governed prepositions (106e).

[7.128]

Wiemer and Nedjalkov (ref-wiemer2007: 464–465) call such verbs “deaccusatives” and consider them to be “extremely rare” in German (which they are not). It is an open question why some verbs take such a reflexive antipassive, while other take a simple antipassive without reflexive pronoun (as discussed in Section 6.7.8). For a typological survey of such antipassive uses of reflexive markers, see Janic (ref-janic2010).

[7.129]

- (106) a. Ich beklage den Lärm.  
 b. Ich beklage mich (\*selbst) über den Lärm.  
 c. \*Ich beklage.  
 d. Ich beklage mich.  
 e. Ich beklage mich darüber, dass es so laut ist.

### Attested verbs

- an : *verschlucken, wagen*
- bei : *entscheiden, überstürzen*
- für : *entscheiden, entschuldigen, rechtfertigen, verantworten, verbürgen*
- in : *behaupten, üben, versuchen, vertiefen*
- über : *beklagen, besprechen*
- von : *trennen*
- vor : *distanzieren, fürchten, scheuen*
- zu : *bekennen*

### Further examples

- Ich fürchte den Ausgang des Verfahrens.  
 Ich fürchte mich vor dem Ausgang des Verfahrens.
- Ich entschuldige den Vorfall.  
 Ich entschuldige mich für den Vorfall.



- Ich verantworte mein Vorgehen.  
Ich verantworte mich für mein Vorgehen.
- Ich rechtfertige mein Vorgehen.  
Ich rechtfertige mich für mein Vorgehen.
- Ich bespreche die Angelegenheit (mit dir).  
Ich bespreche mich (mit dir) über die Angelegenheit.
- Ich wage den Sprung.  
Ich wage mich an die Aufgabe.
- Der Schauspieler versucht die neue Rolle.  
Der Schauspieler versucht sich in der neuen Rolle.
- Er übt die Kunst des Zeichnens.  
Er übt sich in der Kunst des Zeichnens.
- Er überstürzte seine Abreise.  
Er überstürzte sich bei seiner Abreise.
- Ich bekenne die Tat.  
Ich bekenne mich zu der Tat.
- Ich behaupte den ersten Platz.  
Ich behaupte mich in meiner neuen Stelle.
- Ich trenne die Gruppe.  
Ich trenne mich von der Gruppe.
- Er distanzierte den Gegner.  
Er distanzierte sich von seinem Gegner.
- Ich verbürge die Zuverlässigkeit dieser Aussagen.  
Ich verbürge mich für die Zuverlässigkeit dieser Aussagen.

## Notes

There are two different roles with *entscheiden* that both allow for an antipassive alternation with a reflexive pronoun, both for the roles of the “problem”, alternating with *bei* (107a) and for the role of the “solution”, alternating with *für* (107b).

- (107) a. Der Richter entschied den Streit.  
Der Richter entschied sich bei dem Streit (für eine Strafe).
- b. Ich entscheide die Reihenfolge.  
Ich entscheide mich für diese Reihenfolge.

The verb *beklagen* seems to have two different meanings: without *sich* it means ‘to lament’ while with *sich* it means ‘to complain’ (108a). Likewise, the verb *verschlucken* shows a major semantic shift with this antipassive diathesis from ‘to

swallow’ to ‘to choke’ (108b). The verb *vertiefen* shows a minor semantic restriction, changing from ‘to engross’ to ‘to delve into’ (108c).

- (108) a. Ich beklage den Tod.  
           Ich beklage mich über den Lärm.  
       b. Ich verschlucke die Pille.  
           Ich verschlucke mich an der Pille.  
       c. Ich vertiefe meine Kenntnisse.  
           Ich vertiefe mich in mein Buch.

## 7.8 Diatheses with promotion to object

### – [ Ø > PBJ ] – *Reflexiv Bewegungsart*

#### 7.8.1 [ N– | NL ] Reflexive manner-of-movement

Intransitive verbs that describe a movement, like *tanzen* ‘to dance’ (109a) can be used in manner-of-movement construction that includes an obligatory path describing the movement (109b,c). This diathesis is discussed in detail in Section 6.8.2.

- (109) a. Ich habe getanzt.  
       b. Ich bin durch den Garten getanzt.  
       c. \*Ich bin getanzt.

The same diathesis is also attested with non-movement verbs, like *träumen* ‘to dream’ (110a,b), but then an additional reflexive pronoun is obligatory (110c), next to the obligatory location phrase (110d). This construction expresses that by performing the verb (i.e. by dreaming) a movement is performed as described in the location phrase (i.e. moving to New York).

- (110) a. Ich träume.  
       b. Ich träume mich nach New York.  
           (= Ich träume, und im Traum gehe ich nach New York.)  
       c. \*Ich träume nach New York.  
       d. \*Ich träume mich.

The location always describes a movement, with *durch* (111a) ‘through’ and *in* ‘into’ (111b) being the most productive. Incidental examples with *aus* and *nach* are also attested (see the further examples below).

- (111) a. Ich esse und trinke.  
 Ich aß und trank mich durch Deutschland.<sup>58</sup>  
 b. Das Kind zittert.  
 Würzburg zitterte sich am Ende in die Playoffs.<sup>59</sup>

[7.135] This diathesis is exceptional, because an extra obligatory argument is introduced together with the reflexive pronoun. This is a clear counterexample to the generalisation that reflexive diatheses are demoting. A possible solution to this apparent markedness reversal is that the added obligatory location is maybe better interpreted as a marker of the diathesis. In other words, the obligatory location is not a part of the diathetical operation, but a part of the voice of the diathesis. This would be reminiscent of the addition of directionals (see Section 9.2.5). Adding directionals regularly leads to transitive constructions, and then an intransitive verb needs an extra reflexive pronoun. This effect is also observed in the reflexive usage of intransitive verbs with an obligatory resultative preverbal, like with *gesundschlafen* ‘to get healthy by sleeping’ (112). That diathesis is discussed in more detail in Section 9.4.3.

- (112) a. Ich schlafe.  
 b. Ich schlafe mich gesund.

Although not all verbs listed below are strictly intransitive (e.g. *essen*, *trinken* can take an accusative and *arbeiten an*, *träumen von* take a governed preposition) I consider this to be an alternation of the intransitive usage describing the basic action without object argument.

[7.136]

### Attested verbs

- Food processing: *essen*, *fressen*, *trinken*
- Bodily processes: *denken*, *dösen*, *schlafen*, *schwitzen*, *träumen*, *zittern*
- Intransitive actions: *arbeiten*, *fallen*, *kämpfen*, *liegen*, *lügen*, *schießen*
- Movement verbs: *schleichen*, *schwimmen*

### Further examples

- Heute aber döst sich das Viertel durch den Sabbat.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 16.04.1998, Nr. 17.

<sup>59</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.05.2016 (online).

<sup>60</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 21.04.2005, Nr. 17.

- Die herumwieselnden Köche schwitzen sich durch verschiedene Runden.<sup>61</sup>
- Sie schläft sich in ihren Tod.<sup>62</sup>
- Die Motten fressen sich durch den Pullover.
- Die Städte fraßen sich ins Umland.<sup>63</sup>
- Schalke schießt sich aus der Krise.<sup>64</sup>
- Bevor ich auf das Eis gehe, muss ich meine Kür exakt im Kopf haben, ich denke mich quasi durch meinen Trick.<sup>65</sup>
- Er arbeitet sich durch die Daten.
- Ich kämpfe mich durch die Wellen.
- Ich lüge mich durch mein Leben.
- Sie fallen/liegen sich in die Arme.

### Notes

The movement verb *schleichen* ‘to sneak’ (113a) allows for a regular non-reflexive manner-of-movement diathesis (113b), see Section 6.8.2. However, curiously, it also allows for a reflexive manner-of-movement diathesis as discussed in this section (113c). There is a subtle difference in meaning between these two uses that is not trivial to pin down. The example with the movement verb *schwimmen* ‘to swim’ (11) suggests that with a reflexive pronoun the “movement” can be more metaphorical.

[7.137]

- (113) a. Ich habe geschlichen.  
 b. Ich bin nach Hause geschlichen.  
 c. Ich habe mich nach Hause geschlichen.
- (114) a. Er ist zum anderen Ufer geschwommen.  
 b. Am Dienstag schwamm sich Phelps dann schon wieder selbst in die Schlagzeilen.<sup>66</sup>

### 7.8.2 [ NA– | NAL ] Reflexive forced movement

[7.138]

The forced movement diathesis (see Section 6.8.5) is typically found without a reflexive pronoun, like with *jagen* ‘to hunt’ (115).

<sup>61</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 20.04.2016 (online).

<sup>62</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 05.04.1997.

<sup>63</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.01.2017, Nr. 02.

<sup>64</sup>Attested online at <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/sport/2-0-gegen-hannover-schalke-schiesst-sich-aus-der-krise-1258798.html>, accessed 30 March 2021.

<sup>65</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 16.06.2009, Nr. 25.

<sup>66</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 19.08.2004.

- (115) a. Ich jage den Hund.  
 b. Ich jage den Hund aus dem Zimmer.  
 (= Ich jage den Hund und dadurch geht der aus dem Zimmer.)

[7.141] However, there are a few examples in which additionally a dative reflexive pronoun is added, like with *graben* ‘to dig’ (116a) and *wünschen* ‘to wish’ (116b). Note that the dative reflexive pronoun is not a raised possessor with a self-inflicting reflexive. Such examples are discussed in Section 7.4.13. These dative reflexive pronouns are probably best analysed as beneficiary datives (Section 6.8.9) with a stacked self-inflicting reflexive. When that analysis holds for all examples, then this diathesis is just a transparent combination of other alternations and this section can be removed.

- (116) a. Ich grabe mir einen Weg durch den Schnee.  
 b. Ich wünsche mir den Stuhl in die Sonne.

### Attested verbs

- *graben, wünschen*

### Further examples

- [Sie] gruben sich einen Weg durch den Schutt.<sup>67</sup>
- Er wünschte sich seine Eltern in Sicherheit.
- BP wünscht sich den Prozess deshalb nach Houston.<sup>68</sup>
- Man muss kein St.-Pauli-Fan sein, um sich den HSV aus der Liga zu wünschen.<sup>69</sup>

### Notes

[7.140]

The verb *bahnen* ‘to make a path’ (117) idiosyncratically is always used with a reflexive pronoun and the accusative *den Weg* ‘the path’. The resulting construction is like the other verbs in this section, but there is no diathesis.

- (117) Er bahnt sich einen Weg durch die Menschenmenge.

<sup>67</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 15.11.1999.

<sup>68</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.05.2017, Nr. 33.

<sup>69</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 24.03.2015, Nr. 12.

## 7.9 Symmetrical diatheses

— [ OBJ > SBJ > OBJ ] —

### 7.9.1 [ NA | DN ] Reflexive accusative/dative inersive

Some verbs, like *erobern* ‘to conquer’, allow for both a regular transitive construction (118a) and a reflexive inersive in which the former nominative turns into a dative (118b). This diathesis appears to be rare.

- (118) a. Der Eroberer unterwarf den Volksstamm.  
b. Der Volksstamm unterwarf sich dem Eroberer.

#### Attested verbs

- *stellen, unterwerfen*

#### Further examples

- Der Polizist stellte den Einbrecher.  
Der Einbrecher stellte sich dem Polizisten.

### 7.9.2 [ NA | GN ] Reflexive accusative/genitive inersive

Both the alternants of *erbarmen* ‘to have pity’ (119) are very old-fashioned. This inersive diathesis appears to be very rare.

- (119) a. Der Kranke erbarmt mich.  
(= Der Kranke erregte mein Mitleid.)  
b. Ich erbarmte mich des Kranken.  
(= Aus Mitleid kümmerte ich mich um den Kranken.)

#### Attested verbs

- *erbarmen, erfreuen*

#### Further examples

- Das Geschenk erfreut mich.  
Ich erfreue mich bester Gesundheit.

## 7.9.3 [ ND | GN ] Reflexive dative/genitive inersive

There used to be a reflexive verb *bewissen* ‘to know about’ in Early New High German (ref-pfeiffer1993)<sup>70</sup>, but only the construction with the participle *bewusst* is still in contemporary use. The non-reflexive construction (120a) is probably a later addition. As a synchronic diathesis this alternation is a rare example of a dative reflexive without accusative.

- (120) a. Das Problem ist mir bewusst.  
b. Ich bin mir keiner Schuld bewusst.

## Attested verbs

- *bewusst sein*

## — [ OBJ &gt; OBJ ] —

## 7.9.4 [ NA | NG ] Reflexive accusative-to-genitive

[7.144] Only a few examples of an accusative-to-genitive diathesis with additional reflexive pronoun are attested. All examples show substantial semantic drift. However, I consider the semantics of both counterparts to be close enough to be included here as a special kind of diathesis. For example, the verb *annehmen* means ‘to accept’ with an accusative (121a), but ‘to take care of’ with a genitive and a reflexive pronoun (121b).

- (121) a. Er nimmt das Problem an. (= ‘akzeptieren’)  
b. Er nimmt sich des Problems an. (= ‘kümmern’)

[7.145] The verb *bedenken* ‘to consider’ takes an accusative (122a). There is an archaic usage meaning ‘to bethink’ with a reflexive pronoun and a genitive, still attested in the 19th Century (122b).

- (122) a. Man bedenke den Aufwand.<sup>71</sup> (= ‘beachten’)  
b. Ich bedenke mich eines Besseren.<sup>72</sup> (= ‘besinnen’)

<sup>70</sup>Entry *wissen* at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/etymwb/wissen> accessed 2 August 2022.

<sup>71</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 18.04.2001.

<sup>72</sup>Attested examples on Google books from 1800 (<https://books.google.de/books?id=WZNKAAAACAAJ&pg=PA393>) and 1848 (<https://books.google.de/books?id=RD8gAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA665>), accessed 3 August 2022.

## *7 Reflexive pronoun alternations*

### **Attested verbs**

- *annehmen, bedenken*



## 8 Preverb alternations

### 8.1 Introduction

[8.1] Under the heading PREVERB I will subsume two different constructions, known in the German linguistic tradition as *Verbpräfixe* ‘verb prefixes’ (1a) and *Verbpartikel* ‘verb particles’ (1b). These constructions have clearly different syntactic characteristics (see Section 8.2.1), but from the perspective of valency alternations they appear to function highly similar. For a discussion of the term “preverb” as a cover term for both constructions, see Booij & van Kemenade (ref-booij2003b).

- (1) a. Ich umfahre den Polizisten.
- b. Ich fahre den Polizisten um.

[8.2] There is a massive literature on the German alternations induced by verb prefixes and verb particles, including complete monographs on individual preverbs, for example Felfe (ref-felfe2012) on the many different alternations with the particle *an-*. However, most of this literature focusses on the semantic difference between a bare verb and a verb with a preverb. Changes in valency are mostly discussed only as an aside. In contrast, in this chapter the meaning of the preverbs will only play a secondary role. The focus will be on the valency change induced by the preverbs (for similar approaches see ref-eroms1980; ref-kim1983; ref-gunther1987; ref-wunderlich1987; ref-stiebels1996; ref-wunderlich1997; ref-geist2016)■

The central generalisation that can be extracted from the numerous examples in this chapter is that the structural effect of a preverb diathesis is to produce a verb with an accusative argument. This generalisation does not hold without special definitional stipulations (e.g. accusative reflexive pronouns have to be included) and there are various counterexamples (e.g. diatheses resulting in dative arguments), but overall the generalisation seems to be exceptionally strong (see Section 8.2.2). In a very broad sense, preverb diatheses can be seen as a kind of counterpart to reflexive diatheses as discussed in the previous chapter. Reflexive diatheses generally reduce the valency, while preverb diatheses tend to increase the valency.

As is customary in German grammar, I will restrict the class of verb particles to morphemes that are related to prepositions. There are very many other morphemes that behave syntactically rather similar to preverbs, but which are related to adverbials/adjectives. These adverbial/adjectival preverbs are much more limited in the kind of diatheses that they induce, so I have decided to discuss them separately in the next chapter under the heading of adverbial alternations.

There are thirteen diatheses that are sufficiently prominent to be given a German name. I propose the following names for these:

[8.5]

- [Ø › SBJ › OBJ] PRÄVERB KAUSATIV (see Section 8.6.1 ff.)
- [Ø › OBJ] PRÄVERB AKKUSATIV (see Section 8.8.1 ff.)
- [Ø › OBJ] PRÄVERB REFLEXIV AKKUSATIV (see Section 8.8.5 ff.)
- [Ø › OBJ] PRÄVERB DATIV (see Section 8.8.6 ff.)
- [ADJ › OBJ] PRÄVERB APPLIKATIV (see Section 8.8.8)
- [ADJ › OBJ] PRÄVERB DATIV APPLIKATIV (see Section 8.8.13)
- [ADJ › OBJ › ADJ] PRÄVERB TEIL/FEST-OBJEKTTAUSCH (see Section 8.9.1)
- [PBJ › OBJ › ADJ] PRÄVERB GANZ/VOLL-OBJEKTTAUSCH (see Section 8.7.13)
- [PBJ › OBJ › Ø] PRÄVERB GANZ/LEER-OBJEKTTAUSCH (see Section 8.7.12)
- [PBJ › ADJ] PRÄVERB DELOKATIV (see Section 8.7.9 ff.)
- [OBJ › ADJ] PRÄVERB REFLEXIV ANTIPASSIV (see Section 8.7.4)
- [OBJ › ADJ] PRÄVERB DATIV ANTIPASSIV (see Section 8.7.6)
- [OBJ › Ø] PRÄVERB ENDOREFLEXIV (see Section 8.7.1)

## 8.2 Characterising preverbs

### 8.2.1 Prefixes and particles

The central morphosyntactic difference between verb prefixes and verb particles is their morphological bond to the lexical root. As implied by the name, verb prefixes like *be-* are prefixed to the root and are never separated from it (2a). In contrast, verb particles like *ein-* are in many constructions separated from the root (2b), namely (i) in finite uses, (ii) by participle prefix *ge-* (see Section 10.2.1), and (iii) by infinitive “prefix” *zu* (see Section 12.2.1). Additionally, verb prefixes are unstressed, while verb particles are stressed. To indicate whether a preverb is a prefix or particle, I will add a stress mark after (prefix) or before (particle).

- (2) a. Ich *be'trete* den Saal.  
 Ich habe den Saal *be'treten*.

Ich hoffe den Saal zu *be'treten*.

b. Ich *trete* die Tür *'ein*.

Ich habe die Tür *'eingetreten*.

Ich hoffe die Tür *'einzutreten*.

[8.7] The following elements can only be used as VERB PREFIXES in German (see *ref-los2016: 177*; *ref-pfeiffer1993* for the diachronic origin):

- *ge'*, originally meaning 'with', probably cognate with Latin *com*
- *be'*, originally meaning 'by, around', cognate to modern German *bei*
- *er'*, originally meaning 'out', cognate both to modern German *aus* and *ur-*
- *ver'*, originally meaning 'before', probably cognate with both Latin *pro* and *per*
- *zer'*, originally meaning 'in two', cognate with Latin *dis-*
- *ent'*, originally meaning 'against', cognate with Greek *anti*
- *miss'*, originally meaning 'missing', still transparently cognate with modern German verb root (*ver*)*miss(en)*
- *wider'*, originally meaning 'against', still transparently cognate with modern German *wieder*

[8.8] The prefix *ge'* only occurs in completely grammaticalised combinations, i.e. there are no verbs (anymore) in which the root is still transparently related to the *ge'*-prefixed wordform (cf. Section 1.3.2). Pairs like *bieten* 'to offer' and *gebieten* 'to order' are thus simply treated here as two completely separate lexemes, and will consequently not occur among any of the diatheses discussed below (examples in Section 8.3). In contrast, the addition of the prefix *miss'* is always completely transparent and never results in a diathesis, e.g. *achten* 'to respect' and *missachten* 'to disrespect' (examples in Sections 8.4.1, 8.4.3). The prefix *wider'* only occurs in a few fixed combinations (see Section 8.8.13). That leaves the prefixes *be'*, *er'*, *ver'*, *zer'* and *ent'*, and these all occur frequently. They induce various diathesis as discussed throughout this chapter and they do not appear to have any preference for a special kind of diathesis.

[8.9] Turning now to the VERB PARTICLES, the following prepositions can be used as preverbs:

- The four prepositions *durch*, *über*, *um* and *unter* can be used both as verb prefixes and as verb particles leading to diathesis.
- The nine prepositions *ab*, *an*, *auf*, *aus*, *bei*, *in* (=ein), *nach*, *vor* and *zu* are frequently used as verb particles leading to diathesis.

- The preposition *mit* only occurs as a verb particle in completely transparent derivation that never result in a diathesis, e.g. *arbeiten* ‘to work’ becomes *mitarbeiten* ‘to work along’ (see Sections 8.4.1, 8.4.3).
- A few polysyllabic prepositions are used sporadically as verb particles, namely *entlang*, *entgegen*, *gegenüber*, *hinter*, *neben* and *zwischen*. Verbs with these preverbs have not (yet) been included here.
- Crucially, the remaining prepositions are never used as verb particles with a verb root, namely *außer*, *bis*, *für*, *gegen*, *ohne*, *seit* and *von*. There exist only incidental examples like *fürsprechen* or *gegensteuern*. It is unclear to me whether there is any deeper reason for the absence of such derivations.

The two main groups of prepositional preverbs that are involved in diathesis [8.10] show an intriguing semantic structure. Note that this semantic structure involves their prepositional meaning, not their function as preverbs:

- the prefix/particle prepositions *durch*, *über*, *unter* and *um* describe a movement along an object, i.e. ‘through, over, under’ and ‘around’, respectively.
- the particle-only prepositions come in semantic pairs describing either a directional movement (*zu/ab* ‘to/from’ and *ein/aus* ‘in/out’) or a stative position (*vor/nach* ‘before/after’ and *bei/an/auf* ‘near/on/on top’).

When used as a preverb, the meaning of these elements is highly variable. For example, the verb *antanzten* (cf. *ref-felfe2012*: 1) has at least the following possible interpretations (3). In this chapter, I will only sporadically comment on such semantic details.

- (3)
- a. Der Rüpel hat mich angetanzt.  
(= anstoßen beim tanzen)
  - b. Angetanzt wurde recht spät, gegen zehn.<sup>1</sup>  
(= durch tanzen den Ball anfangen)
  - c. Der Junge kam angetanzt.  
(= tanzend irgendwo hinbewegen)
  - d. Ich habe mir ein kaputtes Knie angetanzt.  
(= durch tanzen etwas erreichen)
  - e. Ich haben gegen die Resignation angetanzt.  
(= sich gegen etwas stemmen)
  - f. Er ist beim Chef angetanzt.

<sup>1</sup>Attested online at <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/vbki-ball-so-tanzte-berlins-wirtschaft-durch-die-nacht/21000986.html>, accessed 4 August 2022.

(= herbei zitiert werden)

- g. Bewegungsfolgen werden nur angetanzt und immer wieder abgebrochen.<sup>2</sup>

(= nicht vollständig ausführen)

### 8.2.2 Preverb-verbs prefer an accusative argument

The central generalisation that can be extracted from the numerous examples in this chapter is that the structural effect of a preverb diathesis (by verb prefixes or verb particles) is to produce a verb with an accusative argument. This idea is for example foreshadowed by Kim (1983) “Die *be*-Verben fordern immer eine E\_akk außer bei der Funktionsgruppe der ‘Intensivierung’, deren Basisverben durch Präfigierung sich reflexivieren” (ref-kim1983: 54).

[8.13] Various different diatheses have to be distinguished though. First, many verbs without an accusative argument before the diathesis are turned into a verb with an accusative argument by the preverb diathesis:

- With some verbs an accusative argument is added to a verb when it is prefixed. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ to *verschlafen* ‘to oversleep’ in (4a), see Section 8.8.1.
- Similarly, another constituent, like a prepositional phrase, can be promoted to an accusative argument. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *steigen* ‘to mount’ to *besteigen* ‘to climb’ in (4b), see Section 8.8.8.
- Alternatively, the diathesis can turn the nominative subject into an accusative argument, combined with the addition of a new causative nominative subject. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *brennen* ‘to burn’ to *verbrennen* ‘to burn something’ in (4c), see Section 8.6.1.

- (4) a. Der Student schläft.  
Der Student verschläft den Vortrag.
- b. Ich steige auf den Berg.  
Ich besteige den Berg.
- c. Der Stuhl brennt.  
Ich verbrenne den Stuhl.

Second, verbs that already have an accusative argument show various different kinds of preverb diathesis. Yet, whatever happens, in almost all examples there is still an accusative argument present after the diathesis:

<sup>2</sup>DWDS: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 30.09.2000.

- When there is already an accusative argument, this argument can be retained while other participants in the sentence are marked differently. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *kaufen* ‘to buy’ to *verkaufen* ‘to sell’ in (5a), see Section 8.6.9.
  - Most frequently, the accusative argument is demoted, and another participant is promoted to accusative. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *hängen* ‘to hang’ to *behängen* ‘to drape’ in (5b), see Section 8.7.13.
  - Similarly, with some caused-motion constructions a prepositional location can be promoted to an accusative argument while the original accusative cannot be expressed anymore. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *schütten* ‘to pour’ to *ausschütten* ‘to spill’ in (5c), see Section 8.7.12.
- (5) a. Ich kaufe das Haus von ihm.  
Er verkauft mir das Haus.
- b. Ich hänge die Bilder an die Wand.  
Ich behänge die Wand mit Bildern.
- c. Ich schütte das Wasser aus dem Eimer.  
Ich schütte den Eimer aus.

Third, some verbs appear to be counterexamples to the generalisation of accusative arguments with preverb diathesis because they do not have a full accusative argument after the application of the diathesis. However, they still have an accusative reflexive pronoun as a kind of formal substitute for the accusative. Note that functionally this reflexive pronoun is never coding a “self-inflicting” reflexive construction, but only substituting for the “missing” accusative argument.

- Some transitive verbs with an accusative lose the accusative argument after the diathesis, but formally an “empty” accusative is retained in the form of a reflexive pronoun. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *schreiben* ‘to write’ to *verschreiben* ‘to misspell’ in (6a), see Section 8.7.1.
- Some intransitive verbs remain intransitive after the diathesis, but formally an “empty” accusative is added in the form of a reflexive pronoun. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *arbeiten* ‘to work’ to *überarbeiten* ‘to overwork’ in (6b), see Section 8.4.6.
- Similarly, some intransitives (typically movement verbs) show even more indications that the prefixed verb with reflexive pronoun is alike to a transitive verb. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *laufen* ‘to walk’ to *verlaufen* ‘to be lost’ in (6c), see Section 8.7.10. Some typical

“agentive” characteristics are attested with *verlaufen*, e.g. a perfect auxiliary *haben*.

- (6) a. Er schreibt einen Brief.  
Er verschreibt sich.  
b. Der Mitarbeiter arbeitet zu viel.  
Der Mitarbeiter überarbeitet sich.  
c. Der Hund ist nach Hause gelaufen.  
Der Hund hat sich im Wald verlaufen.

[8.16] Finally, there are a few exceptions to the generalisation that preverb alternations always have an accusative argument:

- A very small group of verbs ( $\pm 3$  examples) appear to lose the accusative argument completely after the preverb diathesis. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *kaufen* ‘to buy’ to *einkaufen* ‘to go shopping’ in (7a), see Section 8.7.2.
- A small number of intransitive verbs ( $\pm 7$  examples) remain intransitive after a preverb diathesis. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *blühen* ‘to blossom’ to *verblühen* ‘to wither’ in (7b), see Section 8.4.4. However, note that these verbs can be used as a nominal attribute (“patientive”) after the diathesis, suggesting that that argument is more object-like after the diathesis.
- The most frequent exception (dozens of examples) are intransitive verbs that show a prepositional phrase turning into a dative argument with a preverb diathesis. This is for example attested with the diathesis from *jagen* ‘to hunt’ to *nachjagen* ‘to chase’ in (7c), see Section 8.8.13.

- (7) a. Ich habe gestern ein Buch gekauft.  
Ich habe gestern eingekauft.  
b. Die Blume blüht. \*Die geblühte Blume stinkt.  
Die Blume verblüht. Die verblühte Blume stinkt.  
c. Die Polizei jagte einen Verbrecher.  
Die Polizei jagte dem Verbrecher nach.

### 8.2.3 Preverbs with non-verbal stems

[8.17] Preverbs typically are added to verbal roots. However, there are a few examples in which preverbs are added to non-verbal roots, constructing a verb in the process.

For examples, from adjectival roots like *frei* ‘free’ it is possible to derive a verb *befreien* ‘to free’ (8). This derivation typically has a causative function with the subject causing the object to become the adjectival predicate, see Section 8.6.3. However, in a few incidental cases, the semantics are slightly different, like with *lustig* ‘funny’ and *belustigen* ‘to amuse’ (9), see Section 8.8.2.

- (8) a. Du bist frei.
- b. Ich befreie dich.  
      (= Ich verursache, dass du frei bist.)
- (9) a. Der Clown ist lustig.
- b. Der Clown belustigt mich.

Preverbs are also sometimes used with a nominal root to derive a verb (see Section 8.6.4). This derivation likewise has a causative semantics in that the subject causes the object to have something, e.g. *Gift* ‘poison’ leads to *vergiften*, which means ‘to cause something to have poison’ (10). With the prefix *ent-* a negation is added, e.g. *Waffe* ‘weapon’ leads to *entwaffnen*, which means ‘to cause somebody to not have a weapon’ (11).

- (10) a. Zucker ist Gift für die Zähne
- b. Ich vergifte die Suppe.  
      (= Ich verursache, dass die Suppe Gift enthält.)
- (11) a. Der Dieb hat eine Waffe.
- b. Ich entwaffne den Dieb.  
      (= Ich verursache, dass der Dieb keine Waffe hat.)

There are some examples for which an intermediate verb exists. For example, the verbs *freien* ‘to court’ (12a) or *giften* ‘to rile’ (12b) are also based on the adjective *frei* and the noun *Gift*, respectively. However, these verbs are clearly independent developments from *befreien* (8) and *vergiften* (10).

- (12) a. Der junge Herr freite um seine jetzige Frau.
- b. Er giftet lauthals gegen die feindliche Übernahme.

Finally, there are a few incidental examples of preverbs added to a prepositional root, but they will not further be discussed here (e.g. *begegnen* ‘to meet’ from *gegen* ‘against’, *erobern* ‘to conquer’ from *ober-* ‘higher up’, or *erwidern* ‘to reply’ from *wider* ‘against’).



## 8.3 Deponent verbs without alternation

Verbs with preverbs frequently grammaticalise into a more specific meaning. For example, the verb *graben* ‘to dig’ and *begraben* ‘to bury’ are still semantically related and show a symmetrical applicative diathesis (see Section 8.9.1). However, the meaning of the prefixed verb *begraben* has become semantically restricted to the digging of a grave (13). As a general rule, it seems to be the preverbal variant that shows more semantic drift. [8.21]

- (13) a. Ich grabe ein Loch (für meinen Hund).  
 b. Ich begrabe meinen Hund (in einem Loch).

[8.22]

It is common that such diachronic developments lead to pairs of verbs that semantically are not related anymore (14). In the extreme case, the original root of the preverbal verb does not exist (anymore) in contemporary German (15).

- (14) Preverbal verbs with existing roots, but without semantic relationship to this root
- a. *gefallen, gehören, geraten*
  - b. *bekommen, benehmen, berichten, beschaffen, bestehen, bestimmen, bevorstehen, beweisen*
  - c. *entsprechen, entwischen*
  - d. *ereignen, ereilen, erfahren, erhalten, erpressen, errichten, ersparen, erstehen, ertragen, ertrinken, erwischen, erzählen, erziehen*
  - e. *zergehen, zerlassen, zersetzen*
- (15) Preverbal verbs with non-existing verbal roots in contemporary German
- a. *gebären, gebieten, gebühren, gedeihen, gelingen, genesen, geschehen, gestehen, gewähren, gewinnen, gewöhnen*
  - b. *beginnen. bescheren. beschäftigen. beteiligen. bezichtigen*
  - c. *erbarmen, ergattern, erinnern, erklimmen, erkunden, erlauben, erläutern, erledigen, erstatten, ersticken*

## 8.4 Alternations without diathesis

There are many preverb alternations without diathesis. I distinguish three different kinds, to be discussed in detail in subsequent sections. [8.23]

- (i) Verbs (with adjectival predicates as a subclass) that do not show any diathesis when a preverb is added.
- (ii) Verbs that show no difference in argument marking, but that show differences in the attributive usage of participles.
- (iii) Verbs that show no difference in argument marking, but the prefixed verb has an obligatory reflexive pronoun.

### — Diathesis completely absent —

It is very common for a verb not to show any change in valency when a preverb is added. The most widespread kind is for nominative-accusative verb to not show a change in valency, like *essen* ‘to eat’ and *aufessen* ‘to eat completely’ (16), see Section 8.4.3.

- (16) a. Ich esse den Apfel.  
b. Ich esse den Apfel auf.

In contrast, it is rather uncommon for intransitive verbs to remain intransitive when a preverb is added. However, it is attested, like with *sinken* ‘to sink’ and *versinken* ‘to sink’ (17), see Section 8.4.1.

[8.25]

- (17) a. Das Schifft sinkt auf hoher See.  
b. Das Schiff versinkt im Meer.

#### 8.4.1 [ N | N ] Preverb intransitives without diathesis

It is rather unusual for the preverbal version of intransitive verbs to not show any valency change (18a,b), not even a difference between the usage of the attributive participles (18c,d). It seems to be slightly more common for the preverb-marked participle to be open for attributive usage (see Section 8.4.4).

- (18) a. Die Milch kocht.  
b. Die Milch kocht über.  
c. Die gekochte Milch schmeckt nicht.  
d. Die übergekochte Milch ist eine Sauerei.

The verb *kochen* also exhibits a bare anticausative diathesis (19a,b), see Section 5.5.5. The preverb *über-* could thus also be interpreted as inducing an anticausative diathesis, when (19c) is opposed to (19a). However, because (19b) is both structurally and semantically closer to (19c), I have decided to take this pair

as the preverb diathesis. Note that there also exist verbs that are unequivocal examples of a preverb anticausative alternation, as discussed in Section 8.5.

- (19) a. Ich koche die Milch.  
 b. Die Milch kocht.  
 c. Die Milch kocht über.

The preverb *'mit-* is typically used with verbs that do not allow for an attributive participle, neither without preverb, nor with preverb (but see Section 8.4.4 for a few exceptions with movement verbs).

[8.28]

- (20) a. Der Student hat an dem Projekt gearbeitet.  
 b. Der Student hat an dem Projekt mitgearbeitet.  
 c. \* Der gearbeitete Student ist fertig.  
 d. \* Der mitgearbeitete Student ist fertig.

### Attested verbs

- *ver'-* : *sinken, sterben, trocknen*
- *'über-* : *kochen*
- *miss'-* : *klingen*
- *'mit-* : *arbeiten, brüllen, denken, essen, fühlen, heulen, hören, kämpfen, lachen, leiden, lächeln, reden, schwingen, singen*

### Further examples

- Das Schiff sinkt.  
 Das Schiff versinkt.  
 Das gesunkene/versunkene Schiff [...].
- Die Blumen trocknen im Keller.  
 Die Blumen vertrocknen im Keller.  
 Die getrockneten/vertrockneten Blumen [...].

### 8.4.2 [ N | N ] Preverb adjectives without diathesis

Adjectives are in many ways similar to intransitive verbs, being basically one-place predicates. There are various adjectives that remain intransitive when combined with a preverb, like *kühl* 'cool' and *abkühlen* 'to cool down' (21a). Similar to the intransitive verbs from the previous section, both adjectival predicates can

be used as attributive adjective (21b). Note, however, that it is more common for preverbal adjectives to have a causative diathesis (see Section 8.6.3).

- (21) a. Das Wasser ist kühl.  
Das Wasser ist abgekühlt.  
b. Das kühle Wasser schmeckt.  
Das abgekühlte Wasser schmeckt.

There is a recurring question whether these verbs are directly derived from an adjective, or via an intermediate “plain” verb, e.g. *kühlen* (cf. Section 8.6.3). Such intermediate verbs might also be independent developments, i.e. the plain verb *kühlen* and the preverbal variant *abkühlen* are both derived from the adjective *kühl*. One argument in favour of independent developments is that the “plain” verbs have varying semantics: either stative, like *kranken* ‘to be sick’ or *wachen* ‘to be awake’; or causative, like *kühlen* ‘to make cold’ or *röten* ‘to become red’. Another argument is that not all such intermediate verbs exist, e.g. the verb *mager* does not exist. Likewise, *späten* and *frühen* do not exist.

### Attested verbs

- er'- : *rot, krank, wach*
- 'ab- : *kühl, mager*

### Further examples

- Der Hund ist wach.  
Der Hund erwacht.  
Der wache/erwachte Hund [...].
- Der Junge ist rot.  
Der Junge errötet.  
Der rote/errötete Junge [...].
- Der Junge ist krank.  
Der Junge erkrankt.  
Der kranke/erkrankte Junge [...].

### 8.4.3 [ NA | NA ] Preverb transitives without diathesis

In contrast to intransitive verbs, it is very common for transitive nominative-accusative verbs to remain transitive when prefixed (22a). The participles of both verbs can be used attributively (22b). The examples presented in this section are

in no way intended to be a complete listing, but only serve as an illustration for this phenomenon. This group of preverb alternations without valency change appears to be very large.

- (22) a. Ich lagere die Kartoffeln im Keller.  
           Ich verlagere die Kartoffeln in den Keller.  
       b. Die gelagerten Kartoffeln [...].  
           Die verlagerten Kartoffeln [...].

### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *jagen, lagern*
- be'- : *fürchten, grüßen*
- miss'- : *achten, billigen, blicken, brauchen, deuten, gönnen, handeln, hören, interpretieren, trauen, verstehen*
- 'an- : *sehen*
- 'auf- : *essen, trinken*
- 'durch- : *halten*
- 'mit- : *ansehen, benutzen, bezahlen, bieten, bringen, erleben, feiern, garen, geben, gestalten, kochen, lesen, liefern, nehmen, nutzen, planen, regieren, schicken, schreiben*
- 'unter- : *bringen*

### Further examples

- Ich halte die Stellung.  
       Ich halte den Kampf durch.
- Ich bringe dich nach Hause.  
       Ich bringe dich in dem Haus unter.
- Ich sehe dich.  
       Ich sehe dich an.
- Ich fürchte das Prüfungsergebnis.  
       Ich befürchte ein schlechtes Prüfungsergebnis.
- Ich grüße dich.  
       Ich begrüße dich.
- Ich achte ihn.  
       Ich missachte ihn.
- Ich billige den Plan.  
       Ich missbillige den Plan.

— Patientive alternations —

[8.32]

Some intransitives show a peculiar phenomenon when prefixed: they are still intransitive but the subject becomes more patient-like in that the participle can be used attributively (one of the characteristics often discussed under the heading of the “unaccusative hypothesis”, see Section 10.2.5). For example, the verbs *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ (23a) and *einschlafen* ‘to fall asleep’ (23b) are both intransitive. However, only *eingeschlafen* can be used attributively (23c,d). These examples are discussed in Section 8.4.4.

- (23) a. Der Junge schläft.  
 b. Der Junge schläft ein.  
 c. \*Der geschlafene Junge schnarcht.  
 d. Der eingeschlafene Junge schnarcht.

[8.3] Similarly, there is a small group of transitive nominative-accusative verbs that show the same effect with attributive participles. These verbs, like *merken* vs. *bemerken* ‘to become aware of’ (24a,b), do not show a valency difference. Yet, there is a difference in that the participle of the prefixed *bemerken* can be used as attributive adjective, while the participle of the non-prefixed *merken* cannot (24c,d). These examples are discussed in Section 8.4.5.

- (24) a. Ich merke den Wind.  
 b. Ich bemerke den Fehler.  
 c. \*Der gemerkte Wind war schlimm.  
 d. Der bemerkte Fehler war schlimm.

#### 8.4.4 [ N | N ] Preverb intransitives with patient-like subject

Many verbs describing natural processes remain intransitive when prefixed, like *blühen* ‘to blossom’ and *verblühen* ‘to wither’ (25a,b). The participle of these verbs can be used attributively when prefixed (25d), but not without prefix (25c). Also note that the auxiliary in the perfekt changes between *sein* and *haben* for these verbs.

- (25) a. Die Blume hat geblüht.  
 b. Die Blume ist verblüht.  
 c. \*Die geblühte Blume ist immer noch schön.  
 d. Die verblühte Blume ist immer noch schön.

Note that there is a fascinating phenomenon going on here that is in need of

more investigation. Many of the “ungrammatical” attributively used participles are actually attested, but only when they are themselves modified (26). My intuition is that in such examples the participle is actually a non-finite embedded relative clause (e.g. *Mauersteine, die grau schimmeln*). However, whether there really is a difference between verbs that allow for a usage as “isolated” attributive participles, like *verblüht* (25d), vs. “modified” attributive participles, like *geblüht* (26a), is an open question in need of more research.

- (26) a. grau geschimmelte Mauersteine<sup>3</sup>  
 b. eine schlecht geschlafene Nacht<sup>4</sup>  
 c. eine braun gerostete Fußgängerbrücke<sup>5</sup>  
 d. die dabei verloren gegangene regionale Identität<sup>6</sup>

### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *blühen, bluten, faulen, dampfen, rosten, schimmeln, welken, zweifeln*
- 'ein- : *rosten, schlafen*
- 'ab- : *bröckeln, faulen, reisen, rosten*
- 'mit- : *fahren, fliegen, gehen, kommen, laufen, segeln*

### Notes

Adjectival *gewelkte* (27a) and *gefaulte* (27b) seem to have been possible up to ±1850. Note that there is a dish called *gefaulte Erdäpfel* (27c), which appears to be a back-translation from Bavarian *dafeide Erdäpfel*, which has a prefix.

- (27) a. Er, der alles zerbricht, was ihm von Anfang her verschrieben war, der die zarte Blüthe wie die gewelkte Frucht mit gleicher Unerbittlichkeit abstreift.<sup>7</sup>  
 b. [...] oder andre vielfach verdorbne, gefaulte, verschimmelte Nahrungsmittel.<sup>8</sup>  
 c. Auf eben diese Weise nimmt eine gefaulte Galle [...] einen gefälligern Geruch an sich.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup>DWDS: Neutsch, Erik: *Spur der Steine*, Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verl. 1964 [1964], S. 387.

<sup>4</sup>DWDS: *Die Zeit*, 16.06.1989, Nr. 25.

<sup>5</sup>DWDS: *Die Zeit*, 30.08.2007, Nr. 36.

<sup>6</sup>DWDS: *Die Zeit*, 09.11.2017 (online).

<sup>7</sup>DWDS: Fouqué, Caroline de La Motte-: *Die Frauen in der großen Welt*. Berlin, 1826.

<sup>8</sup>DWDS: Hahnemann, Samuel: *Organon der rationellen Heilkunde*. Dresden, 1810..

<sup>9</sup>DWDS: Haller, Albrecht von: *Anfangsgründe der Physiologie des menschlichen Körpers*. Bd. 2. Berlin, 1762.

#### 8.4.5 [ NA | NA ] Preverb transitives with patient-like object

Some transitive verbs like *ärgern* and the preverbal variant *verärgern* ‘to irritate’ are almost identical in meaning (28a,b). However, they show the same differentiation in attributive participle usage as the patientive intransitives in the previous section (28c,d), though without a difference in perfect auxiliary (both use *haben*). There is a connected difference in the possibility of the *Zustandspassiv* with *sein*, cf. Section 10.5.16. Note the somewhat older attested example of attributive *geärgert* in (28e).

- (28) a. Die Verzögerung hat den Reisenden geärgert.  
b. Die Verzögerung hat den Reisenden verärgert.  
c. \*Der geärgerte Reisende. \*Der Reisende ist geärgert.  
d. Der verärgerte Reisende. Der Reisende ist verärgert.  
e. Der geärgerte Schulkamerad schrieb: [...] <sup>10</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *ärgern, brauchen, hassen, heiraten, wundern*
- be'- : *drücken, kennen, merken*
- er'- : *freuen*
- zer'- : *kratzen*
- 'an- : *ekeln*

#### Further examples

- Spinnen ekeln den Mann.  
Spinnen ekeln den Mann an.  
Der angeekelte/\*geekelte Mann.
- Der Regen wundert den Mann.  
Der Regen verwundert den Mann.  
Der verwunderte/\*gewunderte Mann.
- Das Geschenk freut den Mann.  
Das Geschenk erfreut den Mann.  
Der erfreute/\*gefremte Mann.

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<sup>10</sup> DWDS: Büchner, Georg: Sämtliche Werke und handschriftlicher Nachlaß. Frankfurt (Main.), 1879.



## — Empty reflexives —

Some verbs need an extra reflexive pronoun when they get a preverb, though the valency of the construction does not change. The reflexive pronoun is thus neither a self-inflicting reflexive construction, nor a marker of the diathesis itself. The reflexive pronouns in these cases seem to be mostly “empty”, except for putting a slight emphasis on the agency of the nominative subject (cf. “free” reflexives in Section 7.4).

[8.38]

## 8.4.6 [ N | N ] Preverb reflexive intransitive alternations

[8.39]

The verb *überarbeiten* is transparently derived from the verb *arbeiten* ‘to work’, but in two semantically different directions. In one sense *überarbeiten* means ‘to revise’, i.e. ‘to work on something again’, which shows an applicative diathesis (29a,b), see Section 8.8.8. In another sense *überarbeiten* means ‘to work too hard’ (29c,d). In this sense an obligatory, but ‘empty’, accusative reflexive pronoun is present.

- (29) a. Ich arbeite am Text.  
 b. Ich überarbeite den Text.  
 c. Ich arbeite zu viel.  
 d. Ich überarbeite mich.

Movement verbs, like *tanzen* ‘to dance’ (30) quite productively can take the prefix *ver-* to describe a movement made erroneously, without any change in valency (cf. *ref-stiebels*1996: 143–151). The same semantic effect is also attested with some transitive verbs, but then the accusative object is dropped (see Section 8.7.1).

- (30) a. Ich laufe.  
 b. Ich verlaufe mich.

## Attested verbs

- *ver-* : *fahren, fliegen, laufen, tanzen*
- *über-* : *arbeiten*
- *'durch-* : *lügen, mogeln*
- *'ein-* : *arbeiten, singen*

### Further examples

- Ich lüge.  
Ich lüge mich durch.
- Ich arbeite.  
Ich arbeite mich ein.
- Ich singe.  
Ich singe mich ein.

#### 8.4.7 [ N | N ] Preverb reflexive adjectives alternations

Some adjectives that are turned into verbs through preverbs obligatorily need a reflexive pronoun, like with *sich verspäten* ‘to be late’ derived from *spät* ‘late’ (31).

[8.41]

- (31) a. Die späte Vorstellung.  
b. Die Vorstellung verspätet sich.

### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *spät*, *früh*

#### 8.4.8 [ NA | NA ] Preverb reflexive transitive alternations

[8.42]

The difference between the verbs *sehen* (32a) and *ansehen* (32b) is very delicate, maybe best summarised by comparing it to the English verbs *to see* and *to watch*. The preverbal verb *ansehen* ‘to watch’ implies slightly more agency of the nominative subject. In German this difference is additionally marked by a dative reflexive pronouns. However, note that this reflexive might be optional (cf. Section 7.4.4).

- (32) a. Ich sehe das Haus.  
b. Ich sehe mir das Haus an.

Note that there is a second, highly similar, construction with *ansehen* and a non-reflexive dative argument (33a). This dative has a completely different semantics, meaning something like ‘to notice’. This diathesis is further discussed under the heading of possessor raising in Section 8.8.16. Finally, *ansehen* can also simply mean ‘to look at’ (33b), in which sense there is no diathesis at all, as discussed in Section 8.4.3.

- (33) a. Ich sehe ihm die Müdigkeit an.  
b. Ich sehe dich an.

#### Attested verbs

- er'- : *kaufen*
- 'an- : *hören, sehen, trainieren, üben*

#### Further examples

- Ich habe den Tango trainiert.  
Ich habe mir den Tango antrainiert.
- Ich kaufe dein Vertrauen.  
Ich erkaufe mir dein Vertrauen.

#### Notes

[8.44]

The verb *anüben* appears to be old-fashioned (34a), though more recent examples can be found (34b). It has an entry in the DWB, explaining “seit Anfang des 19. Jhs. gebräuchlich i.s.v. ‘sich etwas durch ständiges üben (mit mühe) aneignen, antrainieren’.”<sup>11</sup>

- (34) a. Ein derartiges Schauen müssten wir uns nun anüben.<sup>12</sup>  
b. Wer ständig gegen die wachsende Konkurrenz anüben muss [...].<sup>13</sup>

## 8.5 Diatheses with subject demotion

All examples in the following subsections show subject demotion which results in intransitive verbs. Keeping with the observation that preverb alternations tend to produce nominative/accusative constructions (see Section 8.2.2), preverb diatheses with subject demotion are exceedingly rare. Almost all the attested examples use verb prefixes. Examples with verb particles are almost non-existing for subject demotion.

<sup>11</sup> Attested online at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/dwb2/anüben>, accessed 5 August 2022.

<sup>12</sup> DWDS: Chamberlain, Houston Stewart: Die Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts. Bd. 1. München 1899.

<sup>13</sup> DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 11.08.1999.

— [ OBJ > SBJ > Ø ] —

### 8.5.1 [ NA | -N ] Preverb anticausative

Although there is a transparent relation between the transitive *löschen* ‘to extinguish’ (35a) and the intransitive *erlöschen* ‘to go out’ (35b), they show different inflectional patterns, illustrated below with different participles. Historically, the transitive (35a) is a causative, but synchronically the prefixed *erlöschen* is probably better analysed as an anticausative.

- (35) a. Sie hat das Feuer gelöscht.  
b. Das Feuer ist erloschen.

#### Attested verbs

- er'- : *löschen*

### 8.5.2 [ NA | -N ] Preverb reflexive anticausative

Some further anticausatives need an additional reflexive pronoun, like with *fangen* ‘to catch’ (36a) and *verfangen* ‘to entangle oneself’ (36b). Note that the intransitive *verfangen* seems to additionally require a location phrase (36c). [8.47]

- (36) a. Ich fange den Vogel mit einem Netz.  
b. Der Vogel verfängt sich im Netz.  
c. ? Der Vogel verfängt sich.

#### Attested verbs

- er'- : *strecken*
- ver'- : *fangen*

#### Further examples

- Der Schuster streckt die Stiefel.  
Der Wald erstreckt sich bis zum Gebirge.

— [ PBJ > SBJ > Ø ] —

### 8.5.3 [ NL | –N ] Preverb location anticausative

Lipka (ref-lipka1972: 93–94) calls this phenomenon *Subjektvertauschung*, which he claims is “quite frequent in German”. However, I do not know of any other examples of this diathesis except for the example given by Lipka, namely the diathesis between *laufen+aus* and *auslaufen*, both meaning approximately ‘to empty’ (37a,b). It might be that Lipka intended to use this term for anticausatives in general (which indeed are quite common in German), but then his example using a preverb was ill-chosen. Hundsnurscher (ref-hundsnurscher1968: 130ff.) discusses many examples that might be semantically similar, but do not show diathesis (e.g. *tröpfeln/auströpfeln*). For historical context, see Carlberg (ref-carlberg1948) for more about the history of the terminology and the relation to metonymy. For Lipka’s counterpart *Objektvertauschung*, see Section 8.7.12

- (37) a. Das Wasser ist aus der Flasche gelaufen.  
b. Die Flasche ist ausgelaufen.

#### Attested verbs

- 'aus- : *laufen*

### 8.5.4 [ NP | –N ] Preverb preposition anticausative+reflexive loss

[8.49] When combined with the prefix *ver-*, the verb *kümmern* ‘to look after’ (38a) shows a clear anticausative diathesis in that the agent of the care is removed, leading to *verkümmern* ‘to atrophy’ (38c). However, there are two further idiosyncratic characteristics of this diathesis, namely that (i) an obligatory reflexive pronoun is removed and (ii) the cared-for object (*Pflanze* ‘plant’ in the example below) starts out being in a governed prepositional phrase with *um* (38a,b).

- (38) a. Ich kümmere mich nicht um die Pflanze.  
b. Ich kümmere mich nicht darum, ob die Pflanze verkümmert.  
c. Die Pflanze verkümmert.

#### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *kümmern*

## 8.6 Diatheses with promotion to subject

[8] Promotion to subject is somewhat more widespread compared to subject demotion discussed previously. Like with demotion, promotion to subject occurs preferably with verb prefixes and almost never with verb particles.

— [  $\emptyset > \text{SBJ} > \text{OBJ}$  ] — *Präverb Kausativ*

### 8.6.1 [ -N | NA ] Preverb causative

By adding a preverb, some intransitive verbs like *enden* ‘to end’ obtain an extra causer argument (39).

- (39) a. Der Wettkampf endet.  
b. Ich beende den Wettkampf.

With some of the verbs, the causer might occur as a prepositional phrase with *durch* in the intransitive (40), similar to inverted passives, see Section 8.6.11. However, this *durch* phrase could also be interpreted as a regular causal phrase, as discussed in Section 6.2.6.

[8.52]

- (40) a. Ich lebe durch den Eingriff des Arztes.  
b. Der Eingriff des Arztes belebt mich.

#### Attested verbs

- be'- : *atmen, leben, enden*
- ver'- : *ankern, heiraten, brennen*
- zer'- : *knirschen*
- 'an- : *brutzeln, treiben*

#### Further examples

- Paul und Marie heiraten.  
Ich verheirate Paul und Marie.
- Das Holz brennt.  
Ich verbrenne das Holz.
- Die Bremsen knirschen.  
Ich zerknirsche die Steine.
- Der Braten brutzelt im Ofen.  
Ich habe den Braten angebrutzelt.

- Die Wrackteile treiben im Wasser.  
Der Sturm treibt die Wrackteile an.
- Das Kind atmet.  
Ich beatme das Kind.

### 8.6.2 [ –N | NA ] Preverb causative with reflexive loss

An apparently idiosyncratic example is the verb *schämen* ‘to be ashamed’ that takes an obligatory reflexive pronoun (41a). With the preverb *be-*, the verb *beschämen* ‘to shame’ is clearly a causative, but without a reflexive pronoun (41b).

- (41) a. Ich schäme mich.  
b. Sie beschämt mich.

#### Attested verbs

- *be-* : *schämen*

### 8.6.3 [ –N | NA ] Preverb adjectival causative

[8.54]

Many adjectives can be turned into verbs by adding a prefix. The most widespread semantic effect is to turn a state, like *frei sein* ‘to be free’ (42a) into a causative process *befreien* ‘to free somebody’ (42b).

- (42) a. Du bist frei.  
b. Ich befreie dich.

Note that in a few examples an intermediate verb exists. For example, the verb *begrünen* ‘to plant greenery’ (43b) is transparently related to the adjective *grün* ‘green’ (43a). Now, the intermediate verb *grünen* ‘to become green (of plants)’ also exists (43c). However, the verbs in this section consist of examples in which such an intermediate non-preverbal verb is not, or only very rarely, attested. And even if the intermediate verb exists (e.g. *breiten*, *dunkeln*, *härten*, *kürzen*, *mehren*, *wärmen*), then the semantic relation between the adjective and the preverbal verb is still completely transparent, begging the question whether the intermediate verb is really an intermediate step in the derivation or a separate development.

- (43) a. Der Balkon ist grün.  
 b. Ich begrüne den Balkon.  
 c. Die Rasenstücke [...] waren angewachsen und grünt<sup>14</sup> lustig.

With a few adjectives, the causer can be expressed with a regular agentive *durch* or *von* prepositional phrase in the intransitive alternant. This sounds most natural with inanimate causers (44). See also Section 8.6.11 on inverted passives.

- (44) a. Er ist matt vom Sport.  
 b. Der Sport ermattet ihn.

With some verbs the causative also needs an umlaut (cf. **ref-plank2015**), e.g. with *kurz* ‘short’ and *verkürzen* ‘to shorten’ (45a,b). This might be an argument that the preverbal *verkürzen* is derived via the intermediate verb *kürzen*. Conversely, sometimes an umlaut is lost in the causative, e.g. with *böse* ‘angry’ and *erbosen* ‘to make angry’ (45c,d). For more examples of umlaut with verb-to-adjective derivation, see Section 5.6.4.

- (45) a. Die Frist ist kurz.  
 b. Ich verkürze die Frist.  
 c. Er ist böse.  
 d. Die Bemerkung erbost ihn.

Not all verbs derived from adjectives with a preverb have a different argument structure, e.g. *erwachen* ‘to wake up’ as derived from *wach* ‘be awake’ (46). There is a difference in meaning of the predicate without preverb (i.e. stative) ‘to be awake’ (46a) and with preverb (i.e. be caused) ‘to become awake’ (46b), but there is no added causer. These examples are further discussed in Section 8.4.2.

- (46) a. Die Kinder sind wach.  
 b. Die Kinder erwachen.

There are also a few examples of preverbal adjectives in which an accusative object is added, like with *lustig* ‘funny’ and *belustigen* ‘to amuse’ (47). These examples are further discussed in Section 8.8.2.

- (47) a. Der Clown ist lustig.  
 b. Der Clown belustigt mich.

<sup>14</sup>From Viebig, Clara: *Das tägliche Brot*. (Berlin 1952). Attested on <https://www.dwds.de/wb/grünen>, accessed 5 August 2022.



### Attested verbs

- *be'* : *ängstig, fähig, frei, günstig, grün, ruhig, schuldig, schwer, unruhig*
- *er'* : *bitter, böse, hart, hell, hoch, kalt, leichter, matt, müde, munter, mutig, neu, niedrig, rege, schlaff, warm, weich*
- *ver'* : *besser, breit, breiter, deutlich, dunkel, edel, einfach, eng, größer, harmlos, herrlich, länger, niedlich, klein, kurz, kürzer, langsam, mehr, schön, schöner*  
*start*
- *zer'* : *mürbe*

### Further examples

- Die Frist ist länger als sonst.  
Ich verlängere die Frist.
- Die Stadt ist schön.  
Parks verschönen die Stadt.
- Mein Haus ist schöner.  
Ich verschönere mein Haus.
- Er ist niedriger Herkunft.  
Ich erniedrige ihn.
- Der Tee ist bitter.  
Seine Misserfolge erbitterten ihn.
- Er ist mürbe vor Sorgen.  
Die Sorgen zermürben ihn.
- Die Straße ist jetzt breiter.  
Die Arbeiterinnen verbreitern die Straße.

### Notes

Comparatives like *besser* ‘better’ (48) are considered as adjectives here and can likewise be the basis for a derived verb *verbessern* ‘to improve’ (48). Note that there is also a potentially intermediate verb *bessern* ‘to improve’ (48c). Similar adjectival roots are *breiter*, *größer*, *länger*, *kürzer* and *schöner*.

- (48) a. Die Lebensbedingungen sind heutzutage besser.  
b. Ich verbessere die Lebensbedingungen.  
c. Der Bericht bessert meine Lauen.

[8.61] The verb *erbittern* ‘to make bitter’ is probably derived from a verb *bittern* ‘to become bitter’, which does not exist anymore in contemporary German (ref-pfeiffer1993).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Entry *bitter* at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/etymwb/bitter>, accessed 6 August 2022.

Both are of course related to the adjective *bitter* ‘bitter’.

#### 8.6.4 [ -N | NA ] Preverb nominal causative

Preverbs can also be added to nominal roots, deriving a causative verb in the process. For example, the verb *vergiften* ‘to poison’ is derived from *Gift* ‘the poison’ (49a). The meaning of such verbs is that the accusative object is caused to have the nominal property (i.e. ‘to cause to have poison’). In a few examples the derivation also includes an umlaut (like with *ergründen* ‘to ascertain’ from *Grund* ‘cause’). Nominal roots are most frequently attested with verb prefixes, though incidental verb particles are also attested, like *ein-* in *einbürgern* ‘to naturalise’ (49b).

[8.62]

- (49) a. Ich vergifte die Suppe.  
 (= Ich verursache, dass die Suppe giftig ist.)  
 b. Der Beamte bürgert den Flüchtling ein.  
 (= Der Beamte verursacht, dass der Flüchtling zum Bürger wird.)

The prefix *ent-* includes an inherent negation, leading to verbs that express that the object does not have the nominal property, like *entwalden* ‘to deforest’, i.e. ‘to cause not to have a forest’ (50b). The prefix *er-* seems to have a slightly different semantic structure in that there is an experiencer involved, either as the nominative subject, like in *erbeuten* ‘to loot’ (50b), or as the accusative object, like in *erdolchen* ‘to stab with a dagger’ (50b).

[8.63]

- (50) a. Die Arbeiter entwaldeten den Hügel.  
 (= Die Arbeiter verursachten, dass der Hügel keinen Wald mehr hat.)  
 b. Die Piraten erbeuteten den Schatz.  
 (= Die Piraten verursachten, dass sie den Schatz haben.)  
 c. Die Piraten erdolchen den Kapitän.  
 (= Die Piraten verursachen, dass der Kapitän einen Dolch in sich hat.)

Some of these noun-based verbs listed below could also be interpreted as being derived from a verbal stem (which in turn is derived from a nominal stem). For example, verbs like *salzen*, *wassern*, *pfeffern*, *gaunern*, *kalken* and *thronen* are listed in the DWDS dictionary.<sup>16</sup> So, a verb like *entsalzen* is maybe not derived from the noun stem *Salz* directly (as claimed here), but through an intermediate verb *salzen*. Whatever diachronic pathway is correct, the semantic relation

<sup>16</sup> Available online at <<https://www.dwds.de>>.

between the noun *Salz* and the verb *entsalzen* is extremely transparent. For that reason I have still listed these examples here.

In contrast, some intermediate verb stems exist, but they clearly do not have a direct relation to the preverbal verbs listed here. For example, *gründen* ‘to establish’ is clearly derived from *Grund* ‘ground’. However, *begründen* ‘to justify’ does not seem to be derived from *gründen*, but is directly derived from *Grund* in a separate development. Similarly, *giften* can be used with the meaning ‘to be annoyed’ and is clearly derived from *Gift* ‘poison’. However, *vergiften* ‘to poison’ is not derived from this verb *giften* but directly from the noun *Gift*.

### Attested verbs

- be'- : *begrenzen* (*Grenze*), *begründen* (*Grund*), *behaupten* (*Haupt*)
- ver'- : *verchromen* (*Chrome*), *vergiften* (*Gift*), *vergolden* (*Gold*), *verkohlen* (*Kohle*), *vermüllen* (*Müll*), *verpfeffern* (*Pfeffer*), *versalzen* (*Salz*)
- er'- : *erbeuten* (*Beute*), *erdolchen* (*Dolch*), *ergaunern* (*Gauner*), *ergründen* (*Grund*)
- ent'- : *entkalken* (*Kalk*), *entthronen* (*Thron*), *entrinden* (*Rinde*), *entsalzen* (*Salz*), *entschlüsseln* (*Schlüssel*), *entwalden* (*Wald*), *entwassern* (*Wasser*), *entziffern* (*Ziffer*)
- 'ein- : *einbürgern* (*Bürger*), *eingemeinden* (*Gemeinde*)
- 'ab- : *abgrenzen* (*Grenze*)
- 'auf- : *auftischen* (*Tisch*)

### Notes

- [8.66] The relation between *Haupt* ‘head’ and *behaupten* ‘to claim’ is diachronically clear (viz. *behaupten* means ‘to establish oneself as the principal about something’), but synchronically this relation is not transparent anymore. Likewise, *entziffern* ‘to decipher’ is diachronically related to *Ziffer* ‘number’ but in a rather roundabout way. However, intuitively most German speakers do not seem to have a problem to make this semantic jump.

### 8.6.5 [ -N | NA ] Preverb nominal reciprocal causative

A special subclass of nouns produce an inherently reciprocal verb when combined with a preverb. It appears that all these verbs are derived from a plural noun. For example, the plural *Brüder* ‘brother’ is the basis of the verb *verbrüdern* ‘to fraternise’, i.e. ‘to become brothers’ (51). This verb is inherently reciprocal, cf. RECIPROCA TANTUM as discussed in Section 7.3.3.

## 8 Preverb alternations

- (51) Wir verbrüdern uns (miteinander).  
(= Wir machen uns zu Brüdern.)

### Attested verbs

- 'an- : *anfreunden* (*Freunde*)
- ver'- : *verbrüdern* (*Brüder*), *verbünden* (*Bünde*), *verfeinden* (*Feinde*)

### 8.6.6 [ –NP | NAP ] Preverb causative+preposition

Some causative alternations have a governed preposition, like with *haften* 'to be liable' (52a). The preposition becomes optional in the causative counterpart *verhaften* 'to arrest' (52b). Note that there is quite some semantic leeway in this derivation.

- (52) a. Eltern haften für ihre Kinder.  
b. Die Polizisten verhaften die Eltern (für ihre Taten).

### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *haften*
- 'aus- : *fahren*

### Further examples

- Die Landeklappen fahren aus dem Flügel.  
Der Pilot fährt die Landeklappen (aus dem Flügel) aus.
- Der Kunde fährt in der Kutsche.  
Ich fahre den Kunden (in der Kutsche) aus.

### 8.6.7 [ –ND | NAD ] Preverb causative+dative

The verb *gleichen* 'to be alike' (53a) takes a dative argument, which is retained in the causative diathesis *angleichen* 'to adapt' (53b). [8.69]

- (53) a. Seine Aussprache gleicht meinem Dialekt.  
b. Er gleicht seine Aussprache meinem Dialekt an.

### Attested verbs

- 'an- : *gleichen*
- ver'- : *passen*

### Further examples

- Die Brille passt mir.  
Der Arzt hat mir eine Brille verpasst.

#### 8.6.8 [ –ND | NAP ] Preverb causative+dative antipassive

[8.70]

In the special case of the causative diathesis between *gleichen* ‘to resemble’ (54a) and the prefixed form *vergleichen* ‘to compare’ (54b), the original dative argument is turned into a governed preposition (54c).

- (54) a. Ich gleiche einem Affen.  
b. Er vergleicht mich mit einem Affen.  
c. Er vergleicht es damit, dass Affen Bananen essen.

### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *gleichen*

#### 8.6.9 [ –NA | NDA ] Preverb dative causative+accusative

[8.71]

Different from most causatives, the original nominative of *mieten* ‘to rent’ (55a) turns into a dative in the prefixed form *vermieten* ‘to lend’ (55b). The more typical diathesis (as illustrated previously) is a causative in which the original nominative turns into an accusative. However, with verbs like *vermieten* there is already an accusative present before the diathesis, which is retained. In general, there seems to be a strong generalisation (with only few exceptions) that verbs in German do not govern multiple accusatives (cf. Section 5.3.8).

- (55) a. Ich miete die Wohnung (von ihm).  
b. Er vermietet mir die Wohnung.

### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *erben, füttern, kaufen, leihen, mieten, pachten, pfänden*
- be'- : *kennen*

### Further examples

- Die Pferde füttern das Tiermehl.  
Er verfüttert den Pferden das Tiermehl.
- Ich kaufe das Haus.  
Er verkauft mir das Haus.
- Die Polizei pfändet mein Vermögen.  
Ich verpfände dir mein Vermögen.
- Du kennst meine Absicht.  
Ich bekenne dir meine Absicht.

— [ Ø > SBJ > PBJ ] —

#### 8.6.10 [ -NA | NPA ] Preverb reversed fabricative+accusative

Different from the previously discussed causatives, the original nominative of *freuen* ‘to enjoy’ (56a) turns into a governed preposition with the prefixed *er-* *freuen* ‘to delight somebody’ (56b,c). The more typical diathesis is a causative in which the original nominative turns into an accusative.

[8.72]

- (56)
- a. Das Geschenk freut mich.
  - b. Er erfreut mich mit einem Geschenk.
  - c. Er erfreut mich damit, dass er vorbei kommt.

### Attested verbs

- *er'* : *freuen*

— [ PBJ > SBJ > OBJ ] —

The following diatheses can be seen as passives “in reverse”. On first notice everything just looks like a passive: (i) the accusative argument of the (prefixed) transitive verb turns into a nominative of the (non-prefixed) intransitive verb and (ii) the causer/agent of the (prefixed) transitive verb is expressed as a (governed) prepositional phrase with the (non-prefixed) intransitive verb. However, the direction of an alternation is by definition from the unmarked (non-prefixed) to the marked (prefixed) verb. So, these diatheses are “reversed” passives. Although it would make sense to call such diatheses “antipassives”, this term is already taken by another kind of diatheses. Because the prepositional phrases are governed prepositions, these diatheses are examples of a REVERSED CONVERSIVE diathesis, as defined in Section 2.7.3.2.

[8.73]

### 8.6.11 [ PN | NA ] Preverb reversed conversive

The causer of *erstaunen* ‘to amaze’ is expressed as a governed preposition *über*<sup>[8.74]</sup> with the non-prefixed verb *staunen* ‘to be amazed’.

- (57) a. Ich staune über deine Arbeit.  
 b. Ich staune darüber, dass du schon fertig bist.  
 c. Deine Arbeit erstaunt mich.

#### Attested verbs

- er'- : *staunen, warten*

#### Further examples

- Ich warte auf den Test.  
 Der Test erwartet mich.

### 8.6.12 [ PN | NA ] Preverb reversed conversive+reflexive loss

<sup>[8.75]</sup> With the addition of the prefix, the verbs in this section lose their reflexive pronoun, like with *sich schämen* ‘to be ashamed’ (70a) to *beschämen* ‘to shame’ (58c). Further note that the causer of the transitive is expressed as a governed preposition (58b). So, there is both a “reversed” conversive and a “reversed” reflexive marking in these diatheses.

- (58) a. Ich schäme mich für meine Taten.  
 b. Ich schäme mich dafür, dass ich das gemacht habe.  
 c. Meine Taten beschämen mich

The second examples of this diathesis with *wundern* ‘to wonder’ (59) is less clear, because this verb has also a reflexive passive alternation, see Section 7.5.7. Comparing (59a,c) shows an alternation of an inverted conversive with reflexive loss. But comparing (59b,c) shows an alternation without diathesis.

- (59) a. Ich wundere mich über dein Verhalten.  
 b. Dein Verhalten wundert mich.  
 c. Dein Verhalten verwundert mich.

### Attested verbs

- be'- : *schämen*
- ver'- : *wundern*

— [ ADJ > SBJ > OBJ ] —

#### 8.6.13 [ pNA | NA- ] Preverb reversed passive+accusative loss

The relation between *erben* ‘inherit’ and *enterben* ‘disinherit’ is peculiar, because the accusative argument *Schreibtisch* of the verb *erben* in (60a) cannot be expressed in any way with the prefixed verb *enterben* (60b). [8.77]

- (60) a. Ich erbe den Schreibtisch von meinem Vater.  
 b. Mein Vater enterbt mich.

### Attested verbs

- ent'- : *erben*

## 8.7 Diatheses with object demotion

— [ OBJ > Ø ] — *Präverb Endoreflexiv*

#### 8.7.1 [ NA | N- ] Preverb reflexive accusative drop

Some preverbs induce the loss of an accusative with a coincidental obligatory reflexive pronoun, like the diathesis between *wählen* ‘to choose’ and *sich verwählen* ‘to misdial’ (61). The examples of this diathesis mostly appear to relate to using your body in a certain way, which is reminiscent of the endoreflexive diathesis (see Section 7.7.1). Because of the similarities between the two, I propose to call this diathesis the *Präverb Endoreflexiv*. [8.78]

- (61) a. Er wählt die falsche Nummer.  
 b. Er verwählt sich.

The examples with the prefix *ver-* quite productively result in verbs that describe an activity that is performed erroneously (cf. ref-stiebels1996: 143–151). The same semantic effect with *ver-* (but with different diatheses) is also attested with intransitive movement verbs, see Section 8.4.6, and with measurement verbs, see Section 8.7.4. [8.79]



**Attested verbs**

- be'- : *trinken, saufen*
- ver'- : *greifen, hören, lesen, plappern, sprechen, schlucken, schreiben, spielen (Instrument), tippen, wählen*
- über'- : *essen, heben, strecken*

**Further examples**

- Ich schlucke die Tablette.  
Ich habe mich verschluckt.
- Er schreibt einen Brief.  
Er verschreibt sich.
- Ich spreche drei Sätze.  
Ich verspreche mich.
- Ich greife den Zucker.  
Ich habe mich vergriffen.
- Ich hebe die schwere Kiste.  
Ich überhebe mich.
- Ich trinke Bier.  
Ich betrinke mich (mit Bier).
- Ich esse einen Kuchen.  
Ich überesse mich.
- Ich spiele die Sonate (auf der Geige).  
Ich habe mich verspielt.

— [ OBJ > Ø ] —

**8.7.2 [ NA | N- ] Preverb accusative drop**

[8.80]

These verbs are counterexamples to the predominant pattern that preverbs induce an accusative argument (see Section 8.2.2). In contrast, in the diathesis from *kaufen* ‘to buy’ (62a) to *einkaufen* ‘to shop’ (62b) an accusative argument is completely dropped. Comparing this diathesis to the other diatheses in this section, it would be expected for a reflexive pronoun to be necessary here. However, that is not the case.

- (62) a. Ich habe gestern ein Buch gekauft.  
b. Ich habe gestern eingekauft.

### Attested verbs

- er'- : *trinken*
- 'ein- : *kaufen, greifen*

### Notes

Various examples of this diathesis show a strong semantic change, so it is debatable whether these should still be considered diatheses or simply different lexemes. The problematic examples are (i) *greifen* 'to grasp' (63a) vs. *eingreifen* 'to intervene' (63b) and (ii) *trinken* 'to drink' (63c) vs. *ertrinken* 'to drown' (63d).

[8.81]

- (63) a. Der Polizist hat den Stock gegriffen.  
b. Der Polizist hat eingegriffen.  
c. Ich trinke das Wasser.  
d. Ich ertrinke.

### 8.7.3 [ ND | N- ] Preverb reflexive dative drop

There is quite some uncertainty among German speakers as to the case of the reflexive pronoun of *behelfen* 'to manage' (64). Based on a preliminary corpus search, the *Grammatisches Informationssystem* (ref-strecker2017) concludes that accusative *mich* is clearly favoured, though in Google search results the dative *mir* seems to be preferred. This might suggest that there is an ongoing language change from reflexive accusative to dative with *behelfen*. Note that it is highly unusual for a dative reflexive to occur without an accusative argument being present as well (see paragraph 7.7 on page 252).

- (64) a. Ich helfe dir.  
b. Ich behelfe mich (mir).

### Attested verbs

- be'- : *helfen*

### — [ OBJ > ADJ ] — Präverb Reflexiv Antipassiv

### 8.7.4 [ NA | Np ] Preverb reflexive antipassive

The verb *kalkulieren* 'to calculate' (65a) allows for an antipassive diathesis in which an accusative argument is turned into an (optional) prepositional phrase

by adding a prefix *verkalkulieren* ‘to miscalculate’. Additionally, an obligatory accusative reflexive pronoun is part of this diathesis, probably because a preverb diathesis needs an accusative constituent.

- (65) a. Ich kalkuliere die Miete.  
b. Ich verkalkuliere mich bei der Miete.

[8.84] There are various further verbs of measurement in this class, like *schätzen* ‘to estimate’ and *rechnen* ‘to calculate’, but this semantic characteristic is not exhaustive. The prefix *ver-* indicates that the action is performed erroneously, which is also attested in various other diathesis (e.g. Section 8.7.1.)

### Attested verbs

- *ver-* : *kalkulieren, messen, rechnen, schätzen, spekulieren, zählen, tun*
- *be-* : *fassen*

### Further examples

- Ich fasse einen Entschluss.  
Ich befasse mich mit dem Entschluss.
- Er hat seine Abrechnungen getan.  
Er hat sich bei seinen Abrechnungen nie vertan.

### 8.7.5 [ NAA | NAp ] Preverb antipassive+accusative

The verb *lehren* ‘to teach’ (66a) shows a slight variant of the previous antipassive. By adding the preverb, *belehren* ‘to instruct’ turns the inanimate accusative (*Regeln* ‘rules’) into a prepositional phrase (66b) while retaining the other animate accusative (*dich* ‘you’). Because there is an accusative constituent in the sentence, this preverb diathesis does not necessitate a reflexive pronoun.

- (66) a. Ich lehre dich die Regeln.  
b. Ich belehre dich über die Regeln.

### Attested verbs

- *be-* : *lehren*

– [ OBJ > ADJ ] – *Präverb Dativ Antipassiv*

8.7.6 [ NAD | NAp ] Preverb dative antipassive+accusative

Adding a preverb to various ditransitive verbs with dative and accusative arguments, like *schenken* ‘to gift’ (67a), frequently results in the omission of the dative, like *verschenken* ‘to give away’ (67b). The dative can be retained as a prepositional phrase, but is typically omitted. This diathesis appears to be widespread with ditransitive verbs. Because there is an accusative constituent in the sentence, this preverb diathesis does not necessitate a reflexive pronoun.

[8.86]

- (67) a. Ich schenke dem Kindergarten meine Bücher.  
b. Ich verschenke meine Bücher (an den Kindergarten).

Attested verbs

- er'- : *bringen*
- ver'- : *geben, leihen, senden, schenken, schicken*
- unter'- : *schreiben*
- 'ab- : *geben, senden, schicken*
- 'durch- : *reichen*

Further examples

- Er hat dem Lehrer die Arbeit gebracht.  
Er hat die Leistung erbracht (für den Lehrer).
- Ich schenke dir ein Buch.  
Ich verschenke das Buch an dich.
- Ich schreibe dir einen Brief.  
Ich unterschreibe einen Brief (an dich).
- Ich gebe dem Handwerker den Auftrag.  
Ich vergebe den Auftrag an den Handwerker.
- Ich schicke dir den Brief.  
Ich habe den Brief abgeschickt.
- Ich reiche dir das Essen.  
Ich habe das Essen durchgereicht.

8.7.7 [ ND | Np ] Preverb reflexive dative antipassive

The diathesis between *danken* and *bedanken*, both meaning ‘to thank’ (68), is a dative antipassive. The dative is turned into a prepositional phrase. Additionally,

[8.87]

an obligatory accusative reflexiv pronoun is introduced.

- (68) a. Ich danke dir.  
b. Ich bedanke mich bei dir.

#### Attested verbs

- *be'* - : *danken*

— [ OBJ > OBJ > ADJ ] —

#### 8.7.8 [ NDA | NAp ] Preverb antipassive+dative-to-accusative

[8.88]

Like the previously discussed diathesis (see Section 8.7.6), this diathesis takes a ditransitive verb with an accusative and a dative argument, like *schenken* ‘to gift’ (69a). Then, by adding the preverb *be'*, the accusative argument (*Buch* ‘book’) is turned into an optional prepositional phrase (i.e. accusative antipassive) with *beschenken* ‘to give a present’ (69b). At the same time, the dative argument is turned into an accusative (*dir* becomes *dich*).

Compare this to the diathesis with *ver-* as discussed in the previous section: *verschenken* ‘to give away’ takes the dative *von* *schenken* and turns it into a prepositional phrase (i.e. dative antipassive). The accusative is unaffected (69c).

- (69) a. Ich schenke dir ein Buch.  
b. Ich beschenke dich mit einem Buch.  
c. Ich verschenke das Buch an dich.

#### Attested verbs

- *be'* - : *kochen, liefern, lohnen, schenken, singen*

#### Further examples

- Ich lohne dir deine Treue.  
Ich belohne dich für deine Treue.
- Ich liefere dem Bäcker das Mehl.  
Ich beliefere den Bäcker mit dem Mehl.
- Ich singe dir ein Lied.  
Ich besinge dich in einem Lied.
- Ich koche dir eine Suppe.  
Ich bekoche dich (mit einer Suppe).

– [ PBJ > ADJ ] – *Präverb Delokativ*

8.7.9 [ NL | Np ] Preverb intransitive delocative

The non-preverbal *steigen* ‘to mount’ needs an obligatory location describing the endpoint of the action (70a). This location cannot be left out (70b) and, crucially for this diathesis, the participle cannot be used attributively without the location (70c,d).

- (70) a. Der Mann steigt aus dem Auto.  
 b. \*Der Mann steigt.  
 c. Der aus dem Auto gestiegene Mann rutscht aus.  
 d. \*Der gestiegene Mann rutscht aus.

In contrast, with the preverbal *aussteigen* both previously ungrammatical options are possible (71). In effect that means that by adding the preverb, the verb loses the obligation to have a location phrase. Such a DELOCATIVE diathesis is the reverse of a LOCATIVE diathesis in which an obligatory location phrase is added, see e.g. Section 6.8.2. [8.91]

- (71) a. Der Mann steigt aus dem Auto aus.  
 b. Der Mann steigt aus.  
 c. Der aus dem Auto ausgestiegene Mann rutscht aus.  
 d. Der ausgestiegene Mann rutscht aus.

Note that there is another usage of the verb *steigen* in the meaning ‘to rise’ that behaves differently (see Section 6.7.3). [8.92]

**Attested verbs**

- ver'- : *reisen, rutschen*
- zer'- : *rinnen*
- 'durch- : *laufen, sickern*
- 'aus- : *brechen (herauskommen), gehen, steigen, ziehen*
- 'um- : *ziehen*
- 'unter- : *gehen*
- 'an- : *kommen*
- 'auf- : *stehen*

## Further examples

- Das Kind steht im Zimmer.  
Das Kind steht auf.  
Das aufgestandene/\*gestandene Kind [...].
- Der Zug kommt zum Bahnhof.  
Der Zug kommt an.  
Der angekommene/\*gekommene Zug [...].
- Die Brille rutscht von meiner Nase.  
Die Brille verrutscht auf meiner Nase.  
Die verrutschte/\*gerutschte Brille [...].
- Der Junge reist nach Japan.  
Der Junge verreist.  
Der verreiste/?gereiste Junge [...].
- Das Blut ist durch den Verband gesickert.  
Das Blut ist durchgesickert.
- Ich bin durch den Wald gelaufen.  
Der Kaffee ist durchgelaufen.
- Die Quelle bricht aus dem Gestein.  
Der Gefangene ist ausgebrochen.
- Ich ziehe nach München.  
Ich ziehe aus.
- Ich gehe zur Disko.  
Ich gehe aus.
- Das Schiff geht nach Italien.  
Das Schiff geht unter.

## 8.7.10 [ NL | Np ] Preverb reflexive intransitive delocative

This diathesis is similar to the previous diathesis (see Section 8.7.9) with the additional characteristics that the prefixed verbs like *beeilen* ‘to hurry’ also need a reflexive pronoun (72). Note that, contrary to (72b), the verb *eilen* ‘to hurry’ can be used without a location phrase, but only in the meaning ‘to be urgent’ (cf. Section 6.7.3).

- (72) a. Ich eile nach Hause.  
b. \* Ich eile.  
c. Ich beeile mich.

### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *fahren, irren, laufen, spekulieren*
- er'- : *hängen*
- be'- : *eilen*

### Further examples

- Ich fahre nach Dresden.  
Ich verfahre mich (auf dem Weg nach Dresden).
- Ich irre durch den Garten.  
Ich verirre mich (im Garten).
- Ich laufe in den Garten.  
Ich verlaufe mich (im Garten).
- Ich spekuliere auf einen Gewinn.  
Ich verspekuliere mich.
- Er hängt an dem Balken.  
Er erhängt sich (an dem Balken).

#### 8.7.11 [ NAL | NAp ] Preverb transitive delocative

Verbs of caused location (see Section 6.5.10) like *stecken* 'to put into' (73a) cannot be used without a locative prepositional phrase (73b). In contrast, with the prefix *ver-* the verb *verstecken* 'to hide' can be used both with and without the location (73c,d).

[8.94]

- (73) a. Ich stecke das Geschenk in den Schrank.  
b. \*Ich stecke das Geschenk.  
c. Ich verstecke das Geschenk in dem Schrank.  
d. Ich verstecke das Geschenk.

The diathesis is quite widespread stacked on top of a forced movement diathesis as discussed in Section 6.8.4, for example with *wehen* 'to blow' (74).

- (74) a. Der Wind weht hart.  
b. Der Wind weht die Blätter von den Dächern.  
c. \*Der Wind weht die Blätter.  
d. Der Wind verweht die Blätter.



### Attested verbs

- *ver'* : *drängen, gießen, jagen, legen, rücken, scheuchen, schütten, schieben, sprühen, stecken, stoßen, streichen, treiben, wehen*
- *zer'* : *hacken, reißen, sägen, schneiden, teilen*
- *'durch-* : *bringen, setzen*
- *'um-* : *setzen*
- *'unter-* : *binden*
- *'ab-* : *hängen, legen, pumpen, reißen, schlagen, streichen, trennen, waschen, werfen*
- *'ein-* : *packen, räumen, schenken, stecken*
- *'aus-* : *graben, pusten, reißen, spucken, ziehen*
- *'zu-* : *stellen*
- *'auf-* : *setzen*
- *'an-* : *kleben, treiben, spülen*

### Further examples

- Ich treibe die Mücken aus dem Haus.  
Ich vertreibe die Mücken.
- Ich lege meine Brille auf den Tisch.  
Ich verlegen meine Brille.
- Ich reiße die Blätter von dem Strauch.  
Ich reiße die Blätter ab.
- Er hängt die Wäsche an die Leine.  
Er hängt die Wäsche ab.
- Ich stecke das Taschentuch in meine Tasche.  
Ich stecke das Taschentuch ein.
- Ich bringe den Antrag zur Sitzung.  
Ich bringe den Antrag durch.
- Ich setze die Forderung auf die Tagesordnung.  
Ich setze die Forderung durch.
- Der Lehrer setzt den Schüler in die Ecke.  
Der Lehrer setzt den Schüler um.
- Ich binde die Skier an meine Schuhe.  
Ich binde die Skier unter.
- Ich spucke die Kerne ins Gras.  
Ich spucke die Kerne aus.
- Ich ziehe den Anzug über meinen Pullover.  
Ich ziehe meinen Anzug aus.

## 8 Preverb alternations

- Ich reiße das Blatt aus dem Heft.  
Ich reiße das Blatt aus.
- Ich puste den Staub vom Tisch.  
Ich puste die Kerze aus.
- Ich lege die Akten ins Regal.  
Ich lege die Akten ab.
- Der Postbote stellt das Paket vor die Tür.  
Der Postbote stellt das Paket zu.
- Ich hacke den Stuhl in Stücke.  
Ich zerhacke den Stuhl.
- Ich streiche die Butter auf das Brot.  
Ich verstreiche die Butter.
- Ich setze den Hut auf meinen Kopf.  
Ich setzt den Hut auf.
- Ich klebe den Zettel an die Wand.  
Ich klebe den Zettel an.
- Ich treibe die Pferde auf die Wiese.  
Ich treibe die Pferde an.
- Die Wellen spülen Muscheln auf den Strand.  
Die Wellen spülen Muscheln an.
- Ich grabe den Schatz aus den Boden.  
Ich grabe den Schatz aus.
- Der Kommissar schüttelte den Kopf und schenkte Tee in drei Becher.<sup>17</sup> Der Kommissar schenkte Tee ein.
- Ich packe den Pullover in meinen Koffer.  
Ich packe den Pullover (in Papier) ein.
- Ich räume meine Sachen in die neue Wohnung.  
Ich räume die Sachen (in den Schrank) ein.
- Ich wasche den Schmutz von den Händen.  
Ich wasche den (von den Händen) ab.

### Notes

The verb *schenken* ‘to pour’ used to be common in a context of pouring a drink (75a), but this is considered old-fashioned in German. The verb *einschenken* is taking over this usage (75b). [8.96]

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<sup>17</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 30.12.2014, Nr. 01.

- (75) a. Frau Anna schenkte den Wein in die Becher.<sup>18</sup>  
 b. Sie schenkten Wein ein.

— [ PBJ > OBJ > Ø ] — *Präverb Ganz/leer-Objekttausch*

8.7.12 [ NLA | NA– ] Preverb applicative+accusative drop

[8.97]

The result of a verb like *pressen* ‘to squeeze’ is *Saft* ‘juice’ (76a). This verb needs an obligatory local phrase for the original container of the juice, *aus der Zitrone* ‘from the citron’ (76b). Verbs in this category either use the preposition *aus* or *von*. With a preverb, the verb *auspressen* ‘to squeeze’ drops this accusative result and promotes the container of the result *Zitrone* to accusative (76c). In effect, the role marked as object is exchanged. The new object (here *Zitrone*) is always a holonymic “whole” containing the original meronymic content (here *Saft*). This diathesis applies to verbs in which the meronymic content is removed out of the holonymic container.

- (76) a. Ich presse den Saft aus der Zitrone.  
 b. \* Ich presse den Saft.  
 c. Ich presse die Zitrone aus.

Most examples have an obligatory local phrase before the diathesis, but a few verbs allow for this local phrase to be dropped, like with *rauben* ‘to rob’ (77). Other examples of this slightly different diathesis with an optional location are *erben*, *trinken* and *stehlen*.

- (77) a. Ich raube das Gemälde (aus der Wohnung).  
 b. Ich raube die Wohnung aus.

There is a parallel diathesis with the resultative preverbials *leer-* and *frei-*, which is discussed in detail in Section 9.7.4. The reversal of this diathesis is the unmarked PARTITIVE SEPARATED OBJECT diathesis (see Section 6.8.7). Lipka (ref-lipka1972: 93, 173) calls this diathesis *Objektvertauschung* and McIntyre (ref-mcintyre2001: 275–277) “landmark flexibility”. For historical context on this diathesis, see Carlberg (ref-carlberg1948) and Hundsnurscher (ref-hundsnurscher1968: 127). Lipka opposes this diathesis to *Subjektvertauschung*, which is discussed in Section 8.5.3. However, that opposition does not seem to be a fruitful approach.

<sup>18</sup>DWDS: Weismantel, Leo: Die höllische Trinität, Berlin: Union-Verl.1966 (1943), S. 428.

### Attested verbs

- be'- : *erben, rauben, stehlen*
- 'aus- : *klopfen, lecken, packen, pressen, pumpen, quetschen, räumen, rauben, schütten, trinken*
- 'ab- : *bürsten, schrubben, stauben, tragen, tupfen, waschen, wischen, ziehen*

### Further examples

- Ich klopfe den Staub von dem Mantel.  
Ich klopfe den Mantel aus.
- Ich bürste den Staub von dem Rock.  
Ich bürste den Rock ab.
- Ich ziehe das Laken von dem Bett.  
Ich ziehe das Bett ab.
- Ich wasche den Schmutz von dem Geschirr.  
Ich wasche das Geschirr ab.
- Ich trage die Dachziegel von dem Dach.  
Ich trage das Dach ab.
- Ich schrubbe den Schmutz von meiner Hand. Ich schrubbe meine Hand ab.
- Ich pumpe das Wasser aus dem Keller.  
Ich pumpe den Keller aus.
- Ich schütte das Wasser aus dem Eimer.  
Ich schütte den Eimer aus.
- Ich erbe die Uhr (von meinem Vater).  
Ich beerbe meinen Vater.
- Ich trinke Wasser (aus meiner Tasse).  
Ich trinke meine Tasse aus.
- Ich tupfe das Blut von der Wunde.  
Ich tupfe die Wunde ab.
- Mit seinem Taschentuch staubte er von seinen Ärmeln die Spinnengewebe<sup>19</sup> ■  
Er staubt seine Ärmel ab.

— [ PBJ > OBJ > ADJ ] — *Präverb Ganz/voll-Objekttausch*

#### 8.7.13 [ NLA | NAp ] Preverb applicative+*mit* antipassive

This diathesis is a combination of an applicative promotion and an antipassive demotion. Such an object exchange is a very widespread diathesis, exemplified

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<sup>19</sup>DWDS: H. Mann9,42.

here with *drücken* ‘to press’ (78a). This verb needs both an accusative object (here *Finger* ‘finger’) and an obligatory location (here *auf die Wunde* ‘on the wound’). This location cannot be left out (78b). With the preverb *zu-* the verb *zudrücken* ‘to press shut’ (78c) promotes the locational object to accusative (*Wunde*) and demotes the original object to an optional prepositional phrase (*Finger*). Semantically, the new accusative object (*Wunde*) is covered by the old accusative object (*Finger*). This is an example of the FILLED HOLONYM object exchange (see Section 2.7.5.2). The reverse diathesis is the JOINED MERONYM object exchange, discussed below in Section 8.9.1.

- (78) a. Ich habe meinen Finger auf die Wunde gedrückt.  
 b. \* Ich habe meinen Finger gedrückt.  
 c. Ich habe die Wunde mit meinem Finger zgedrückt.  
 d. Ich habe die Wunde zgedrückt.

The antipassive demotion in this section always takes the preposition *mit*. There is more variation in the prepositions that take part in the applicative promotion part of the diathesis, e.g. *auf* in (78). The prepositions *an*, *auf*, *in* or *um* are attested. All examples of this diathesis will be surveyed in the following subsections according to this applicative preposition.

### 8.7.13.1 *an/mit* Preverb object exchange

- (79) a. Ich hänge die Bilder an die Wand.  
 b. \* Ich hänge die Bilder.  
 c. Ich behänge die Wand mit Bildern.  
 d. Ich behänge die Wand.

#### Attested verbs

- be'- : *hängen, liefern*
- ver'- : *nageln*
- über'- : *schwemmen*
- 'an- : *malen*

#### Further examples

- Der Händler liefert die Waren (an den Kaufmann).  
 Der Händler beliefert den Kaufmann (mit den Waren).

## 8 Preverb alternations

- Ich male ein Gemälde an die Wand.  
Ich male die Wand (mit Farbe) an.
- Die Welle hat das Holz an Land geschwemmt.  
Deutsche Exporteure überschwemmen die Welt mit Gütern.
- Er nagelt die Bretter an die Tür. Er hat die Tür (mit Brettern) vernagelt.

### 8.7.13.2 *auf/mit* Preverb object exchange

- (80) a. Ich schmiere Salbe auf die Wunde.  
b. \* Ich schmiere Salbe.  
c. Ich beschmiere die Wunde mit Salbe.  
d. Ich beschmiere die Wunde.

### Attested verbs

- be'- : (fill a container) *bauen, gießen, laden, legen, packen, schmieren, schmeißen, schütten, spritzen, streuen, werfen*
- be'- : (fill a canvas) *kleben, kleckern, kritzeln, schreiben, spannen, sprühen, streichen*
- über'- : *bauen, gießen, kleben, malen, pinseln, schütten, streichen, streuen, ziehen*
- ver'- : *kleben*
- durch'- : *setzen*
- 'ein- : *werfen*
- 'auf- : *gießen*
- 'zu- : *bauen, drücken, kleben*

### Further examples

- Ich gieße Wasser auf den Tee.  
Ich gieße den Tee (mit Wasser) auf.
- Ich kleckere die Tinte auf die Bluse.  
Ich bekleckere meine Bluse (mit Tinte).
- Ich setze meine Leute auf die wichtigen Stellen im Betrieb.  
Ich durchsetze den Betrieb mit meinen Leuten.
- Ich werfe den Stein auf das Fenster.  
Ich werfe das Fenster ein (mit einem Stein).
- Ich klebe den Zettel auf die Tür.  
Ich verklebe die Tür (mit dem Zettel).

- Ich klebe ein Pflaster auf die Lücke.  
Ich klebe die Lücke (mit einem Pflaster) zu.
- Die Baufirma baut neue Häuser auf die Freifläche.  
Die Baufirma baut die Freifläche (mit Häusern) zu.
- Ich drücke meinen Finger auf die Wunde.  
Ich drücke die Wunde (mit meinem Finger) zu.
- Ich lege Fliesen auf den Boden.  
Ich belege den Boden mit Fliesen.
- Ich streiche Farbe auf die Wand.  
Ich überstreiche die Wand (mit Farbe).
- Ich gieße Wasser auf die Blumen.  
Ich übergieße die Blumen mit Wasser.
- Ich streue Zucker auf den Kuchen.  
Ich überstreue den Kuchen mit Zucker.
- Ich spanne Stoff auf den Rahmen.  
Ich bespanne den Rahmen (mit Stoff).

### 8.7.13.3 *in/mit* Preverb object exchange

- (81) a. Ich reibe die Salbe in den Muskel.  
b. \* Ich reibe die Salbe.  
c. Ich reibe den Muskel mit Salbe ein.  
d. Ich reibe den Muskel ein.

#### Attested verbs

- be'- : *füllen, pflanzen*
- er'- : *stechen*
- ver'- : *bauen, rauchen, stellen, stopfen*
- 'ein- : *reiben*
- 'zu- : *mauern, schaufeln, schütten*

#### Further examples

- Ich pflanze Tulpen in das Beet.  
Ich bepflanze das Beet (mit Tulpen).
- Ich steche das Messer in den Mann.  
Ich ersteche den Mann (mit dem Messer).

- Er mauert das Fundament in dem Loch.  
Er mauert das Loch (mit dem Fundament) zu.
- Ich habe die Kohle in den Keller geschaufelt.  
Ich habe den Keller (mit Kohle) zugeschaufelt.
- Ich stelle den Schrank im Korridor.  
Ich verstelle den Korridor (mit dem Schrank).
- Sie haben ein Hochhaus in der Aussicht gebaut. Sie haben die Aussicht  
(mit einem Hochhaus) verbaut.
- Ich rauche eine Zigarette im Schlafzimmer.  
Früher hatte er ihr die Zimmer stets mit schlechten Zigarren verraucht.<sup>20</sup>

#### 8.7.13.4 *um/mit* Preverb object exchange

These verbs are illustrated with the diathesis between *binden* ‘to tie’ and *zubinden* ‘tie up’ (82). With these verbs, the new object after the diathesis (*Paket* ‘parcel’) is surrounded by the old object (*Faden* ‘thread’). Because of the parallels to the previously discussed examples of this diathesis, this implies that the surrounded object is treated alike to a holonym and the surrounding as a meronym, and “being surrounded” is treated alike to “being full”.

[8.102]

- (82)
- a. Ich binde einen Faden um das Paket.
  - b. \* Ich binde einen Faden.
  - c. Ich binde das Paket mit dem Faden zu.
  - d. Ich bind das Paket zu.

#### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *binden*
- um'- : *stellen, wickeln*
- 'ein- : *wickeln*
- 'zu- : *binden*

#### Further examples

- Ich binde einen Verband um den Arm.  
Ich verbinde den Arm mit einem Verband.
- Ich stelle Kerzen um das Grab.  
Ich umstelle das Grab mit Kerzen.

<sup>20</sup> Attested online at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/verrauchen>, accessed 9 August 2022.



- Ich wickele ein Tuch um dich.  
Ich umwickele dich mit einem Tuch.
- Ich wickle das Tuch um den Arm.  
Ich wickle den Arm in dem Tuch ein.

— [ PBJ > OBJ > ADJ ] —

#### 8.7.14 [ NPA | NAp ] Preverb *von* antipassive+applicative

[8.103] This chained applicative+antipassive diathesis uses a *von* antipassive. All examples currently known to me use the preverb *er'*. The applicative side of the diathesis uses different prepositions, but they are all governed prepositions. For example, the verb *zwingen* 'to compel' (83a) takes a governed preposition *zu* (83b). The prefixed *erzwingen* promotes the *zu* argument to accusative and demotes the erstwhile accusative to an optional *von* prepositional phrase (83c). The few attested verbs all concern some kind of persuasion of another person.

- (83) a. Er zwingt ihn zu einem Geständnis.  
b. Er zwingt ihn dazu, ein Geständnis abzulegen.  
c. Er erzwingt ein Geständnis (von ihm).

#### Attested verbs

- *er'*- (um) : *bitten*
- *er'*- (nach) : *fragen*
- *er'*- (zu) : *pressen, zwingen*

#### Further examples

- Ich bitte dich um einen Gefallen.  
Ich erbitte einen Gefallen (von dir).
- Ich frage dich nach dem Weg zum Bahnhof.  
Ich erfrage den Weg zum Bahnhof (von dir).

#### 8.7.15 [ NPA | NAp ] Preverb reflexive *von* antipassive+applicative

The object exchange from *bitten* 'to ask' (84a) to *verbitten* 'to not tolerate' (84b) additionally needs a dative reflexive pronoun.

- (84) a. Ich bitte dich um einen Kommentar.  
b. Ich verbitte mir einen Kommentar von dir.

**Attested verbs**

- ver'- (um) : *bitten*

## 8.8 Diatheses with promotion to object

### – [ Ø > OBJ ] – *Präverb Akkusativ*

#### 8.8.1 [ N- | NA ] Preverb accusative addition

A relatively widespread effect of the addition of a preverb is that an accusative object is added, like with the diathesis from *zaubern* ‘to perform magic’ to *verzaubern* ‘to enchant’ (85).

- (85) a. Sie zaubert.  
b. Sie verzaubert mich.

There are two other highly similar diatheses that likewise add an accusative object when a preverb is added. First, some verbs additionally need a dative reflexive pronoun, like when *arbeiten* ‘to work’ is turned into *erarbeiten* ‘to work for something’ (86a). These verbs are discussed in detail in Section 8.8.5. Second, many verbs can express the new object as a prepositional phrase before the diathesis. For example, *klettern auf* ‘to climb onto X’ is turned into *erklettern* ‘to climb X’ (86b). This applicative diathesis is by far the most frequently attested variant of these three diatheses. It is discussed in detail in Section 8.8.8.

[8.106]

- (86) a. Ich arbeite viel.  
Ich erarbeite mir ein Vermögen.  
b. Sie kletterten auf die Mauer.  
Sie erkletterten die Mauer der Botschaft.<sup>21</sup>

**Attested verbs**

- be'- : *lügen, schummeln, zaubern*
- er'- : *kämpfen, leben, leuchten, lügen, morden, schnüffeln, schwimmen*
- ver'- : *dösen, gammeln, pennen, petzen, qualmen, schlafen, schweigen, schwitzen, speisen, träumen, trödeln, wackeln, zaubern*
- ent'- : *zaubern*
- 'an- : *bellen, blinzeln, fauchen, hupen, leuchten, schwindeln*

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<sup>21</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 12.09.2012, Nr. 37.

- 'ab- : *schreiten*
- 'durch- : *boxen*
- 'vor- : *flunkern, heulen, lügen, rechnen*

### Further examples

- Der Fotograf wackelt.  
Der Fotograf verwackelt das Foto.
- Sie petzt.  
Sie verpetzt den Jungen.
- Sie mordet.  
Sie ermordet ihn.
- Die Kerzen leuchten.  
Die Kerzen erleuchten den Saal.
- Ich habe gehupt.  
Ich habe dich angehupt.
- Ich lebe.  
Ich erlebe eine Überraschung.
- Der Mond leuchtet.  
Der Mond leuchtet uns an.
- Ich boxe.  
Ich boxe den Vorschlag durch.
- Die Zigarre qualmt.  
Die Zigarren verqualmen den Raum.
- Ich blinzelte (in die Sonne).  
Ich blinzelte dich an.
- Ich schlafe (während der Vorlesung).  
Ich verschlafe die Vorlesung
- Die Armee hat gekämpft.  
Die Armee hat den Sieg erkämpft.

### Notes

[8.107] The verbs with the prefix *vor-* typically also take a dative argument (cf. Section 8.8.7).

- (87) a. Er lügt.  
Er lügt (mir) etwas vor.
- b. Er flunkert.

Er flunkert (mir) die Erfahrung nur vor.

c. Der Lehrer rechnet.

Der Lehrer rechnet (den Schülern) die Aufgabe vor.

### 8.8.2 [ N– | NA ] Preverb adjectival accusative addition

Typically, preverbal adjectives lead to causative semantics by adding a new nominative subject (see Section 8.6.3). In contrast, the adjective *lustig* ‘funny’ is the root of the derived verb *belustigen* ‘to amuse’ and this verb adds a new accusative object (88).

(88) a. Der Clown ist lustig.

b. Der Clown belustigt mich.

#### Attested verbs

- be'- : *lustig, lästig*

#### Further examples

- Die Mücken sind lästig.  
Die Mücken belästigen mich.

### 8.8.3 [ NP– | NPA ] Preverb accusative addition+preposition

The verb *büßen* ‘to pay for something’ needs a governed preposition (89a). This prepositional phrase is optionally retained when the verb is prefixed, leading to *verbüßen* ‘to serve a sentence’ (89b). Additionally, it obtains an accusative argument in the process.

(89) a. Sie büßt für ihre Tat.

b. Sie verbüßt ihre Strafe für die Tat.

#### Attested verbs

- er'- : *blicken*
- ver'- : *büßen*

#### Further examples

- Ich blicke in die Ferne.  
Ich erblicke ein Schiff (in der Ferne).

## 8.8.4 [ ND– | NDA ] Preverb accusative addition+dative

The verb *vertrauen* ‘to trust’ (90a) takes a dative argument. The preverbal *an-vertrauen* ‘to entrust’ (90b) retains this dative and additionally includes a new accusative argument.

- (90) a. Sie vertraut mir.  
b. Sie vertraut mir ein Geheimnis an.

## Attested verbs

- ‘an- : *vertrauen*

– [ Ø > OBJ ] – *Präverb Reflexiv Akkusativ*

## 8.8.5 [ N– | NA ] Preverb reflexive accusative

[8.111] Some intransitive verbs like *tanzen* ‘to dance’ (91a) allow for a added-result diathesis *antanzen* ‘to achieve something through dancing’ (91b). With this diathesis, the result of the dancing is expressed as a new accusative argument. A special characteristic of this diathesis is that a dative reflexive pronoun is obligatory (see also *ref-wunderlich1997*: 105–106).

- (91) a. Ich habe gestern viel getanzt.  
b. Ich habe mir gestern einen Muskelkater angetanzt.

This diathesis contrasts with a highly similar diathesis that also introduces an accusative, but without the additional reflexive pronoun, like with *morden* ‘to murder’ (92). This diathesis is discussed in detail in Section 8.8.1. A possible avenue to explain this difference is that verbs with reflexive, like *antanzen*, typically have an accusative object that is the result of the action. In contrast, verbs without reflexive, like *ermorden*, typically have an object that is the patient of the action. However, this semantic difference does not seem to hold for all examples.

[8.112]

- (92) a. Sie mordet.  
b. Sie ermordet ihn.  
c. \* Sie ermordet sich ihn.

Some verbs, like *erschwimmen* ‘to achieve by swimming’ (93), even allow for both constructions, either with reflexive pronoun (93a) or without reflexive pronoun (93b). More examples of such “free” reflexive pronouns are discussed in

Section 7.4.4. Note that the semantic difference between these examples does not easily fit the opposition result vs. patient as proposed above. It remains unclear to me how exactly to explain these two options.

- (93) a. Zumindest Völker erschwimmt sich jährlich einen fünfstelligen Betrag.<sup>22</sup>  
b. Das erste EM-Gold für die Gastgeber erschwamm Adam Peaty.<sup>23</sup>

### Attested verbs

- er'- : *arbeiten, boxen, kämpfen, laufen, schlafen, schreiben, schwimmen, schwimmen, deln, tanzen, wandern*
- 'an- : *essen, lesen, tanzen, trinken*

### Further examples

- Ich erarbeite mir ein Vermögen.  
(= Ich arbeite, und am Ende habe ich dadurch ein Vermögen.)
- Ich esse mir einen Bauch an.  
(= Ich esse, und am Ende habe ich dadurch einen dicken Bauch.)
- Diese Haltung will ich mir auch antrinken.<sup>24</sup>
- Es hatte sich feuerrothe Backen erschlafen.<sup>25</sup>
- Sie erwandert sich die Atlantikküste.<sup>26</sup>
- Der Sportler hat sich den ersten Platz erkämpft.
- Schwergewichtler Witali Klitschko hat sich den Titel des Weltverbandes WBC erboxt.<sup>27</sup>

### Notes

A few of these verbs are transitive, like *lesen, schreiben* (94a,b), ambitransitive, like *essen, trinken* (94c,d), and various others allow for an accusative addition, like *laufen* (94e). In effect, this leads to some kind of reflexive object exchange. [8.114]

- (94) a. Ich habe ein Buch gelesen.

<sup>22</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 16.03.2000.

<sup>23</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 17.05.2016 (online).

<sup>24</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.01.2018, Nr. 02.

<sup>25</sup>DWDS: Spyri, Johanna: Heidi's Lehr- und Wanderjahre. Gotha, 1880.

<sup>26</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 24.05.2007, Nr. 22.

<sup>27</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 26.04.2004.

- Ich habe mir das Wissen (aus einem Buch) angelesen.
- b. Er schrieb Miniaturen.  
Sein Alltag lieferte ihm Stoff zu kleinen Miniaturen, mit denen er sich eine Kolumne erscrieb.<sup>28</sup>
- c. Ich esse viel Fleisch.  
Ich habe mir (mit dem vielen Fleisch) einen Bauch angegessen.
- d. Sie trinken Glühwein.  
[...] rotnasigen Menschen, die sich mit klebrigem Glühwein den nächsten Kaufrausch antrinken.<sup>29</sup>
- e. Ich habe gestern einen Marathon gelaufen.  
Ich habe mir (im Marathon) eine Medaille erlaufen.

— [ Ø > OBJ ] — *Präverb Dativ*

### 8.8.6 [ N- | ND ] Preverb dative addition

The verbs in this section are intransitive verbs, like *gehen* ‘to walk’ (95a), that when prefixed by *ent*’- obtain a new dative argument, like with *entgehen* ‘to evade’ (95b). This is not very common. More widespread, the prefixation of *ent*’- induces a dative applicative diathesis, turning a prepositional phrase into a dative argument, as discussed extensively in Section 8.8.13.

- (95) a. Ich gehe (nach Hause).  
b. Ich entgehe dem Urteil.

#### Attested verbs

- *ent*’- : *gehen, kommen, wachsen, zaubern*

#### Further examples

- Ich komme gleich.  
Ich entkomme einer Gefahr.
- Das Kind wächst.  
Das Kind entwächst den Windeln.

<sup>28</sup>DWDS: Zeit Magazin, 20.04.2011, Nr. 17.

<sup>29</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 20.12.2006, Nr. 52.

### 8.8.7 [ NA– | NAD ] Preverb dative addition+accusative

The verbs in this section are transitive verbs, like *lesen* ‘to read’ (96a). When used with a preverb they obtain an additional dative argument, like with *vorlesen* ‘to read to somebody’ (96b). Most prominently, the prefix *vor-* quite productively produces ditransitive verbs with accusative and dative arguments.

- (96) a. Ich lese ein Buch.  
b. Ich lese dir ein Buch vor.

#### Attested verbs

- 'ab- : *nehmen*
- 'vor- : *führen, legen, lesen, machen, sagen, schreiben, singen, spielen, stellen, zaubern*
- 'zu- : *werfen*
- 'über- : *werfen*

#### Further examples

- Ich nehme die Einkäufe (in die Hand).  
Ich nehme ihr die Einkäufe ab.
- Ich habe den Ball geworfen.  
Ich habe dir den Ball zugeworfen.
- Ich habe den Schal geworfen.  
Ich habe dir den Schal übergeworfen.

### – [ ADJ > OBJ ] – *Präverb Applikativ*

### 8.8.8 [ Np | NA ] Preverb applicative

A widespread diathesis induced by a preverb is the change of a prepositional phrase into an accusative, i.e. an [8.117] APPLICATIVE diathesis. An example is the alternation between *grenzen* ‘to border’ and *begrenzen* ‘to limit’ (97), see e.g. Eroms (ref-eroms1980: §1b/III/IV; ref-kim1983: §1.1). The different subsections below are organised by the prepositions that alternate with the accusatives.

- (97) a. Die Mauer grenzt an den Garten.  
b. Die Mauer begrenzt den Garten.

Note that the prepositions *über, unter, um* and *durch* appear to have a special status. These prepositions always alternate with exactly the same preverbs,



viz. *über-*, *unter-*, *um-* and *durch-*. These prepositions are exactly those that can function both as verbal prefix and as verbal particle (see Section 8.2.1). Both kinds of preverbs are attested in these alternations.

#### 8.8.8.1 *an* Preverb applicative

- (98) a. Der Efeu wuchert an der Mauer.  
b. Der Efeu bewuchert die Mauer.

##### Attested verbs

- *be'-* : *fummeln, grenzen, knabbern, riechen, schnupfern, wuchern*
- *zer'-* : *nagen, fressen, kratzen, reiben, reißen*
- *'an-* : *fahren, fassen, knabbern*
- *'ab-* : *ziehen, zupfen*

##### Further examples

- Der Hund kratzt an der Tür.  
Der Hund zerkratzt die Tür.
- Ich fahre an den Bodensee.  
Ich fahre den Bodensee an.
- Ich fasse an die Wand.  
Ich fasse die Wand an.
- Die Motten fressen an den Pullover.  
Die Motten zerfressen den Pullover.

#### 8.8.8.2 *auf* Preverb applicative

- (99) a. Ich steige auf den Berg.  
b. Ich besteige den Berg.

##### Attested verbs

- *be'-* : *brüten, glotzen, hauchen, legen, leuchten, pinkeln, reiten, scheinen, segeln, spucken, springen, steigen, treffen, treten, wandern*
- *er'-* : *blicken, drücken, klettern, schießen, steigen, zielen*
- *zer'-* : *beißen, drücken, hauen, kauen, klopfen, schießen, schlagen, trampeln, treten*
- *'ein-* : *drücken, hämmern, klagen, reiten, schlagen, schießen, treten*
- *'an-* : *spucken, stampfen*

### Further examples

- Ich blicke auf meinen Freund.  
Ich erblicke meinen Freund.
- Ich steige auf den Berg.  
Ich ersteige den Berg.
- Ich schlage auf den Schrank.  
Ich zerschlage den Schrank.
- Ich drücke auf den Knopf.  
Ich drücke den Knopf ein.
- Ich klage auf Schadensersatz.  
Ich klage das Geld ein.
- Ich reite auf einem Pferd.  
Ich reite das Pferd ein.
- Ich segele auf den See.  
Ich besegle den See.

#### 8.8.8.3 *durch* Preverb applicative

The preposition *durch* only alternates with the preverb *durch-*, either as a verb prefix (100b) or a verb particle (100c).

- (100) a. Der Fluß fließt durch das Tal.  
b. Der Fluß durchfließt das Tal.  
c. Der Fluß fließt das Tal durch.

### Attested verbs

- *durch-* : *dringen, fahren, fließen, laufen, schauen, schlagen, streifen, ziehen*
- *'durch-* : *beißen, blättern, bohren, fahren, fließen, laufen, schlagen*

### Further examples

- Ich fahre durch das Dorf.  
Ich durchfahre das Dorf.  
Ich fahre das Dorf durch.
- Ich laufe durch den Wald.  
Ich durchlaufe den Wald.  
Ich laufe den Wald durch.

- Ich schlage durch die Scheibe.  
Ich durchschlage die Scheibe.  
Ich schlage die Scheibe durch.
- Der Regen dringt durch den Vorhang.  
Der Regen durchdringt den Vorhang.
- Die Horden ziehen durch das Land.  
Die Horden durchzogen das Land.
- Ich streife durch die Stadt.  
Ich durchstreife die Stadt.
- Ich schaue durch das Mikroskop.  
Ich durchschaue deine List.
- Ich blättere durch das Buch.  
Ich blättere das Buch durch.
- Ich bohre durch das Brett.  
Ich bohre das Brett durch.
- Ich beiße durch den Apfel.  
Ich beiße den Apfel durch.

### Notes

There are various still transparent derivations in which there is a rather strong semantic difference (101).

- (101) a. Ich drücke auf den Knopf.  
Ich drücke den Plan durch.
- b. Ich stehe in dem Garten während des Rückschlages.  
Ich stehe einen Rückschlag durch.

#### 8.8.8.4 *gegen* Preverb applicative

- (102) a. Ich fahre gegen den Stein.  
b. Ich fahre den Stein um.

### Attested verbs

- 'an- : *fahren, hüpfen, klagen, springen, tanzen*
- 'um- : *fahren, stoßen*
- 'auf- : *stoßen*

### Further examples

- Ich fahre gegen das Auto.  
Ich fahre das Auto an.
- Ich stoße gegen die Tür.  
Ich stoße die Tür auf.
- Der Rüpel tanzt gegen mich.  
Der Rüpel hat mich angetanzt.
- Ich klage gegen dich.  
Ich klage dich an.

#### 8.8.8.5 *in* Preverb applicative

- (103) a. Ich bohre in das Brett.  
b. Ich zerbohre das Brett.

### Attested verbs

- be'- : *fischen, siedeln, wohnen*
- er'- : *wandern*
- zer'- : *bohren, stechen, wühlen*
- durch'- : *bohren, leuchten, suchen*
- 'ein- : *laufen*
- 'ab- : *zwicken*

### Further examples

- Er sticht (mit der Nadel) in den Finger.  
Er zersticht den Finger (mit der Nadel).
- Ich wühle im Haar.  
Ich zerwühle das Haar.
- Ich leuchte in jeden Winkel.  
Ich durchleuchte jeden Winkel.
- Ich bohre in das Brett.  
Ich durchbohre das Brett.
- Ich suche in der Wohnung.  
Ich durchsuche die Wohnung.
- Ich laufe in meinen neuen Schuhen.  
Ich laufe meine neue Schuhe ein.

- Er wandert in seiner neuen Heimat.  
Er erwanderte seine neue Heimat.<sup>30</sup>

#### 8.8.8.6 *mit* Preverb applicative

- (104) a. Ich rede mit dir.  
b. Ich überrede dich.

#### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *fahren* (Benzin), *heizen*, *schießen*, *schlampen*, *schludern*, *spekulieren*, *spielen* (Glücksspiel), *spritzen*, *sprühen*, *zögern*
- er'- : *schwindeln*
- über'- : *reden*

#### Further examples

- Ich verheize das Holz.  
Ich heize mit Holz.
- Ich schlampe mit meinen Aufgaben.  
Ich verschlampe meine Aufgaben.
- Ich zögere mit den Maßnahmen.  
Ich verzögere die Maßnahmen.
- Ich zögere mit der Abreise.  
Ich verzögere die Abreise.
- Ich schwindele mit meinem Darlehen.  
Ich erschwindele (mir) mein Darlehen.
- Ich spiele mit meiner Glaubwürdigkeit.  
Ich verspiele meine Glaubwürdigkeit.
- Ich fahre mit Benzin.  
Ich verfahre mein letztes Benzin.

#### 8.8.8.7 *nach* Preverb applicative

- (105) a. Ich reiche nach der Flasche.  
b. Ich erreiche die Flasche nicht.

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<sup>30</sup>DWDS: Zeit Magazin, 20.09.2012, Nr. 39.

## 8 Preverb alternations

### Attested verbs

- be'- : *fliegen, reisen*
- er'- : *bohren, fragen, jagen, greifen, lauschen, reichen, schauen, spähen, tasten*
- 'aus- : *graben*

### Further examples

- Ich grabe nach dem Schatz.  
Ich grabe den Schatz aus.

#### 8.8.8.8 *über* Preverb applicative

- (106) a. Ich schreite über die Schwelle.  
b. Ich überschreite die Schwelle.

### Attested verbs

- über'- : *fahren, fliegen, rollen, schreiten, springen*

### Further examples

- Ich fahre über den Polizisten.  
Ich überfahre den Polizisten.

#### 8.8.8.9 *um* Preverb applicative

- (107) a. Ich fahre um den Polizisten.  
b. Ich umfahre den Polizisten.

### Attested verbs

- um'- : *fahren, kreisen*
- 'ein- : *kreisen*

### Further examples

- Die Truppen kreisen um das Dorf.  
Die Truppen umkreisen das Dorf.  
Die Truppen kreisen das Dorf ein.

8.8.8.10 *unter* Preverb applicative

- (108) a. Der Tunnel führt unter die Bahnstrecke hindurch.  
b. Der Tunnel unterführt die Bahnstrecke.

Attested verbs

- *unter'* : *führen*

8.8.8.11 *zu* Preverb applicative

- (109) a. Ich spreche zu dem Mann.  
b. Ich spreche den Mann an.

Attested verbs

- *er'* : *blicken, greifen, reichen*
- *'an-* : *beten, blicken, brüllen, grinsen, lachen, lächeln, reden, schauen, schreien, singen, sprechen, winken*

Further examples

- Der Mantel reicht bis zu meinen Füßen.  
Der Mantel erreicht meine Füße.
- Ich rede zu dir.  
Ich rede dich an.
- Ich singe zu meiner Geliebten.  
Ich singe meine Geliebte an.

— [ PBJ > OBJ ] —

8.8.9 [ NP | NA ] Preverb governed applicative

A preverb applicative diathesis turns a prepositional phrase into an accusative argument. This is a widespread diathesis (see the previous Section 8.8.8). In this section a few special verbs are listed in which the prepositional phrase is a governed preposition (see Section 6.2 on the definition of governed prepositions). For example, the preposition *an* used with the verb *arbeiten* ‘to work’ is a governed preposition (110a,b). This role is turned into an accusative with the verb *überarbeiten* ‘to revise’ (110c). This kind of diathesis appears not to be very common, and it might not be very useful to separate these governed prepositions

from the previously discussed non-governed prepositions. However, I have kept them separate here for future in-detail comparisons.

- (110) a. Ich arbeite an dem Text.  
b. Ich arbeite daran den Text rechtzeitig fertig zu schreiben.  
c. Ich überarbeite den Text.

#### 8.8.9.1 *an* Preverb governed applicative

- (111) a. Ich leide an Kopfschmerzen.  
b. Ich erleide Kopfschmerzen.

#### Attested verbs

- be'- : *arbeiten, denken*
- er'- : *arbeiten, denken, leiden*
- über'- : *arbeiten, denken*
- durch'- : *denken*
- 'aus- : *arbeiten*

#### Further examples

- Ich arbeite an dem Plan.  
Ich arbeite den Plan aus.
- Die Klasse arbeitet an dem Begriff "Realismus".  
Die Klasse erarbeitet den Begriff "Realismus".
- Ich denke an den Plan.  
Ich durchdenke den Plan.

#### 8.8.9.2 *auf* Preverb governed applicative

- (112) a. Ich antworte auf deine Frage.  
b. Ich beantworte deine Frage.

#### Attested verbs

- be'- : *achten, antworten, deuten*
- er'- : *sinnen, warten*



**Further examples**

- Die Weltausstellung deutet auf den Frieden.  
Das Gesetz bedeutet das Ende für Dieselaautos.

**8.8.9.3 *gegen* Preverb governed applicative**

- (113) a. Ich kämpfe gegen das Unrecht.  
b. Ich bekämpfe das Unrecht.

**Attested verbs**

- be'- : *geifern, kämpfen*

**8.8.9.4 *mit* Preverb governed applicative**

- (114) a. Ich rechne mit einem Verlust.  
b. Ich rechne den Verlust ein.

**Attested verbs**

- be'- : *kämpfen*
- 'ein- : *kalkulieren, rechnen*

**8.8.9.5 *nach* Preverb governed applicative**

- (115) a. Ich strebe nach einem hohen Amt.  
b. Ich strebe ein hohes Amt an.

**Attested verbs**

- er'- : *langen, sehnen*
- 'an- : *streben*

**Further examples**

- Ich sehne nach etwas Ruhe.  
Ich ersehne etwas Ruhe.

## 8 Preverb alternations

### 8.8.9.6 *über* Preverb governed applicative

- (116) a. Ich klage über den Lärm.  
b. Ich beklage den Lärm

#### Attested verbs

- *be'* : *gutachten, herrschen, jammern, jubeln, klagen, lachen, lächeln, reden, schmunzeln, spotten, sprechen, staunen, trauern, urteilen, weinen, zweifeln*
- *er'* : *forschen, lesen, lügen*
- *ver'* : *fluchen, klagen, spotten, schweigen*
- *'aus-* : *plaudern, lachen*

#### Further examples

- Ich plauderte über mein Geheimnis.  
Ich plauderte das Geheimnis aus.
- Ich lache über dich.  
Ich lache dich aus.

### 8.8.9.7 *um* Preverb governed applicative

- (117) a. Ich verspiele mein Haus.  
b. Ich spiele um mein Haus.

#### Attested verbs

- *ver'* : *spielen, wetten*
- *er'* : *betteln, bitten, fechten, flehen, kämpfen, mogeln, spielen, streiten, tanzen*

### 8.8.10 [ NP | NA ] Preverb reflexive governed applicative

The diathesis from *betteln* (118a) to *erbetteln* (118b), both meaning ‘to beg’, shows an additional reflexive marking on top of the accusative applicative.

[8.122]

- (118) a. Ich bettele um ein Stück Brot.  
b. Ich erbettele mir ein Stück Brot.

[8.123] When using the prefix *ver-* the meaning of this diathesis includes some kind of implicit negation, like with *bitten* ‘to ask’ vs. *verbitten* ‘to not tolerate’ (119).

- (119) a. Ich bitte um ein besseres Verhalten.  
b. Ich verbitte mir dein Verhalten.

However, the datives in many of these examples can be interpreted as a beneficiary, so it might be better to interpret them as a kind of *für* beneficiary dative, see Section 6.8.9. The reflexive marking might also not be necessary, i.e. the action could also be performed in favour of somebody else. When both these possibilities come together, then this diathesis would be a transparent stack of applicative +> beneficiary dative +> self-inflicting reflexive (120) and would not warrant a separate subsection (for the notion “stack” see Section 2.5).

- (120) Ich bettele um ein Stück Brot für dich.  
(+> applicative) Ich erbettele ein Stück Brot für dich.  
(+> beneficiary dative) Ich erbettele dir ein Stück Brot.  
(+> self-inflicting reflexive) Ich erbettele mir ein Stück Brot.

#### Attested verbs

- er'- : *betteln, hoffen, sehnen, spielen, träumen*
- ver'- : *bitten*
- 'aus- : *denken*

#### Further examples

- Ich hoffe auf einen schönen Geburtstag.  
Ich erhoffe mir einen schönen Geburtstag.
- Ich spiele um den Sieg.  
Ich habe mir den Sieg erspielt.
- Ich denke an den Plan.  
Ich denke mir den Plan aus.

#### 8.8.11 [ NDP | NDA ] Preverb governed applicative+dative

An unusual variant of a governed applicative is illustrated with the diathesis between *drohen* (121a) and *androhen* (121b), both meaning ‘to threaten’. Additional to the change from a prepositional phrase to an accusative there is a dative that does not change in this diathesis. Such unchanged datives are highly unusual together with an applicative. Note that the reversal, i.e. a dative applicative with an unchanged accusative, is much more widespread (see Section 8.8.14). This asymmetry is yet another example of the dative-accusative asymmetry as also

observed with reflexive pronouns (paragraph 7.7 on page 252), the drop hierarchy (Section 5.7) and the antipassive hierarchy (Section 6.7).

- (121) a. Er droht mir mit Entlassung.  
b. Er droht mir die Entlassung an.

#### Attested verbs

- ver'- : *denken*
- 'an- : *drohen*

#### Further examples

- Ich danke dir für deinen Einsatz.  
Ich verdanke dir mein Leben.

— [ PBJ > OBJ > OBJ ] —

#### 8.8.12 [ NPA | NAD ] Preverb governed applicative+accusative-to-dative

A peculiar diathesis is attested with *drängen zu* 'to urge' (122a) and *aufdrängen* 'to force' (122b). The *zu* governed prepositional phrase is turned into an accusative, which is a regular applicative. However, additionally the accusative *dich* is turned into a dative *dir*.

- (122) a. Ich dränge dich zu einem Abo.  
Ich dränge dich dazu ein Abo zu nehmen.  
b. Ich dränge dir ein Abo auf.

#### Attested verbs

- 'ab- : *gewöhnen*
- 'auf- : *drängen*

#### Further examples

- Ich gewöhne die Kinder an Sauberkeit.  
Sie gewöhnt mir das Rauchen ab.

— [ ADJ > OBJ ] — *Präverb Dativ Applikativ*

## 8.8.13 [ Np | ND ] Preverb dative applicative

The following applicatives turn a prepositional phrase into a dative. For example, *stammen* ‘to descent from’ is used with a preposition *aus* (123a). This role is turned into a dative with the preverb *entstammen* ‘to be descended from’. Note that these prepositions are never governed prepositions (for *ent-*, see also ref-eisenberg2006: 263–264).

- (123) a. Ich stamme aus einem Adelsgeschlecht.  
b. Ich entstamme einem Adelsgeschlecht.

**Attested verbs**

- er'- : *mangeln*
- ent'- : *eilen, fliegen, fliehen, fließen, gehen, gleiten, kommen, laufen, springen, sprießen, steigen, stammen, strömen, wachsen, weichen*
- wider'- : *reden, rufen, sprechen, stehen, streben, streiten*
- 'an- : *hängen (gehangen)*
- 'nach- : *fahren, gehen, hinken, laufen, reiten, rennen, schwimmen, rufen, schreien, schauen, sehen, weinen*
- 'zu- : *arbeiten, hören, lachen, lächeln, laufen, nicken, prosten, reden, sich wenden, schauen, trinken, winken, zwinkern*
- 'bei- : *liegen, stehen, stimmen*

**Further examples**

- Ich lache freundlich zu dir.  
Ich lache dir freundlich zu.
- Der Wagen fuhr zu mir.  
Der Wagen fuhr auf mich zu.
- Er arbeitet für mich.  
Er arbeitet mir zu.
- Meine Freunde haben zu mir geredet.  
Meine Freunde haben mir zugeredet.
- Sein Referat mangelt an jeglicher Sachkenntnis.  
Sein Referat ermangelt jeglicher Sachkenntnis.
- Die Kinder haben immer mit Liebe an ihren Eltern gehangen.  
Seine Vergangenheit hat ihm noch angehangen.

- Ich rufe nach dir.  
Ich rufe dir nach.
- Ich gehe hinter dir.  
Ich gehe dir nach.
- Er fährt in ihrer Spur.  
Er ist ihrer Spur nachgefahren.
- Die Rechnung liegt in dem Brief.  
Die Rechnung liegt dem Brief bei.
- Ich rede mit ihm.  
Ich rede ihm zu.
- Ich nicke zu dem Kind.  
Ich nicke dem Kind zu.
- Er floh vor dem Feind.  
Er entfloh der Gefahr.
- Ich wende mich zu dir.  
Ich wende mich dir zu.
- Ich weine über die alte Zeit.  
Ich weine der alten Zeit nach.
- Sie spricht mit ihm.  
Sie widerspricht ihn.
- Diese Beobachtung spricht gegen die Theorie.  
Diese Beobachtung widerspricht der Theorie.
- Er strebt nach Ruhm.  
Er widerstrebt den Anweisungen.

#### 8.8.14 [ NAp | NAD ] Preverb dative applicative+accusative

Some verbs allow for an additional accusative argument alongside a dative applicative diathesis. For example, the verb *flüstern* ‘to whisper’ (124a) has an additional accusative argument in the form of reported speech. This argument is retained in the diathesis *zuflüstern* ‘to whisper to somebody’ (124b). The *zu*-diathesis appears to be rather productive with verbs of communication (cf. **ref-wiemer2007** 472).

[8.128]

- (124) a. “Jesses Maria [...]”, flüsterte ich zu dem Russen [...].<sup>31</sup>  
b. “Jesses Maria”, flüsterte ich dem Russen zu.

<sup>31</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 29.05.2012, Nr. 19.

### Attested verbs

- er'- : *klären*
- ent'- : *locken, nehmen, reißen, ziehen*
- 'an- : *hängen (gehängt), kleben, stecken*
- 'ab- : *gewinnen, handeln, nehmen*
- 'auf- : *packen*
- 'aus- : *setzen, treiben, ziehen*
- 'bei- : *fügen, legen, mischen*
- 'über- : *legen, werfen*
- 'um- : *wickeln*
- 'unter- : *schieben*
- 'zu- : *flüstern, pfeifen, rufen, schreien, spielen, tuscheln, treiben*

### Further examples

- Ich kläre die Frage mit dir.  
Ich erkläre dir die Antwort.
- Ich habe ein Schild an die Wand gehängt.  
Ich habe meinem Widersacher einen Prozess angehängt.
- Ich nehme das Geld von dir.  
Ich nehme dir das Geld ab.
- Zu dem Paket füge ich eine Zollerklärung.  
Ich füge dem Paket eine Zollerklärung bei.
- Ich ziehe eine Feder aus dem Vogel.  
Ich ziehe dem Vogel eine Feder aus.
- Ich schiebe den Stuhl unter den Tisch.  
Ich schiebe dir ein Kissen unter.
- Ich treibe den Eigensinn aus dem Kind.  
Ich treibe dem Kind den Eigensinn aus.
- Ich habe den Hund in seine Hütte gesetzt.  
Ich habe den Hund der Kälte ausgesetzt.
- Ich nehme das Geld aus der Brieftasche.  
Ich entnehme der Brieftasche das Geld.
- Ich locke Töne aus dem Instrument.  
Ich entlocke dem Instrument einige Töne.
- Ich packe noch weitere Lasten auf den Esel.  
Ich packe dem Esel noch weitere Lasten auf.
- Ich wickele ein Tuch um dich.  
Ich wickele dir ein Tuch um.

## 8 Preverb alternations

- Sie klebt einen Bart an ihn.  
Sie klebt ihm einen Bart an.

### 8.8.15 [ NPp | NAD ] Preverb dative applicative+governed applicative

An example of a “double” applicative is found with the diathesis from *schweigen* ‘to be silent’ (125a) and *verschweigen* ‘to conceal’ (125b). With the addition of the preverb *ver-* both a dative and an accusative applicative are induced. [8.129]

- (125) a. Ich schweige zu dir über meinen Besuch.  
b. Ich verschweige dir meinen Besuch.

#### Attested verbs

- *ver-* : *schweigen, sprechen*
- *'ab-* : *schwatzen*

#### Further examples

- Ich spreche (mit dir) über das Buch.  
Ich verspreche dir das Buch.
- Ich schwatze (mit dir) über dein Geld.  
Ich schwatze dir dein Geld ab.

### 8.8.16 [ NAg | NAD ] Preverb possessor-of-accusative to dative

The verb *ansehen* has various different meanings, as summarised in Section 8.4.8. One of these can approximately be translated into English as ‘to notice’ (127). In this sense of *ansehen*, the possessor of the accusative argument from *sehen* is obligatorily expressed as a dative with *ansehen*.

- (126) a. Ich sehe seine Müdigkeit.  
b. Ich sehe ihm die Müdigkeit an.

#### Attested verbs

- *'an-* : *hören, sehen*

#### Further examples

- Ich höre seine Müdigkeit.  
Ich höre ihm die Müdigkeit an.



## 8.9 Symmetrical diatheses

— [ ADJ > OBJ > ADJ ] — *Präverb Teil/fest-Objekttausch*

### 8.9.1 [ NpA | NAp ] Preverb applicative+*in* antipassive

The diathesis from *füllen* ‘to fill’ (127a) to *einfüllen* ‘to fill into’ (127b) is an example of a JOINED MERONYM object exchange (cf, Section 2.7.5.3). The original accusative object (*Flasche* ‘bottle’) is changed into an optional *in* prepositional phrase, while an optional *mit* prepositional phrase (*Schnaps* ‘liquor’) is changed to accusative object. Semantically, the role of new accusative object (i.e. the liquid, *Schnaps*) is always a part (“meronym”) of the old object role (i.e. the container, *Flasche*). Additionally, the verb describes a process in which the meronym is connected to the holonym. So the new object in this diathesis is always a “joined” meronym’.

- (127) a. Er hat die Flasche (mit Schnaps) gefüllt.  
b. Er hat den Schnaps (in die Flasche) eingefüllt.

[8.132] All examples of this diathesis have an *in* demotion. There is a bit more variation in the promotion, but not much. Most examples have a *mit/in* exchange, while just very few examples of a *für/in* exchange are attested. Both these patterns are discussed separately below.

#### 8.9.1.1 *mit/in* Preverb object exchange

The current *mit/in* object exchange is the reversal of the *in/mit* object exchange, discussed previously in detail in Section 8.7.13. There are even nice close examples. For example, the diathesis *massieren/einmassieren* is an example of the current *mit/in* exchange (128a). In contrast, the diathesis *reiben/einreiben* is a reversed example of an *in/mit* object exchange (128b).

- (128) a. Ich habe den Muskel mit einer Salbe massiert.  
Ich habe die Salbe in den Muskel einmassiert.  
b. Ich habe die Salbe in den Muskel gerieben.  
Ich habe den Muskel mit einer Salbe eingerieben.

#### Attested verbs

- be'- : *schreiben*
- ver'- : *bauen, backen, heizen*
- 'ein- : *füllen, massieren*

## 8 Preverb alternations

- 'ab- : *füllen*
- 'ein- : *schließen*

### Further examples

- Ich schreibe einen Brief (mit meinen Erlebnissen).  
Ich beschreibe meine Erlebnisse (in einem Brief).
- Ich baue ein Haus (mit Steinen).  
Ich verbaue die Steine (in dem Haus).
- Ich backe einen Kuchen (mit einem Kilo Mehl).  
Ich verbacke ein Kilo Mehl (in dem Kuchen).
- Ich heize die Wohnung (mit Kohle).  
Ich verheize alle Kohle (in der Wohnung).
- Ich fülle die Flaschen (mit Milch).  
Ich fülle die Milch (in Flaschen) ab.

### Notes

The diathesis from *schließen* 'to close' (129a) to *einschließen* 'to close away' (129b) [8.134] introduces a new accusative object (*Schmuck* 'jewellery') and turns the original accusative (*Safe* 'safe') into an optional prepositional phrase. However, the special characteristic of this diathesis is that the new accusative object (*Schmuck*) is impossible to express with the non-prefixed verb *schließen*.

- (129) a. Ich schließe den Safe.  
b. Ich schließe den Schmuck (in den Safe) ein.

### 8.9.1.2 *für/in* Preverb object exchange

- (130) a. Ich grabe ein Loch (für meinen Hund).  
b. Ich begrabe meinen Hund (in dem Loch).

### Attested verbs

- be'- : *graben*
- ver'- : *graben, buddeln*
- 'ein- : *graben*

### Further examples

- Ich grabe/buddele ein Loch (für den Schatz).  
Ich vergrabe/verbuddele den Schatz (im Loch).
- Ich grabe ein Loch (für den Baum).  
Ich grabe den Baum (ins Erdreich) ein.

— [ OBJ > OBJ ] —

### 8.9.2 [ ND | NA ] Preverb dative-to-accusative

A few examples exist of a preverb diathesis in which a dative argument is changed into an accusative argument. For example, *folgen* ‘to follow’ (131a) takes a dative, while *verfolgen* ‘to pursue’ (131b) takes an accusative.

- (131) a. Ich folge dem Auto.  
b. Ich verfolge das Auto.

### Attested verbs

- be'- : *dienen, drohen, folgen, lauschen, raten*
- ver'- : *dienen, folgen*
- 'an- : *schreiben*

### Further examples

- Ich rate dir (zum Plan).  
Ich berate dich (in dem Fall).
- Ich folge dem Rat.  
Ich befolge den Rat.
- Ich habe dir geschrieben.  
Ich habe dich angeschrieben.

### 8.9.3 [ NA | ND ] Preverb accusative-to-dative

Conversely, the diathesis from *jagen* ‘to hunt’ (132a) to *nachjagen* ‘to chase’ (132b) changes an accusative argument into a dative argument. This seems to be less frequent than the reverse, as discussed in the previous section.

- (132) a. Die Polizei jagt den Verbrecher.  
b. Die Polizei jagt dem Verbrecher nach.

**Attested verbs**

- 'nach- : *jagen*

— [ OBJ > OBJ > OBJ ] —

**8.9.4 [ NDA | NAG ] Preverb**

**dative-to-accusative+accusative-to-genitive**

Even more intricate, the diathesis from *rauben* (133a) to *berauben* (133b), both meaning 'to rob', includes both a case change from dative to accusative and one from accusative to genitive. The usage of the genitive sounds rather old-fashioned.

- (133) a. Ich raube dir das Buch.  
b. Ich beraube dich des Buches.

**Attested verbs**

- be'- : *rauben*

— [ OBJ > SBJ > OBJ ] —

**8.9.5 [ NA | AN ] Preverb accusative inersive**

The alternation between *wundern* 'to amaze' (134a) and *bewundern* 'to be in awe' (134b) reverses the nominative and accusative arguments. Note that the verb *wundern* also allows for a reflexive conversive diathesis (134c), see Section 7.5.7, but that construction cannot function as an intermediate step in this diathesis.

- (134) a. Dein Verhalten wundert mich.  
b. Ich bewundere dein Verhalten.  
c. Ich wundere mich über dein Verhalten.

**Attested verbs**

- be'- : *wundern*

— [ PBJ > SBJ > PBJ ] —

### 8.9.6 [ NL | LN ] Preverb location inersive

The alternation between *strahlen* ‘to shine’ (135a) and *erstrahlen* ‘to gleam’ (135b) involves a reversal of nominative and locational arguments.

- (135)    a. Die Sonne strahlt auf das Haus.  
          b. Das Haus erstrahlt in der Sonne.

#### Attested verbs

- er'- : *strahlen*
- 'zu- : *wachsen*

#### Further examples

- Der Efeu wächst an der Hauswand.  
  Die Hauswand wächst durch den Efeu zu.



## 9 Adverbial alternations

### 9.1 Introduction

[9.1] It might come as a surprise that adverbials play a role in valency and diathesis. However, on closer inspection it is evident that there are various verbs that obligatorily need a manner adverbial, like *sich verhalten* ‘to behave’ (1). Such verbs show that adverbials have to be considered when determining the valency of verbs.

- (1) a. Ich verhalte mich tapfer.  
b. \* Ich verhalte mich.

[9.2] Yet, adverbials cast an even wider net. There are various diatheses in which an obligatory adverbial is introduced, like anticausatives (2b), see Section 9.5.2, applicatives (2c), see Section 9.8.1, and even a few incidental antipassives (2d), see Section 9.7.9.

- (2) a. Ich fahre den Lastwagen.  
Der Lastwagen fährt sich gut.  
b. Ich fische in dem Teich.  
Ich fische den Teich leer.  
c. Ich sehe das Gemälde.  
Ich sehe mich satt an dem Gemälde.

[9.3] The diatheses discussed in this chapter involve two superficially highly similar, but syntactically and semantically clearly different kinds of constructions, namely evaluative constructions, like with *gut* ‘good’ in (3a), or resultative constructions, like with *leer* ‘empty’ in (3b). The syntactic structures and the valency alternations in which they appear turn out to be rather different, ideally warranting two separate chapters. However, the current combination of these superficially very similar German constructions into a single chapter allows me to sharpen their distinction and investigate similarities and differences between the two.

- (3) a. Das Buch verkauft sich gut.  
b. Die Leser kaufen den Buchladen leer.

[9.4] Quickly summarised, EVALUATIVES (see Section 9.2.3) are basically manner adverbials using an adjectival stem, like *gut* ‘good’ in (3a). They appear in valency-reducing diatheses, often with reflexive pronouns, typically resulting in intransitive constructions after the diathesis. In contrast, RESULTATIVES (see Section 9.2.6) are adjectives that arguably make up a new verb together with the main predicate. For example, *leer* and *kaufen* form a new verb *leerkaufen* in which the first part *leer-* is separable (3b). This is reminiscent of verbs with preverbs like *an-* in *ankaufen* (cf. Section 8.2.1). Similar to preverbs, diatheses with resultatives almost always lead to a transitive construction with a nominative and an accusative argument (cf. Section 8.2.2). This parallelism reinforces the widespread impression that resultatives should be considered together with preverbs (cf. ref-wunderlich1997; ref-chang2007).<sup>1</sup>

There are nine diatheses in this chapter that seem prominent enough to be given a German name. I propose the following names for these: [9.5]

- [SBJ > Ø] AKTIONSBEWERTUNG (see Section 9.5.1)
- [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] BEWERTUNGSANTIKAUSATIV (see Section 9.5.2 ff.)
- [OBJ > Ø] AKTIONSFOKUS (see Section 9.7.1)
- [PBJ > OBJ > Ø] RESULTATIV GANZ/LEER-OBJEKTTAUSCH (see Section 9.7.4)
- [PBJ > OBJ > ADJ] RESULTATIV GANZ/VOLL-OBJEKTTAUSCH (see Section 9.7.5)
- [Ø > OBJ > ADJ] RESULTATIV TEIL/FEST-OBJEKTTAUSCH (see Section 9.8.3)
- [Ø > OBJ] RESULTATIV AKKUSATIV (see Section 9.8.2)
- [ADJ > OBJ] RESULTATIV APPLIKATIV (see Section 9.8.1)
- [PBJ > ADJ] RESULTATIV DELOKATIV (see Section 9.7.6 ff.)

## 9.2 Disentangling adverbial expressions

### 9.2.1 Terminology

The term ADVERBIAL is commonly used in grammatical descriptions of German (or any other language, for that matter). However, it normally describes a wide range of rather disparate linguistic phenomena that will be distinguished here

<sup>1</sup>The Duden grammar (ref-duden2009: 790) presents *Er hält/macht den Tisch sauber* as examples of resultative constructions. However, these examples are probably better analysed as adjectival predicates with light verbs *halten* and *machen*, see the full discussion in Section 10.2.8.



for a better insight into German sentence structure. When needed for clarification, I will use the term ADVERBIALS-AT-LARGE for the whole domain commonly called “adverbial” and the term ADVERBIALS (PROPER) for the more restricted definition used here. However, in the main body of this chapter, whenever I use the unmodified term “adverbials” this is supposed to simply mean “adverbials (proper)”.

[9.7]

Within the German adverbials-at-large domain there are three different syntactic functions that have to be separated. I will call these three syntactic functions ADVERBIAL, PREVERBIAL and SECONDARY PREDICATION. Basically, adverbials are syntactically free elements that modify verbs, preverbials are syntactically bound to the verbs they modify, and secondary predicates modify noun phrases, not verbs.

Intersecting these functions are classes of morphemes that are potentially used in more than one of these syntactic functions. First, those morphemes that only have adverbial function are called ADVERBS. Second, those that only have preverbal function are called PREVERBS (discussed in the previous chapter). Next, adjectives can be used in all three of the functions mentioned above, leading to (i) adjectival adverbials, called EVALUATIVES here, (ii) adjectival preverbials, called RESULTATIVES here, and (iii) adjectival secondary predicates, called DEPICTIVES here. Finally, there is also a closed set of preverbal morphemes that I will call DIRECTIONALS.

### 9.2.2 Adverbials

ADVERBIALS (proper) in German are defined here strictly syntactically as a word or phrase that modifies the main predicate of a sentence (and as such often modifies the whole sentence). When such an adverbial consists of a single word that cannot be used in any other syntactic function, then such a word is called a (pure) ADVERB. There exists an arguably rather small class of such purely adverbial words in German with restricted semantic possibilities, typically local, e.g. *hier, oben, dort* (4a), temporal, e.g. *gestern, später, immer* (4b), causal, e.g. *deshalb, dennoch, folglich* (4c) and modal, e.g. *ebenfalls, fast, ganz* (4d). [9.9]

- (4) a. Das Flugzeug ist dort gelandet.
- b. Das Flugzeug ist gestern gelandet.
- c. Deshalb ist das Flugzeug gelandet.
- d. Das Flugzeug ist ebenfalls gelandet.

As an aside, note that there are special contexts in which some of these adverbs can be used to modify noun phrases, but apparently only post-nominal (5a,b).

This position cannot be taken by adjectives (5c), but seems to be related to the position of modifying prepositional phrases (5d).

- (5) a. Das Flugzeug *dort* finde ich schöner.
- b. Das Flugzeug *gestern* fand ich schöner.
- c. \* Das Flugzeug *große* fand ich schöner.
- d. Das Flugzeug *mit dem großen Fenster* finde ich schöner.

Except for (pure) adverbs, there are many other kinds of expressions that can fill the syntactic role of an adverbial, like prepositional phrases (6a), quantified objects (6b), see Section 5.3.9, or adverbial clauses (6c). Also negation (6d) and equative phrases (6e) are syntactically highly similar to adverbials. For example, various verbs that obligatorily need an adverbial allow for a negation or equative phrase to fill the necessary adverbial slot (see Section 9.3.1 ff.).

[9.11]

- (6) a. Das Flugzeug ist *auf der Wiese* gelandet.
- b. Das Flugzeug ist *jeden Tag* gelandet.
- c. Das Flugzeug ist gelandet, *weil der Tank leer war*.
- d. Das Flugzeug ist *nicht* gelandet.
- e. Das Flugzeug ist *wie eine Feder* gelandet.

### 9.2.3 Evaluatives vs. depictives

Moreover, German ADJECTIVES are also frequently used in adverbial syntactic function. German adjectives are here strictly defined as stems that can be used as a noun modifier and that are placed in front of that noun, like *sicher* ‘safe’ in (7a). As an adjective, such stems show agreement with the noun, as indicated by the suffix *-e* in *sichere* (7a). Given a suitable context, all German adjectives can be used syntactically as adverbials. When they fulfil this function, they are unmarked in German (in contrast to English, in which the suffix *-ly* is necessary) and they never show any agreement (7b).

[9.12]

- (7) a. Das *sichere* Flugzeug ist teuer.
- b. Das Flugzeug ist *sicher* gelandet.

[9.13] Depending on the context and their placement inside the sentence, German adjectival adverbials can ascribe a characteristic to different constituents in the sentence. Typically, they modify the main predicate (and often implicitly the whole sentence), like with *sicher* ‘safe’ in (7b). In this sentence, the adjective

evaluates the manner in which the action *landen* ‘to land’ is executed. Such an event-oriented adjectival adverbial is called an EVALUATIVE here.

Evaluatives (i.e. event-oriented adjectival adverbials, typically describing manner), appear in valency-reducing diatheses, commonly combined with reflexive pronouns. The two most widespread diatheses are (i) a nominative drop with intransitives, like with *leben* ‘to live’ (8a), see Section 9.5.1, and (ii) a closely related anticausative diathesis with transitive verbs, like with *verkaufen* ‘to sell’ (8b), see Section 9.5.2.

- (8) a. Ich lebe hier.  
Hier lebt es sich gut.
- b. Ich verkaufe mein Buch.  
Mein Buch verkauft sich gut.

[9.15] Besides modifying the verb (9a), adjectival adverbials can also modify an argument, like an accusative object (9b) or a nominative subject (9c). Modification of other arguments does not seem to be possible. Strictly speaking, such modification of an argument is not properly “adverbial” anymore but really adnominal. It is commonly called “depictive secondary predication”, but I will simply use the term DEPICTIVE here (see [ref-himmelmänn2005b](#) for a survey). Depictives do not seem to play any role in diathesis and are only introduced here to distinguish them from evaluatives (this section) and resultatives (Section 9.2.6).

- (9) a. Ich habe meine Hose schnell gekauft.
- b. Ich habe meine Hose eng gekauft.
- c. Ich habe meine Hose müde gekauft.

Pure adverbs only allow for the modification of the predicate (or the complete event, for that matter). A pure adverb like *gestern* ‘yesterday’ cannot be a depictive, i.e. it cannot ascribe any characteristic to an argument (but see (5) for some possibilities). For example, the adverb *gestern* in (10a) can only modify to the verb *kaufen*, not the subject *Ich* nor the object *Hose*. In contrast, adverbially used participles like *gebügelt* ‘ironed’ (10b) can only be a depictive, i.e. they never modify the main verb, but only specify the subject or the object (see Section 10.2.3).

- (10) a. Ich habe meine Hose gestern gekauft.
- b. Ich habe meine Hose gebügelt gekauft.

### 9.2.4 Preverbials

Syntactically, adverbials (proper) have to be distinguished from a superficially highly similar phenomenon, which I will call **PREVERBIALS** (see **ref-broschart2000** for a similar use of this term in Tongan, a completely unrelated language). A preverbial is an adverbial-like element that syntactically behaves just like a preverb (cf. the previous Chapter 8). Preverbials combine with a verb to form a new verb, either as a non-separable prefix (*Verbpräfix*), like *voll* in *vollenden* ‘to finalise’ (11a), or as a separable particle (*Verbpartikel*), like *voll* in *vollschenken* ‘to fill up’ (11b). The syntactic differences between such separable verb prefixes and non-separable verb particles are described in detail in Section 8.2.1. Non-separable preverbials (other than preverbs) are extremely rare. The only examples known to me are *vollbringen*, *vollenden*, *vollführen* and *wiederholen*.

- (11) a. Ich vollende das Buch.  
      Ich will das Buch vollenden.  
      Ich versuche das Buch zu vollenden.  
      b. Ich schenke das Glas voll.  
      Ich werde das Glas vollschenken.  
      Ich versuche das Glas vollzuschenken.

The **PREVERBS** as discussed in the previous chapter are just one of the three different kinds of preverbials. Other than preverbs, a preverbial is either a directional or a resultative. **DIRECTIONALS** are a closed class of preverbials that express a direction, like *hin-* or *her-*. They are concisely discussed in Section 9.2.5, but they deserve more in-depth investigation. **RESULTATIVES** are adjectival stems that are combined with verbs, like *voll* in (11) above. For conceptual clarity, they are opposed to depictives in Section 9.2.6. The different diatheses that are induced by resultatives are discussed in more detail throughout this chapter. Section 9.2.7 gives a basic summary of those constructions.

### 9.2.5 Directionals

The thirteen **DIRECTIONALS** in (12) have a special status in German grammar. They have wide variety of different origins, for example *wieder-* from preposition *wider* ‘against’, *heim-* from noun *Heim* ‘home’ or *hoch-* from adjective *hoch* ‘high, tall’. Semantically they occur in pairs, with *empor-* being an additional old-fashioned variant of contemporary *hoch-*.

(12) Directionals

- a. *hin/her-*
- b. *weg/zurück*
- c. *fort/heim-*
- d. *hoch/empor/nieder-*
- e. *da(r)/wieder-*
- f. *zusammen/auseinander-*

These directionals are frequently used as preverbials with a wide range of semantic interpretations and diathetical remappings. The detailed survey of their syntax is left for future research. As preverbials they are typically used in a de-locative diathesis, replacing a locative phrase (13).

[9.20]

- (13)
- a. Er schickte die Kinder in die Schule.  
Er schickte die Kinder *her/hin/weg/zurück/fort/heim*.
  - b. Ich kletterte auf den Berg.  
Ich kletterte *hoch/empor/hinunter*.
  - c. Er prügelt ihn von der Treppe.  
Er prügelt ihn *nieder*.
  - d. Der schwarze Koffer bleibt im Keller.  
Der schwarze Koffer bleibt *da*.
  - e. Ich höre das Lied im Radio.  
Ich höre das Lied *wieder*.
  - f. Ich fege die Scherben in die Ecke.  
Ich fege die Scherben *zusammen/auseinander*.

[9.21]

The directionals *hin-* and *her-* are frequently combined with local prepositions, mostly as prefixes (except for *nebenher-*, *hinterher-* and *vorher-*). In colloquial usage the first syllables are often dropped and with *her-* this drop is also sometimes acceptable in written German. There are some interesting differences as to which prepositions are combined with *hin-* and which with *her-* (14), but I will not further delve into these differences here.

(14) Attested combinations of *her/hin* with prepositions:

- a. both with *hin-* and *her-*:  
*herab/(he)rauf-, (he)raus/(he)rein-, (he)rüber/(he)runter-*  
*hinab/hinauf-, hinaus/hinein-, hinüber/hinunter-*
- b. only with *her-*:

(he)ran-, herbei-, (he)rum-, hervor-, nebenher-, hinterher-

c. only with *hin*-:

*hindurch*-, *hinzu*-

Combinations of *da(r)*- with prepositions mostly concern so-called correlative *da(r)*-, i.e. the element *da(r)*- refers to some concrete entity mentioned earlier in the discourse (15a). There are also some fixed combinations of *da(r)*- with prepositions, like *davon* in (15b) and *dazwischen* in (15c). The precise possibilities and functions of *da(r)*- will not be further investigated here.

- (15) a. Ich schreibe meinen Namen unter den Brief.  
 Ich schreibe meinen Namen darunter.  
 b. Ich laufe davon.  
 (= Ich laufe “von Zuhause”.)  
 c. Ich rede dazwischen.  
 (= Ich rede “zwischen den Anderen”.)

There are also various preverbials that are combinations of *vor*- with prepositions (e.g. *voran*-, *voraus*-, *vorbei*-) that need a more details investigation. [9.23]

### 9.2.6 Resultatives vs. depictives

There is a wide variety of adjectives that can be used as RESULTATIVE preverbials. Highly productive resultatives in German are *leer*-, *voll*-, *tot*- and *fest*- (according to ref-fuhrhop2012: 79–80), e.g. *vollniesen* ‘to sneeze full’ (16a). However, many others are also attested, e.g. *still*- ‘silent’ in *stillschweigen* ‘to silence something’, *platt*- ‘flat’ in *plattwalzen* ‘to flatten’ or *schön*- ‘beautiful’ in *schönreden* ‘to white-wash’ (16b). Additionally, datives from raised possessors are often possible (16b), see Section 5.8.4, including subsequent reflexive constructions (16c).

- (16) a. Er niest das Taschentuch voll.  
 b. Er redet mir das Leben schön.  
 c. Ich rede mir mein Benehmen gut.

Such adjectival preverbials have a resultative object-oriented meaning. For example, in *vollschenken* ‘to fill up’ (17), the adjective (*voll* ‘full’) indicates that the object of the verb (*Glas* ‘glass’) is full as a result of the action (*schenken* ‘to pour’). Note that there are exactly two adjectival preverbials that are not resultative

and not object-oriented, namely inchoative *los-* (Section 9.4.1) and continuative *weiter-* (Section 9.4.2).

- (17) a. Ich schenke Wein in das Glas.  
b. Ich schenke das Glas voll.

Superficially, resultatives look highly similar to constructions with depictive secondary predicates (see Section 9.2.3) as both influence the interpretation of an argument. However, the resultative turns out to be a radically different construction from the depictive. There exist even sentences that can be interpreted in both ways. For example, the adjective *leer* ‘empty’ in (18) can be interpreted as a depictive, stating that the store is empty. In this interpretation the sentence has the meaning ‘I have bought the store, which was empty when I bought it’ (18a). Alternatively, it can be interpreted as a resultative with the meaning ‘I have bought everything that was in the store, with the result that the store was empty afterwards’ (18b).

- (18) a. Ich habe den Laden leer gekauft.  
(= Ich habe den Laden, der ganz leer war, gekauft.)  
b. Ich habe den Laden leergekauft.  
(= Ich habe alle Produkte im Laden gekauft mit dem Resultat, dass der Laden leer ist.)

[9.27]

This semantic difference is typically, though not consistently, reflected in German orthography by separating the depictive from the verb with a space. However, German authors are far from consistent in this respect. For example, a quick search for resultative *trockenschleudern* ‘to spin until dry’ in the DWDS corpus resulted in five examples with a space (*trocken schleudern*) and eight examples without a space (*trockenschleudern*) without any obvious difference in meaning between the two groups.

[9.28] There are various diagnostic differences between the depictive (18a) and the resultative (18b) interpretation. First, the widespread orthographic separation for depictives (and the orthographic univerbation of resultatives) is actually a consequence of differences in the prosodic structure, as depictive *leer kaufen* (18a) has two separate stress domains, while resultative *leer, kaufen* (18b) has only a single stress domain. For linguistically naive speakers of German this feels like there is a little pause after depictives, but not after resultatives.

[9.29]

Second, with some verbs the accusative object in the resultative interpretation is a completely new role for the main lexical verb, like with *leerkaufen* ‘to buy’

(18). To be precise, in the depictive interpretation (18a), the *Laden* ‘shop’ is the buyee (i.e. the object of the buying). In this interpretation it is the shop itself that is being bought. In contrast, in the resultative interpretation (18b) it is not the *Laden* ‘shop’ that is being bought, but the items inside the shop. The accusative object *den Laden* ‘shop’ is the encompassing location where the buying is taking place (see Section 9.7.4). The addition of such a new role can lead to the introduction of accusative constituents for otherwise intransitive verbs, like *fischen* ‘to fish’ (19a) or *niesen* ‘to sneeze’ (19b), see Section 9.8.1. A diagnostic corollary to this semantic interpretation for intransitive verbs is the fact that those resultatives cannot be left out (19c,d).

- (19) a. Ich habe den Teich leergefischt.  
 b. Ich habe das Taschentuch vollgeniest.  
 c. \* Ich habe den Teich gefischt.  
 d. \* Ich habe das Taschentuch geniest.

Third, resultative adverbials cannot occur together with verb particles.<sup>2</sup> This is not just a semantic incompatibility, but also a syntactic one. The resultative adverbials take the same place in the syntax as the verb particles. For example, dictionaries of German typically include resultative constructions as complex predicates, i.e. *totschießen* ‘to kill by shooting’ (20a)<sup>2</sup>, parallel to verbs with particles like *abschießen* ‘to shoot down’ (20b)<sup>3</sup>. Trying to combine both resultative adverbials and verb particles is not possible (20c). In contrast, with evaluatives (20d) and depictives (20e) there is no problem combining them with verb particles.

- (20) a. Der Jäger hat den Wolf totgeschossen.  
 b. Der Jäger hat den Wolf abgeschossen.  
 c. \* Der Jäger hat den Wolf tot abgeschossen.  
 d. Der Jäger hat den Wolf schnell abgeschossen. (= Das Abschießen war schnell.)  
 e. Der Jäger hat den Wolf verletzt abgeschossen. (= Der Jäger war verletzt.)

Fourth, depictives can both refer to nominative subjects (21a) and to accusative objects (21b), but apparently not to any other kind of objects. In contrast, resul-

<sup>2</sup> Attested at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/totschießen>, accessed 8 September 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Attested at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/abschießen>, accessed 8 September 2022.



tatives always refer to accusative objects (21c). Resultatives can only refer to (intransitive) nominative subjects with an additional accusative reflexive pronoun (21d), see Section 9.4.3.

- (21) a. Ich habe die Hose gesund gekauft.  
(= Ich war gesund.)  
b. Der Zoo hat den Pinguin gesund gekauft.  
(= Der Pinguin war gesund.)  
c. Der Zoowärter hat den Pinguin gesundgepflegt.  
(= Der Pinguin ist wieder gesund.)  
d. Ich habe mich gesundgeschlafen.  
(= Ich bin wieder gesund.)

[9.32] Finally, participles like *gereinigt* ‘cleaned’ are an adjectival form of a verb. As such they can be used as depictives (22a,b), see Section 10.2.3. In contrast, participles never function as resultatives (22c).

- (22) a. Ich habe den Laden gereinigt gekauft.  
b. = Ich habe den Laden gekauft als der gereinigt war.  
c. ≠ Ich habe etwas im Laden gekauft mit dem Resultat, dass der Laden gereinigt ist.

### 9.2.7 Summary of resultative constructions

In this chapter I will discuss examples with the resultatives *fest*, *fern*, *fertig*, *frei*, *gesund*, *glücklich*, *gut*, *heiß*, *kaputt*, *klein*, *leer*, *los*, *nass*, *platt*, *reich*, *sauber*, *satt*, *schlapp*, *schön*, *still*, *tot*, *trocken*, *voll*, *wach* and *wund*. However, this list is by no means supposed to be exhaustive. Quite to the contrary, there does not appear to be any syntactic restriction on which adjectives can be used as resultative preverbials, although semantical restrictions clearly exist. For example, colour resultatives appear to be rare (though note *schwarzmalen* ‘doomsaying’).

There are four major resultative constructions. These “major four” constructions occur frequently and they are attested with a wide variety of resultative adjectives. All other resultative constructions (as discussed below) only allow for just a few special resultative adjectives. Not so with the “major four”. The “major four” resultative constructions are the following:

- *Reflexiv Resultativ*, a reflexive alternation without diathesis [N | N] (Section 9.4.3), e.g. *sich gesundschlafen* ‘to heal by sleeping’ (23a).

## 9 Adverbial alternations

- *Transitiv Resultativ*, a transitive alternation without diathesis [NA | NA] (Section 9.4.5), e.g. *gesundpflegen* ‘to heal by nursing’ (23b).
- *Resultativ Applikativ*, an alternation with an applicative diathesis [N<sub>P</sub> | NA] (Section 9.8.1), e.g. *gesundbeten* ‘to heal by praying’ (23c).
- *Resultativ Akkusativ*, an alternation with an objective diathesis [N- | NA] (Section 9.8.2), e.g. *gesundhexen* ‘to heal by magic’ (23d).

- (23) a. Sie schläft.  
Sie schläft sich gesund.
- b. Sie pflegt ihre Mutter.  
Sie pflegt ihre Mutter gesund.
- c. Sie betet für ihre Mutter.  
Sie betet ihre Mutter gesund.
- d. Er hext.  
Milingo wird vorgeworfen, [...] Kranke gesundgehext zu haben.<sup>4</sup>

There are six special resultative adjectives, in alphabetical order: *fest-* ‘firm’, *frei-* ‘free’, *leer-* ‘empty’, *los-* ‘loose’, *voll-* ‘full’ and *weiter-* ‘further’. Of all the dozens (possibly hundreds) of German adjectives that can be used in resultative constructions, it is only these six adjectives that can be used to create constructions other than the “major four”. These “special six” resultatives also occur regularly in the “major four” constructions, but besides those occurrences there is a long list of further resultative constructions that are all put together with just these six resultative adjectives. Note that there are also idiosyncratic diatheses with *satt-* ‘well-fed’ (Section 9.7.9) and *wund-* ‘wounded’ (Section 9.7.8). However, these do not (yet) seem to be as productive as the “special six”. The “special six” appear to become more like directionals and less like regular adjectival resultatives (cf. Section 9.2.5). They occur in the following constructions:

- *los/fest-* in the meaning ‘to detach/to attach’ is used with remapping:
  - [N | N] no diathesis with verbs describing a natural process  
e.g. *festrosten* ‘to rust into’ (Section 9.4.4).
  - [NAL | NA<sub>P</sub>] a delocative diathesis with verbs of attachment  
e.g. *losbinden* ‘to untie’ (Section 9.7.6).
- *fest-* in the meaning ‘to fixate’ is used with remapping:

<sup>4</sup> Attested online at <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/giftige-blume-a-003fa8d4-0002-0001-0000--000014353984>, accessed 8 September 2022.

- [NL | N<sub>p</sub>] a delocative diathesis with verbs of position  
e.g. *festsitzen* ‘to be stuck’ (Section 9.7.7).
- [NA– | N<sub>p</sub>A] an object exchange with verbs of fixation  
e.g. *festnähen* ‘to attach by stitching’ (Section 9.8.3).
- *voll/leer-* in the meaning ‘to fill/to empty’ is used with remapping:
  - [NL | <sub>p</sub>N] a locational-passive diathesis with alluvial verbs  
e.g. *vollsickern* ‘to trickle full’ (Section 9.5.6).
  - [NLA | NAP] with *voll-*: an object exchange with verbs of filling  
e.g. *vollschenken* ‘to pour until full’ (Section 9.7.5).
  - [NLA | NA–] with *leer-*: an object exchange with verbs of emptying  
e.g. *leerpumpen* ‘to pump until empty’ (Section 9.7.4).
- *frei-* in the meaning ‘to uncover’ is used with remapping:
  - [NLA | NA–] an object exchange with verbs of uncovering  
e.g. *freifegen* ‘to uncover by brushing’ (Section 9.7.4).
  - [NAL | NA<sub>p</sub>] a delocative diathesis with verbs of excavating  
e.g. *freigraben* ‘to uncover by digging’ (Section 9.7.6).
- *los/weiter-* in the meaning ‘to start/to continue’ is used with remapping:
  - [N | N] no diathesis with intransitive verbs  
e.g. *losrennen* ‘to start running’ (Section 9.4.1)
  - e.g. *weiterrennen* ‘to continue running’ (Section 9.4.2).
  - [NA | NA] with *weiter-*: no diathesis with transitive verbs  
e.g. *weiterbauen* ‘to proceed building’ (Section 9.4.2).
  - [NA | N<sub>p</sub>] with *los-*: an antipassive diathesis with verbs of attacking  
e.g. *loshauen* ‘to start bashing’ (Section 9.7.10).
- *los-* in the meaning ‘to cause to start moving’ is used with remapping:
  - [NAL | NA<sub>p</sub>] a delocative diathesis with verbs of sending  
e.g. *losschicken* ‘to send off’ (Section 9.7.6).
- *weiter-* in the meaning ‘to pass on’ is used with remapping:
  - [NAD | NA<sub>p</sub>] a dative antipassive diathesis with verbs with a recipient  
e.g. *weitererzählen* ‘to pass on’ (Section 9.7.11).

[9.36] There are various syntactic parallels between resultative constructions and other diatheses discussed previously in this book. These parallels come in two different guises. First, resultative adjectives are closely related to directionals, like

weg- ‘away’ or zurück- ‘back’, which are in turn closely related to local prepositional phrases (see Section 9.2.5). Accordingly, some resultatives take the same syntactic position as local prepositional phrases. The most important parallels are listed in Table 9.1. Note that it is exactly the “L” in the locational remapping on the right side of the table that is absent in the resultative remapping on left side of the table.

Table 9.1: Resultativ adjective is syntactically like a local prepositional phrase.

	Resultative		Compare to
[N   N]	<i>Inchoativ</i> (§9.4.1)	[N-   NL]	<i>Bewegungsart</i> (§6.8.2)
[N   N]	<i>Kontinuativ</i> (§9.4.2)	[N-   NL]	<i>Bewegungsart</i> (§6.8.2)
[N   N]	<i>Reflexiv</i>	[N-   NL]	<i>Reflexiv</i>
	<i>Resultativ</i> (§9.4.3)		<i>Bewegungsart</i> (§7.8.1)
[NA   NA]	<i>Transitiv</i>	[NA-   NAL]	<i>Transitiv Verursachte</i>
	<i>Resultativ</i> (§9.4.5)		<i>Bewegung</i> (§6.8.5)
[N-   NA]	<i>Resultativ</i>	[N--   NAL]	<i>Intransitiv Verursachte</i>
	<i>Akkusativ</i> (§9.8.2)		<i>Bewegung</i> (§6.8.4)

Second, resultative adjectives are closely related to preverbs, like *ver-* or *an-* (see Chapter 8). Accordingly, some resultatives take the same syntactic position as preverbs, as summarised in Table 9.2. Note that these parallels concern the structure of the diathesis in general. It is not necessarily the case that each resultative+verb combination has a parallel preverb+verb combination.

[9.37]

Table 9.2: Resultativ adjective is syntactically like a preverb.

	Resultative		Compare to
[N <sub>p</sub>   NA]	<i>Resultativ</i>	[N <sub>p</sub>   NA]	<i>Präverb</i>
	<i>Applikativ</i> (§9.8.1)		<i>Applikativ</i> (§8.8.8)
[NAL   NA <sub>p</sub> ]	<i>Resultativ</i>	[NAL   NA <sub>p</sub> ]	<i>Präverb</i>
	<i>Delokativ</i> (§9.7.6)		<i>Delokativ</i> (§8.7.11)
[NLA   NA <sub>p</sub> ]	<i>Resultativ Ganz/voll-</i>	[NLA   NA <sub>p</sub> ]	<i>Präverb Ganz/voll-</i>
	<i>Objekttausch</i> (§9.7.5)		<i>Objekttausch</i> (§8.7.13)
[NLA   NA-]	<i>Resultativ Ganz/leer-</i>	[NLA   NA-]	<i>Präverb Ganz/leer-</i>
	<i>Objekttausch</i> (§9.7.4)		<i>Objekttausch</i> (§8.7.12)

Resultative		Compare to	
$[N-A \mid NA_P]$	<i>Resultativ Teil/fest-Objekttausch</i> (§9.8.3)	$[N_P A \mid NA_P]$	<i>Präverb Teil/fest-Objekttausch</i> (§8.9.1)

## 9.3 Deponent verbs without alternations

[9.38] This section summarises the various German verbs that require adverbials. All examples discussed in this section concern verbs with obligatory EVALUATIVES. Although I see no reason why obligatory RESULTATIVES would be impossible, I have not been able to find any examples. The phenomenon to look out for are verbs with a resultative preverbial (like *leerkaufen*) in which the verb stem (i.e. *kaufen*) is not attested as an individual verb, but only occurs in combination with the resultative.

### — Verb with obligatory adverbial —

#### 9.3.1 [ N ] Nominative+evaluative

[9.39] Some verbs have obligatory manner adverbials, called “*Artergänzung*” by Engelen (ref-engelen1986: 140). In some special situations the adverbial can be left out, but only with a subsequent strong evaluative implication. For example, with *aussehen* ‘to look/appear’ (24a,b) without an adverbial (24c) there is a strong negative implicature that somebody looks bad. In contrast, with a verb like *sitzen* ‘to fit’ (25a), the omission of the manner adverb implies a positive fit (25b). Note that negation also can function syntactically as a manner adverbial in this context (25c).

- (24) a. Er sieht gut aus.  
       b. ? Er sieht aus.  
       c. Er sieht aber aus!
- (25) a. Der Mantel sitzt gut.  
       b. Der Mantel sitzt.  
       c. Der Mantel sitzt nicht.

#### Attested verbs

- Manner: *ausfallen, aussehen, bleiben, gelaunt sein, klingen, riechen, sitzen (passen), wirken (erscheinen)*

- Quantity: *kosten*, *wiegen*

### Further examples

- Ich bleibe wachsam/ruhig.
- Sein Zeugnis ist schlecht ausgefallen.
- Der Vortragende wirkte nervös.

### Notes

The verb *klingen* has two slightly different, but clearly related meanings. In the literal meaning ‘to ring’ it can only be used with a highly restricted set of nominative subjects that can actually ring, like *Glocken* ‘bells’ (26a). In the more general meaning ‘to sound’ it can be used with a wide variety of subjects, but in this meaning an adverbial is obligatory (26b,c).

- (26) a. Die Glocken klingen.  
b. Die Musik klingt gut.  
c. \* Die Musik klingt.

### 9.3.2 [ N ] Reflexive nominative+evaluative

The obligatory reflexive verb *sich benehmen* ‘to behave’ preferably needs an adverbial constituent that describes how to behave (27a,b), except in imperatives (27c) and in some light verb constructions (27d). Without an adverbial this verb has a conversational implicature of good behaviour. Note that there is a completely different meaning of *benehmen* without reflexive *sich* meaning ‘to deprive of’ (27e) that does not need an adverbial. [9.41]

- (27) a. Ich benehme mich anständig.  
b. ? Ich benehme mich.  
c. Benimm dich!  
d. Ich weiß mich zu benehmen.  
e. Und trotzdem benimmt es mir fast den Atem.<sup>5</sup>

[9.42] The verbs *sich verhalten* and *sich aufführen* ‘to behave’ similarly always need an adverbial that indicates the kind of behaviour (28a-d). All such examples currently known to me describe some kind of behaviour. As always, leaving out

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<sup>5</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 06.03.1992, Nr. 11.

the adverbial is sometimes possible with a strong conversational implicature, e.g. ‘bad’ behaviour with *sich aufführen* (28e).

- (28) a. \*Ich verhalte mich.  
 b. Ich verhalte mich tapfer.  
 c. \*Ich führe mich auf.  
 d. Ich führe mich wie ein Holzklotz auf.  
 e. Du führst dich aber mal wieder auf!

### Attested verbs

- *anfühlen, aufführen, benehmen, geben (vorzeigen), gebärden, verhalten*

### Further examples

- Er gibt sich jovial.
- Ich verhalte mich abwartend.
- Diese Musik kann man sich gut anhören.

### Notes

[9.43] The verb *anfühlen* ‘to sense by touching’ is typically used intransitively with a reflexive pronoun and a manner adverbial (29a). However, there are also attested uses of a causative alternant, though these are rare and seem old-fashioned (29b). As an alternation, the pair in (29) would belong in Section 9.5.2. When (29b) is ignored, the verb *anfühlen* belongs in this section.

- (29) a. Seine Nase fühlt sich kalt an.  
 b. Sieühlte Juliettens erfrorene Füße an.<sup>6</sup>

### 9.3.3 [ N ] Nominative+local adverb

[9.44] Verbs with an obligatory local prepositional phrase (Section 6.3.3), like *übernachten* ‘to sleep over’ (30a), can of course be used with an obligatory local adverb instead (30b).

- (30) a. Er übernachtet bei Freunden.  
 b. Er übernachtet hier/dort/draußen.

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<sup>6</sup>DWDS: Werfel, Franz: Die Vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh II, Stockholm: Bermann - Fischer 1947 (1933), S. 383.

**Attested verbs**

- *entspringen, münden, sein (sich befinden), spielen (zutragen), wohnen, übernachten, zeigen*

**Further examples**

- Der Garten ist dort.
- Der Film spielt in Egypten.

**9.3.4 [ N ] Reflexive nominative+local adverb**

Obligatory reflexive verbs with an obligatory local prepositional phrase (Section 7.3.4), like *befinden* ‘to be located’ (31a), can of course also be used with an obligatory local adverb instead (31b).

[9.45]

- (31) a. Das Geschäft befindet sich in der Stadt.  
b. Das Geschäft befindet sich außerhalb.

**Attested verbs**

- *aalen, ansiedeln, anstellen, aufhalten (befinden), befinden, begeben, einfressen, einschleichen, ergießen, fläzen, niederlassen, scheren, suhlen, umsehen, verkriechen, verschanzen, zubewegen, zurechtfinden*

**9.3.5 [ NP ] Nominative+governed preposition+evaluative**

Both the manner adverbial and the governed preposition cannot be left out with *halten von* ‘to think of’ (32).

- (32) a. Ich halte viel von dir.  
b. \* Ich halte viel.  
c. \* Ich halte von dir.

**Attested verbs**

- *halten*



### 9.3.6 [ NA ] Nominative+accusative+evaluative

Both the manner adverbial and the accusative argument cannot be left out with *stimmen* in the meaning ‘to raise the atmosphere’ (33).

- (33) a. Die Musik stimmt die Leute freundlich.  
 b. \* Die Musik stimmt die Leute.  
 c. \* Die Musik stimmt freundlich.

#### Attested verbs

- *finden, stimmen*

#### Further examples

- Sie findet den Stuhl gut.

### 9.3.7 [ ND ] Nominative+dative+evaluative

The verb *bekommen* in the meaning ‘something agrees with someone’s health’ needs a dative and cannot be used without an adverbial (34a,b). With a negation the adverbial can be left out, though with the obvious implicature that the agreement is ‘bad’ (34c).

- (34) a. Das Essen bekommt mir schlecht.  
 b. \* Das Essen bekommt mir.  
 c. Das Essen bekommt mir nicht.

[9.48] The verb *fallen* in the meaning ‘to be difficult/easy’ can be used with either *schwer* or *leicht*, but apparently with no other adverbials (35).

- (35) a. Die Aufgabe fällt mir schwer/leicht.  
 b. \* Die Aufgabe fällt mir.

#### Attested verbs

- *bekommen, fallen*

### 9.3.8 [ D ] Dative+evaluative

[9.50]

Because there is no nominative argument in this special construction with *gehen*, meaning approximately ‘to cope with life’ (36a), a non-phoric *es* pronoun is necessary. Note that the same meaning of *gehen* also occurs in other impersonal constructions, see Section 9.3.9. Without the adverbial there is a conversational implicature that one is coping “so-so” with life (36b). Without the dative it seems like the pronoun *es* is always referential, though the reference is often implicit. For example, in (36c) the pronoun *es* seems to refer to something like “the using of the foot” (see also Section 9.3.9).

- (36) a. Mir geht es gut.  
b. (Wie geht es dir?) Es geht.  
c. Mein Fuß ist nicht mehr eingeschränkt, es geht besser.<sup>7</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- *gehen*

#### — Alternation with obligatory adverbial —

### 9.3.9 [ N | – ] Nominative drop+evaluative

Some verbs with an obligatory adverbial allow for the presence or absence of a nominative subject, like with *aussehen* ‘to appear’ (37a,b). The pronoun *es* is valency-simulating for the nominative subject (see Section 2.2.3). Whether this is better interpreted as the loss or the addition of an agent is unclear. These verbs need an additional manner adverbial, negation, or *wie* comparison clause. [9.51]

- (37) a. Er sieht gut aus.  
b. Hier sieht es gut aus.

#### Attested verbs

- *aussehen, funktionieren, gehen, klappen*

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<sup>7</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 27.07.2012 (online).

## Further examples

- Die Lampe funktioniert einwandfrei.  
Jetzt funktioniert es wieder gut.
- Das Radeln geht gut.  
So geht es jahrelang, bis es 1982 dann gar nicht mehr geht.<sup>8</sup>

## 9.4 Alternations without diathesis

[9.52] Adverbials are a regular part of German grammar. There are many different possibilities to add such adverbials to all German sentences, and it is of course extremely common for such an adverbial to be added without any change in valency. That is actually the regular situation with adverbials as illustrated with *schnell* ‘quickly’ in (38). This will not further be considered here.

- (38) a. Ich fahre nach Hause.  
b. Ich fahre schnell nach Hause.

[9.53] The situation is more interesting with preverbials. First, there are two special adjectival preverbials that are not resultatives, namely *los-* (Section 9.4.1) and *weiter-* (Section 9.4.2). Interestingly, these two appear to be the only adjectival preverbials that are not resultatives. These non-resultative preverbials have an temporal aspectual interpretation.

[9.54] Second, the addition of a resultative preverbial regularly leads to a diathesis (see the summary in Section 9.2.7). However there are also two highly productive patterns in which the addition of a resultative does not trigger a diathesis. With intransitive verbs an additional reflexive pronoun is needed (Section 9.4.3). In contrast, with transitive verbs there is no reflexive pronoun. With those verbs the addition of a resultative does not have any syntactic repercussions (Section 9.4.5).

## — Temporal aspect —

9.4.1 [ N | N ] *los-* Inchoative (*Inchoativ*)

The preverbial *los-* can be used without any diathesis. In that usage *los-* is a preverbial, but it is not a resultative preverbial (cf. Section 9.2.6). As a non-resultative preverbial *los-* indicates that an activity is starting, i.e. it marks an inchoative aspect, like with *losrennen* ‘to start running’ (39a). An early discussion of this inchoative aspect of *los-* is presented by Storch (ref-storch1978: 113–126).

<sup>8</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 03.01.2018, Nr. 01.

This inchoative *los-* is clearly different from a diathesis marking “detachment” that is also marked with *los-* (39b), as discussed in detail in Section 9.7.6. Diachronically, both uses of the preverbal *los-* are related to an older meaning of the adjective *los*, namely ‘free’. In contemporary German the adjective *los* basically means ‘loose’, which is not transparently related anymore to the inchoative meaning (39a), only to the detachment meaning (39b).

- (39) a. Der Junge rennt.  
           Der Junge rennt los.  
       b. Der Junge bindet den Hund los.

The inchoative *los-* occurs typically with intransitive verbs. To obtain a better indication of the kind of verbs with which the continuative *los-* is used, I classified the examples listed in the DWDS dictionary to obtain the list of attested verbs below (with only a few haphazard additions of my own).<sup>9</sup> One central generalisation is that *los-* cannot be combined with preverbs (like *ver-* or *auf-*). This incompatibility is consistent with the general complementary distribution of adjectival preverbials and preverbs (see paragraph 9.30 on page 402).

Further, it is astonishing how many manner-of-movement verbs (like *hetzen*, *krabbeln*, *marschieren*) and manner-of-speaking verbs (like *brüllen*, *kichern*, *schwatzen*) are mentioned in the dictionary. The *los-* inchoative is surely not limited to these kinds of verbs, as other intransitives are clearly attested as well (like *lachen*, *arbeiten*, *spucken*). However, for some reason acts of movement and speaking stand out to a lexicographer collecting data about *los-*.

There appears to be a strong overlap between the intransitive verbs that allow for *los-* and agentive intransitives (“unergative verbs”, see Section 10.2.5). The overlap is not perfect but robust. Contradicting this generalisation are various verbs have a *sein* perfect (see Section 10.4.2), e.g. *fliehen*, *fließen*, *gehen*, *gleiten*, *schreiten*, *steigen*, *stolpern*, *strömen*, *traben*. However, only very few of them allow for an attributive participle (see Section 10.2.4), namely *fliehen*, *fließen*, *stolpern*, and even fewer do not allow an impersonal passive (see Section 10.5.1), namely only *fließen* and *strömen*.

Additionally, for the manner-of-movement verbs only, the inchoative *los-* converts an agentive intransitive like *rennen* ‘to run’ into a patientive *losrennen* ‘to start running’ (cf. Section 10.2.5). For example, *rennen* (without directional modification) takes a *haben* perfect and the participle cannot be used attributively

<sup>9</sup> Attested on <https://www.dwds.de/wb/los->, accessed 3 September 2022.

(40a). A *sein* perfect and an attributive participle are only possible after a manner-of-movement diathesis (40b), see Section 6.8.2. Similarly, *losrennen* takes a *sein* perfect and allows for an attributive participle (40c).

- (40) a. Der Junge hat gerannt.  
       \*Der gerannte Junge [...].  
       b. Der Junge ist nach Hause gerannt.  
           Der nach Hause gerannte Junge [...].  
       c. Der Junge ist losgerannt.  
           Der losgerannte Junge [...].

[9.61] With transitive verbs, like *schreiben* ‘to write’ (41a), *lesen* ‘to read’ (41b) or *bauen* ‘to build’ (41c), the inchoative *los-* is only possible in constructions without any accusative object present. In such contexts these verbs basically function as intransitive verbs.

- (41) a. Dark schreibt los, das Klappern der Maschine erfüllt das  
       Dachgeschoss.<sup>10</sup>  
       b. Nathalie kramt flink in der Bücherkiste, zieht ein Buch heraus,  
           schlägt es auf und liest los.<sup>11</sup>  
       c. Gleich als der nächste Tag graute, baute er los.<sup>12</sup>

[9.62] Further, there are two kinds of transitive verbs that allow for continuative *los-*, but they additionally induce a diathesis. First, with transitive manner-of-attack verbs, like *hauen* ‘to bash’ (42a), the addition of a *los-* is clearly continuative: *loshauen* means ‘starting to bash’ (42b). However, the addition of *los-* with these verbs results in an antipassive diathesis, as the accusative *ihn* (42a) becomes an optional *auf* prepositional phrase (42b). The result is that *loshauen* is basically an intransitive verb. These examples are discussed in detail in Section 9.7.10.

- (42) a. Er haut ihn.  
       b. Er haut auf ihn los.

Second, transitive verbs that cause an object to move can be combined with inchoative *los-*, like with *schicken* ‘to send’ (43a). The preverbal *los-* replaces a directional location phrase in such examples (43b). This delocative diathesis is

[9.63]

<sup>10</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 15.12.2004.

<sup>11</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 03.06.2003.

<sup>12</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 22.06.1996.

discussed in detail in Section 9.7.6. Crucially, it is the accusative object that is affected by the inchoative aspect. So in the example below it is the accusative object (*Brief* ‘letter’) that starts moving, not the nominative subject (*Mädchen* ‘girl’).

- (43) a. Das Mädchen schickt den Brief nach Amerika.  
b. Das Mädchen schickt den Brief los.

The same “object-inchoative” effect can be observed with some intransitive verbs after a caused-movement diathesis (see Section 6.8.4). For example, the intransitive *hetzen* ‘to rush’ can be used with a regular intransitive inchoative *los-*, resulting in *loshetzen* meaning ‘to start rushing’ (44a). However, a caused-movement diathesis with *hetzen* leads to a meaning ‘to rush somebody’ (44b). The verb *loshetzen* then means ‘to cause somebody to start rushing’ (44c,d).

- (44) a. Die Tiere hetzen los.<sup>13</sup>  
b. Ich hetze die Tiere in den Wald.  
c. Ich hetze die Tiere los.  
d. Die serbische Spezialpolizei [...] hetzte uns dann los, niemand wußte, wohin.<sup>14</sup>

[9.65] The effect of these two meanings of *los-* is that there are two syntactic patterns for the verb *loshetzen*. The intransitive use has a perfect with *sein* and the transitive has a perfect with *haben*. This alternation is completely parallel to the unmarked causative diathesis as discussed in detail in Section 5.6.2.

- (45) a. Die Tiere sind losgehetzt.  
b. Ich habe die Tiere losgehetzt.

### Attested verbs

- Manner of movement: *düsen, gehen, fliegen, fließen, flitzen, gleiten, hetzen, krabbeln, krähen, laufen, marschieren, pesen, preschen, radeln, rasen, reiten, rennen, sausen, schreiten, schwimmen, schwirren, schnellen, segeln, spazieren, springen, stampfen, stolpern, strömen, stürmen, tanzen, tigern, traben*

<sup>13</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 19.02.2011, Nr. 7.

<sup>14</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 10.08.1999.

- Manner of speaking: *bellen, brüllen, donnern, feuern, fluchen, grölen, heulen, keifen, kichern, knurren, platzen, posaunen, prasseln, prusten, rattern, reden, schießen, schimpfen, schnattern, schreien, schwatzen, sprechen, sprudeln, wettern, wetzen, zetern*
- Bodily process: *husten, lachen, pinkeln, spucken, stinken, weinen*
- Intransitive activity: *arbeiten, ballern, hämmern, knattern, schmettern*
- Transitives without accusatives: *bauen, lesen, schreiben, etc.*

### Further examples

- Endlich hustet er los.<sup>15</sup>
- Ein Schauspieler holt seinen Pimmel raus und pinkelt los, echt.<sup>16</sup>
- Da spuckt die Maschine wieder los.<sup>17</sup>
- Der Blonde zuckte die Achseln und stieg los.<sup>18</sup>
- Und dann fließt der Autoverkehr los.<sup>19</sup>
- Was kann ich aber machen damit [die Mäuse] nicht gleich wieder losstinken?<sup>20</sup>
- Alarmanlagen sorgen dafür, dass Einbrecher losfliehen.<sup>21</sup>

#### 9.4.2 [ N | N ] *weiter*-Continuative (*Kontinuativ*)

The word *weiter* in German has a wide range of uses. This section deals with its non-resultative preverbal usage that has a temporal meaning ‘to continue an activity’, like in *weitergehen* ‘to continue on walking’. However, before discussing this continuative usage of *weiter*-, the preverbal structure first has to be separated from the various highly similar adverbial uses of *weiter*.

The word *weiter* originates as a comparative form of the adjective *weit* ‘far, wide’ (46a). Its local meaning of ‘further’ (46b) has been extended to also include a sense ‘additional’ (46c) when used as an adjective. Like all adjectives in German, *weiter* can also be used unchanged as an adverbial (46d).

<sup>15</sup>DWDS: Johnson, Uwe: Jahrestage, Bd. 1, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1970, S. 132.

<sup>16</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 17.12.2009, Nr. 52.

<sup>17</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 25.05.2009 (online).

<sup>18</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 26.04.1951, Nr. 17.

<sup>19</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 03.11.2005, Nr. 45.

<sup>20</sup>Attested online at <https://forum.mausebande.com/index.php?threads/nasen-stinken-d.25969/>, accessed 9 September 2022.

<sup>21</sup>Attested online at <https://www.heimwerk24.de/effektiv-vor-einbruch-schuetzen-12-wertvolle-tipps-tricks/>, accessed 9 September 2022.

- (46) a. Er macht einen weiten Sprung.  
 b. Der Athlet will einen noch weiteren Sprung machen.  
 c. Zwei weitere Teilnehmer treten ein.  
 d. Sie werden noch weiter springen.

[9.68]

As an adverbial, *weiter* has extended its local meaning to also include a more general sense of ‘to an even larger extent’ (47a). Both the local meaning and this more general usage can be identified by the possibility to add *noch* and become *noch weiter*. Furthermore, adverbial *weiter* can also mean approximately ‘still’ in a temporal sense (47b). In that usage it can be replaced by *weiterhin*. In contrast, the preverbal *weiter-* that will be the focus of the rest of this section cannot be replaced by either *noch weiter* nor by *weiterhin*. So, the impossibility of these paraphrases can be used as a test to separate preverbal *weiter-* from adverbial *weiter*.

- (47) a. Tim und Kolja hätten die Zeitung im Unterricht gerne weiter  
 gelesen.<sup>22</sup>  
 (= Sie hätten die Zeitung gerne *noch weiter* gelesen.)  
 b. Ja, natürlich, Bücher werden weiter gelesen.<sup>23</sup>  
 (= Bücher werden *weiterhin* gelesen.)

There are additional differences between adverbial *weiter* ‘further’ (48a) and preverbal *weiter-* ‘to continue’ (48b). Syntactically, *weiter* in adverbial usage can be separated from a nonfinite verb by other parts of the sentence (48c). In contrast, when used as a marker of continuation then *weiter-* is a preverbal that cannot be separated from its nonfinite verb (48d). This difference is typically mirrored in German orthography by writing two words (48e) versus one word (48f). The prosodic structure also supports this analysis, because adverbial ‘*weiter springen*’ (48e) has two separate stress domains, while preverbal ‘*weiter, springen*’ (48f) only has a single stress domain.

[9.69]

- (48) a. Sie springt weiter als alle anderen Teilnehmer.  
 b. Sie springt weiter, bis sie ihr Ziel geschafft hat.  
 c. Sie will weiter bis zur roten Linie springen.  
 d. Sie will bis zur Erschöpfung weiterspringen.  
 e. Sie will weiter springen.

<sup>22</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 07.09.1996.

<sup>23</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.01.2009, Nr. 03.



(= Sie will eine größere Distanz springen.)

f. Sie will weiterspringen.

(= Sie will fortfahren mit dem Springen.)

In many sentences the adverbial and preverbal uses are quite similar, and care has to be taken not to confuse them. However, the various syntactic tests (paraphrasing, separation, prosodic structure) and of course the obvious difference in meaning should be sufficient to clearly identify adverbial *weiter* (51a) from preverbal *weiter-* (49b).

(49) a. Sie werden den Kahn weiter in den Hafen schleppen.

(= Sie werden den Kahn noch weiter in den Hafen hinein schleppen.)

b. Sie werden den Kahn im Hafen weiterschleppen.

(= Im Hafen werden sie fortfahren mit dem Schleppen des Kahns.)

[9.71]

To obtain an indication of the kind of verbs with which the continuative preverbal *weiter-* is used, I classified many examples from the DWDS dictionary.<sup>24</sup> I extended these examples with some haphazard examples of my own to obtain the list of attested verbs below. Manner-of-movement verbs are again quite frequent, just as with *los-* in Section 9.4.1. Many other intransitives are also attested and it appears that continuative *weiter-* is basically used with agentive intransitives (“unergative verbs”, see Section 10.2.5), again similar to inchoative *los-*.

[9.72] However, *weiter-* also is used with other kinds of verbs, crucially including many transitive verbs, which is quite different from *los-*. Among the transitive verbs listed below there are various verbs that also have preverbs, like *ver-* in *weiterverfolgen* ‘to continue pursuing’ or *weiterverarbeiten* ‘to continue processing’. Resultative preverbials cannot be used together with preverbs (see paragraph 9.30 on page 402), so this indicates that *weiter-* is grammaticalising into an aspect marker. However, there are still strong restrictions on such *weiter*+preverb combinations. First, only verb prefixes appear to be possible (e.g. *be-* or *ver-*). Verb particles are not attested (e.g. no *an-* or *auf-*). Second, most attested examples are strongly lexicalised, like *weiterverwenden* ‘to continue using’, which is not transparently related anymore to *wenden* ‘to turn’.

With ditransitive verbs, like *empfehlen* ‘to recommend’ (50a), the preverbal *weiterempfehlen* (50b) has a slightly different semantics. It means approximately ‘to repeat the recommendation to somebody else’. Also, the dative recipient is

[9.73]

<sup>24</sup> Attested on <https://www.dwds.de/wb/weiter->, accessed 3 September 2022.

remapped to an *an* prepositional phrase (i.e. dative antipassive). For these reasons I consider this to be a different construction that will be discussed in Section 9.7.11.

- (50) a. Ich empfehle dir diesen Kuchen.  
 b. Ich empfehle diesen Kuchen an meine Freunde weiter.

### Attested verbs

- Manner of movement: *fahren, fliegen, fließen, gehen, gondeln, hasten, hetzen, irren, kommen, laufen, marschieren, rasen, reisen, reiten, rollen, schlurfen, schreiten, schwimmen, segeln, spazieren, tanzen, tasten, traben, trotten, trödeln, wandern, waten, ziehen, zockeln*
- Manner of speaking: *brausen, brummen, brüllen, flüstern, plappern, schwatzen, sprechen, tratschen*
- Bodily and natural process: *bestehen, bluten, brüten, existieren, leben, pen-  
nen, schlafen, schlummern, sprudeln, träumen, wachsen*
- Intransitive activity: *arbeiten, blättern, bohren, denken, drehen, essen, feiern,  
forschen, kramen, kämpfen, qualifizieren, qualmen, rauchen, reden, regieren,  
saufen, schießen, singen, spielen, streiken, studieren, trinken, verhandeln, win-  
ken, zechen*
- Transitive: *bauen, bearbeiten, befördern (transportieren), beschäftigen, be-  
treiben, bewegen, braten, bringen, entwickeln, fragen, fressen, führen, helfen,  
lesen, schieben, schleppen, schreiben, sehen, verarbeiten, verbreiten, verfolgen,  
verwenden, verwerten, zahlen*

### — Resultatives without diathesis —

#### 9.4.3 [ N | N ] Reflexive intransitive resultative (*Reflexiv Resultativ*)

There is a special construction that apparently only exists for some intransitive verbs, like *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ (6a). The verb is combined with a reflexive pronoun and a resultative adjectival preverbal. The meaning of this construction approximately amounts to ‘by performing the verb, the adjectival characteristic is achieved’ (51b). There is no role-remapping in this alternation, so this is no diathesis. The alternation is clearly related to the reflexive manner-of-movement diathesis (51c), see Section 7.8.1. Instead of a location phrase (*nach New York*), the current construction uses a resultative (*gesund*).

- (51) a. Ich schlafe.  
 b. Ich schlafe mich gesund.  
 (= Ich schlafe, und dadurch bin ich gesund.)  
 c. Ich träume.  
 Ich träume mich nach New York.

[9.75]

There are many different adjectives attested in this construction. The few examples listed below are only illustrative and are in no way intended to be an exhaustive survey. It seems like possible adjectives are only bound by a speaker's imagination. In contrast, the intransitive verbs that allow for this construction are clearly restricted. They are strongly related to the agentive class of intransitive (see Section 10.2.5). Typical patientive intransitives are not possible in this construction, like *scheitern* 'to fail' (52a) or *wachsen* 'to grow' (52b), though note constructions like (52c,d).

- (52) a. \* Ich scheitere mich glücklich.  
 b. \* Ich wachse mich groß.  
 c. Jens Spahn scheitert sich in der Gunst der Deutschen ganz nach oben.<sup>25</sup>  
 d. Der Wald wächst sich zu Tode.<sup>26</sup>

[9.76]

The same reflexive+resultative alternation is attested with some verbs that take a governed preposition, like *totlachen* 'to laugh extremely' (53a). In this alternation the governed prepositional phrase can be retained. This is crucially different from a resultative applicative (see Section 9.8.1). In that diathesis there is no reflexive pronoun and the prepositional phrase is promoted to accusative with the addition of a resultative, like with *kleinlachen* 'to diminish something by laughing' (53b).

- (53) a. Ich lache (über den Witz).  
 Ich lache mich tot (über den Witz).  
 b. Ich lache über die Politik.

<sup>25</sup> Attested online at <https://www.tichyseinblick.de/daili-es-sentials/spahn-beliebtheit-impfstart/>, accessed 27 August 2022.

<sup>26</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 30.12.1998.

[Die] große Politik wird kleingelacht.<sup>27</sup>

When the combination of resultative and verb is considered to be a new lexicalised predicate (i.e. *totlachen*, *festbeißen*, etc.), then all these verbs would be obligatorily reflexive, alike to the verbs in Section 7.3.1.

### Attested verbs

- fest- : *beißen*, *lesen*, *rennen*, *saugen*
- frei- : *schwimmen*, *singen*
- gesund- : *schlafen*, *sparen*
- glücklich- : *laufen*
- kaputt- : *arbeiten*, *lachen*, *schreien*
- locker- : *laufen*
- los- : *lügen*
- reich- : *sparen*
- schief- : *lachen*
- schlapp- : *lachen*
- tot- : *ärgern*, *arbeiten*, *fressen*, *hungern*, *lachen*, *laufen*, *malochen*, *rackern*, *saufen*, *schämen*, *trinken*, *weinen*

### Further examples

- Ich lache mich tot/kaputt/schlapp.
- Ich laufe mich glücklich.
- Ich spare mich reich.
- Der Hund beißt sich (in meinem Bein) fest.
- Ich arbeite an einem Buch.  
Ich arbeite mich tot.
- Die Jungen saugen an den Zitzen.  
Die Jungen saugen sich an den Zitzen des Muttertieres fest.
- Hier blättert man gern herum und liest sich fest.<sup>28</sup>
- Die Zuschauer, seine Mannschaftskameraden schriegen sich die Kehle kaputt.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Attested online at <https://www.antennebrandenburg.de/service/veranstaltungen/presentationen/regionalstudios-praesentationen/frankfurt/2022/hunde--die-pellen--beissen-nicht.html>, accessed 16 September 2022.

<sup>28</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 06.10.2001.

<sup>29</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 30.07.1976, Nr. 32.

- Zwei Strassenmädchen flogen mit wirbelnden Rocken einem Mann entgegen, der sich losgelogen hatte.<sup>30</sup>

#### 9.4.4 [ N | N ] *los/fest*- natural process

Intransitive verbs with a resultative preverbal, but without a reflexive pronoun, appear to be extremely rare. I know of only a few examples describing natural processes, like *rosten* ‘to rust’ (54a). With this verb, no reflexive pronoun is necessary with a resultative preverbal, like *festrosten* ‘to rust into something’ (161b). This is clearly different from the more common intransitive construction with a reflexive pronoun discussed previously (Section 9.4.3). The verbs with *fest*- listed below are typically (but not obligatorily) used with an additional location (54c).

- (54) a. Die Züge rosten.  
 b. Die Züge rosten fest.  
 c. Züge rosten an ihren Gleisen fest.<sup>31</sup>

[9.79] This construction only seems to occur with the resultatives *fest*- and *los*-, similar to the delocative diathesis that is discussed in Section 9.7.6. The case of *warmlaufen* seems to be an idiosyncrasy.

#### Attested verbs

- *fest*- : *frieren, laufen, rosten, wachsen*
- *los*- : *frieren, rosten, tauen*
- *warm*- : *laufen*

#### Further examples

- Die Verhandlungen laufen fest.
- Der Motor läuft warm.
- Rostende Fahrzeuge wachsen im Gras fest.<sup>32</sup>
- Oder ein Zipfel meiner Decke friert am Fenster fest.<sup>33</sup>
- Doch am Ende eines fünfstündigen Diskussionsmarathons hagelten Zwischenrufe auf ihn nieder.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Attested online at <https://www.amazon.de/dp/1235151247>, accessed 9 September 2022.

<sup>31</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.05.2002, Nr. 20.

<sup>32</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 20.09.2001, Nr. 39.

<sup>33</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.02.2014, Nr. 7.

<sup>34</sup> DWDS: Die Welt, 24.09.1999.

- Mutter, die Fenster wollen heute nicht lostauen!<sup>35</sup>
- Das Auspuff Endrohr ist losgerostet.<sup>36</sup>
- Dann besteht die Gefahr, dass die Steine losfrieren.<sup>37</sup>

#### 9.4.5 [ NA | NA ] Transitive resultative (*Transitiv Resultativ*)

The addition of a resultative preverbal to transitive verbs (i.e. basic nominative+accusative verbs) does not lead to any role remapping. For example, *prügeln* ‘to beat’ (55a) and *totprügeln* ‘to beat to death’ (55b) show exactly the same valency. Such resultative transitive verbs without diathesis appear to be frequent and the examples given below are just a few illustrative verbs. It is unclear to me whether there is any restriction on which adjectives or verbs can occur in this construction. [9.80]

- (55) a. Der Vater prügelt den Sohn.  
b. Der Vater prügelt den Sohn tot.

#### Attested verbs

- fern- : *lenken*
- fertig- : *bauen, schreiben*
- frei- : *legen, kaufen*
- gesund- : *pflegen*
- gut- : *machen*
- kaputt- : *fahren, kochen*
- leer- : *fegen*
- platt- : *walzen*
- sauber- : *bürsten*
- schön- : *schreiben*
- tot- : *beißen, hetzen, kitzeln, peitschen, prügeln, schießen, schlagen, spritzen, stechen, treten*
- trocken- : *bügeln, reiben, schleudern, wischen*
- wach- : *kitzeln, küssen, rufen*

<sup>35</sup>DWDS: Bergg, Franz: Ein Proletarierleben. In: Simons, Oliver (Hg.) Deutsche Autobiographien 1690–1930, Berlin: Directmedia Publ. 2004 (1913), S. 4996.

<sup>36</sup>Attested online at <https://www.bulliforum.com/viewtopic.php?t=66958>, accessed 8 September 2022.

<sup>37</sup>Attested online at <https://www.come-on.de/lennetal/nachrodt-wiblingwerde/nachrodt-wiblingwerdehangsicherungserpentinenebewehrte-erde-8639613.html>, accessed 8 September 2022.

### Further examples

- Ich schieße den Bären.  
Ich schieße den Bären tot.
- Ich koche den Reis.  
Ich koche den Reis kaputt.
- Er macht einen Fehler.  
Er macht seinen Fehler gut.
- Ich fahre das Auto.  
Ich fahre das Auto kaputt.
- Die Arbeiter legen ein neues Kabel.  
Die Arbeiter legen das alte Kabel frei.
- Ich kaufe die Sklaven.  
Ich kaufe die Sklaven frei.

## 9.5 Diatheses with subject demotion

### — [ SBJ > Ø ] — *Aktionsbewertung*

#### 9.5.1 [ N | – ] Reflexive intransitive drop+evaluative

[9.81] Many intransitives allow for a dropping of the nominative with an obligatory reflexive pronoun *sich* and an obligatory adjectival manner adverbial. Because of the dropped nominative there is an obligatory non-phoric *es* in such sentences (56a). Such constructions seem to be possible with very many intransitive verbs, though with some, like *aufstehen* ‘rise’ (56b), it is of debatable grammaticality. More research is needed into the question which intransitive verbs do not allow this diathesis.

- (56) a. In der Gruppe lacht es sich besser.  
b. ? Am frühen morgen steht es sich schlecht auf.

[9.82] A very similar diathesis is attested with transitives, see Section 9.5.2, but in that case the accusative is retained as a nominative (i.e. anticausative). Also note that the connection between an intransitive subject drop and a transitive anticausative is strongly reminiscent of the unaccusative hypothesis, see Section 10.2.5. However, there does not seem to be an obvious match between patientive (“unaccusative”) verbs and the verbs that allow for the current diathesis (cf. ref-steinbach1998: 15–18).

### Attested verbs

- Very many intransitives allow for this construction, like:  
*leben, tanzen, lachen, ertrinken*, etc.
- However, there are many exceptions that do not seem to allow this construction, like:  
*aufstehen, beginnen, stinken*, etc.

### Further examples

- Hier lebt es sich gut.
- In diesem Saal tanzt es sich gut.
- Beim Kanufahren ertrinkt es sich leichter als bei der Aquarellmalerei.

### — [ OBJ > SBJ > Ø ] — *Bewertungsantikausativ*

#### 9.5.2 [ NA | –N ] Reflexive anticausative+evaluative

With many transitive verbs an anticausative is only possible with an evaluative manner adjective and a reflexive pronoun (57). There is a clear parallel to the diathesis for intransitives described in Section 9.5.1. The semantically highly similar *lassen+Infinitiv* construction (57c) does not need the adverbial (see Section 11.5.5).

[9.83]

- (57)
- a. Ich schneide die Wurst mit diesem Messer.
  - b. Die Wurst schneidet sich schwer mit diesem Messer.
  - c. Die Wurst lässt sich mit diesem Messer schneiden.

[9.84] Kunze (ref-kunze1996: 647) and Steinbach (ref-steinbach1998) call this “middle”, Zifonun (ref-zifonun2003) “fazilitives Medium”, Wiemer & Nedjalkov (ref-wiemer2007: 465–466) classify it as a “passive-like meaning of reflexive” and Kulikov (ref-kulikov2011: 375–376) talks about a “potential agentless passive”. Steinbach (ref-steinbach1998: 25ff.) argues that the adverbial is not necessary in the “middle” construction, but this is because he combines different constructions under the heading of “middle”. His examples without adverbial are discussed here as a separate construction in Section 7.5.2.

### Attested verbs

- *fahren, finden, gehen, laufen, lesen, lernen, malen, schneiden, schreiben, spielen, springen, tanzen, verdienen, verkaufen*, etc.



### Further examples

- Ich fahre einen Lastwagen.  
Der Lastwagen fährt sich gut.
- Ich verkaufe das Buch.  
Das Buch verkauft sich gut.
- Ich schreibe Briefe mit einem Bleistift.  
Briefe schreiben sich schlecht mit einem Bleistift.
- Ich finde neue Freunde.  
Neue Freunde finden sich nur schwer.
- Ich male ein Bild.  
Das Bild hat sich wie von alleine gemalt.
- Ich spiele Klavier.  
Das Klavier spielt sich angenehm.
- Er hat den Marathon gelaufen.  
Ein Marathon läuft sich nicht einfach so.
- Er hat den Salto gesprungen.  
Ein Salto springt sich nicht einfach so.
- Er hat den Tango getanzt.  
Ein Tango tanzt sich ganz leicht.
- Ich lese den Roman.  
Der neue Roman liest sich müheelos.

### Notes

[9.8] Some of these verbs can also occur with a “free” reflexive, see Section 7.4.4.

- (58) a. Ich höre (mir) deinen Vorschlag an.  
Dein Vorschlag hört sich gut an.
- b. Ich verdiene (mir) ein Vermögen.  
Ein Vermögen verdient sich leicht.

### 9.5.3 [ NA | -N ] Anticausative+evaluative

The verb *riechen* ‘to smell’ allows for an anticausative alternation (59a,b), but the intransitive obligatorily needs an evaluative adverbial. It is possible to leave out the adverbial, but then a strong negative conversational implicature arises, i.e. without an adverbial the smell is bad (59c). Interestingly, with *schmecken* ‘to taste’ the absence of an adverbial leads to a positive implicature (59d).

## 9 Adverbial alternations

- (59) a. Ich rieche den Duft.  
b. Der Duft riecht gut.  
c. Der Müll riecht (schlecht).  
d. Das Essen schmeckt (gut).

### Attested verbs

- *riechen, schmecken*

### Further examples

- Ich schmecke den Rotwein in der Soße.  
Der Rotwein schmeckt (mir) gut.

— [ ADJ > SBJ > Ø ] —

### 9.5.4 [ Np | -N ] Conciliative+evaluative

Some verbs that have a prototypical instrument connected to the action allow for the instrument to be turned into the nominative subject, but only with the addition of an evaluative adverbial, like with *schneiden* ‘to cut’ (60). [9.87]

- (60) a. Ich schneide das Brot mit einem Messer.  
b. ? Das Messer schneidet.  
c. Das Messer schneidet gut.

### Attested verbs

- *schneiden, schreiben*

### Further examples

- Ich schreibe den Brief mit einem Füller.  
Der Füller schreibt gut/nicht/angenehm.

— [ PBJ &gt; SBJ &gt; Ø ] —

## 9.5.5 [ NL | –N ] Reflexive location anticausative+evaluative

[9.88] With some intransitive verbs, like *sitzen* ‘to sit’ (61a) a locational argument can be promoted to subject, but only with an additional reflexive pronoun and a manner adverbial (61b). This might be interpreted as a variant of the *Aktionsbewertung* (61c), see Section 9.5.1.

- (61) a. Ich sitze auf der Bank.  
 b. Die Bänke sitzen sich gut.<sup>38</sup>  
 c. Es sitzt sich gut auf der Bank.

## Attested verbs

- *klettern, liegen, sitzen, schwimmen*

## Further examples

- Ich schwimme im Becken.  
 Das Becken an sich schwimmt sich gut.<sup>39</sup>
- Die Matratze liegt sich gut.<sup>40</sup>
- Die Route klettert sich wirklich sehr schön.

— [ PBJ &gt; SBJ &gt; ADJ ] —

9.5.6 [ NL | pN ] *voll/leer*- Location passive

[9.89] A very peculiar diathesis is attested with alluvial verbs like *laufen* in the meaning ‘to pour’ (62a). In this meaning, the location phrase is obligatory. By adding the resultative preverbal *voll-* (possibly also *leer-*) a passive-like diathesis arises (62b). The obligatory location is promoted to nominative subject. The original nominative can optionally be retained as a *mit* prepositional phrase with the resultative *voll-*. This diathesis is clearly related to the transitive diathesis with *voll* and *leer-* described in Section 9.7.5 and Section 9.7.4, respectively.

- (62) a. Das Wasser läuft in die Badewanne.  
 b. Die Badewanne läuft voll (mit Wasser).

<sup>38</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 24.02.2005.

<sup>39</sup>Attested online at <https://chlorhuhn.wordpress.com/2017/11/28/jetzt-tatsaechlich-umbau-in-der-olympiaschwimmhalle/>, accessed 21 August 2022.

<sup>40</sup>Attested online at <http://www.hans-struve.de/richtiges-lueften-im-schlafzimmer-eine-tuecke-der-physik/>, accessed 21 August 2022.

### Attested verbs

- voll- : *laufen, fließen, sich saugen, sickern, strömen*
- leer- : *laufen, fließen, strömen*

### Further examples

- Die DDR lief leer.<sup>41</sup>
- Heute nacht ist unsre große Schale | Bis zu ihrem Rande vollgeflossen.<sup>42</sup>
- Die Kirche strömt voll.<sup>43</sup>
- Die Aushöhlung ist mit Grubenwasser vollgesickert.<sup>44</sup>

### Notes

The verb *saugen* ‘to suck’ (63) shows an interesting stack of diatheses (see Section 2.5 on the notion of a “stack”). There are three roles involved, (i) the “sucker” agent (*Kind* ‘child’) that does the sucking, (ii) the “suckee” liquid (*Milch* ‘milk’) that is being absorbed and (iii) the container, *Tuch* ‘cloth’ that holds the liquid. Note that the choice of container in this example is slightly unusual to make the stack of diatheses clearer. The stack starts off with a basic intransitive construction (63a), which leads via a caused motion diathesis (63b) and a reflexive anticausative diathesis (63c) to the current resultative location anticausative diathesis (63d).

[9.90]

- (63)
- a. Das Kind saugt an dem Tuch.
  - b. +> Caused motion (Section 6.8.4): Das Kind saugt Milch aus dem Tuch.
  - c. +> Reflexive anticausative (Section 7.5.4): Die Milch saugt sich in das Tuch.
  - d. +> Resultative location passive (this section): Das Tuch saugt sich voll (mit Milch).

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<sup>41</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 09.08.2001, Nr. 33.

<sup>42</sup>Emanuel von Bodman, Erfüllung, attested online at [https://gedichte.xbib.de/Bodman%2C+Emanuel+von\\_gedicht\\_0826.+Erf%FCllung.htm](https://gedichte.xbib.de/Bodman%2C+Emanuel+von_gedicht_0826.+Erf%FCllung.htm), accessed 31 August 2022.

<sup>43</sup>DWDS: Zeit Magazin, 14.03.2013, Nr. 12.

<sup>44</sup>Attested online at <https://www.gamepro.de/artikel/unmechanical-im-test-mechanischer-herzchirurg.3010962.html>, accessed 2 September 2022.

## 9.6 Diatheses with promotion to subject

– [ ADJ > SBJ ] –

### 9.6.1 [ p | N ] *voll-* Weather location

The diathesis in (64) with weather verbs like *schneien* ‘to snow’ is a rare example <sup>[9.91]</sup> of a promotion-to-subject induced by a resultative preverbal. However, this idiosyncrasy can of course easily be explained as a slight variant of the previously discussed passive-like diathesis, but used here with verbs without a subject (see Section 9.5.6).

- (64) a. Es schneit auf den Trainingsplatz.  
b. Der Trainingsplatz schneit voll.

#### Attested verbs

- *voll-* : *regnen, schneien*

## 9.7 Diatheses with object demotion

– [ OBJ > Ø ] – *Aktionsfokus*

### 9.7.1 [ NA | N– ] Accusative drop+evaluative

<sup>[9.92]</sup> Many transitive verbs can be used without an accusative object. However, with some verbs such a deaccusative comes easier than for others. Real ambitransitive verbs that occur both as transitive and as intransitive, but without needing any extra marking in the intransitive, are discussed in Section 5.7.1. In contrast, for many other transitive verbs, like *sehen* ‘to see’ (65a), the drop of the accusative is highly restricted. It might be possible in an ability setting, meaning something like ‘I am able to see’ (65b). In such an intended meaning, what seems to happen is that the focus of the utterance becomes the action itself, i.e. the seeing. However, this makes much more sense with the addition of a specification of the action by an adverbial (65c). It is currently unclear to me, whether this is simply a pragmatic effect or whether this amounts to a real diathesis.

- (65) a. Ich sehe das Haus.  
b. ? Ich sehe.  
    (= Ich kann sehen.)  
c. Ich sehe gut.

### Attested verbs

- *kaufen, schenken, sehen, treffen, werfen*, etc.

### Further examples

- Ich schenke immer viel zu viel.  
\*Ich schenke.
- Hunderttausende guckten viel und kauften wenig.<sup>45</sup>
- Aber nicht nur er hatte Probleme, auch James (24 Punkte) und Wade (22) warfen viel und trafen wenig.<sup>46</sup>

– [ OBJ > Ø ] –

#### 9.7.2 [ NA | N– ] Endoreflexive+evaluative

The verb *fühlen* ‘to feel’ (66a) is similar to endoreflexive verbs (see Section 7.7.1),<sup>[9.93]</sup> but with an obligatory evaluative adverbial (66b,c). Without the evaluation, a sentence like (66c) might still be possible, but only when it is interpreted with self-inflicting reflexive reference, viz. ‘I touch myself’.

- (66)
- a. Ich fühle die Schmerzen.
  - b. Ich fühle mich schlecht.
  - c. \* Ich fühle mich.

### Attested verbs

- *fühlen*

#### 9.7.3 [ NA | N– ] Accusative *es*+evaluative

Some verbs allow for constructions with a non-phoric pronoun *es* apparently in the accusative case (see Section 6.3.5). With some verbs in this construction an evaluative manner adverbial is also necessarily present, like with *meinen* ‘to deem’ (67a,b). Without the manner adverbial the only possible interpretation of the pronoun *es* is phoric (67d).

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<sup>45</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 16.08.1999.

<sup>46</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 01.06.2011 (online).

- (67) a. Ich meine deinen Bruder.  
 b. Ich meine es ernst.  
 c. \*Ich meine ernst.  
 d. ? Ich meine es.  
 (= Ich meine das, was ich vorher behauptet habe.)

#### Attested verbs

- *haben, meinen*

#### Further examples

- Wir haben viel Geld.  
 Wir haben es gut.

### — [ PBJ > OBJ > Ø ] — *Resultativ Ganz/leer-Objekttausch*

#### 9.7.4 [ NLA | NA- ] *leer/frei-* Object exchange

[9.95]

This diathesis is one of the various kinds of object exchange, i.e. the role marked as accusative is exchanged between the alternants. The current variant is an example of the EMPTIED HOLONYM object exchange (cf. Section 2.7.5.2). The new object after the exchange is a holonym (“whole”) that is emptied from the original meronymic object (“part”). The preposition used with the holonym is either *aus* or *von* in this diathesis. There is a parallel diathesis with preverbs discussed in detail in Section 8.7.12.

The primary group of verbs that allow for this diathesis consists of verbs that describe emptying a container, marked by the preverbal *leer-*. For example, *räumen* ‘to clear’ (68a) can be used to describing removing the contents (here *Geschirr* ‘cutlery’) out of a container (here *Spülmaschine* ‘dish washer’). In this usage, the container is expressed with an obligatory *aus* prepositional phrase (68a,b). In contrast, the resultative verb *leerräumen* ‘to empty’ (68c) marks the container as the accusative object, and the contents cannot be expressed anymore (68d).

- (68) a. Ich räume das Geschirr aus der Spülmaschine.  
 b. \*Ich räume das Geschirr.  
 c. Ich räume die Spülmaschine leer.  
 d. \*Ich räume die Spülmaschine vom Geschirr leer.

A second group of verbs that allow for this diathesis consists of consumption

verbs like *trinken* ‘to drink’ (69). With these verbs a container is emptied by eating or drinking the contents. Interestingly, the verb *kaufen* ‘to buy’ syntactically fits in perfectly with this group (69b). Slightly different from the previous group, the container is not obligatory with consumption verbs, cf. the prepositional phrases with *Flasche* ‘bottle’ in (69a) and *Laden* ‘shop’ in (69b) can be left out.

- (69) a. Ich trinke Wasser (aus der Flasche).  
       Ich trinke die Flasche leer.  
       b. Ich kaufe Karotten (im Laden).  
       Ich kaufe den Laden leer.

The same diathesis is also attested with the resultative *frei*- ‘free’. This is used with verbs that describe some kind of uncovering. For example, the verb *wischen* ‘to wipe’ (70a,b) obligatorily needs an accusative (here *Blätter* ‘leaves’) and a location (here *Auto* ‘car’). In contrast, *freiwischen* ‘to wipe clean’ normally only takes an accusative describing the object that is being cleaned (70c). Different from *leer*- above, it might be possible to retain the old accusative with *freiwischen*, but this seems to be very uncommon (70d). Semantically, the roles that are effected by the *frei*- diathesis are a cover (*Blätter*) and a covered object (*Auto*). The fact that this diathesis is possible implies that the German language treats a cover as a meronym and the covered object as the holonym.

[9.98]

- (70) a. Ich wische die Blätter vom Auto.  
       b. \* Ich wische die Blätter.  
       c. Ich wische das Auto frei.  
       d. ? Ich wische das Auto von den Blätter frei.

### Attested verbs

- *leer*- : (empty a container) *buddeln, kratzen, pumpen, rauben, räumen, saugen, schaufeln, stehlen*
- *leer*- : (empty by consumption) *bestellen, essen, kaufen, knabbern, löffeln, nippen, nuckeln, saufen, schlürfen, trinken*
- *frei*- : (uncover) *arbeiten, fegen, klopfen, räumen, schaufeln, schneiden, wischen*

### Further examples

- Er schaufelt den Sand aus den Waggon.  
   Er schaufelt den Waggon leer.



- Die Gäste kratzen die Reste aus den Topf.  
Die Gäste haben den Topf leergekratzt.
- Ich schlürfe den Tee (aus meiner Tasse).  
Ich schlürfe die Tasse leer.
- Ich esse die Kartoffel (von dem Teller).  
Ich esse den Teller leer.
- [...] weil die Menschen uns das Lager leerbestellt haben.<sup>47</sup>
- Mein Mann hatte im Nullkommanix die ersten Tüte leergeknabbert.<sup>48</sup>
- Zufrieden löffelt er seinen Sorbet-Becher leer.<sup>49</sup>
- Entlang der Totenhalle wurde fast das komplette Beet leer gestohlen.<sup>50</sup>
- Ich schaufele den Schnee von den Gleisen.  
Ich schaufele die Gleise frei.
- Die Arbeiter haben die Wrackteile von den Gleisen geräumt.  
Die Arbeiter haben die Gleise freigeräumt.
- Ich arbeite die Papiere von meinem Schreibtisch.  
Ich arbeite den Schreibtisch frei.
- Ich klopfe viele Farbschichten von dem Fachwerk.  
Ich klopfe das Fachwerk frei.
- Ich fege den Sand von der Terrasse.  
Ich fege die Terrasse frei.
- Ich schneide die Zweige vom überwucherten Pfad. Ich schneide den überwucherten Pfad frei. Feuerwehrleute schnitten die Eingeklemmten frei.<sup>51</sup>

— [ PBJ > OBJ > ADJ ] — *Resultativ Ganz/voll-Objekttausch*

9.7.5 [ NLA | NAp ] *voll-* Object exchange

[9.99] This diathesis is yet another kind of object exchange, i.e. it is a diathesis in which the role marked as accusative is changed between the alternants. The current variant is always marked with the resultative preverb *voll-* and is an example of the FILLED HOLONYM object exchange (cf. Section 2.7.5.2). The new object after the diathesis is a holonym (“whole”) that is filled with the original meronymic

<sup>47</sup> Attested online at <https://twitter.com/aufgeteet/status/1246679437053235201>, accessed 9 September 2022.

<sup>48</sup> Attested online at <https://www.brandsyoullove.de/project/pausencracker/Super-leckerer-Snack.BUHx/detail.html>, accessed 9 September 2022.

<sup>49</sup> DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 11.02.2002.

<sup>50</sup> Attested online at <https://mags.de/presse-detail/diebstahl-auf-dem-friedhof-holt>, accessed 10 September 2022.

<sup>51</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 03.06.2015 (online).

object (“part”). When not marked as accusative, the preposition used with the holonym is either *in*, *an* or *auf*. The preposition for the meronym is always *mit*. There is a parallel diathesis the preverbs, discussed in detail in Section 8.7.13.

An example is the verb *schenken* ‘to pour’ and the alternant *vollschenken* ‘to pour until full’ <sup>[9.100]</sup>. Before the diathesis, the moved substance (here *Wein* ‘wine’) is marked as an accusative object and the container (here *Glas* ‘glass’) is expressed as an obligatory prepositional phrase (71a,b). After the diathesis, the verb *vollschenken* (71c) marks the container as the accusative object (*Glas*) and the moved substance (*Wein*) is expressed with a *mit* prepositional phrase, or dropped completely. The verbs that allow for this diathesis describe an action in which a container is filled with a moved substance, so the new accusative after the diathesis is the filled holonym. This diathesis is typically stacked with a subsequent possessor-of-accusative dative (71c), see Section 5.8.4, which can also be a self-inflicting reflexive pronoun (71d), see Section 7.4.8.

- (71) a. Ich schenke den Wein in das Glas.  
 b. \* Ich schenke den Wein.  
 c. Ich schenke das Glas voll (mit Wein).  
 d. Ich schenke ihm das (‘sein’) Glas voll.  
 e. Er schenkt sich das (‘sein’) Glas voll.

A second group of verbs that allow for this object exchange are verbs that describe filling some kind of canvas, i.e. writing, painting, etc. For example, the verb *malen* ‘to paint’ (72a) marks the role of the painting as an accusative object (here *Porträt* ‘portrait’), and the role of the canvas is expressed with an *auf* prepositional phrase (here *Leinwand* ‘canvas’). The preverbial *vollmalen* ‘to paint out completely’ (72b) reverses the marking of these two roles. Different from the previous verb of filling a container, the prepositional phrase for the canvas in (72a) is not obligatory. <sup>[9.101]</sup>

- (72) a. Ich habe ein Porträt (auf eine Leinwand) gemalt.  
 b. Ich habe die Leinwand (mit einem Porträt) vollgemalt.

### Attested verbs

- voll- : (fill a container) *bauen, füllen, gießen, häufen, kleben, laden, packen, pflanzen, pumpen, säen, schenken, schöpfen, schmieren, stecken, stellen, tanken*
- voll- : (fill a canvas) *drucken, kritzeln, malen, schreiben, sprühen, tippen, zeichnen*

## Further examples

- Ich lade Heu auf den Wagen.  
Ich lade den Wagen voll (mit Heu).
- Ich packe die Einkäufe in den Wagen.  
Ich packe den Wagen voll (mit Einkäufe).
- Ich pumpe Luft in den Reifen.  
Ich pumpe den Reifen voll (mit Luft).
- Ich tanke Benzin in das Auto.  
Ich tanke das Auto voll (mit Benzin).
- Ich stelle Möbel in die Stube.  
Ich stelle die Stube voll (mit Möbel).
- Die Kinder stecken Rosen in den Kranz.  
Die Kinder haben den Kranz (mit Rosen) vollgesteckt.
- Der Bauer sät Hafer auf dem Feld.  
Der Bauer hat das Feld (mit Hafer) vollgesät.
- Tobias häuft das Essen auf seinen Teller.  
Auch Tobias häufte sich den Teller voll.<sup>52</sup>
- Ich schreibe Buchstaben (in das Buch).  
Ich schreibe das Buch voll (mit Buchstaben).
- Ich kritzele mein Namen an die Wand.  
Ich kritzele die Wand (mit meinen Namen) voll.

— [ PBJ > ADJ ] — *Resultativ Delokativ*9.7.6 [ NAL | NAp ] *los/fest/frei-* Transitive location drop

[9.102]

A location prepositional phrase is obligatory present with verbs that describe making a connection between two entities, like *binden* ‘to tie’ (73a,b). In contrast, when adding the resultative *los-* ‘loose’ in *losbinden* ‘to untie’ (73c,d), then the location phrase is not obligatory anymore. This delocative diathesis is attested both with the preverbal *los-* ‘loose’ for detachment and *fest-* ‘tight’ for attachment. For the parallel diathesis with preverbs, see Section 8.7.11. The preverbal *fest-* is also used for a different diathesis, see Section 9.8.3.

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<sup>52</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.07.2008, Nr. 06.

## 9 Adverbial alternations

- (73) a. Ich binde den Hund an die Leine.  
b. \* Ich binde den Hund.  
c. Ich binde den Hund von der Leine los.  
d. Ich binde den Hund los.

A different group of “excavation” verbs can be combined with the resultative *frei-*. They show syntactically exactly the same delocative diathesis as before. For example, the verb *bohren* ‘to drill’ can be used in a caused-movement construction with an obligatory accusative and location (74a,b). In contrast, with the resultative *freibohren* ‘to drill free’ the location is not obligatory anymore (74c,d).

- (74) a. Sie haben die Bergleute aus der Höhle gebohrt.  
b. \* Sie haben die Bergleute gebohrt.  
c. Sie haben die Bergleute aus der Höhle freigebohrt.  
d. Sie haben die Bergleute freigebohrt.

The preverbal *los-* is also attested with some verbs that cause something else to move. Although this diathesis is syntactically the same delocative diathesis as with *binden* above, semantically this “cause to move” construction is closer to the inchoative usage of *los-* (see Section 9.4.1). This typically applies to verbs of sending, like *schicken* ‘to send’ (75a). However, also verbs with a caused-movement diathesis, like *klopfen* ‘to knock’ (75b) allow for this inchoative usage of *los-* (cf. Section 6.8.4).

[9.104]

- (75) a. Ich schicke den Brief nach Amerika.  
Ich schicke den Brief los.  
b. Ich klopfe die Rinde von dem Baum.  
Ich klopfe die Rinde los.

[9.105] The example with *werfen* ‘to throw’ (76a) illustrates the close relationship between these two uses of *los-*, i.e. ‘loose’ and ‘onwards’. By throwing, the *Leine* ‘rope’ is detached (from the ship), but at the same time the rope is also caused to move (towards the shore). Similarly with *lostreten* (76b), which can be used locationally in the meaning ‘to unfasten by trampling’ but also temporally ‘to set in motion’.

- (76) a. Der Kapitän wirft die Leine los.<sup>53</sup>  
b. Der Wanderer trat einen Felsen los.  
Die Entscheidung trat eine Protestwelle los.

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<sup>53</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.10.2003, Nr. 44.

### Attested verbs

- los- : (detachment) *binden, ketten, klopfen, koppeln, sägen, schnallen, schneiden, schrauben, treten*
- fest- : (attachment) *binden, haken, hämmern, heften, klammern, kleben, klopfen, knoten, nageln, schnallen, schnüren, schrauben*
- frei- : (uncovering by excavation) *bohren, graben, präparieren*
- los- : (causing to move) *bringen, hetzen, jagen, schicken, senden, treten, werfen*

### Further examples

- Die Arbeiter klopfen die Pflastersteine in den Bürgersteig.  
Die Arbeiter klopfen die letzten Pflastersteine fest.<sup>54</sup>
- Ich klammere die Wäsche an die Leine.  
Ich klammere die Wäsche (an der Leine) fest.
- Der Geheimagent schraubt den Schallschutzdämpfer auf die Pistole.  
Er schraubt den Schallschutzdämpfer fest.
- Frauen und Kinder klopfen die Rinde los und verpacken sie in Körbe und Säcke.<sup>55</sup>
- Augenzeugen berichteten, die Polizei habe angekettete Ordensleute losgeschnitten und fortgetragen.<sup>56</sup>
- Er schickt einen Testballon los.<sup>57</sup>
- Festgehalten ist, wie er die Begleiter loshetzt und sie zum Killen auffordert.<sup>58</sup>
- Zwischendurch stoppt Lienen das Spiel und korrigiert Positionen, dann jagt er die Spieler wieder los.<sup>59</sup>
- Ich habe die Räder aus dem Sand gegraben.  
Ich habe die Räder freigegeben.
- Der Arzt präpariert die Arterie aus dem Arm.  
Der Arzt präpariert die Arterie frei.

#### 9.7.7 [ NL | Np ] *fest/frei*- Intransitive delocative

A delocative diathesis is also attested with a few posture verbs that obligatorily need a location, like *stecken* ‘be positioned’ (77a), cf. Section 6.6.2. By adding the

<sup>54</sup>DWDS: Bild, 28.04.2005.

<sup>55</sup>DWDS: Welt und Wissen, 1929, Nr. 3, Bd. 18.

<sup>56</sup>DWDS: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 05.06.1993.

<sup>57</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 11.08.2016 (online).

<sup>58</sup>DWDS: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 26.10.2001.

<sup>59</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 22.10.1993, Nr. 43.

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resultative *fest-* or *frei-* the location is not obligatory anymore (77b).

- (77) a. Der Nagel steckt in der Wand.  
b. Der Nagel steckt (in der Wand) fest.

### Attested verbs

- *fest-* : *sitzen, sich fressen, stecken*
- *frei-* : *stehen, liegen*

### Further examples

- Die Reifen fressen sich in den Schnee.  
Die Reifen fressen sich (in den Schnee) fest.
- Der Hut sitzt auf ihrem Kopf.  
Der Hut sitzt fest.
- Die Kabel liegen auf den Boden.  
Die Kabel liegen frei.
- Das Haus steht neben der Kirche. Das Haus steht frei.

### 9.7.8 [ NL | Np ] **wund-** Reflexive intransitive delocative

Some intransitives with obligatory location, like *liegen* ‘to lie’ (78a,b) can be used without this location when a resultative is added (78c). However, this delocative needs an additional reflexive pronoun (78d). This diathesis is only attested with the resultative *wund-* ‘sore’.

- (78) a. Der Patient liegt auf dem Bett.  
b. ? Der Patient liegt.  
c. Der Patient liegt sich wund.  
d. \* Der Patient liegt wund.

### Attested verbs

- *wund-* : *liegen, sitzen*

— [ OBJ > ADJ ] —

### 9.7.9 [ NA | Np ] *satt*- Reflexive antipassive

The accusative object of *sehen* ‘to see’ is transformed into a prepositional phrase<sup>[9.108]</sup> when adding the resultative *satt*- ‘well-fed’ to form *sattsehen* ‘to see until satisfied’ (79). This diathesis obligatorily introduces a reflexive pronoun. Such a reflexive antipassive diathesis is currently only attested with verbs of consumption with the resultative *satt*-. See Section 8.7.4 for similar examples with preverbs.

- (79) a. Ich sehe das Gemälde.  
b. Ich sehe mich satt an dem Gemälde.

#### Attested verbs

- *satt*- : (verbs of consumption) *essen, fressen, sehen, lesen, trinken*

#### Further examples

- Ich esse die Bouletten.  
Ich esse mich satt an den Bouletten.
- Ich lese die Artikel.  
Die Bergleute drehen sich und lesen sich an unserer Spruchleiste satt.<sup>60</sup>
- Im Tierheim fraßen sich die Welpen erstmal satt.<sup>61</sup>
- Sie tranken sich erst tüchtig satt.<sup>62</sup>

### 9.7.10 [ NA | Np ] *los*- Antipassive

The preverbal *los*- is used frequently without any diathesis as a marker of inchoative aspect with intransitive verbs (see Section 9.4.1). With transitive verbs of attack, like *hauen* ‘to bash’ (80a), the inchoative *loshauen* ‘starting to bash’ shows an antipassive diathesis. The accusative *ihn* is changed to an optional *auf* prepositional phrase (80b). In effect, this diathesis produces an intransitive verb, compatible with the generalisation that inchoative *los*- is only used with intransitives.

- (80) a. Er haut ihn.  
b. Er haut auf ihn los.

<sup>60</sup>DWDS: Strittmatter, Erwin: Der Laden, Berlin: Aufbau-Verl. 1983, S. 108.

<sup>61</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 09.01.2003.

<sup>62</sup>DWDS: May, Karl: Winnetou IV, Berlin: Neues Leben 1993 (1910), S. 123.

### Attested verbs

- *los-* : (verbs of attack) *dreschen, hacken, hauen, knallen, prügeln, schießen, schlagen, stechen, stürzen*

### Further examples

- Einige werden überritten, andere hauen und stechen auf die Anstürmenden *los*.<sup>63</sup>

#### 9.7.11 [ NAD | NAp ] *weiter-* Dative antipassive

Ditransitive verbs like *empfehlen* ‘to recommend’ (81a) can be used with a preverbal *weiter-* to form *weiterempfehlen* ‘to recommend on’ (81b). With this preverbal it does not seem to be possible anymore to use a dative (81a). Instead, an *an* prepositional phrase is used, or the recipient is completely left out, which appears to be even more common. There is some overlap between the verbs in this section with verbs allowing for an unmarked *an* antipassive (see Section 6.7.11).

This diathesis is only attested with the preverbal *weiter-*. With non-ditransitive verbs, this preverbal does not induce any diathesis and it has a continuative aspectual meaning ‘to continue’, as discussed in Section 9.4.2. In contrast, with these ditransitive verbs the meaning of *weiter-* is more like ‘to pass something on’.

- (81) a. Ich empfehle dir diesen Kuchen.  
b. Ich empfehle diesen Kuchen an meine Freunde weiter.  
c. ? Ich empfehle dir diesen Kuchen weiter.

### Attested verbs

- *weiter-* : *empfehlen, erzählen, geben, leiten, melden, reichen, sagen, schenken, schicken, vererben, verkaufen, vermieten, vermitteln, verschenken*

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<sup>63</sup>DWDS: Völkischer Beobachter (Reichsausgabe), 04.03.1932.



## 9.8 Diatheses with promotion to object

### — [ ADJ > OBJ ] — *Resultativ Applikativ*

#### 9.8.1 [ Np | NA ] Resultative applicative

The resultative applicative appears to be one of the most productive kind of diathesis with a resultative preverbal. In this diathesis, a prepositional phrase of an intransitive verb, like with *niesen* ‘to sneeze’ (82a), is reformulated as an accusative, like with *vollniesen* ‘to fill by sneezing’ (82b). There are many different resultatives that induce this diatheses. The list presented below is in no way complete, but should just be seen as a set of random illustrative examples. This diathesis is also attested with governed prepositions, like with *reden über* ‘to talk about’ (83).

- (82) a. Ich niese (in das Taschentuch).  
       b. Ich niese das Taschentuch voll.
- (83) a. Ich rede über dein Benehmen.  
       b. Ich rede darüber, dass du dich gut benommen hast.  
       c. Ich rede dein Benehmen gut.

Many verbs occur with different resultative preverbials. However, the new accusative object always relates to the same prepositionally marked role. For example, the verb *reden* ‘to talk’ (84a) can be combined with many different resultatives, like *gutreden*, *kleinreden*, *schönreden* and *totreden*. However, all these verbs promote the role marked by *über* in the intransitive (i.e. the content of the talk). Similarly, with *drücken* ‘to press’ (84b) there are resultatives like *festdrücken*, *kaputtdrücken*, *plattdrücken* that all promote the *auf* prepositional role (i.e. the object to which the pressure is applied). A final example is *beten* ‘to pray’ (84c), for which both *freibeten* and *gesundbeten* promote the *für* prepositional role (i.e. the addressee of the prayer). These examples suggest that each verb has a preferred role for the resultative applicative diathesis. This concept of a preferred prepositional role is highly reminiscent of the notion “governed prepositions” as defined in Section 6.2.1. However, the current set of examples does not suggest any clear connection between the two concepts.

- (84) a. Ich rede über dein Benehmen.  
       Ich rede dein Benehmen gut/klein/schön  
       b. Ich drücke auf den Deckel.

- Ich drücke den Deckel fest/kaputt/platt
- c. Ich bete für den Gefangenen.  
Ich bete den Gefangenen frei/gesund.

A counterexample to this preferred-role generalisation is *tanzen* ‘to dance’. First, there is a resultative *kaputttanzen* (85a) that promoted the *auf* prepositional role (i.e. the surface on which the dancing is taking place). Second, there is *schwindligtanzen* (85b) that promoted the *with* prepositional role (i.e. the partner of the dancing). This is currently the only example known to me that allows for an applicative for two different prepositional roles.

- (85) a. Sie tanzt auf dem Parkett.  
Sie tanzt das Parkett kaputt.
- b. Sie tanzt mit mir.  
Sie tanzt mich schwindlig.

#### Attested verbs

- fest- : *drücken, klopfen, stampfen, treten*
- frei- : *beten, boxen, kämpfen, strömen*
- gesund- : *beten, quatschen, reden*
- gut- : *reden*
- kaputt- : *blättern, drücken, fallen, hämmern, laufen, schlagen, sparen, stoßen, tanzen*
- leer- : *fischen, grasen, klopfen*
- klein- : *kauen, reden*
- nass- : *heulen, schwitzen, weinen*
- platt- : *drücken, laufen*
- schön- : *jubeln, reden*
- still- : *schweigen*
- tot- : *reden, schwiegen, trampeln*
- trocken- : *pusten, tupfen*
- voll- : *heulen, kotzen, lästern, niesen, quatschen, rauchen, spucken, tratschen, weinen*
- wund- : *beißen, sitzen*

#### Further examples

- Ich fische in dem Teich.  
Ich fische den Teich leer.

- Ich weine in das Taschentuch.  
Ich weine das Taschentuch nass.
- Ich heule in das Kissen.  
Ich heule das Kissen voll.
- Ich beiße auf meine Lippe.  
Ich beiße meine Lippe wund.
- Ich sitze auf den Po.  
Ich sitze den Po wund.
- Er spuckt auf den Boden.  
Er spuckt mich voll.
- Die Gäste rauchen in der Wohnung.  
Die Gäste rauchen die Wohnung voll.
- Er hämmert auf die Tastatur.  
Er hämmert die Tastatur kaputt.
- Ich klopfe auf den Aschenbecher.  
Ich klopfe den Aschenbecher leer.
- Die Flüssigkeit strömt durch das Rohr.  
Dort werden sie von der zuerst durch die [...] einströmende Rückspülflüssigkeit aufgewirbelt und freigeströmt.<sup>64</sup>
- Die Truppen kämpfen um die Stadt.  
Die Truppen kämpfen die Stadt frei.
- Die Anwältin hat für ihren Mandanten ‘geboxt’.  
Die Anwältin hat ihren Mandanten freigeboxt.
- Die Tiere grasen auf der Weide.  
Die Tiere grasen die Weide leer.
- Die anderen sagen: Parkett, das tanzen wir nur kaputt mit unseren Springerstiefeln.<sup>65</sup>
- Er schwitzte sein Hemd naß.<sup>66</sup>
- [Er] heult dabei eine ganze Kleenex-Packung nass.<sup>67</sup>
- Bund und Länder hätten die Polizei systematisch kaputtgespart.<sup>68</sup>
- Aus Ratskreisen verlautete, es sollte der Eindruck vermieden werden, man rede den Euro gesund.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Attested online at <https://patents.google.com/patent/EP0104307A2/>, accessed 8 September 2022.

<sup>65</sup> DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 23.08.2003.

<sup>66</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 21.04.1997.

<sup>67</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 17.08.2004.

<sup>68</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 20.08.2016 (online).

<sup>69</sup> DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 04.06.1999.

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- Statt dessen [...] werden unerträgliche Lösungsvorschläge vom Stadtentwicklungssenator schöngejubelt.<sup>70</sup>
- Er baggerte am Haus, stieß dabei die Dachrinne kaputt.<sup>71</sup>
- Hierzu müssen die Körner, Salatblätter und Fasern aber sehr gut kleingekaut werden.<sup>72</sup>
- Du hast mich gesund gequatscht.<sup>73</sup>
- [Er hat] eine Zeitung kaputt geblättert [...].<sup>74</sup>

### Notes

With some verbs, like *fallen* ‘to fall’ (86a), this diathesis appears to be more colloquial with the addition of a possessor-of-accusative dative (see Section 5.8.4). Note that the few attested examples suggest that this possessor dative is a reflexive pronoun, coreferencing the subject.

[9.115]

- (86) a. Ich falle.  
b. ? Ich falle meine Hose kaputt.  
c. Ich falle mir die (‘meine’) Hose kaputt.  
d. Als jemand der sich Handgelenk und insbesondere das Knie mit dem Rad kaputt gefallen hat: ich bin extrem froh, dass der Kopf heile geblieben ist.<sup>75</sup>

[9.116] The resultative verb *freiboxen* ‘to box somebody free’ is also typically used with an additional reflexive pronoun (87a), but it can also be used with a non-coreferential accusative (87b).

<sup>70</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 10.08.1995.

<sup>71</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 22.07.1999, Nr. 30.

<sup>72</sup>Attested online at <https://www.ihre-kfo.de/verbesserung-des-kauverhaltens-durch-zahnspange>, accessed 31 August 2022.

<sup>73</sup>Attested online at <https://books.google.de/books?id=fJN7DwAAQBAJ&pg=PT133>, accessed 31 August 2022.

<sup>74</sup>Attested online at <https://www.urbia.de/forum/3-kleinkind/4331874-kind-drosseln-ruhiger-werden-so-erschoeft>, accessed 31 August 2022.

<sup>75</sup>Attested online at [https://www.reddit.com/r/Fahrrad/comments/vtyxw7/wie\\_haltet\\_ihr\\_das\\_durch/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Fahrrad/comments/vtyxw7/wie_haltet_ihr_das_durch/), accessed 13 August 2022.

- (87) a. Dass sich Fischer den Weg zum großen Auftritt mit der Energie des Straßenkämpfers freiboxen wird, ist unwahrscheinlich.<sup>76</sup>  
 b. Denn in Chicago gibt es den Star-Anwalt Flynn, der mit Riesen-Publicity-Shows vor Gericht Frauen freiboxt, die ihren Kerl erschossen haben.<sup>77</sup>

Some of these verbs, like *laufen* ‘to run’ (88a) allow for the addition of an accusative result (88b), see Section 5.8.1. The diathesis between (88b) and (88c) then becomes an example of a object exchange, cf. Section 2.7.5.1.

- (88) a. Ich laufe in meinen neuen Schuhen.  
 b. Ich laufe den Marathon in meinen neuen Schuhen.  
 c. Ich laufe meine Schuhe beim Marathon platt/kaputt.

— [ Ø > OBJ ] — *Resultativ Akkusativ*

9.8.2 [ N- | NA ] Resultative object addition

With the addition of an resultative preverbal, some intransitive verbs obtain a completely new role in the accusative, like *bellen* ‘to bark’ (89a) when combined with the resultative *wach-* ‘awake’ (89b). There is no prepositional alternative like with the much more frequent applicatives as discussed in the previous Section 9.8.1. Instead, this construction is more closely related to the intransitive caused-motion diathesis (89c), see Section 6.8.4. The new object is a clear example of an ADDED RESULT. The new object is not a patient of the verb, but a result.

[9.118]

- (89) a. Der Hund bellt.  
 b. Der Hund bellt die Kinder wach.  
 c. Der Hund bellt die Kinder aus dem Bett.

Attested verbs

- gesund- : *hexen*
- heiß- : *reden*
- leer- : *fahren*
- sauber- : *schwitzen*
- schön- : *schwindeln*

<sup>76</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 04.12.2000, Nr. 49.

<sup>77</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 06.02.2003.

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- tot- : *fahren, rasen*
- voll- : *jammern, rauchen, schreien, schwärmen*
- wach- : *bellen, klingeln, schreien*

### Further examples

- Ich fahre den Tank leer.
- Der Mann fährt das Kind tot.
- Er raucht den Aschenbecher voll.
- Bevor ich jedenfalls meine Karriere voranzaubern kann, muss erst der Rechner **gesundgehext** werden.<sup>78</sup>
- Die Feuerwächter stürmten aber durch die Straßen, stießen mit ihren eisenbeschlagenen Stöcken an die Haustüren und schrieen die Leute wach.<sup>79</sup>
- Sie hätte unabsichtlich nordstream zum ‘reinen wirtschafstprojekt’ schön-geschwindelt.<sup>80</sup>
- In den Dampfbädern wird jede Pore sauber geschwitzt.<sup>81</sup>
- Vielleicht kann man Theater tatsächlich vollschreien.<sup>82</sup>
- Ich schwärme dir die Ohren voll.

### Notes

The verb *reden* ‘to talk’ is listed here in a special variant, namely *heißreden* ‘to arouse’. This verb is frequently used in collocation with an accusative *Kopf* ‘head’ and a reflexive possessor dative (90a). However, it is also attested with other objects (90b). Also note that there are various other resultative combinations with *reden* with a different diathesis (e.g. *gutreden*, *kleinreden*, *schönreden*). These all refer to the topic of the talk (discussed in the previous Section 9.8.1), different from *heißreden*.

- (90) a. Draußen schneit es, und drinnen reden sich 100 Leute die Köpfe heiß.<sup>83</sup>
- b. Er redete die Spieler heiß.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.11.2007, Nr. 06.

<sup>79</sup>DWDS: Pfeiffer, Ida: Eine Frauenfahrt um die Welt, Band 3. Wien, 1850.

<sup>80</sup>Attested online at <https://www.zeit.de/2022/27/angela-merkel-aussenpolitik-russland-wladimir-putin#comments>, accessed 31 August 2022.

<sup>81</sup>Attested online at <https://www.fti.de/themenreisen/wellnessurlaub-harz.html>, accessed 31 August 2022.

<sup>82</sup>DWDS: Die Welt, 18.03.1999.

<sup>83</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.01.2017 (online).

<sup>84</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 11.05.2001.

— [ Ø > OBJ > ADJ ] — *Resultativ Teil/fest-Objekttausch*9.8.3 [ NA- | NpA ] *fest-* Object exchange

This diathesis is yet another kind of object exchange, namely a JOINED MERONYM. This is basically the reversal of the filled-holonym object exchange in Section 9.7.5. This diathesis applies to verbs of connection. After the diathesis the new accusative object is a component part (“meronym”) that is attached to the old accusative object (“holonym”). For example, the verb *nähen* ‘to sew’ takes an accusative object in the role of “sew” (i.e. the thing that is being sewn together). However, there is a resultative diathesis *festnähen* ‘to attach by sewing’ (91b) that produces a sentence in which the accusative encodes another role, namely the attached object (here *Knopf* ‘button’) that is joined to something else by sewing (here *Hose* ‘trousers’). This attachment location is marked by an *an* or *in* prepositional phrase, and it is optional (91c). This joined-meronym diathesis is similar to the diatheses discussed in Sections 6.8.7, 8.9.1.

- (91) a. Er näht eine Hose.  
 b. Er näht den Knopf an seiner Hose fest.  
 c. Er näht den Knopf fest.

**Attested verbs**

- *fest-* : (verbs of connection) *kitten, kleben, leimen, löten, nähen, schweißen*
- *fest-* : (other verbs) *bügeln, schreiben*

**Further examples**

- Ich nähe eine Bluse.  
 Ich nähe den Knopf (an die Bluse) fest.
- Ich bügle ein Hemd.  
 Ich bügle die Falten (in dem Hemd) fest.
- Ich klebe die Vase.  
 Ich klebe ein Etikett (an der Vase) fest.
- Die Regierung schreibt eine Richtlinie.  
 Die Regierung schreibt eine Obergrenze (in der Richtlinie) fest.
- Ich kitte die zerbrochene Tasse.  
 Ich kitte den Henkel (an die Tasse) fest.

## 9.9 Symmetrical diatheses

[9.121] This section is currently empty. It is only included here to keep the numbering parallel in all chapters.



# 10 Light-verb alternations with *Partizip*

## 10.1 Introduction

[10.1]

In German there are many different constructions that consist of a participle combined with an auxiliary-like light verb (i.e. a verb with limited lexical meaning). These include constructions without diathesis like the *haben+Partizip* PERFEKT (1a) and constructions with diathesis like the *werden+Partizip* VORGANGSPASSIV (1b).

- (1) a. Ich habe einen Brief geschrieben.
- b. Der Brief wurde geschrieben.

[10.2]

The term “participle” (German *Partizip*) is used here as the name for a verbform known in German grammar as *Partizip II* (e.g. *geschrieben* ‘written’). There is another participle, known in German grammar as *Partizip I* (e.g. *schreibend* ‘while writing’), but this wordform does not play any role in the marking of diathesis and will not be further discussed here. In consequence, the terms “participle” and *Partizip* as used in this book only refer to the *Partizip II*.

Diatheses consisting of a light verb with a participle are widely acknowledged as crucial constructions of German grammar. Most prominently, the *werden+Partizip* passive is often seen as the quintessential example of a diathesis. Other similar constructions are also repeatedly discussed in grammatical descriptions of German, like the *sein+Partizip* passive (2a), known as ZUSTANDSPASSIV (see Section 10.5.16), and the *bekommen+Partizip* passive (2b), known as REZIPIENTENPASSIV (see Section 10.5.21). Many others are only sporadically discussed, like the *gehören+Partizip* passive (2c), here called NORMPASSIV (see Section 10.5.18).

- (2) a. Der Brief ist schon fertig geschrieben.
- b. Er bekommt einen Brief geschrieben.
- c. Dieser Brief gehört geschrieben.

This chapter is an attempt to provide a complete survey of all light-verb constructions with participles in German. Care has to be taken to distinguish light-verb constructions (3a) from constructions in which the participle is used adverbially as a depictive secondary predicate (3b). Both constructions superficially

look very similar, but can be distinguished by various syntactic characteristics (see Section 10.2.3).

- (3) a. Er hält das Haus verschlossen.  
b. Er hinterlässt das Haus verschlossen.

After all depictive uses are discarded, there remain many auxiliary-like light verbs that can be combined with a participle into a grammaticalised monoclausal construction. All these light verbs are summarised below, classified by their literal meaning. However, it is crucial to realise that these literal meanings are mostly lost in the grammaticalised constructions with participles. Also note that some of these verbs only infrequently occur as light verbs with participles. All light-verb constructions will be discussed in separate subsections throughout this chapter.

- Existential verbs: *bleiben, lassen, machen, sein, werden*
- Movement/Posture verbs: *gehen, kommen, liegen, setzen, stehen*
- Give/Take verbs: *bekommen, erhalten, geben, kriegen, nehmen, zeigen*
- Possession verbs: *finden, gehören, haben, halten*
- Appearance verbs: *aussehen, erscheinen, scheinen, wirken*
- Experience verbs: *glauben, sehen, wissen*

The following twelve diatheses seem prominent enough to grant them a German name. I propose the following names:

- [SBJ > Ø] *werden* UNPERSÖNLICHES VORGANGSPASSIV (see Section 10.5.1 ff.)
- [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] *scheinen/erscheinen* INFERENZANTIKAUSATIV (see Section 10.5.10)
- [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] *aussehen/wirken* SINNESANTIKAUSATIV (see Section 10.5.11)
- [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] *geben/zeigen* DARSTELLUNGSANTIKAUSATIV (see Section 10.5.12)
- [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ] *werden* VORGANGSPASSIV (see Section 10.5.15)
- [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ] *sein* ZUSTANDSPASSIV (see Section 10.5.16)
- [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ] *bleiben* FORTSETZUNGSPASSIV (see Section 10.5.17)
- [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ] *gehören* NORMPASSIV (see Section 10.5.18)
- [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ] *bekommen/kriegen* REZIPIENTENPASSIV (see Section 10.5.21)
- [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ] *haben* PERTINENZPASSIV (see Section 10.5.22)
- [OBJ > SBJ > PBJ] *sein* ERLEBNISKONVERSIV (see Section 10.5.23)
- [Ø > SBJ > OBJ/ADJ] *wissen/glauben/sehen/finden* OPINIATIV (see Section 10.6 ff.)

## 10.2 Characterising participle constructions

### 10.2.1 Identifying participles

German participles – in German grammar idiosyncratically known as *Partizip II* – can rather straightforwardly be identified by their morphology. This identification is complicated by the existence of a wide range of allomorphy, which will only be succinctly summarised here (cf. **ref-duden2009**: 440, §613–614; **ref-eisenberg2006** [10.7] 201–202):

- Typically, participles have a prefix *ge-*, like in *ge-kauf-t*, except when the stem already contains one of the unstressed verb prefixes *ge-*, *be-*, *er-*, *ver-*, *zer-* or *ent-*, like in *verkauf-t*, and in general when the verb stem has an unstressed first syllable, like *schmarotz-t* or *karier-t* (cf. **ref-wiese1996**: 92). The prefix will appear between the stem and the stressed verb particles *an-*, *ein-*, *vor-*, etc., like in *ein-ge-kauf-t* (see Section 8.2.1 for a summary of verb prefixes and verb particles).
- Typically, participles have a suffix *-t*, like in *ge-kauf-t*. In some phonological surroundings this suffix has an epenthetic schwa, like in *ge-wart-et*. In a large but closed class of verbs the suffix is *-en*, like in *ge-lauf-en*, often combined with ablaut of the stem vowel, like in *ge-fund-en* (stem *find*).

[10.8]

The allomorphs without prefix *ge-* exhibit syncretism, because such participles are identical to either a third person singular finite verb (when ending in *-t*) or a first/third person plural finite verb (when ending in *-en*). For example, in (4a) the wordform *verkauft* is a finite third person singular, while in (4b) it is a participle. Given that finite verbs show agreement with the subject, checking a different subject easily differentiates between these two homonyms, e.g. in the first person singular the finite verb changes to *verkaufe* (4c), while the participle remains unchanged (4d).

- (4) a. Er verkauft das Haus.  
 b. Er hat das Haus verkauft.  
 c. Ich verkaufe das Haus.  
 d. Ich habe das Haus verkauft.

The formation of participles is highly productive in German. It is so productive that speakers have no problem producing participles for newly invented pseudo-words. As a result, every verb (i.e. every stem that can have finite person inflec-

tion) also allows for the formation of a participle.<sup>1</sup> The reversal is not true though, as there exist many participles that do not have corresponding finite verb forms (see Section 10.3).

### 10.2.2 Syntactic functions of participles

Participles, like *geputzt* ‘cleaned’ in (5), can be used in three different syntactic functions in the grammar of German, namely as (i) an adnominal adjective (5a), see Section 10.2.5, as (ii) a depictive secondary predicate (5b), see Section 10.2.3, and as (iii) a part of light-verb construction (5c,d) to be discussed extensively throughout this chapter.

[10.10]

- (5) a. Das geputzte Haus erstrahlt im Sonnenlicht.
- b. Er verkauft das Haus geputzt.
- c. Er hat das Haus geputzt.
- d. Das Haus wird geputzt.

Arguably, these three functions are part of the spectrum of uses that are also available to German adjectives, like *leer* ‘empty’ in (6). Basically then, participles are morphologically derived verb forms that are syntactically alike to adjectives.

[10.11]

- (6) a. Das leere Haus erstrahlt im Sonnenlicht.
- b. Er verkauft das Haus leer.
- c. Er macht das Haus leer.
- d. Das Haus ist leer.

Not all participles can be used in all three syntactic functions, however. For example, the participle *geschlafen* ‘slept’ (7) only allows for one of the contexts exemplified with *geputzt* in (5) above. Central to the discussion in this chapter is

<sup>1</sup>Latzel (*ref-latzel1977*: 73–76, citing and discussing data from Mater 1969) lists various verbs that do not allow for a participle. However, many examples are very unusual verbs (e.g. *ornamentieren*, *leiben*), and many others clearly have participles (e.g. *ankeuchen*: *er kommt angekeucht*; *gutachten*: *ich habe gegutachtet*; *worthalten*: *ich habe wortgehalten*). The best examples of verbs without participles appear to be verbs with incorporated objects (e.g. *bausparen*, *wettlaufen*) that neither can be used in finite forms, nor as participle, but only as an infinitive. In these examples it is even questionable whether these words should be classified as verbs at all. Still, some participles indeed appear to be very rare, like with *stammen*, <sup>?</sup>*gestammt* ‘to originate from’ or *wogen*, <sup>?</sup>*gewogt* ‘to undulate’. However, examples are attested in corpora, e.g. *Wir haben keinen Hinweis darauf, woher der Geruch gestammt haben könnte* (DWDS: Die Zeit, 29.12.2014 online) or *Getanzt wird auch im Stehen nicht, nur gewogt*. (DWDS: Die Zeit, 16.04.2015, Nr. 16).

the fact that participles differ as to the kind of constructions in which they can occur.

- (7) a. \* Das geschlafene Kind liegt im Bett.  
 b. \* Er beobachtet das Kind geschlafen.  
 c. Das Kind hat geschlafen.  
 d. \* Das Kind wird geschlafen.

Crucially, the adnominal (5a) and the depictive (5b) usage of participles are not monoclausal. Both can be seen as alternative expressions of a relative subordinate clause. In contrast, the light-verb constructions with participles (5c,d) are monoclausal.

### 10.2.3 Depictively used participles

[10.14] Participles can be used adverbially, or, to be more precise, they can be used as so-called depictive secondary predicates. A depictive (for short) is an adverbial-like element that modifies an argument of a sentence (see Section 9.2.3 for a detailed discussion of depictives).<sup>2</sup> For example in (8a) the participle *gebogen* ‘to bend’ functions syntactically like a modifier of the argument *Nägel* ‘nails’. So this sentence is about ‘bent nails’ and not about doing something so that the nails are bent.<sup>3</sup> A crucial problem is that constructions with such modifying depictive participles (8a) are superficially highly similar to light-verb constructions (8b).

- (8) a. Er verkauft die Nägel gebogen.  
 b. Er hat die Nägel gebogen.

Diachronically, the depictive usage of participles is likely to be the origin of light-verb constructions. Various light-verb constructions appear to be only partially grammaticalised. For example, the participle of *geschenkt* in (9a) can both be interpreted as a depictive predicate with the meaning as in (9b) and as part of a light-verb construction with meaning as in (9c), see Section 10.5.21.

<sup>2</sup>The depictive usage is only adverbial in the sense “adverbial-at-large”, not in the sense “adverbial-proper” (cf. Section 9.2.3). Actually, participles (i.e. *Partizip II*) do not appear to be possible in adverbial-proper function. In contrast, to so-called “present” participles (i.e. *Partizip I*, ending in *-end*) can be used as an adverbial-proper, but that is a topic for another book.

<sup>3</sup>Not all verbs seem to be possible in this depictive participle construction, but I currently do not have any deeper insights into these restrictions. That seems to be a promising topic for further research.

- (9) a. Er bekommt ein Buch geschenkt.  
b. (= Er bekommt ein Buch als Geschenk.)  
c. (= Ihm wird ein Buch geschenkt.)

Despite these superficial similarities, participles as depictive secondary predicates and participles in light-verb constructions can be clearly separated synchronically. In the remainder of this section I will present five criteria for this separation:

[10.16]

- i. Leaving out the participle.
- ii. Word order in subordinate clauses.
- iii. Adding negation to the participle.
- iv. The semantic scope of the participle.
- v. Retention of arguments with the participle.

First, a participle used as a secondary predicate (10a) can in most cases easily be identified by trying to leave it out of the sentence (10b) or replace it with an adverb (10c). The main predicate of the sentence (here *verkaufen* ‘to sell’) should not change its meaning, and in general the meaning of the sentence will remain almost identical (except of course for the meaning of the missing or replaced participle). With light-verb constructions this is not the case: leaving out the participle is either ungrammatical or leads to a radically different interpretation of the light verb (11).

- (10) a. Er verkauft die Nägel gebogen.  
b. Er verkauft die Nägel.  
c. Er verkauft die Nägel jetzt.
- (11) a. Er bekommt die Haare geschnitten.  
b. \* Er bekommt die Haare.  
c. \* Er bekommt die Haare jetzt.

Second, depictive participles can be distinguished from light-verb constructions by investigating the word order in subordinate constructions. Light-verb constructions (12a) obligatorily place the participle *geputzt* ‘cleaned’ directly in front of the finite light verb *bekommen* in a subordinate clause (12b). They cannot be separated (12c). In contrast, a depictive participle *geputzt* (13a) can occur adjacent to (13b) or separated from (13c) the main verb *kaufen* in a subordinate clause.

[10.18]

- (12) a. Er bekommt die Schuhe im Geschäft immer geputzt.  
 (= Ihm werden die Schuhe im Geschäft immer geputzt.)  
 b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) er die Schuhe im Geschäft immer geputzt bekommt.  
 c. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) er die Schuhe immer geputzt im Geschäft bekommt.
- (13) a. Er kauft die Schuhe im Geschäft immer geputzt.  
 (= Er kauft die Schuhe, die immer geputzt sein müssen, im Geschäft.)  
 b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) er die Schuhe im Geschäft immer geputzt kauft.  
 c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) er die Schuhe immer geputzt im Geschäft kauft.

[10.19] Third, secondary predication with participles can also be distinguished from light-verb constructions by considering negation. Negation in sentences with a participle as a secondary predicate normally negates this secondary predicate itself (lexical scope), just like negation of adverbs (14a,b). With secondary predicates it is often even possible to use the prefix *un-* to mark the lexical scope of the negation over the participle (14c). When the prefix *un-* can be added, this is an easy test for secondary-predicate usage (ref-rothstein2007a: 161–162). However, this test does not work in reverse (i.e. the impossibility to add *un-* is not necessarily a sign of a light-verb construction), because many participles simply do not exist with the *un-* prefix.

- (14) a. Er kauft die Schuhe nicht jetzt.  
 b. Er kauft die Schuhe nicht geputzt.  
 c. Er kauft die Schuhe ungeputzt.

In contrast, negation in a monoclausal light-verb construction with a participle has a wide scope reading over the whole sentence. For example, in (15a) the verb *bekommen* has two different readings. Either, as in (15b), the verb *bekommen* is a full lexical verb with the meaning ‘to get as a gift’ and a narrow scope negation over the participle *nicht geputzt* (which is almost equivalent to *ungeputzt* ‘uncleaned’), resulting in a meaning of ‘he gets a gift of uncleaned shoes’. In this interpretation, the participle is a secondary predicate. Alternatively (15c), *bekommen* can be interpreted as a light verb with a meaning ‘to get something done for you’ with a full verb as participle *geputzt* ‘cleaned’. Together with the wide scope negation the meaning of the sentence then becomes ‘he doesn’t manage to get his shoes cleaned’. In this interpretation, the participle is part of a light-verb construction *bekommen+Partizip*, see Section 10.5.21.

## 10 Light-verb alternations with Partizip

- (15) a. Er bekommt die Schuhe nicht geputzt.  
b. (= Er kriegt ein Geschenk, nämlich ungeputzte Schuhe.)  
c. (= Er schafft es nicht seine Schuhe putzen zu lassen.)

[10.21] Note further that the sentence stress in (15a) differs for both readings. With the reading as in (15b), the first sentence has stress on the negation *nicht* (as is usually the case for lexical scope), while in the reading as in (16c) the first sentence has stress on the participle *geputzt* (which is the regular stress placement for a wide-scope negation of the indicative main clause).

Fourth, a further difference between participles as secondary predicates (16a) and in light-verb constructions (16b) is that secondary predicates are in many contexts ambiguous as to the scope of the predicate. For example, in (16a) the secondary predicate *angekleidet* ‘dressed’ can be interpreted both as referring to the accusative object *Patienten* ‘patients’ and (in this infamous example with a humorous undertone) to the nominative subject *Doktor* ‘doctor’. With light-verb constructions (16b) there is never any such ambiguity, because the participle does not directly modify an argument.

[10.22]

- (16) a. Der Doktor untersucht seine Patienten immer angekleidet.  
b. Der Doktor wird von seinem Assistenten immer angekleidet.

Fifth and finally, in some circumstances arguments can be retained when participles are used as secondary predicate, but this is not possible in light-verb constructions. For example, the syntactic function of the adverb *kaputt* ‘broken’ in (17a) can be replaced by a participle *überlassen* ‘to abandon’, but only when the dative *dem Wetter* is retained (17b,c). This dative is not governed by the main verb *aussehen* ‘to appear’ but by the embedded participle *überlassen* used as an depictive secondary predicate.

[10.23]

- (17) a. Der Balkon sieht *kaputt* aus.  
b. (replacing *kaputt* with *Irgendjemand überlässt den Balkon dem Wetter*:)  
Der Balkon sieht *dem Wetter überlassen* aus.  
c. \*Der Balkon sieht *überlassen* aus.

Some more examples of such retained arguments are shown in (18) with intransitive (*quälen*) and reflexive (*sich fühlen*) main verbs, and prepositional (*von Schmerzen*) and dative (*dem Gericht*) retained arguments, respectively.



- (18) a. Er hustete *plötzlich*.  
 (replacing *plötzlich* with *Schmerzen quälen ihn*.)  
 Er hustete *von Schmerzen gequält*.
- b. Der Beschuldigte fühlt sich *schlecht*.  
 (replacing *schlecht* with *Er ist dem Militär eng verbunden*.)  
 Der Beschuldigte fühlt sich *dem Militär eng verbunden*.

#### 10.2.4 Adnominally used participles

[10.25] The first known observation of a restriction on German adnominal participle usage goes back to the *Sprachlehre* of Carl Friedrich Aichinger (ref-aichinger1754: 282ff.). He reserves the term PARTICIPIUM for those stems that allow for an adnominal usage of their participles, like with *eingeschlafen* in (19a). His rationale for this restriction is that “real” participles should allow for declension (like in Latin) and in German only the adnominal usage shows declension, be it minimal (viz. the suffix *-e* in *eingeschlafene*). In contrast, participles that never occur adnominally, like *geschlafen* in (19b) are morphologically immutable in German. Inflected word forms like *geschlafene*, *geschlafenes* or *geschlafenen* do not exist in German.

- (19) a. Das eingeschlafene Kind schnarcht.  
 b. \* Das geschlafene Kind schnarcht.

[10.26] Aichinger proposes a separate name for such immutable participles like *geschlafen*, namely SUPINUM. This nomenclature is unfortunate, because the German participle has no relation at all to the Latin supine, neither formally nor functionally. Being criticised for this terminology, Aichinger in a later reply explains that he uses the term *Supinum* solely because the Latin supine is also an immutable verb from (ref-aichinger1776: 627). Although there are many unfortunate terminological confusions in the history of linguistics, this usage of the term *Supinum* is regrettably still around in German grammatical literature to this day (with a history of transmission that deserves more in-depth study), most forcefully reinforced by the usage of this term in Bech (ref-bech1955) and the large literature building on that influential work.

[10.27] The basic observation of Aichinger, though, is sound. There is clearly a group of verbs in German that do not allow for an adnominal usage of their participle. The impossibility of participles to function adnominally is nowadays often included as one of the characteristics of so-called unaccusative intransitives (here called “agentive”). Basically (and strongly simplified), the claim is that the

verbs without adnominal participles are intransitive verbs that take the auxiliary *haben* in the perfect (see Section 10.2.5). Empirically, this correlation appears to be rather strong, though it is not without exceptions. For example, the verb *schmerzen* ‘to hurt’ (participle *geschmerzt*) and the verb *lügen* ‘to lie’ (participle *gelogen*) both have a perfect with the auxiliary *haben* and their participles are typically not used adnominally. However, exceptions can be found (20), though semantically these examples suggest a “patientive” relation between the participle and the noun.

- (20) a. Sein Körper hat geschmerzt.  
 Ähnlich ekstatisch *geschmerzte Körper* zeichneten der junge Kokoschka und Egon Schiele, als das Jahrhundert gerade begonnen hatte.<sup>4</sup>
- b. Er hat über die Geschichte gelogen.  
 Die offizielle, aber *gelogene Variante der Geschichte* hat ihn selber mehr ergriffen.<sup>5</sup>

Further, many intransitive verbs with a *haben* perfect can be used with an added-result accusative, for example verbs like *weinen* ‘to cry’ or *tanzen* ‘to dance’ (see Section 5.8.1). With such an added accusative these verbs are transitives, and then the participle can be used adnominally with the new accusative object (21).

[10.28]

- (21) a. Er hat (die Worte) geweint.  
 Ich höre laute Schreie und unverständlich *geweinte Worte* aus dem Nebenzimmer.<sup>6</sup>
- b. Er hat (den Tanz) getanzt.  
 Besonders der im Biedermeierkostüm *getanzte Aschenbrödeltanz* mit Vertonung von Zepler ergab wirkungsvolle Bilder.<sup>7</sup>

[10.29]

An even more intricate detail occurs with some movement verbs like *laufen* ‘to walk’ that allow for a manner-of-movement diathesis (cf. Section 6.8.2). When used with a directional phrase like *nach Hause* ‘home’ such verbs take the auxiliary *sein* (22a) and then the participle together with the directional phrase can be used adnominally (22b). In contrast, the auxiliary *haben* seems incompatible with a directional phrase (22c) and the participle without the directional phrase cannot be used adnominally (22d).

<sup>4</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 19.02.1988, Nr. 08.

<sup>5</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 08.05.2001.

<sup>6</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 11.01.2006, Nr. 02.

<sup>7</sup>DWDS: Berliner Tageblatt (Abend-Ausgabe), 12.03.1918.

- (22) a. Der Schüler ist nach Hause gelaufen.  
 b. Der nach Hause gelaufene Schüler weint.  
 c. Der Schüler hat \*(nach Hause) gelaufen.  
 d. \* Der gelaufene Schüler weint.

### 10.2.5 Lexical restrictions on participle constructions

In recent years there has been an extensive discussion about two classes of intransitive verbs depending on their light-verb possibilities. This discussion originated with the discussion on the impersonal *werden* passive (see Section 10.5.1) in Perlmutter (ref-perlmutter1978). He introduced the terms UNERGATIVE/UNACCUSATIVE for intransitive verbs that do (unergative) or do not (unaccusative) allow for such impersonal passives (see ref-pullum1988 for a discussion of the origin of the term and scholarly predecessors; for an early discussions in German, see ref-wunderlich1985). The most extensive discussion of the grammatical possibilities of intransitives in German can be found in Grewendorf (ref-grewendorf1989) though unfortunately (and confusingly) using the term “ergative” for what Perlmutter calls “unaccusative”.

[10.31] Similar phenomena of splits in intransitives have long been recognised in the typological literature under various names. Instead of unergative/unaccusative one can find active/inactive (ref-sapir1917: 85),  $S_a/S_o$  (ref-dixon1979: 70) or more mnemonic AGENTIVE/PATIENTIVE (cf. ref-mithun1991). These last terms will be used here. The term AGENTIVE is used here because the sole argument of an agentive intransitive verb is syntactically treated similar to the agent of a transitive verb. Likewise, The name PATIENTIVE is used because the sole argument of patientive intransitive verb is syntactically treated similar to the patient of a transitive verb.

[10.32] The basic proposal from Perlmutter (ref-perlmutter1978) is the UNACCUSATIVE HYPOTHESIS. This hypothesis proposes that the sole argument of certain intransitive verbs is underlyingly alike to a transitive object (i.e. patientive). Such verbs can be identified by various syntactic characteristics. For example, a patientive verb like *einschlafen* ‘to fall asleep’ combines with *sein* to form the perfect (23a) and not with *haben* (23b). Further, patientives do not allow for an impersonal *werden* passive (23c), but they can be used adnominally (23d). In contrast, an agentive intransitive verb like *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ has the reversed distribution (24).

10 Light-verb alternations with Partizip

- (23) a. Das Kind ist eingeschlafen.  
b. \* Das Kind hat eingeschlafen.  
c. \* Jetzt wird eingeschlafen.  
d. Das eingeschlafene Kind schnarcht.
- (24) a. \* Das Kind ist geschlafen.  
b. Das Kind hat geschlafen.  
c. Jetzt wird geschlafen.  
d. \* Das geschlafene Kind schnarcht.

However, there is much more variation in the distribution of light-verb constructions besides just agentive participles (e.g. *geschlafen*) and patientive participles (e.g. *eingeschlafen*), as summarised in Table 10.1. Basically, every theoretical possibility of light verb with a participle is attested (except for the combination of neither *sein* nor *haben*). The real challenge concealed behind the unaccusative hypothesis is the question how widespread all of these possibilities are. The *ein-schlafen*-class (PATIENTIVE) and the *schlafen*-class (AGENTIVE) are undoubtedly large classes of intransitive verbs in German. In contrast, the *rosten* class seems to be very small (see Section 10.4.3). It is a clear desideratum for more research in corpus-based lexicology to exhaustively classify verbs in this way. Only then will it be possible to judge which classes are significant for German grammar and which classes, if any, consist of only incidental exceptional examples.

[10.33]

Table 10.1: Possible combinations of light-verbs with participles

participle	<i>sein</i>	<i>haben</i>	<i>werden</i>
<i>eingeschlafen</i>	+	–	–
<i>gefallen</i>	+	–	+
<i>gerostet</i>	+	+	–
<i>geklettert</i>	+	+	+
<i>geblutet</i>	–	+	–
<i>geschlafen</i>	–	+	+

Looking even further, there are many more light-verb constructions besides *sein*, *haben* and *werden* that can be included. For example, *bleiben+Partizip* (see Section 10.4.10) only seems possible with *einschlafen*, while *scheinen+Partizip* (see Section 10.4.14) seems possible with *einschlafen* and *fallen*, and *kommen+Partizip* (see Section 10.4.9) only applies to *fallen* and *klettern*. Also of interest in this

[10.34]

context is the possibility of various impersonal diatheses (see e.g. Section 9.5.1 and Section 11.5.1). This chapter will not attempt to answer the question how many different such verb classes have to be distinguished in German, but only takes the first step of presenting a list of relevant constructions to be investigated further in future research.

### 10.2.6 Temporal interpretation of participle constructions

The temporal interpretation of light-verb-plus-participle constructions is a widely discussed topic (cf. ref-hohle1978: 42; ref-nedjalkov1988a: 412; ref-maienborn2007: 88; ref-businger2017: 162, among many others). Using my own terms here, there is a recurrent observation of a difference between PROCESS-ORIENTATION (*Vorgangsausrichtung*) and RESULT-ORIENTATION (*Zustandsausrichtung*). What is called “result-orientation” here is basically “perfect” in the sense of Comrie (ref-comrie1976: Ch. 3; cf. “perfect-resultative” in ref-nedjalkov1988a: 415). However, I will avoid the term “perfect” because in the German grammatical tradition there is a verb-form called the *Perfekt* that, confusingly, is process-oriented and not perfect/result-oriented (see the end of this section).

[10.36] Basically, a construction is PROCESS-ORIENTED when the action (as described by the verb) starts at the time reference as expressed in the sentence. Such constructions revolve around the process of the ongoing action. In contrast, a construction is RESULT-ORIENTED when the action is finished at the specified time reference. Such constructions focus on the result of the finished action. Before syntactically distinguishing these two options, a brief digression is needed to summarise the expression of TIME and TENSE in German.

German TENSE is marked obligatorily on all finite verbs. There are just two possibilities, namely an opposition between NON-PAST (i.e. present/future, called *Präsens* in the German tradition) and PAST (called *Präteritum* in German). Basically, these tenses are used according to their names. There is a conversational implicature (but no necessity) for past tense to indicate that an action has ended. Many further details about the use of these tenses are described in great length in every decent German grammar and will not be repeated here. All finite verbs are marked obligatorily as to tense, so with participle constructions tense is marked obligatorily on the finite light verb.

German TIME reference is marked by optional adverbial expressions. Although syntactically optional, each sentence can be assumed to have such a time reference, either expressed explicitly or otherwise deducible from context. Such adverbial time is crucial for the current discussion, so I will give a slightly excessive

[10.37]

summary of the different possibilities below. Time reference can be one of the following:

- POINT time reference:
  - past, e.g. *gestern, vor drei Tage*
  - present, e.g. *jetzt, heute, im Moment*
  - future, e.g. *morgen, in drei Tage, um drei Uhr*
- PERIOD time reference:
  - unbound, e.g. *immer, dauernd*
  - bound (one-sided start), e.g. *seitdem, weiterhin, seit drei Tage, ab Freitag*
  - bound (one-sided end), e.g. *bisher, bis morgen, bis in drei Stunden, immer noch*
  - bound (two sided), e.g. *den ganzen Tag, drei Stunden lang*
- PROCESS time reference:
  - sudden, e.g. *plötzlich, schlagartig, auf einmal*
  - gradual, e.g. *allmählich, schrittweise, langsam, nach und nach, in Zeitlupe*
  - recurring, e.g. *regelmäßig, immer wieder, jeden Tag*

Now, for the following discussion I will ignore the *haben/sein Perfekt* because it is exceptional in various ways. With that out of the way, the temporal structure of German participle construction is really very simple. Namely: everything goes, except:

[10.39]

(25) PARTICIPLE TIME/TENSE RULES

- a. IF: non-past time, THEN: non-past tense.
- b. IF: past time, THEN: past tense.
- c. IF: gradual time, THEN NOT: result-orientation.

The first two rules (25a,b) are rather obvious (again, remember to ignore the *haben/sein Perfekt* for now), but they crucially work in one direction only. When there is some explicit point-time reference, then inflectional tense has to follow suit. However, for any of the other kinds of time reference (any of the “period” or “process” options), tense can be either *Präsens* or *Präteritum* with no restrictions.

[10.41]

As an illustration, consider the following *werden*-passive examples. The sentences in (26a) show the restrictions with point time, while (26b) and (26c) show

the independence of period/process time and paste/non-past tense. Note that the independence of time and tense entails that both kinds of marking add some facet to the overall meaning of the sentence. So different choices of tense really mean something different.

- (26) a. Die Scheune wird/\*wurde morgen gebaut.  
Die Scheune \*wird/wurde vor drei Tage gebaut.
- b. Sie wird/wurde dauernd verbessert.  
Sie wird/wurde seitdem zerstört.  
Sie wird/wurde bis jetzt nicht wieder repariert.  
Sie wird/wurde den ganzen Tag dem Wetter überlassen.
- c. Sie wird/wurde plötzlich neu errichtet.  
Sie wird/wurde allmählich wieder wahrgenommen.  
Sie wird/wurde jeden Tag bewundert.

[10.43] Returning now to the temporal structure of participle construction, a construction like the *werden+Partizip* passive above in (26) is a process-oriented construction because there are no further restrictions (except for the point-time/tense coupling). In contrast, the *bleiben+Partizip* construction as illustrated below in (27) is a result-oriented construction. The crucial difference is embodied by the restriction as stated above (25c): gradual time reference (here *allmählich* ‘gradually’) is incompatible with a result-oriented construction, as illustrated below in (27c).

- (27) a. Der Eingang bleibt/\*blieb morgen geöffnet.  
Der Eingang \*bleibt/blieb vor drei Tage geöffnet.
- b. Er bleibt/blieb dauernd geöffnet  
Er bleibt/blieb seitdem geöffnet.  
Er bleibt/blieb bis jetzt geöffnet.  
Er bleibt/blieb den ganzen Tag geöffnet.
- c. Er bleibt/blieb plötzlich geschlossen.  
\*Er bleibt/blieb allmählich geschlossen.  
Er bleibt/blieb jeden Tag geschlossen.

[10.43] This might look like a minor and somewhat random difference. Yet, although it is indeed minor, it surely is not random. I have specifically selected this minor difference because it can be used as an indicator to distinguish the two classes. It is a GRADUALITY TEST, so to speak.<sup>8</sup> The rationale behind this test is that with

<sup>8</sup>This test was inspired by a different usage of gradual time by Latzel (ref-latzel1977: 180).

result-oriented constructions the action as described by the main verb is already finished at the start of the time reference. Being finished is incompatible with performing the action in a gradual way. In contrast, with process-oriented constructions the action starts at the specified time reference. Such an ongoing action can readily be combined with gradual time reference. As an aside, note that period-time reference is compatible with result-orientation (27b) because the expressed period (e.g. *seitdem* ‘since’) refers to the period that the finished result is kept in place and not to the period leading up to the finished result.

This graduality test has a minor issue with punctual verbs like *treten* ‘to kick’ or *verwarnen* ‘to reprimand’. The problem is that these actions are of a very short duration (hence “punctual”), so the start of the action practically coincides with the end of the action. Because it is rather hard to conceive of such a short action as gradual, adding a gradual time adverbial feels very artificial. The best solution I can offer for such verbs is to use the gradual adverbial *in Zeitlupe* ‘in slow motion’ to stretch out the perceived duration of the action. This is compatible with *werden+Partizip* (28a) but not with *bleiben+Partizip* (146b).

[10.44]

- (28) a. Der Spieler wurde in Zeitlupe verwarnt.  
b. \* Der Spieler bleibt in Zeitlupe verwarnt.

The process-oriented constructions, that are compatible with gradual time, are listed in (29). The result-oriented constructions, incompatible with gradual time, are listed in (30).

- (29) PROCESS-ORIENTED CONSTRUCTIONS
- *haben/sein* perfect (Section 10.4)
  - *kommen* movement (Section 10.4.9)
  - *werden* passive (Section 10.5.15)
  - *gehören* passive (Section 10.5.18)
  - *bekommen/kriegen* passive (Section 10.5.21)
  - *(er)scheinen/aussehen/wirken* anticausative (Section 10.5.10)
  - *geben/zeigen* anticausative (Section 10.5.12)
  - *wissen/glauben/sehen/finden* novative (Section 10.6)
- (30) RESULT-ORIENTED CONSTRUCTIONS
- *sein* passive (Sections 10.5.16, 10.5.23)
  - *haben* passive (Section 10.5.22)
  - *bleiben* anticausative (Section 10.5.17)
  - *halten* continuative (Section 10.4.12)



- *lassen* continuative (Section 10.4.11)

Finally now, let me return to the *haben*+*Partizip* and *sein*+*Partizip* constructions. First, these constructions are used for various different kinds of passives: the *Zustandspassiv* (Section 10.5.16), the *Erlebniskonversiv* (Section 10.5.23) and the *Pertinenzpassiv* (Section 10.5.22). These passives follow the general time/tense rules for participle constructions as discussed above, and these passives are all result-oriented.

[10.47] In contrast, the *haben/sein*+*Partizip Perfekt* (see Section 10.4) is process-oriented because it is compatible with a gradual time specification like *nach und nach* ‘gradually’ (31a). Additionally, the *Perfekt* has completely different time/tense rules. It cannot be used with future time reference (31b), and tense marking is not correlated with time reference. As a result, the *Perfekt* can be used with a combination of past time and *Präsens* tense marking (31c). This combination is otherwise completely unattested in German participle constructions, and it is thus reliable indicator of a *Perfekt* construction.

- (31) a. Ich habe das Haus nach und nach gekauft.  
 b. \* Ich habe das Haus morgen gekauft.  
 c. Ich habe das Haus gestern gekauft.

### 10.2.7 Different diatheses with the same light verb

Many light-verb constructions with participles will be discussed in more than one subsection in this chapter. This is necessary because many light-verb constructions show different sentence alternations for verbs with different valency. Typically, participles of intransitive and participles of transitive verbs will lead to different alternations. For example, some intransitive verbs, like *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ (32a), allow for an *werden* impersonal passive in which the nominative argument is dropped (see Section 10.5.1). In contrast, with many transitive verbs, like *putzen* ‘to clean’ (32b), the *werden* passive shows a different diathesis in which the accusative is turned into a nominative (see Section 10.5.15).

- (32) a. Das Kind schläft.  
 Jetzt wird geschlafen.  
 b. Irgendjemand putzt das Haus.  
 Das Haus wird geputzt.

There are many different such “repeated” light-verb constructions. A recurring phenomenon, exemplified here with the light-verb construction with *bleiben*,

is one in which intransitives show no diathesis (33a), see Section 10.4.10, while transitives display an anticausative diathesis (33b), see Section 10.5.17. This combination will be called **ABSOLUTIVE** here, calling on the “ergative/absolutive” terminology as used in linguistic typology. This affinity of intransitive subjects to transitive objects is also reminiscent of the unaccusative hypothesis discussed previously, which proposes that some intransitive subjects are underlyingly objects. However, these absolutive phenomena are not uniform in German grammar. Exactly which verbs are amenable for which constructions appears to be rather unpredictable (or maybe better: “lexically dependent”), and the survey in this chapter is proposed to be a step towards a more precise understanding the such constructional distributions.

- (33) a. Der Schlüssel verschwindet.  
           Der Schlüssel bleibt verschwunden.  
       b. Irgendjemand schließt den Schrank.  
           Der Schrank bleibt geschlossen.

A recurrent topic of debate in German grammar is the question whether the different constructions with the auxiliary *sein* should be considered to be a single construction or not (cf. **ref-thieroff2007** for a summary of the debate). I will here distinguish four different constructions with *sein* that are all in complementary distribution (i.e. a specific predicate can only occur in one of these):

- i. the *sein-Perfekt* (34a) with some intransitives like *einschlafen* ‘to fall asleep’, see Section 10.4.2,
- ii. the *sein-Zustandspassiv* (34b) with some transitives like *waschen* ‘to wash’, see Section 10.5.16,
- iii. the *sein-Erlebniskonversiv* (34c) with a restricted set of experiencer transitives like *erstaunen* ‘to astonish’, see Section 10.5.23 and
- iv. *sein* adjectival predication, like with *wach* ‘awake’ (34d), see Section 10.2.8.

Because these constructions are in complementary distribution, I see no objection to consider them as one construction. However, there are also obvious differences, so splitting them up is likewise sensible. Whether one of these points of view is better than the other seems like a moot question to me. Both perspectives are useful.

- (34) a. Der Junge schläft ein.  
           Der Junge ist eingeschlafen.  
       b. Irgendjemand wäscht den Jungen.

- Der Junge ist gewaschen.
- c. Die Strafe erstaunt den Jungen.  
Der Junge ist erstaunt (über die Strafe).
- d. Der wache Junge läuft.  
Der Junge ist wach.

[10.52] Similarly, with opinative light verbs *wissen*, *glauben*, *sehen* and *finden* there exist different diatheses depending on the valency of the main verb. These different constructions are clearly related, and I tend to consider them all to be special cases of the same underlying construction. First, intransitives like *einschlafen* ‘to fall asleep’ (35a) obtain a new role as subject (the opinionator), see Section 10.6.1. Second, transitive verbs like *aufheben* ‘to preserve’ (35b) are passivised before the opinionator is added as subject Section 10.6.5.

- (35) a. Der Junge schläft ein.  
Der Großvater wusste den Jungen eingeschlafen.
- b. Das Archiv hebt den Nachlass auf.  
Der Großvater wusste den Nachlass im Archiv gut aufgehoben.

[10.53] In contrast to the previous examples, the separation between structurally similar constructions becomes critical when there is no complementary distribution, but possible ambiguity. For example, there are two clearly different constructions of *haben* with a participle, and some verbs can occur in both constructions, leading to possibly ambiguous sentences, exemplified here with *schneiden* ‘to cut’. First, there is the *haben-Perfekt* (36a), see Section 10.4 and second the *haben-Pertinenzdativ* (36b), see Section 10.5.22. There is a crucial difference here in who is doing the cutting, as disambiguated by the words in brackets.

- (36) a. Der Friseur hat (mir) die Haare geschnitten.
- b. Der Friseur hat die Haare geschnitten (bekommen).

An exceedingly complex situation occurs with the light verb *machen*, which induces many different diatheses depending on the main verb. Fehrmann (ref-fehrmann2018) extensively describes *machen* constructions with adjectives, but he seems to have completely ignored the complex situation with participles. There appear to be at least the following five different possibilities:

- i. No diathesis, leading to a resultative/stative interpretation  
For example (37a), see Section 10.4.16.

- ii. A conciliative diathesis  
For example (37b), see Section 10.5.25.
  - iii. A passive diathesis with an additional reflexive pronoun  
For example (37c), see Section 10.5.19.
  - iv. An inverted passive diathesis with an additional reflexive pronoun  
For example (37d), see Section 10.6.9.
  - v. A subject switch, i.e. a commutative diathesis  
For example (37e), see Section 10.9.2.
- (37) a. Der Verlust betrifft mich.  
Der Verlust macht mich betroffen.
- b. Ich begehre den Job wegen der Bezahlung.  
Die Bezahlung macht den Job begehrt.
- c. Die Polizei verdächtigt ihn.  
Er macht sich bei der Polizei verdächtigt.
- d. Ich eigne mich durch meine Qualifikation für den Job.  
Die Qualifikation macht mich geeignet für den Job.
- e. Er vergisst den Verlust.  
Ich mache den Verlust (bei ihm) vergessen.

### 10.2.8 Adjectives in light-verb constructions

Because of the similarity between participles and adjectives, it is instructive to turn the tables and investigate light-verb constructions with predicatively used adjectives like *schmutzig* ‘dirty’ or *offen* ‘open’. Most light verbs are used identically with adjective and participle constructions, but there are few interesting differences.

[10.55]

The verbs *sein*, *werden*, *bleiben*, known as KOPULAVERBEN in German grammar (e.g. ref-duden2009: 416), can be used both with participles and adjectives (38). Note that this parallelism implies that *werden*+*Adjektiv* is similar to a passive. The *werden* construction with adjectives (38c) might appear to be more of a *werden*+*Infinitiv* future (see Section 11.4.9) than a *werden*+*Partizip* passive (see Section 10.5.15). However, this is not the case. For example, the nominative subject in (38c) is not an agent.

[10.56]

- (38) a. Mein Fahrrad ist schmutzig.  
b. Mein Fahrrad bleibt schmutzig.  
c. Mein Fahrrad wird schmutzig.

The appearance verbs *wirken*, *(er)scheinen* and *aussehen* likewise can be used

both with participles (see Sections 10.5.10, 10.5.11) and adjectives (39) with no apparent differences between the two.

- (39) a. Mein Fahrrad wirkt schmutzig.  
 b. Mein Fahrrad scheint schmutzig.  
 c. Mein Fahrrad erscheint schmutzig.  
 d. Mein Fahrrad sieht schmutzig aus.

[10.58] The light verb *geben* (with obligatory reflexive pronoun) can be used with participles (see Section 10.5.12) and adjectives (40) without any apparent differences.

- (40) a. Er ist weltoffen.  
 b. Er gibt sich weltoffen.

[10.59] The light verbs *machen*, *lassen*, *halten* and *finden* are both used with adjectives and participles. With adjectives they all induce a novative alternation, i.e. a new subject role is added (see Section 2.7.3.2). However, with participles they lead to different kinds of diatheses.

- i. The light verb *finden* adds an opinionator, both with adjectives and participles (see Section 10.6.4).
- ii. The subject of the light verb *lassen* has a permissive meaning with adjectives (41b), but an additional continuative meaning with participles (see Section 10.4.11).
- iii. Similarly, the subject of *halten* has a causative meaning with adjectives (41c) but like *lassen* it has an added continuative meaning when combined with participles (see Section 10.4.12).
- iv. Finally, *machen* has many different uses with adjectives (ref-fehrmann2018 218), among them a causative reading (41d). With participles, *machen* likewise induces various different kinds of constructions, which need a similarly in-depth study as Fehrmann's study of adjectives (see paragraph 10.5.4 on page 469).

- (41) a. Ich finde mein Fahrrad schmutzig.  
 Ich finde das Projekt gescheitert.  
 b. Ich lasse die Tür offen.  
 Ich lasse die Tür geschlossen.  
 c. Ich halte den Kaffee warm.

Ich halte die Tür geschlossen.

- d. Ich mache mein Fahrrad schmutzig.  
Der Verlust macht mich betroffen.

The combination of *haben* with predicative adjectives (42) does not show any relationship to the *haben+Partizip* PERFECT, see Section 10.4.1. However, it is possible to draw a connection to the other *haben+Partizip* construction, namely the DATIVE PASSIVE (42b), see Section 10.5.22. In both constructions the new subject is an experiencer, who is also the possessor of the object (*Rechnung, Haare*).

- (42) a. Sie hat noch eine Rechnung offen.  
(= Ihre Rechnung ist noch offen.)  
b. Sie hat die Haare geschnitten.  
(= Ihre Haare sind geschnitten.)

Finally, the light verbs *gehören, sehen, wissen* and *glauben* can be combined with participles, but they do not seem to occur with predicative adjectives.

[10.61]

### 10.3 Deponent verbs without alternations

Most participles are regularly derived from verb stems that also have finite inflection. However, there are various participles that are not directly related to a finite verb, but that still occur in light-verb constructions. Such a participle is sometimes called a *Scheinpartizip* in German (cf. ref-haig2005). However, this name is somewhat of a misnomer as there is nothing ‘apparent’ (*schein*) about these participles. In contrast, it is the finite verb that is missing. A name like *Scheinverbpartizip* ‘participle of an apparent verb’ would be more accurate, but of course rather cumbersome. In this section, I will discuss the following kinds of participles without finite counterpart (cf. ref-rapp1997: 220ff.; ref-haig2005):

- Some participles have an idiomatic meaning that is not transparently related to the meaning of the morphologically corresponding finite verb (see Section 10.3.1).
- Some participles are derived from loanwords, but the corresponding finite verb does not exist (see Section 10.3.2).
- Some participles are derived from nouns, and the corresponding finite verb does not exist (see Section 10.3.3).
- Some participles might seem to be regular participles of verbs with a preverb, but the corresponding verb does not exist as a finite verb – only the verb without the preverb exists in finite form (see Section 10.3.4).

### 10.3.1 Idiomatic meaning of participles

[10.63]

Some participles have obtained a specialised idiomatic meaning, different from the finite use of the verb. For example *verwenden* ‘to plead for’ with participle *verwandt* (43a) has given rise to a completely separate participle *verwandt* ‘to be related’ (43b).<sup>9</sup> Similarly idiomatic are the participles *verrückt* ‘crazy’ from *verrücken* ‘to relocate’ (44a), *verklemmt* ‘prudish’ from *verklemmen* ‘to get jammed’ (44b) and *abgestanden* ‘flat, stale’ from *abstehen* ‘to stand out’ (44c). The extreme consequence of such an idiomatic meaning of a participle would be a participle without any finite corresponding verb, which could arise when the original verb is lost. I have not been able to find any convincing examples of this in contemporary German.

- (43) a. Er hat sich sehr für die Einrichtung eines Spielplatzes verwandt.  
b. Wir sind verwandt.
- (44) a. Er ist verrückt.  
b. Er ist verklemmt.  
c. Das Bier ist abgestanden.

[10.64]

The verb *regnen* ‘to rain’ is of course a completely normal finite verb in German, typically used with a non-phoric pronoun *es* (45a). However, there is a special usage of this verb with an animate subject and an obligatory manner adverbial (cf. Section 9.3.1) that can be used as a participle *geregnet* (45b), but not as a finite verb (45c). This special usage could be a participle derived from the noun *Regen* ‘rain’ instead, as discussed in Section 10.3.3 below.

- (45) a. Es regnet.  
b. Ich bin nass geregnet.  
c. \* Ich regne nass.

[10.65]

The participle *bekannt* ‘well-known’ appears to be morphologically derived from *bekennen* ‘to confess’, although the meaning of the participle is related to *kennen* ‘to know’, which has a participle *gekannt*. Such examples are discussed in Section 10.3.4 below.

- (46) a. Jeder kennt den Schauspieler.  
b. Der Schauspieler ist bekannt/\*gekannt.

<sup>9</sup>Unrelated, there is also a separate verb *verwenden* meaning ‘to utilise’ with a different participle *verwendet*.

### Attested verbs

- *geregnet, verdutzt, verrückt, verklemmt, verwandt*

### Notes

Eisenberg (ref-eisenberg2006: 201) also mentions *entsetzt* ‘appalled’ as an idiomatic participle, but the verb *entsetzen* ‘to appall’ seems to be perfectly possible as a finite verb (47a). The intended meaning from Eisenberg is then simply the anticausative *Zustandspassiv* (47b). Likewise, the DWDS mentions *verfroren* as an idiomatic participle,<sup>10</sup> but the verb *verfrieren* ‘to freeze’ is attested, though rare (47c,d).

- (47) a. Der Anblick entsetzt ihn. Der Anblick hat ihn entsetzt.  
b. Er ist entsetzt.  
c. Bei Wind verfrieren die Wangen in kürzester Zeit.<sup>11</sup>  
d. Meine Wangen sind verfroren.

### 10.3.2 Participles from loanwords

There are some participles ending in *-iert* that do not have any finite counterparts. These are built using a widespread German suffix *-ier* to turn loanwords into German verbs, like with *montieren* ‘to assemble’. This verb clearly has finite and non-finite forms, among them a participle *montiert*.<sup>12</sup>

However, there are various participle-like forms ending in *-iert* that do not appear to have finite forms, like *alkoholisiert* ‘to be full of alcohol’ (ref-haig2005: 117). Although many German dictionaries mention this verb, including sometimes listing finite forms, I have been unable to find any finite example of this verb. Only the infinitive *alkoholisieren* and the participle *alkoholisiert* are attested. It is unclear to me whether the finite forms have simply been lost, or whether they have never existed at all.

### Attested verbs

- *alkoholisiert, motorisiert, dezidiert, deplatziert, detailliert, kariert, versiert, pointiert*

<sup>10</sup> Attested at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/verfroren>, accessed 21 September 2022.

<sup>11</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 10.01.1997, Nr. 03.

<sup>12</sup> This participle has no prefix *ge-* because of the general German rule that verbs with non-initial stress do not get a prefix (ref-wiese1996: 92). With these loan verbs, the suffix *-ier* is always stressed, so there is never any prefix.



### 10.3.3 Participles from nouns

There exist various German words that are clearly participles in form, but their stems are nouns and not finite verbs (cf. ref-haig2005: 119). This might look like conversion, but it is not. The wholesale (zero-marked) conversion of nouns into finite verbs is clearly attested in German (e.g. *ölen* ‘to apply oil’ from the noun *Öl*, ‘oil’), but this is far from as productive as in English.

[10.70] In contrast, the participles that are of interest here do not exist as finite verbs, i.e. there are no German verbs *blumen* ‘to put flowers on something’ or *flügeln* ‘to put wings on something, but the participles *geblümt* ‘flowered’ (from noun *Blume* ‘flower’) and *geflügelt* ‘winged’ (from noun *Flügel* ‘wing’) are perfectly possible. Semantically, the noun-based participles express a kind of possessive relationship “subject exists with noun”. For example, *geblümt* means ‘to exist with flowers applied to it’.

[10.71] Further, various participles are derived from nouns using verb prefixes *be-* and *ver-*. As discussed earlier, it is a relatively widespread phenomenon for finite verbs to be derived from nominal stems using these prefixes (see Section 8.2.3). For example, the verb *vergiften* ‘to poison’ is derived from the noun *Gift* ‘poison’ without any verb like *giften* in between (48a,b). As a consequence, the participle *vergiftet* also exist (48c).

- (48) a. \* Sie giftet ihn.  
 b. Sie vergiftet ihn.  
 c. Er ist vergiftet.

Differently, the participle *verhasst* ‘hated’ appears to be derived from the noun *Hass* ‘hate’, but actually both are derived from the verb *hassen* ‘to hate’ (52a). However, the verb *verhassen* cannot be used as a finite verb (50b), only as a participle (50c). These examples are discussed in Section 10.3.4 below.

- (49) a. Sie hasst ihn.  
 b. \* Sie verhasst ihn.  
 c. Er ist verhasst.

#### Attested verbs

- *ge-*: *geädert*, *geblümt*, *gebrandmarkt*, *gebuchtet*, *gefenstert*, *gefiedert*, *gefleckt*, *geflügelt*, *gehandikapt*, *gehenkelt*, *gehörnt*, *gelaunt*, *gemustert*, *genarbt*, *genoppt*, *gepunktet*, *gerädert*, *gerahmt*, *gerippt*, *geschweift*, *gesittet*, *gestreift*, *gewitzt*, *gewürfelt*, *gezackt*

## 10 Light-verb alternations with Partizip

- be- : *bebartet, beblümt, bebrillt, befrackt, begabt, begnadet, behaart, behämmert, beheimatet, behelmt, beherzt, beknackt, beleibt, bemittelt, bemoost, bereift, berindet, beschilft, beschürzt, besternt, betagt, bezopft*
- ver- : *veraltet, verblümt, verkorst, verwitwet*
- zer- : *zerfurcht, zerklüftet*

### Notes

The finite verb *zacken* ‘to produce indentation’ is also attested, though rare (50a),<sup>[10.73]</sup> so *gezackt* might not be a good example of a participle without finite usage. In contrast, the verb *schweifen* ‘to ramble’ exists (50b), but is semantically not directly related to the participle *geschweift* ‘curled’. Both seem independently derived from the noun *Schweif* ‘bushy tail’. The same holds for the participle *gestreift* ‘striped’ and the verb *streifen* ‘to roam, to streak’, which are probably both independently related to the noun *Streifen* ‘strip, band’.

- (50) a. Die Streifen zackten sich über Schuhe, Bänke, Tische, Mäntel, Bettgitter.<sup>13</sup>  
b. Man schweifte wie auf einem riesigen Schuttplatz jenseits der Ränder der bekannten Welt.<sup>14</sup>

The participle *gelaunt* (from noun *Laune* ‘mood’) needs a manner adverbial (cf. <sup>[10.74]</sup> Section 9.3.1).

- (51) a. Ich bin gut *gelaunt*.  
b. \* Ich *laune* gut.

### 10.3.4 Participles with preverbs

<sup>[10.75]</sup> Words like *einverstanden* ‘agreed’ (52a) look morphologically like a regular participle from a verb *einverstehen*. However, that verb does not exist (52b), only the non-prefixed verb *verstehen* exists. Latzel (**ref-latzel1977**: 79–80) discussed various examples with the preverb *aus-* and Rothstein (**ref-rothstein2007a**: 162) lists examples with the preverb *an-* that only occur in construction with light verb *kommen* (see Section 10.4.9). Participles with preverbs that do not have a corresponding finite verb appear to be a common phenomenon and the participles listed here should only to be taken as illustrative examples.

<sup>13</sup>DWDS: Fichte, Hubert: Das Waisenhaus, Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verl. 1988 [1965], S. 139.

<sup>14</sup>DWDS: Jünger, Ernst: In Stahlgewittern, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1994 [1920], S. 110.

- (52) a. Ich bin einverstanden.  
 b. \* Ich verstehe ein.

### Attested verbs

- an- : *angedampft, angedonnert, angeflitzt, angeheiratet, angehetzt, angeheult, angekeucht, angekrochen, angelatscht, angelaufen, angeprescht, angerast, angerselt, angerauscht, angeritten, angerannt*
- aus- : *ausgeblufft, ausgedient, ausgekämpft, ausgeknabbert, ausgelitten, ausgepredigt, ausgeschätzt, ausgesorgt, ausgespielt, ausgeträumt, ausgezaubert, ausstudiert, ausverkauft*
- Other preverbs : *abgeneigt, befangen, bekannt, bescheuert, bewusst, einverstanden, erlesen, verfressen, verhasst, verrotzt, verschämt, verträumt, zerschunden*

## 10.4 Alternations without diathesis

### — *haben/sein Perfekt* —

The combination of the light verbs *haben* and *sein* with a participle is traditionally considered to be a single tense/aspect construction, called *PERFEKT* in the German grammatical terminology. Given the latinate origin of much of modern grammatical theory, the wish for a unified German equivalent of the inflectional Latin *PERFECTUM* is perfectly understandable. However, it is far from obvious that this German *Perfekt* is a unified construction.

[10.77] The first argument in favour of a unified German *Perfekt* construction is that the light verbs *haben* and *sein* occur in almost complete complementary distribution. Only very few verbs are attested that allow for both. However, for this generalisation to work, various diatheses have to be excluded (see Sections 10.4.3, 10.4.4). Also the *haben/sein+Partizip* passives have to be separated (see Sections 10.5.16, 10.5.22, 10.5.23).

A second intriguing argument is that all German verbs have a *Perfekt*. In other words, every stem that allows for finite inflection also has at least one of the two constructions *haben+Partizip* or *sein+Partizip* without any role mapping (i.e. without diathesis). Such an universal applicability of a construction to all verbs is otherwise only attested (arguably) with *Modalverben* (see Section 11.4.9 and subsequent sections). This universal applicability of the *Perfekt* and the *Modalverben* is reflected in the widespread practice of the German grammatical tradition to

consider the *haben+Partizip*, *sein+Partizip* and *werden+Infinitiv* as part of the inflectional paradigm of a verb. In contrast, all the hundreds of other constructions discussed in this book always have a restricted domain of application, i.e. they do not apply to all verbs (cf. Section 1.3.4).

The universal applicability of the *Perfekt* is known to have been developed in the late Middle Ages and was only completed in the 16th century with the development of a *haben+Partizip* construction for the *Modalverben* (ref-fischer2020: 258).<sup>15</sup> However, examples of a *Perfekt* with various *Modalverben* are still really rare in German. For example, only a few examples of *haben gedurft* are attested in the DWDS corpus, almost exclusively with *haben* in the *Konjunktiv*.<sup>16</sup>

There is a lot of fluidity in the temporal interpretation of the *Perfekt*, with much dialectal variation, ongoing change, and idiosyncratic diversity (ref-fischer2020). Basically, the *Perfekt* in contemporary German is very close to the simple past (*Präteritum*) and seems to replace it in various contexts. Also, while this construction is called *Perfekt*, it is clearly not marking a grammatical perfect aspect (see Section 10.2.6). Additionally, the temporal structure of the *Perfekt* is exceptional compared to all other participle constructions. It cannot be used with point-time reference to the future (53a) and any inflectional tense marking is independent from time reference. As a result, the *Perfekt* can be used with a combination of past time reference and *Präsens* tense marking (53b). This combination is otherwise completely unattested in German participle constructions, and it is thus reliable indicator of a *Perfekt* construction.

- (53) a. \* Ich habe das Haus morgen gekauft.  
b. Ich habe das Haus gestern gekauft.

#### 10.4.1 [ N | N ] *haben+Partizip* Intransitive perfect

Many intransitive verbs have a perfect with the auxiliary *haben*, like *lachen* ‘to laugh’ (54a). Typically, the participle of such verbs cannot be used adnominally

<sup>15</sup>Fischer writes: “Ab 1300 und häufiger erst ab 1400 bildet auch das Verb *haben* Perfektformen (*hat gehabt*). Perfektbildungen der Modalverben sind erst ab Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts belegt, wobei diese im Mittelhochdeutschen noch verschiedene Konkurrenzformen haben [...]. Erst dann hat die Perfektgrammatikalisierung alle Verben des Deutschen erfasst und ist vollständig vollzogen.” (ref-fischer2020: 258)

<sup>16</sup>For example, the search “@gedurft haben” gives 60 hits in the *Referenz- und Zeitungskorpora* (available at <https://www.dwds.de/d/korpora/public>). Only three of those are not in the *Konjunktiv*, and one of those appears to be an error. Similarly, the search “haben #4 @gedurft” gives 64 hits with only 5 not in the *Konjunktiv*. All searches were performed on 21 September 2022.

(54b), see Section 10.2.4, but the impersonal *werden* passive is possible (54c), see Section 10.5.1.

- (54) a. Die Schüler lachen.  
       Die Schüler haben gelacht.  
       b. \*Die gelachte Schüler sind froh.  
       c. Heute wurde viel gelacht.

[10.82] Although verbs with a *haben* perfect are often thought of as “agentive” verbs, there are many semantically non-agentive verbs, for example describing bodily processes (like *bluten* ‘to bleed’) or bodily sensations (like *jucken* ‘to itch’) that also take *haben* in the perfect.

### Attested verbs

- Agentive verbs: *arbeiten, lügen, schwindeln (betrügen), hupen, stehen, sitzen, tun*
- Bodily processes: *atmen, bluten, husten, lachen, weinen, niesen, pinkeln, schlafen, schwitzen, träumen*
- Bodily sensations (cf. Section 5.8.3): *brennen, frieren, drücken, jucken, klopfen, rasen (Emotion), schmerzen, tränen, zittern*
- Natural processes (cf. Section 5.8.3): *blühen, dampfen, modern (faulen), stinken*
- Accusative addition (cf. Section 5.8.1): *leben, schauen, singen, spielen, springen, tanzen*
- Manner-of-speaking (cf. Section 5.8.1): *brüllen, flüstern, grölen, johlen, murmeln, schreien, stottern*

### 10.4.2 [ N | N ] *sein+Partizip* Intransitive perfect

[10.83] A large group of intransitive verbs only allow for a perfect with the auxiliary *sein*, like *flüchten* ‘to flee’ (55a). In contrast to the intransitives with *haben*, the verbs with *sein* allow for an adnominal usage of the participle (55b), but do not (easily) allow for an impersonal passive (55c). There appear to be only a restricted set of monomorphemic verbs with a *sein* perfect, but a much larger number of such verbs with preverbs (cf. Section 8.4.4).

- (55) a. Der Gefangene flüchtet.

Der Gefangene ist geflüchtet.

- b. Der geflüchtete Gefangene wurde wieder gefasst.
- c. ? Heute wird geflüchtet.

There is a strong semantic tendency for the nominative subject of intransitives with *sein* to be more like a patient. Many of the verbs describe actions that are not performed deliberately, but more or less happen to the subject (e.g. *sterben* ‘to die’, *fallen* ‘to fall’ or *scheitern* ‘to fail’). However, there are also many verbs that do not fit into this semantic characterisation (e.g. *flüchten* ‘to flee’, *gehen* ‘to go’ or *abreisen* ‘to depart’). Note that the characterisation “change-of-location/state” verbs (ref-keller2003: 65) likewise does not fit to describe the semantics of the verbs as listed below.

### Attested verbs

- Monomorphemic verbs: *bersten, beuteln, bleiben, fallen, fliehen, fließen, flüchten, gehen, gleiten, kentern, kommen, krepieren, platzen, prallen, quellen, reifen, schlüpfen, scheitern, schreiten, schrumpfen, sein, sinken, sprießen, steigen, sterben, stolpern, strömen, traben, wachsen, weichen, werden*
- Verbs with a lexicalised prefix: *degenerieren, detonieren, emigrieren, gedeihen, gelangen, genesen, geschehen, explodieren*
- Verbs with a preverb: *abbiegen, abhauen (weglaufen), abmagern, abreisen, absaufen, absteigen, abstürzen, anbrennen, ankommen, anschwellen, ansteigen, auffallen, aufstehen, aufsteigen, auftreten, aufwachen, aufwachsen, ausbleiben, ausbrechen, ausfallen, ausgehen, auslaufen, aussteigen, auswandern, ausweichen, ausziehen (wohnen), beitreten, 'durchlaufen, 'durchsickern, 'durchfallen, 'durchgehen, eindringen, einfließen, einfrieren, einkehren, einreisen, einrosten, einschlafen, einsteigen, einstürzen, eintauchen, eintreffen, eintreten, entbrennen, entfliehen, entkommen, entstehen, erfrieren, erkranken, erlöschen, ermüden, erschallen, erscheinen, ertrinken, fehlschlagen, herumgehen, hinfallen, mitgehen, mitkommen, nachkommen, stehenbleiben, 'umfallen, 'umsiedeln, 'umziehen, 'untergehen, 'untertauchen, 'überkochen, verbleiben, verblühen, verbluten, verdampfen, verfaulen, verfallen, verhungern, verreisen, verrosten, verrutschen, verschimmeln, verschwinden, versinken, versterben, vertrocknen, verwelken, vorgehen, vorkommen, wegfallen, weggehen, weglaufen, wegrennen, zerfallen, zerrinnen, zufrieren, zuwachsen, zurückbleiben, zurückfahren, zurückgehen, zurückkommen, zurücklaufen, zurückrennen*

## Further examples

- Er ist ertrunken/verstorben/gestorben/gescheitert.
- Er ist ausgebrochen/ausgegangen/ausgestiegen/ausgezogen.
- Ich bin aufgestanden/durchgelaufen/umgezogen/verreist.
- Der Junge ist gewachsen.
- Der Baum ist gefallen.
- Der Ballon ist geplatzt.
- Meine Hoffnung ist geschwunden.
- Der Wasserpegel ist gesunken/gestiegen.
- Die Flasche ist ausgelaufen.
- Die Prophezeiung ist eingetroffen.
- Die Kerze ist erloschen.
- Die Milch ist übergekocht.
- Das Schiff ist versunken.
- Das Kind ist eingeschlafen.
- Die Blumen sind vertrocknet/verblüht.
- Die Wunde ist zugewachsen.
- Der Zug ist angekommen.
- Der Regen ist durchgesickert.
- Die Sonne ist untergegangen.
- Die Ladung ist verrutscht.
- Der Schnee ist zerronnen.

10.4.3 [ N | N ] *haben/sein+Partizip* Intransitive perfect

[10.85] There is a surprisingly large group of intransitive verbs that allow for both a *haben* and a *sein* perfect. However, most turn out to be the result of some diathesis productively applied to these verb. Besides those productive diatheses there is only a very small group of intransitive verbs that alternate between *haben* and *sein*. In this section I have collected all those different kinds of intransitive verbs that allow for both auxiliaries (see also *ref-hinze2007*; *ref-gillmann2016*: Ch. 5). Additionally, the next Section 10.4.4 discusses verbs that allow for an intransitive *haben* perfect with a reflexive pronoun and an intransitive *sein* perfect without a reflexive pronoun.

[10.86] The main group of intransitive verbs that are attested with both *haben* and *sein* (without the involvement of a diathesis) are verbs that describe a natural process, like *splittern* ‘to splinter’ (127a) or *faulen* ‘to rot’ (56b). These verbs can both be used to describe the process (with a *haben* perfect) and the result of

this process (taking a *sein* perfect), though these semantic differences are very faint. Curiously, almost all verbs that show this phenomenon also have as *ver/zer-*prefixed variant with minimal semantic change (cf. Section 8.4.4). These prefixed variants, e.g. *zersplittern*, *verfaulen*, *verrosten*, consistently take *sein* in the perfect.

- (56) a. Das Holz war nicht brauchbar, es hat zu sehr gesplittert.<sup>17</sup>  
Die Fensterscheibe ist in tausend Scherben gesplittert.<sup>18</sup>
- b. Blut und Fleischinfus, das längere Zeit gefault hat, scheint weniger schädlich zu wirken.<sup>19</sup>  
Und wir haben gehungert, so gehungert, daß mir das Fleisch am Leibe gefault ist.<sup>20</sup>

The faint semantic difference indicates that the *sein* perfect with these verbs is closely related to the *sein* passive, which also is used to express a result (cf. Section 10.5.16). And indeed, the graduality test also seems to apply (cf. Section 10.2.6), namely the *sein+Partizip* construction is incompatible with a gradual time specification like *langsam* ‘slowly’, as illustrated with *rosten* ‘to rust’ in (57).

[10.87]

- (57) a. Die Fässer hätten viel zu lange nahezu unbeobachtet vor sich hin gerostet.<sup>21</sup>
- b. Die Fässer sind mittlerweile so stark gerostet, daß Giftdämpfe entweichen.<sup>22</sup>
- c. Die Fässer haben langsam gerostet.
- d. \* Die Fässer sind langsam gerostet.

A similar situation is attested with a few incidental verbs describing mental states, like *verzweifeln* ‘to despair’. Interpreted as a state, this verb takes a *sein* perfect (58a). However, when interpreted as a process leading to this state, this verb takes a *haben* perfect (58b).

<sup>17</sup> Attested online at the DWDS dictionary at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/splittern>, accessed 21 September 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Attested online at the DWDS dictionary at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/splittern>, accessed 21 September 2022.

<sup>19</sup> DWDS: Koch, Robert: Untersuchung über die Aetiologie der Wundinfektionskrankheiten. Leipzig, 1878.

<sup>20</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 30.09.1988, Nr. 40.

<sup>21</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 09.02.2015 (online).

<sup>22</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 03.06.1988, Nr. 23.



- (58) a. Sie ist ganz verzweifelt.  
 b. Und ich steh hier am teuflischen 17. Loch, wo so viele verzweifelt haben.<sup>23</sup>

Other than these, all examples of intransitive verbs with both a *haben* and a *sein* perfect exist because of a diathesis that is productively applied to these verbs. There are two diatheses involved, namely the manner-of-movement diathesis (Section 6.8.2) and the unmarked anticausative diathesis (Section 5.5.5). These two phenomena will briefly be summarised here.

[10.90] First, and most famously, both *haben* and *sein* perfects are attested with movement verbs. This is mainly due to the manner-of-movement diathesis (see Section 6.8.2).<sup>24</sup> For example, a verb like *wackeln* ‘to shake, to wiggle’ can be used as a verb performing the action, and then it takes a *haben* perfect (59a). Alternatively, it can be used to describe a manner of motion to reach a new position, and then it takes a *sein* perfect (59b). Various semantic and syntactic phenomena go along with this diathesis, as described in detail in Section 6.8.2.

- (59) a. Er wackelt mit dem Schwanz.  
 Er hat mit dem Schwanz gewackelt.  
 b. Er wackelt durch den Garten.  
 Er ist durch den Garten gewackelt.

[10.91] A similar phenomenon can be observed with some weather verbs, like *stürmen* ‘to storm’ (see Section 6.8.3). When used as a description of a type of weather it takes a *haben* perfect (60a). However, when used (metaphorically) as a manner-of-movement description it takes a *sein* perfect (60b).

- (60) a. Es stürmt.  
 Es hat gestürmt.  
 b. Sie stürmen in den Saal.  
 Sie sind in den Saal gestürmt.

[10.92] Second, anticausative verbs like *kochen* ‘to cook’ (see Section 5.5.5) allow for both an intransitive *sein* passive of the transitive *kochen* (61a) and a *haben* perfect of the intransitive *kochen* (61b). In effect, this results in verbs with two intransitive constructions, one with *haben+Partizip* and one with *sein+Partizip*. However, the *sein+Partizip* construction is actually a *Zustandspassiv* in such examples,

<sup>23</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 04.01.2001, Nr. 02.

<sup>24</sup>There also seems to be some dialectal and idiolectal variation as to the choice of *haben* vs. *sein* with movement verbs. This needs more in-depth investigation.

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with all semantic and syntactic characteristics that go along with that (see Section 10.5.16).

- (61) a. Die Oma kocht eine Suppe.  
Die Oma hat eine Suppe gekocht.  
Die Suppe ist gekocht.  
b. Die Suppe kocht.  
Die Suppe hat gekocht.

A similar diathesis is attested with some of the anticausative verbs with obligatory location like *kleben* ‘to stick to’ (62), see Section 6.5.10. [10.93]

- (62) a. Ich klebe den Teller an den Tisch.  
Ich habe den Teller an den Tisch geklebt.  
Der Teller ist am Tisch geklebt.  
b. Der Teller klebt am Tisch.  
Der Teller hat am Tisch geklebt.

### Attested verbs

- Natural process verbs with *ver-* alternation: *altern, dorren, faulen, frieren, gären, rosten, schimmeln, splintern, welken*
- Natural process verbs without *ver-* alternation: *keimen, münden*
- Mental states: *resignieren, verzweifeln*
- Manner-of-motion verbs (see Section 6.8.2): *fahren, fliegen, hüpfen*, etc.
- Weather manner-of-motion verbs (see Section 6.8.3): *blitzen, donnern, hageln*, etc.
- Anticausative verbs (see Section 5.5.5): *abnehmen, abreißen, abstoßen*, etc.
- Location anticausative verbs (see Section 6.5.10): *hängen, kleben, lehnen*, etc.

### Further examples

- Das Kind hat gefroren.  
Das Wasser ist gefroren.
- Die Diebe sind in den Tresor eingebrochen.  
Die Diebe haben im Tresor eingebrochen.
- Ich weiss nicht, warum dies Brot geschimmelt ist.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup>DWDS: Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm (Hrsg.): Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. Bd. 5. Leipzig, 1880.

- Nach Medienberichten soll dies in einem erpresserischen System gemündet haben.<sup>26</sup>  
Es ist die monatelange Stimmungsmache gegen Flüchtlinge, die den Hass säte, der in Tröglitz nun in Flammen gemündet ist.<sup>27</sup>

## Notes

[p] Intransitive *altern* with *haben+Partizip* is not in current use anymore (63a). The verb *dorren* is typically listed as having only a *sein* perfect, but note examples like (63b) with *haben*.

- (63) a. Sie fand, daß er in der letzten Zeit stark gealtert hatte.<sup>28</sup>  
b. Denn der eigentliche Zauber einer Oase erschließt sich nur demjenigen, der zuvor einige Stunden in der Sonne gedorrt hat.<sup>29</sup>

### 10.4.4 [ N | N ] *haben/sein+Partizip* Reflexive intransitive perfect

There is a further group of verbs that occur both with an intransitive *haben+Partizip* and with an intransitive *sein+Partizip* construction, but with a special twist. These verbs also have a reflexive pronoun in the *haben* construction, like with *sich verspäten* ‘to be late’ (64). With such verbs it looks like there are two different intransitive perfects, one with *haben* and a reflexive pronoun (64a) and one with *sein* without a reflexive pronoun (64b). However, this last construction is probably best analysed as a special kind of *Zustandspassiv* (see Section 10.5.16).

- (64) a. Der Zug hat sich verspätet.  
b. Der Zug ist verspätet.

There is a difference in the temporal interpretation of the two participle constructions (cf. Section 10.2.6). The *haben* construction is process-oriented and has no temporal restrictions (65a). In contrast, the *sein* construction is result-oriented and cannot be combined with gradual time specification, like *schrittweise* ‘gradually’ (65b). So, to be clear, the verbs in this section do not have two different perfects. There only is a single reflexive *Perfekt* with *haben*. The non-reflexive construction with *sein* is a *Zustandspassiv*. The interesting aspects of the verbs in this section is that both these options occur in the intransitive.

<sup>26</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.11.2015 (online).

<sup>27</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 04.04.2015 (online).

<sup>28</sup>DWDS: Die Grenzboten. Jg. 70, 1911, Viertes Vierteljahr.

<sup>29</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 19.04.1997.

- (65) a. Der Zug hat sich schrittweise immer mehr verspätet.  
 b. \*Der Zug ist schrittweise immer mehr verspätet.

This phenomenon is found with many verbs with an obligatory reflexive pronoun (see Section 7.3.1 ff.), like the previous example *sich verspäten*. A similar situation arises with reflexive anticausative verbs like *schließen* ‘to close’ (see Section 7.5.2). Such verbs occur in transitive constructions, which allow for an intransitive *Zustandspassiv* with *sein* (66a). Alternatively, such verbs have an intransitive usage with a reflexive pronoun with a *haben* perfect (66b). In effect, there are two different intransitive participle constructions, one with *haben* and a reflexive pronoun (66b) and one with *sein* without a reflexive pronoun (66a). Again, gradual time (*schrittweise*) is not possible with *sein+Partizip*. Note that gradual time is possible with the addition of *worden*, but that is a completely different construction (see Section 10.5.16 for a discussion of the difference).

- (66) a. Ich schließe den Schrank.  
 Der Schrank ist (\*schrittweise) geschlossen.  
 b. Der Schrank schließt sich.  
 Der Schrank hat sich (schrittweise) geschlossen

A similar situation also occurs with many (though not all) endoreflexive verbs (cf. Section 7.7.1) like *entblößen* ‘to undress’ (67a), resulting in both an intransitive reflexive *haben* perfect (67b) and an intransitive non-reflexive *sein* construction (67c). The *sein* construction is not compatible with gradual time specification, so it is similar to a *Zustandspassiv*. [10.98]

- (67) a. Der Patient entblößt den Oberkörper.  
 Der Patient entblößt sich.  
 b. Der Patient hat sich (allmählich) entblößt.  
 c. Der Patient ist (\*allmählich) entblößt.

Likewise, some verbs allow for both a reflexive conversive (*Reflexiv Erlebniskon-*  
*versiv*, see Section 7.5.7) and also a *sein+Partizip* passive (*Zustandspassiv*, see Section 10.5.16). When both are possible, then such verbs have both a *sein* and a *haben* intransitive construction. For example *aufregen* ‘to upset’ is such a verb (68a). This verb allows for a conversive diathesis with a reflexive pronoun, which in turn takes a *haben* perfect (68b). However, there is also a *sein* passive without reflexive pronoun (68c), which is best analysed as the *Zustandspassiv* of the original transitive construction (68a) because it does not allow for gradual time. [10.99]

- (68) a. Der Lärm regt ihn auf.  
           Der Lärm hat ihn aufgeregt.  
       b. Er regt sich auf (über den Lärm).  
           Er hat sich aufgeregt (über den Lärm).  
       c. Er ist (\*schrittweise) aufgeregt (wegen des Lärms).

[10.100] The verbs below are repeated from the previous sections in which the various phenomena are discussed in detail. However, only those verb are listed here that actually allow for both the intransitive *haben* reflexive participle construction and the intransitive *sein* participle construction. It remains an interested topic for more research why not all verbs from the relevant sections allow for both.

### Attested verbs

- Obligatory reflexive verbs (cf. Section 7.3.1 ff.): *ausruhen, ausschlafen, bemühen, befreunden, beteiligen, betrinken, beschäftigen, drehen, eignen, entscheiden, entschließen, erholen, erkälten, erstaunen, konzentrieren, üben, verabreden, verbrüdern, verirren, verkrachen, verloben, verlieben, versuchen, verspäten, vertiefen*
- Reflexive anticausative verbs (cf. Section 7.5.2 ff.): *abduschen, abkühlen, ablagern, ablösen, abnutzen, abschalten, abschwächen, abseilen, ändern, ansammeln, ansparen, auflösen, aufwärmen, ausbreiten, ausdehnen, ausschalten, beschleunigen, beschränken, bessern, bestätigen, bewegen, beziehen, drehen, eindrücken, einfügen, einschalten, entfalten, entscheiden, entzünden, erfüllen, erhöhen, erwärmen, erweitern, färben, festigen, füllen, gliedern, komplizieren, konstituieren, leeren, lockern, lohnen, mildern, öffnen, quälen, schließen, senken, spalten, steigern, stürzen, teilen, unterwerfen, verändern, verbessern, verbreiten, verdoppeln, vereinfachen, verengen, vergrößern, verhaken, verkleinern, verkürzen, verlängern, verlangsamen, vermehren, verringern, versammeln, verschieben, verschlechtern, verstärken, verwandeln, wärmen, wiederholen, zeigen*
- Reflexive conversive verbs (cf. Section 7.5.7): *anstrengen, aufregen, begeistern, beschäftigen, empören, entspannen, entwickeln, erfreuen, erschrecken, erstaunen, erzürnen, interessieren, langweilen*
- Endoreflexive verbs (cf. Section 7.7.1): *abhetzen, anziehen, ausziehen, bewegen, entblößen, neigen, täuschen, verkleiden, verschlafen, zuneigen*
- Quasi-endoreflexive verbs: *fokussieren, konzentrieren, organisieren*

### Further examples

- Ich habe mich betrunken.  
Ich bin betrunken.
- Er hat sich erkältet.  
Er ist erkältet.
- Er hat sich entschlossen zu reisen.  
Er ist entschlossen zu reisen.
- Er hat sich erholt von der Krankheit.  
Er ist erholt von der Reise.
- Ich habe mich auf die Arbeit fokussiert. Ich bin auf die Arbeit fokussiert.

#### 10.4.5 [ ND | ND ] *haben+Partizip* Dative perfect

Verbs with a dative argument are strictly split between *sein* and *haben*. There do not appear to be any verbs that allow for both. The grammatical status of the datives is slightly different among these verbs (see Sections 5.3.4, 5.7.4, 6.7.10, 8.8.13 for detailed discussion). Similar to intransitives, the dative verbs with a *haben* perfect, like *antworten* ‘to answer’ (69a), do not allow for a construction with an adnominal participle (69b), but the impersonal *werden* passive is possible (69c). [10.101]

- (69) a. Die Professorin hat dem Studenten geantwortet.  
b. \*Der geantwortete Student ist zufrieden.  
c. Heute wird dem Studenten geantwortet.

### Attested verbs

- *ähneln, angehören, antworten, beiliegen, beipflichten, bevorstehen, dienen, einleuchten, entsprechen, fehlen, gefallen, gehören, gelten, gleichen, gratulieren, helfen, imponieren, kündigen, liegen (natürliche Begabung), missfallen, nacheifern, passen, schaden, schmecken, sitzen (passen), trauen, vertrauen, zuhören, zure-*  
*den*

#### 10.4.6 [ ND | ND ] *sein+Partizip* Dative perfect

Similar to intransitives, the dative-verbs with *sein*, like *gelingen* ‘to succeed’ (70a), all appear to allow for a construction with an adnominal participle (70b), while the impersonal *werden* passive is not possible (70c). Among these verbs, there are

very many with the *ent-* prefix. Other than that special group, there does not appear to be any obvious semantic differentiation between the nominative+dative verbs that take *sein*+*Partizip* vs. those that take *haben*+*Partizip* (as discussed in the previous section).

- (70) a. Das Gemälde ist mir gelungen.  
 b. Das gelungene Gemälde ist schön.  
 c. \* Heute wird mir gelungen.

### Attested verbs

- *auffallen, begegnen, bleiben, einfallen, beitreten, entgegen kommen, erscheinen, folgen, gegenüber treten, gelingen, geschehen, glücken, misslingen, nachgehen, nachlaufen, passieren, unterlaufen, unterliegen, unterstehen, verfallen, weglaufen, weichen, widerfahren, zufallen, zulaufen, zustoßen*
- Prefix *ent-*: *enteilen, entfliegen, entfliehen, entfließen, entgegen, entgleiten, entkommen, entlaufen, entspringen, entspringen, entspringen, entstammen, entströmen, entwachsen, entweichen, entschlüpfen, entspringen, entwischen*

### Notes

The verb *folgen* ‘to follow’ typically takes *sein*, but there are incidental instances of *haben* (71a) connected to a slightly different meaning ‘to obey’ (71b). This usage seems to be old-fashioned. Similarly, the verb *begegnen* ‘to meet’ typically takes *sein*, but *haben* is attested (71c).

- (71) a. [...] wenn China und Nordkorea den Empfehlungen der Kommission gefolgt hätte.<sup>30</sup>  
 b. [Sie] hätten nur Befehlen gefolgt.<sup>31</sup>  
 c. Er nannte Beispiele, wie er während seiner Präsidentschaft Notständen begegnen mußte und begegnet habe.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup>DWDS: Archiv der Gegenwart, 2001 [1953]. Note the error in the verb agreement, which is like this in the original.

<sup>31</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 27.10.2017 (online).

<sup>32</sup>DWDS: Archiv der Gegenwart, 2001 [1952].

#### 10.4.7 [ NP | NP ] *sein+Partizip* Governed preposition perfect

[10.104]

Almost all verbs with governed prepositions take a *haben* perfect, and these will not be separately listed here. Only a small group take a *sein+Partizip* perfect, for example *scheitern an* ‘to fail’ (72a). Only very few examples of obligatory local prepositions belong in this category, like *einziehen* ‘enter’ (72b).

- (72) a. Ich scheitere an der Aufgabe.  
Ich bin an der Aufgabe gescheitert.  
b. Die Sportler zogen in das Stadion ein.  
Die Sportler sind in das Stadion eingezogen.

##### Attested verbs

- an : *scheitern, sterben*
- auf : *kommen (einfallen)*
- aus : *entkommen, entfliehen, entschlüpfen, entspringen, entwischen*
- bei : *bleiben*
- in : *einziehen, geraten*
- vor : *fliehen, flüchten, weichen*

##### Further examples

- Ich bin nicht darauf gekommen.
- Ich bin dabei geblieben.
- Er ist in eine prekäre Situation geraten.
- Die Sportler sind in das Stadion eingezogen.

#### 10.4.8 [ NA | NA ] *sein+Partizip* Transitive perfect

Almost all transitive (nominative+accusative) verbs take a *haben* perfect, and these will not be separately listed here. There is only a small group of transitive verbs that use *sein* in the perfect, like *angehen* ‘to tackle’ or *loswerden* ‘to get rid of’ (cf. ref-grewendorf1989: 9; ref-strobl2007: 102, 107ff.).

[10.105]

- (73) a. Ich bin die Prüfung ruhig angegangen.  
b. Ich bin den Verfolger losgeworden.

Movement verbs with the separable preverbs *ab-* (in the meaning ‘along’) and *durch-* (with the meaning ‘through’) appear to be quite productive in producing transitive verbs with a *sein* Perfect. For example, a verb like *abkriechen* ‘to crawl



along’ does not appear in regular German lexical resources, but can productively be created and seems to take quite naturally a perfect with *sein* (74a). Similarly, the somewhat more widespread verb *durchkriechen* ‘to crawl through’ also takes *sein* in the perfect (74b).

- (74) a. Ich bin dann mit dem Messgerät auch nochmal das gesamte Fahrzeug abgekrochen.<sup>33</sup>  
 b. Sobald man das Loch durchgekrochen ist, hat man einen grandiosen Blick auf das schöne Gletscherpanorama.<sup>34</sup>

[10.107]

Likewise, directional preverbials (see Section 9.2.5) quite productively turn movement verbs into transitive verbs with a *sein+Partizip* perfect. This is particularly frequent with vertical movement, for example with *hoch-*, e.g. *hochkriechen* ‘to crawl up’ (75a), and with *hin/her-*, e.g. *hinunterrennen* ‘to run down’ (75b) and *hinaufgehen* ‘to walk up’ (75c).

- (75) a. Deinen Hals ist es hochgekrochen.<sup>35</sup>  
 b. Der Kleine war aufgestanden und die Stiege hinuntergerannt.<sup>36</sup>  
 c. Schließlich waren sie einen Hügel hinaufgegangen ins Iglu-Dorf.<sup>37</sup>

[10.108]

Finally, the verb *laufen* allows for both *sein* and *haben* in the intransitive (see Section 10.4.3), while also allowing for an added-result accusative (see Section 5.8.1). Because of this combination, both *haben* and *sein* appear possible in transitive constructions (76a). The same is also attested with *springen* ‘to jump’ (76b).

- (76) a. Ich habe den Marathon gelaufen.  
 Ich bin den Marathon gelaufen.  
 b. Ich habe einen Salto gesprungen.  
 Daß ich den Weltrekord nicht gesprungen bin, ist nicht so schlimm.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Attested online at <https://www.wohnmobilforum.de/w-t88559,start,45.html>, accessed 23 April 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Attested online at <https://sac-saas.ch/24-02-2020-hangende-gletscher/>, accessed 23 April 2021.

<sup>35</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 12.02.2013, Nr. 6.

<sup>36</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.04.2004, Nr. 16.

<sup>37</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 15.10.2009, Nr. 43.

<sup>38</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 26.01.1998.

**Attested verbs**

- ab- : *abfahren, abkriechen, ablaufen, abschreiten*
- durch- : *durchfahren, durchgehen, durchklettern (Alpinismus), durchkriechen*
- hoch- : *hochgehen, hochkriechen, hochlaufen, hochrennen, hochschleichen, hochsteigen*
- hin/her- : *herabsteigen, heruntergehen, hinabgehen, hinabtraben, hinabtrotten, hinaufgehen*
- Others : *angehen, eingehen, laufen, loswerden, springen*

#### Further examples {unnumbered}

[10.109]

- Wir sind die Papiere durchgegangen.
- Wir sind den Vertrag eingegangen.
- Ich bin die Piste abgefahren.
- Ich bin den Weg abgelaufen.
- Ich bin die Treppe hinaufgegangen.
- Ich bin den Hang hinabgetrottet.
- Das Pferd ist den Hang hinabgetrabt.
- Ich hob meinen schicken Flieger hoch und ging den langen Hang singend herunter.<sup>39</sup>
- Während Guerrero dies berichtete, war Guatemoc den Hügel herabgestiegen.<sup>40</sup>
- Und eine Bewertung kann man ja sowieso erst auswerfen, wenn man eine Route durchgeklettert ist.<sup>41</sup>
- Ich konnte es bereits riechen, als ich vor Stunden die steilen Treppen in mein Zimmer hochgeschlichen bin.<sup>42</sup>

— Aspect —

**10.4.9 [ N | N ] *kommen+(an-)+Partizip* Movement towards (Aditivprogressiv)**

[10.110]

The *kommen+Partizip* construction (77) is used to convey that the subject is approaching while performing a specific kind of movement. It is very similar to a

<sup>39</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 28.07.2001.

<sup>40</sup>DWDS: Stucken, Eduard: *Die weißen Götter*, Stuttgart: Stuttgarter Hausbücherei (1960, 1919), S. 223.

<sup>41</sup>Attested online at <https://www.frankenjura.com/klettern/kommentare/poi/13198>, accessed 18 September 2022.

<sup>42</sup>Attested online at <https://www.harpercollins.de/products/feels-like-love-9783745752526>, accessed 20 September 2022.

main verb *kommen* ‘to come’ with a secondary adverbial predicate (78). Rothstein (ref-rothstein2007a; ref-rothstein2011) observed various structural differences between these constructions (see also the general discussion about participles as secondary predicates in Section 10.2.3). The *kommen+Partizip* construction, like with *hüpfen* ‘to hop’, can be identified by the impossibility of adding the negating *un-* prefix to the participle (77b) and by the clause-final position of the participle (77c,d). With secondary predicates like *verkleidet* ‘dressed up’ these syntactic characteristics are reversed (78b-d).

- (77) a. Er kommt gehüpft.  
 b. \* Er kommt ungehüpft.  
 c. Er kommt aus seinem Zimmer gehüpft.  
 d. \* Er kommt gehüpft aus seinem Zimmer.
- (78) a. Er kommt verkleidet.  
 b. Er kommt unverkleidet.  
 c. \* Er kommt aus seinem Zimmer verkleidet.  
 d. Er kommt verkleidet aus seinem Zimmer.

[10.111] Rothstein also observes that these two different kinds of participles cannot be conjoined. A secondary predicate like *verkleidet* can be conjoined with adverbials like *froh* or *springend* (79a). In contrast, this is not possible with *gehüpft* (79b). Likewise *verkleidet* and *gehüpft* cannot be conjoined in a *kommen+Partizip* construction (79c).

- (79) a. Er kommt froh, springend und verkleidet.  
 b. \* Er kommt froh, springend und gehüpft.  
 c. \* Er kommt verkleidet und gehüpft.

The *kommen+Partizip* construction is typically attested with intransitive verbs of movement, like *hüpfen*. However, there are also examples of movement verbs with additional accusative (80a) or dative (80b) arguments. These possibilities need more in-depth investigation.

- (80) a. Er kommt den Berg herabgelaufen.  
 b. Er kam mir nachgelaufen.

A widely discussed special variant is the construction with participles with a preverb *an-* (see ref-eisenberg2006: 266; ref-rothstein2007a: 162; ref-felfe2012:

194, 241). Many of these *an-* verbs are only possible in this construction, i.e. they do not occur in finite clauses (ref-rothstein2007a: 162), see also Section 10.3.4. Besides with movement verbs, like *reiten* ‘to ride on horseback’ (81a), the *an-* construction also occurs with sound-production verbs, like *keuchen* ‘to pant’ (81b). These two possibilities are related to the manner-of-movement construction, see Section 6.8.2, and the manner-of-speaking construction, see Section 5.8.1.

- (81) a. Er kommt angeritten.  
(= Er geht reitend irgendwohin.)  
b. Er kommt angekeucht.  
(= Er geht keuchend irgendwohin.)

The secondary predicate usage is also possible with transitive verbs, but then typically with an anticausative argument reversal (82). [10.114]

- (82) a. Er packt das Geschenk ein.  
Das Geschenk kommt (un)eingepackt.  
b. Er kocht die Rüben.  
Die Rüben kommen (un)gekocht.  
c. Er schreibt einen Brief.  
Sein Brief kam schon fertig geschrieben bei mir auf den Tisch.

### Attested Verbs

- Movement verbs: *fliegen, hüpfen, laufen, schwimmen, zufliegen*, etc.
- *an-* verbs only attested in the *kommen+Partizip* construction: *andampfen, andonnern, anfliegen, anflitzen, anhetzen, anheulen, ankeuchen, ankriechen, anlatschen, anlaufen, anpreschen, anrasen, anrasseln, anrauschen, anreisen, anreiten, anrennen, anrücken*

### Further Example

- Er kam aus dem Haus gelaufen.
- Er kam zum Ufer geschwommen.
- Eine Kugel kommt geflogen.
- Ein Vogel ist auf mich zugeflogen gekommen.
- Er kam geschmückt, erregt, und gespannt zu Tische.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Thomas Mann, cited from (ref-rothstein2007a: 161).

10.4.10 [ N | N ] *bleiben+Partizip* Continuative (*Perfektkontinuativ*)

The *bleiben+Partizip* construction can be used both with some transitive verbs leading to a passive diathesis (see Section 10.5.17), and with a few intransitives, but then without any diathesis. For example, verbs like *verschwinden* ‘to vanish, to go missing’ (83a) or *zufrieren* ‘to freeze over’ (83b) allow for this epithesis. There is a close connection to the *sein+Partizip* passive construction, though with an added notion of continuation.

- (83) a. Der Schlüssel verschwindet.  
Der Schlüssel bleibt verschwunden.  
b. Der Binnensee ist zugefroren.  
Weihnachten rückt näher, und der Binnensee bleibt zugefroren.<sup>44</sup>

[10.116] The *bleiben+Partizip* construction is only possible with verbs that also allow for a *sein+Partizip* perfect (Section 10.4.2), though far from all verbs allow for both. In general, it turns out to be far from easy to find many examples of *bleiben+Partizip* with intransitive verbs, suggesting that there are strong restrictions on the application of this construction. There is a strong semantic intuition that only reversible events allow for a *bleiben+Partizip* construction (ref-helbig2001: 163; ref-schlucker2007: 152). However, examples are attested with clearly irreversible events like *verbrennen* ‘to burn’ (84a) or punctual events like *einschlafen* ‘to fall asleep’ (84b). The notion “reversibility” is thus clearly not the whole explanation.

- (84) a. ? Das Buch bleibt verbrannt.  
Die Haut bleibt verbrannt, egal wieviel Sonnenmilch sie dann auftragen.<sup>45</sup>  
b. ? Das Kind bleibt eingeschlafen.  
Alex rührt sich, aber bleibt eingeschlafen.<sup>46</sup>

## Attested Verbs

- *erkranken, verbrennen, verrosten, verschimmeln, verschwinden, vertrocknen, verwelken, zufrieren*

<sup>44</sup> Attested online at <https://www.haz.de/Umland/Wunstorf/Nachrichten/Inselvogt-Zobel-von-Feuerwehr-gerettet>, accessed 16 July 2021.

<sup>45</sup> Attested online at <https://www.leben-mit-ms.de/expertenrat/ms-kortison>, accessed 16 July 2021.

<sup>46</sup> Attested online at <https://blogs.cornell.edu/glp-spr58/2014/05/07/jesus-christus-und-ikea-in-wolfgang-beckers-goodbye-lenin/>, accessed 16 July 2021.

### Further Examples

- Die Blume bleibt verwelkt (verblüht).
- Das Schloss bleibt verrostet.
- Das Geschirr wurde gewaschen, aber selbst der Fach wo das Geschirr reinkommt, ist verschimmelt geblieben.<sup>47</sup>
- Nur von 4000 Personen ist aktenkundig bekannt, daß sie verschwunden geblieben sind.<sup>48</sup>
- Die Köpfchen vertrockneten immer wieder, aber sie rappelte sich immer wieder auf. Seit 4 Wochen sind die Köpfchen vertrocknet geblieben.<sup>49</sup>
- Ich bin auch nach der Schwangerschaft weiter an Diabetes erkrankt geblieben.<sup>50</sup>

#### 10.4.11 [ NA | NA ] *lassen+Partizip* Permissive continuative (*Permissivkontinuativ*)

Similar to the previous construction, the *lassen+Partizip* construction also can be used to express the continuation of a state, like with *einschalten* ‘to turn on’ (85). Although this construction can be used with many different verbs, it turns out to be much more difficult to find suitable examples, which suggests that there are some additional constraints of the applicability of this construction. Semantically, *lassen+Partizip* expresses permissive continuative (cf. the permissive reading of *lassen* with infinitive, see Section 11.2.5).

[10.117]

- (85) a. Ich schalte den Fernseher ein.  
b. Ich lasse den Fernseher eingeschaltet.
- *anlehnen, ausklammern, einschalten, öffnen, zudecken*

### Further examples

- Der Mann hatte den Zuleitungsschlauch ohne Zusatzsicherung mehrere Jahre hindurch geöffnet gelassen.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Attested online at <https://www.holidaycheck.de/hrd/hl-miraflor-suites-hotel-sehr-viel-verbesserungspotenzial/2e0be7a4-3803-4fe7-a19a-910d17de92b8>, accessed 16 July 2021.

<sup>48</sup> Attested online at <https://www.zeit.de/1975/46/spurlos-verschwunden/seite-4>, accessed 16 July 2021.

<sup>49</sup> Attested online at <https://www.hausgarten.net/gartenforum/threads/carnivoren-winterruhe.32314>, accessed 16 July 2021.

<sup>50</sup> Attested online at <https://www.hipp.de/forum/viewtopic.php?t=17551>, accessed 16 July 2021.

<sup>51</sup> dwds: Der Tagesspiegel, 12.07.2004.

- Die Tür hatte sie angelehnt gelassen, jetzt stand sie sperrangelweit offen.<sup>52</sup>
- Hätte man die Streitfragen wirklich ausgeklammert gelassen, dann wäre das Berlin-Abkommen ein großer Erfolg gewesen.<sup>53</sup>

#### 10.4.12 [ NA | NA ] *halten+Partizip* Caused continuative (*Kausativkontinuativ*)

A widespread option for transitive verbs is to use the *halten+Partizip* construction to express the conscious decision by the subject to prolong a reached state, like with *schließen* ‘to close’ (86). Semantically, the nominative subject of the *halten+Partizip* construction is a causative agent. The attested verbs listed below are only a few exemplary lexemes. This construction is applicable to a much wider group of verbs.

- (86) a. Er schließt die Tür.  
b. Er hält die Tür geschlossen.

##### Attested verbs

- *ausstrecken, besetzen, drücken, fangen, richten, schließen, verbergen, verstecken*, etc.

##### Further examples

- Er hält seine Augen auf sie gerichtet.
- Er hält den Brief verborgen.
- Er hält das Personal gefangen.
- Er hält den Raum besetzt.
- Er hält die Taste gedrückt.
- Er hält den Arm ausgestreckt.

##### — Modality —

#### 10.4.13 [ NA | NA ] *bekommen/kriegen+Partizip* Achievement (*Effektiv*)

The construction of the light verbs *bekommen/kriegen+Partizip* is widely discussed as a dative passive (*Rezipientenpassiv*, see Section 10.5.21). However, transitive verbs without dative arguments can also occur in this construction with a

<sup>52</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.03.1990, Nr. 13.

<sup>53</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.03.1974, Nr. 11.

completely different ‘to be able to’ interpretation (87). This usage is discussed as the “*bekommen*-Konstruktion 2” (ref-leirbukt1997: 15–16) or as the “resultative usage” of *bekommen/kriegen* (ref-lenz2013: 86, 238–239). Different from the dative passive, the light verb *erhalten* is not possible in this construction. I propose the German name *EFFEKTIV* (from Lat. *effectus* ‘accomplishment’) for this construction. In some situations it is even possible to construct ambiguous sentences, that can either have an *Effektiv* (87b) or a *Rezipientenpassiv* (87c) interpretation.

- (87) a. Ich koche einen Tee.  
 b. Ich bekomme (schon noch) einen Tee gekocht!  
 (= Ich schaffe es, einen Tee zu kochen.)  
 c. Ich bekomme (von meiner Mutter) einen Tee gekocht.  
 (= Meine Mutter kocht einen Tee für mich.)

The light verb *kriegen* is also frequently used with resultative preverbials (see Section 9.2.6) instead of the participle, e.g. *flottkriegen*, *kaputtkriegen*, *kleinkriegen*, *loskriegen*, *totkriegen*, *vollkriegen*. This seems somewhat less productive with *bekommen*, e.g. *fertigbekommen*, *kleinbekommen*, *losbekommen*.

[10.120]

### Attested verbs

- *kochen*, *öffnen*, *schließen*, *trocknen*, *vermieten*, *verschieben*, *zerbrechen*, etc.

### Further examples

- Wenn wir die Pforte geschlossen bekommen, verfassen wir nachträglich einen Bericht.<sup>54</sup>
- Er kriegt den Stock zerbrochen.
- Ich kriege den Schrank geöffnet.
- Er kriegt seine Kleider noch rechtzeitig getrocknet.
- Er kriegt den schweren Schrank auch alleine verschoben.
- Er kriegt die Wohnung vermietet.

<sup>54</sup>Regnier, Sandra. 2017. *Die magische Pforte der Anderwelt*, p. 122. Available online at <https://books.google.de/books?id=Lhm1DgAAQBAJ&pg=122>, accessed 16 July 2021.



## — Evidentiality —

10.4.14 [ N | N ] *scheinen/erscheinen*+Partizip Inferred evidence  
(*Perfektinferenz*)

The light verbs *scheinen* and *erscheinen* are used with participles of some intransitive verbs to describe an inference being made by the speaker. The intransitive verbs that are used in this construction are patientive verbs that have a *sein* perfect, like *einschlafen* ‘to fall asleep’ (88a). Agentive intransitives, like *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ are not possible (88b). With transitive verbs this construction leads to an anticausative diathesis (see Section 10.5.10).

- (88) a. Das Kind schläft endlich ein.  
           Das Kind scheint endlich eingeschlafen.  
       b. \* Das Kind scheint geschlafen.

[10.122] An additional experiencer dative is sometimes attested to express the role of the person making the inference. When this dative is not present, then the speaker is making the inference (89a). The dative can be used to express that somebody else is making the inference (89b).

- (89) a. Das Kind scheint mir endlich eingeschlafen.  
           (= Das Kind scheint endlich eingeschlafen.)  
       b. Der jüdische Publizist Julius Rodenberg schien ihm als  
           Namenspatron geeignet.<sup>55</sup>

[10.123] These constructions are analysed by Lasch (ref-lasch2016: 253ff.) as *Askription mit modaler Relation*. However, I propose to categorise these construction as a kind of evidential, following the proposal by Diewald & Smirnova (ref-diewald2010: 177–191). Diewald and Smirnova present an extensive discussion of the meaning of *scheinen* in various constructions, but, inexplicably, they did not include the construction with a participle. Still, their proposal that *scheinen* can express an inferential evidential also seems fitting for the participle construction. The German name *PERFEKTINFERENZ* is proposed here because of the perfectivity of the main verb. It stands in opposition to the *Imperfektinferenz* construction, which uses a *zu-Infinitiv* (see Section 12.4.10).

<sup>55</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 24.06.1999.

### Attested verbs

The following attested verbs are only illustrative examples taken from the data analysed by Lasch (2016).<sup>56</sup> There are many more verbs possible in these constructions, but these lists present a good sample of the kind of verbs that are actually attested.

[10.124]

- scheinen: *abreisen, brechen, entstehen, gefrieren, gelingen, geschehen, kommen, rücken, verlorengelassen, verschwinden, versinken, werden, zerbrechen, zurückziehen*
- erscheinen: *ausbrennen, ausdehnen, ausformen, ausreifen, bräunen, eignen, einbilden, hervorstechen, verblühen, verdicken, vertrocknen, wachsen*

#### 10.4.15 [ N | N ] *aussehen/wirken+Partizip* Sensory evidence (*Sinnesevidenz*)

The light verbs *aussehen* and *wirken* can be used with participles of intransitive verbs to describe an evaluation of an event based on sensory evidence by the speaker. It is typically used with patientive verbs that have a *sein* perfect, like *ausschlafen* ‘to sleep in’ (90a). Agentive verbs with a *haben* perfect are not possible, like *arbeiten* ‘to work’ (90b).

[10.125]

- (90) a. Er schläft aus.  
           Er wirkt ausgeschlafen.  
       b. \*Er wirkt gearbeitet.

These constructions are analysed by Lasch (ref-lasch2016: 253ff.) as *Askription mit modaler Relation*, but an evidential analysis seems more suitable (cf. the discussion in Section 10.4.14). For *aussehen/wirken* I propose to categorise the participle constructions as a *direkt evidential* based on sensory evidence by the speaker (*Sinnesevidenz*). With transitive verbs these constructions evoke an anti-causative diathesis (see Section 10.5.11).

[10.126]

<sup>56</sup>Data accessed on 24 May 2012, available online at <https://goo.gl/xUng8v> for *aussehen*, <https://goo.gl/Xj7EW6> for *erscheinen*, <https://goo.gl/5YvKiw> for *scheinen* and <https://goo.gl/yCai8B> for *wirken*.

### Attested verbs

The following attested verbs are only illustrative examples taken from the data analysed by Lasch (2016).<sup>57</sup> There are many more verbs possible in these constructions, but these lists present a sample of the kind of verbs that are actually attested.

- aussehen: *abstürzen, einbilden, brechen, sterben, verkleiden, verkümmern, verregnen, verwildern*
- wirken: *ausschlagen, aussterben, brechen, schwellen, verirren, versinken*

### — Other —

#### 10.4.16 [ NA | NA ] *machen+Partizip* Resultative

[10.128] This is one of the various alternations that occur with *machen+Partizip* (see Section 10.2.7). With some experiencer verbs like *betreffen* ‘to concern’ this alternation does not induce any role-remapping, i.e. there is no diathesis.

- (91) a. Der Verlust betrifft mich.  
b. Der Verlust macht mich betroffen.

[10.129] There are various highly frequent examples of *machen+Partizip* in which the participle is not directly derived from a finite verb (see Section 10.3.4).

- (92) a. Das Geschäft macht mich angesehen.  
b. Die Arbeit macht mich erfahren.  
c. Der Film macht ihn beliebt.  
d. Der Rauch macht mich benommen.

### Attested verbs

- *betreffen, verbittern, verstören, verzagen*

### Further examples

- Das Geschehen macht mich verbittert.
- Der Bericht hat mich verstört gemacht.
- Den Jäcklein hatte der getrunzene Wein verzagt und verstört gemacht.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup>Data accessed on 24 May 2012, available online at <https://goo.gl/xUng8v> for *aussehen*, <https://goo.gl/Xj7EW6> for *erscheinen*, <https://goo.gl/5YvKiw> for *scheinen* and <https://goo.gl/yCai8B> for *wirken*.

<sup>58</sup>DWDS: Perutz, Leo: Die dritte Kugel, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt 1988 [1915], S. 217.

#### 10.4.17 [ NA | NA ] *nehmen+Partizip* Imprisonment

The *nehmen+Partizip* construction frequently occurs with *fangen* ‘to catch’ in the context of imprisonment (93). Incidental cases with other verbs are attested, but these seem to be highly unusual.

- (93) a. Er fängt den Dieb.  
b. Er nimmt den Dieb gefangen.

##### Attested verbs

- *fangen, festnehmen, schenken*

##### Further examples

- Der mutmaßliche zweite Terrorverdächtige von Boston ist nach Polizeiangaben festgenommen genommen.<sup>59</sup>
- Ich habe mich übrigens nie als Miteigentümer der Leuna-Werke verstanden und hätte sie 1990 nicht geschenkt genommen.<sup>60</sup>

#### 10.4.18 [ NA | NA ] *setzen+Partizip* Imprisonment

The *setzen+Partizip* construction appears to be only possible with the verb *fangen* ‘to catch’ in the context of imprisonment (94). [10.131]

- (94) a. Er fängt den Dieb.  
b. Er setzt den Dieb gefangen.

##### Attested verbs

- *fangen*

### 10.5 Diatheses with subject demotion

#### — [ SBJ > Ø ] —

To call the following [SBJ > Ø] diatheses “passive” is actually a misnomer, because there is no promotion of an argument to subject status. Also the retention of

<sup>59</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 20.04.2013 (online).

<sup>60</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 12.05.2005, Nr. 20.

the original subject is mostly not possible. According to the categorisation of diatheses as used here a term like *INSUBJECTIVE* would be a more suitable name (see Section 2.7.2). However, because the actual constructions (using light verbs *werden*, *sein* or *gehören*) show a parallel to the real passives, the widely used term *unpersönliches Passiv* from the German grammatical tradition is retained here.

### 10.5.1 [ N | – ] *werden*+*Partizip* Impersonal passive (*Unpersönliches Vorgangspassiv*)

[10.133]

The *werden*+*Partizip* impersonal passive is a widely discussed phenomenon in German grammar (cf. *ref-primus2011* and the references therein) that occurs with some intransitive verbs like *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ (95). A special and very atypical characteristic of this diathesis is that there is no grammatical subject expressed. Typically in German, when a nominative subject is dropped, then a valency-simulating pronoun *es* is inserted (see Section 2.2.3). However, in this diathesis the pronoun *es* is only position-simulating (i.e. it occurs when the first position of the sentence is empty). In contrast, when the first position is filled, the pronoun *es* is absent (95b).

- (95) a. Das kleine Kind schläft im Bett.  
           Das kleine Kind hat im Bett geschlafen.  
       b. Es wird im Bett geschlafen.  
           Im Bett wird (\*es) geschlafen.

[10.134]

This diathesis has become famous in grammatical discussions because of the claimed correlation with unaccusative verbs (here called “agentive verbs”, see Section 10.2.5). Basically, the claim is that there is a correlation between the *sein/haben* selection in the perfect and the possibility of the *werden* impersonal passive. Concretely, the claim is that (agentive) intransitive verbs with *haben* allow for the impersonal passive (95), while (patientive) intransitive verbs with *sein* do not (96).

- (96) a. Das kleine Kind schläft im Bett ein.  
           Das kleine Kind ist im Bett eingeschlafen.  
       b. \* Im Bett wird eingeschlafen.

Although there indeed seems to be a tendency here, there are many counterexamples. For example, with verbs with *haben*+*Partizip* like *lügen* ‘to lie’, *jucken* ‘to

itch’ or *blühen* ‘to blossom’ it appears to be neigh impossible to use an impersonal passive. Possible examples are attested only with additional modal verbs like *können* or *dürfen* (97).

- (97) a. In den Rieselfeldern kann ungehemmt gestunken und gelärmt werden.<sup>61</sup>  
 b. Im Gericht gibt es Fragen, bei denen gelogen werden darf.<sup>62</sup>

In contrast, intransitive verbs with *sein* mostly do not allow for the impersonal passive, though examples can be found rather easily in corpora (98). Primus (**ref-primus2011**: 289–290) observes that this typically induces a repetitive interpretation. The examples below suggest a habitual reading as a further possible interpretation.

- (98) a. Lange Zeit weiß niemand - Patrick eingeschlossen - wovor hier eigentlich geflohen wird.<sup>63</sup>  
 b. Außerdem: Wie brutal ist das Betrachten eines Regenbogens, wenn nebenan krepirt wird?<sup>64</sup>  
 c. Auch 2001 soll mit zweistelliger Rate weiter gewachsen werden.<sup>65</sup>  
 d. In meiner Umgebung wird nicht gestorben.<sup>66</sup>

In some specific contexts this impersonal construction also seems possible for transitive verbs like *überarbeiten* ‘to rework’ (99a) or even ditransitive verbs like *geben* ‘to give’ (99b). However, note that in all such cases it appears to be impossible to retain any of the non-subject arguments (99c), so these impersonal passives can be analysed as being stacked on top of an action focus diathesis (see Section 9.7.1) dropping the accusative role and leading to an intransitive verb.

[10.137]

- (99) a. Ich überarbeite den Aufsatz.  
 Morgen wird dann weiter überarbeitet.  
 b. Ich schenke dir die Bücher.  
 Geschenkt wird erst morgen wieder.  
 c. \* Erst morgen wird dir wieder geschenkt.

Related to impersonal passives, there is a recurrent proposal for a special *Reflexivpassiv* in the German grammatical literature (e.g. **ref-eisenberg2006a**: 131;

<sup>61</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 16.12.1983, Nr. 51.

<sup>62</sup>Attested online at [http://www.rhetorik.ch/Aktuell/11/01\\_27/index.html](http://www.rhetorik.ch/Aktuell/11/01_27/index.html), accessed 4 June 2021.

<sup>63</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 05.01.2002.

<sup>64</sup>DWDS: Arjouni, Jakob: Chez Max, Zürich: Diogenes 2006, S. 61.

<sup>65</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 30.05.2001.

<sup>66</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 05.03.2017 (online).

ref-lasch2016: 119). This does not appear to be a special diathesis, but rather an effect of an impersonal passive stacked on top of any construction with a reflexive pronoun. For example, verbs with obligatory reflexive pronouns retain this reflexive pronoun in an impersonal passive, like *konzentrieren* ‘to concentrate’ (100a), see Section 7.3.1. Also, sentence constructions that include a reflexive pronoun because of another diathesis can be stacked with an impersonal passive on top. For example *kümmern* ‘to worry, to take care’ shows a conversive diathesis with an reflexive pronoun (see Section 7.5.7) and retains this reflexive pronoun in an impersonal passive (100b). Similarly, regular “self-inflicting” reflexive constructions retain the reflexive pronoun in an impersonal passive (100c). In summary, the *Reflexivpassiv* is not a separate phenomenon, but a combination of two separate diatheses. The term should preferably not be used.

- (100) a. Die Regierung hat sich konzentriert auf die systemrelevanten Banken.  
Zunächst solle sich auf die systemrelevanten Banken konzentriert werden.<sup>67</sup>
- b. Ich kümmere mich darum.  
Es wird sich jetzt endlich darum gekümmert.
- c. Ich rasiere mich.  
Heute wird sich rasiert.

### 10.5.2 [ NP | –P ] *werden*+*Partizip* Impersonal passive+governed preposition

[10.1] Many, but not all, verbs with governed prepositions (but without accusative argument, cf. Section 6.7.1) appear to allow for an impersonal passive, like *warten auf* ‘to wait for’ or *arbeiten an* ‘to work on’ (101). Note that these verbs all take a *haben*+*Partizip* perfekt. Although it seems possible to retain the original subject as a *von* prepositional phrase, I have not been able to find good examples of such subject retention in corpora.

- (101) a. Auf den Professor wurde gewartet.  
b. An den Aufsatz wurde gearbeitet.

[10.140] Many, but not all, verbs that allow for a reflexive conversive diathesis, like *empören* ‘to appal’ or *aufregen* ‘to upset’ (102), see Section 7.5.7, also allow for an impersonal passive in the reflexive usage with a governed preposition.

<sup>67</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 11.09.2012, Nr. 37

- (102) a. Über die Zerstörung der Schöpfung [...] wird sich empört.<sup>68</sup>  
b. In braver Einigkeit wird sich darüber aufgeregt, dass die  
Debattenkultur in Deutschland zu lahm, zu konsensuell, zu träge  
geworden sei.<sup>69</sup>

### Attested verbs

- Governed preposition verbs (see Section 6.7.1)
  - über : *herrschen, siegen, triumphieren, lügen, reden, sprechen, schweigen, denken, diskutieren, meditieren, nachdenken, klagen, lachen, schimpfen, staunen, streiten, weinen*
  - auf : *abfahren (mögen), drängen, hoffen, rechnen, verzichten, warten, schimpfen*
  - an : *arbeiten, denken, klopfen, teilnehmen, zweifeln*
  - um : *streiten*
- Reflexive conversive verbs (see Section 7.5.7)
  - über : *aufregen, ärgern, begeistern, beschweren, empören, freuen, wundern*
  - um : *kümmern*

### Further examples

- Als Erstes wird sich allgemein darüber gewundert, wie anders man doch aussehe und dass man sich dennoch wieder erkannt habe.<sup>70</sup>
- Wenn du etwas falsch machst, wird sich um dich gekümmert.<sup>71</sup>

#### 10.5.3 [ ND | –D ] *werden+Partizip* Impersonal passive+dative

Only a small subset of all verbs with a dative argument allow for an impersonal passive. Although this appears to be slightly more common for verbs with a *haben* perfect, like *entsprechen* ‘to conform’ or *helfen* ‘to help’ (103a), cf. Section 10.4.5, there are also verbs with a *sein* perfect that allow for an impersonal passive, like *entfliehen* ‘to flee’ or *beitreten* ‘to join’ (103b), cf. Section 10.4.6.

[10.141]

<sup>68</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 24.11.2003

<sup>69</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 12.09.2017 (online).

<sup>70</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 01.12.2004.

<sup>71</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 24.09.2015 (online).



- (103) a. Seiner Bitte wird entsprochen.  
Den Eltern wurde geholfen.  
b. Dem Gefängnis wird entflohen.  
Dem Verein wird beigetreten.

### Attested verbs

- With *haben* perfect: *antworten, beipflichten, bevorstehen, entsprechen, gratulieren, helfen, nacheifern, trauen, vertrauen, zuhören, zureden*
- With *sein* perfect: *beitreten, folgen, nachgehen*

### Further examples

- Auch in diesem Fall wird dem Gesprächspartner zuerst beigepflichtet.<sup>72</sup>
- Ich weiß nicht, wie weit dem Zola-Roman gefolgt wird.<sup>73</sup>
- Ich habe angeordnet, daß allen Spuren [...] nachgegangen wird.<sup>74</sup>

### 10.5.4 [ N | – ] *sein+Partizip* Impersonal passive

It appears to be impossible for intransitives to be used in a *sein+Partizip* impersonal passive. This section is only included to discuss the theoretical possibility of this construction, because there is a curious parallel with the other impersonal constructions, which makes it noteworthy that this diathesis does not exist. Impersonal constructions with light verbs *werden, sein* and *gehören* occur with additional governed prepositions and with additional datives (see the next sections), but a parallel construction with *sein* is (apparently) not attested for “real” intransitives (104).

- (104) a. \* Es ist geschlafen.  
b. \* Während des Protests ist viel gehupt.

Such constructions only seem to be possible with an additional *worden* (105), which is effectively a stack of an impersonal *werden+Partizip* passive with a *sein+Partizip* perfect as discussed in detail in Section 10.5.16 (with the participle of *werden* showing up as the idiosyncratic form *worden*).

<sup>72</sup> Attested online at <https://wortwuchs.net/stilmittel/concessio/>, accessed 6 Juni 2021.

<sup>73</sup> DWDS: Klemperer, Victor: [Tagebuch] 1928. In: “Leben sammeln, nicht fragen wozu und warum”, Berlin: Aufbau-Taschenbuch-Verl. 2000, S. 258.

<sup>74</sup> DWDS: Der Spiegel, 16.01.1989.

- (105) a. Da ist geschrien worden.  
b. Vier Jahre ist geschlafen worden, jetzt sollen wir alles in vier Tagen machen.<sup>75</sup>

### 10.5.5 [ NP | –P ] *sein*+*Partizip* Impersonal passive+governed preposition

It turns out to be astonishingly hard, but not impossible, to find examples of a *sein* impersonal passive with a governed preposition, like with *denken* (106a). Constructions with an additional *worden* are more widespread (106b), but those are stacks of *werden* passive with a *sein* perfect (106c). See Section 10.5.16 for a more in-depth discussion of this difference.

- (106) a. Aber auch daran ist gedacht.  
b. An nichts ist gearbeitet worden.  
c. Jemand arbeitet an nichts.  
+> *werden*+*Partizip* impersonal passive  
= An nichts wird gearbeitet.  
+> *sein*+*Partizip* perfect  
= An nichts ist gearbeitet worden.

#### Attested verbs

- *denken*

### 10.5.6 [ ND | –D ] *sein*+*Partizip* Impersonal passive+dative

In contrast, *sein* impersonal passives with nominative+dative verbs are easy to find. All nominative+dative verbs that allow for a *werden* impersonal passive (see Section 10.5.3) also are possible with *sein* (107).

- (107) a. Dem Entschluss ist entsprochen.  
„Es gibt kein Zurück“, sagte Metzger, „ganz gleich, ob dem Willen des Haushaltsausschusses entsprochen ist oder nicht.“<sup>76</sup>  
b. Ihm ist geholfen.

<sup>75</sup> Attested online at <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/muenchen/dachau/brandschutz-karlsfeld-wohnhaeuser-kritik-1.5250267>, accessed 17 June 2021.

<sup>76</sup> DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 27.04.2002.

Ich glaube nicht, dass den Jungs damit geholfen ist.<sup>77</sup>

- c. Ihm ist gekündigt.  
 Schon gar nicht, bevor dem Mieter dort wirksam gekündigt ist.<sup>78</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- *antworten, entsprechen, helfen, kündigen*, etc.

#### 10.5.7 [ N | – ] *gehören+Partizip* Impersonal passive

The *gehören+Partizip* passive occurs in some examples with intransitive verbs, resulting in impersonal constructions. An in-depth introduction to the *gehören+Partizip* passive for transitive verbs can be found in Section 10.5.18. The usage of this construction with intransitive verbs needs more in-depth study, as many examples seem doubtful (108a,b). However, they are sparingly attested (108c).

- (108) a. ? In der Sauna gehört geschwitzt.  
 b. ? In der Nacht gehört geschlafen.  
 c. Um die Uhrzeit gehört geschlafen.<sup>79</sup>

#### 10.5.8 [ NP | –P ] *gehören+Partizip* Impersonal passive+governed preposition

[10] Impersonal passive constructions with a governed preposition are attested with the light verb *gehören* (109). Basically the same verbs that occur with *werden+Partizip* (see Section 10.5.2) can also occur with *gehören+Partizip*, though a more detailed study into this construction is necessary.

- (109) a. Ich kämpfe gegen den Feind.  
 Gegen den Feind gehört gekämpft.  
 b. Darüber gehört diskutiert, darüber gehört gestritten.<sup>80</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- *diskutieren, kämpfen, streiten*

<sup>77</sup> DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 17.05.2003.

<sup>78</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 03.05.2003.

<sup>79</sup> Attested online at <https://www.motor-talk.de/forum/empire-bikes-und-klaus-huelsmann-t3208043.html?page=7>, accessed 16 June 2021.

<sup>80</sup> Attested online at <https://katharina-schulze.de/zukunft-wird-aus-mut-gemacht/>, accessed 17 June 2021.

### 10.5.9 [ ND | –D ] *gehören+Partizip* Impersonal passive+dative

Impersonal passives with a dative are widespread with the light verb *gehören* (110). Such examples were already included in one of the first discussions of the *gehören+Partizip* passive (ref-reis1976: 70).

- (110) a. Ich helfe dem Studenten.  
Dem Studenten gehört geholfen.  
b. Ich kündige ihm.  
Ihm gehört gekündigt.

#### Attested verbs

- *antworten, entsprechen, helfen, kündigen*

– [ OBJ > SBJ > Ø ] –

### 10.5.10 [ NA | –N ] *scheinen/erscheinen+Partizip* Anticausative (*Inferenzantikausativ*)

The light verbs *scheinen* and *erscheinen* can be used with participles in monoclausal constructions. With intransitive verbs these light verbs do not induce any diathesis (see Section 10.4.14). In contrast, with transitive verbs these constructions result in an anticausative diathesis (111). Such constructions are analysed by Lasch (ref-lasch2016: 253ff.) as *Askription mit modaler Relation*. However, inspired by the analysis by Diewald & Smirnova (ref-diewald2010: 177–191) it seems better to consider these expression as marking inferential evidence. As a German name I propose to use the term *INFERENZANTIKAUSATIV*.

[10.149]

- (111) a. Die Polizei hat die Straßensperre aufgehoben.  
Die Straßensperre scheint aufgehoben.  
b. Die Spekulation hat die Aktienkurse aufgeblasen.  
Die Aktienkurse erscheinen aufgeblasen.

The retention of the agent using a *von* prepositional phrase appears to be possible, though examples are very rare (112). Note that examples with *wie von* phrases have to be discarded as such phrases do not instantiate an agent. Because of the very rare attestation of retained agents I consider these diatheses to be anticausatives, not passives.

[10.150]

- (112) a. Im Längsschnitt erscheint der helle Innenraum von zwei dunklen Linien begrenzt.<sup>81</sup>  
 b. Zuletzt scheinen von diesem Prozeß die biblischen Gleichnisse betroffen.<sup>82</sup>

Other arguments, like datives (113a) or governed prepositions (113b), are simply retained as such with this diathesis.

- (113) a. Jemand hat das Dorf dem Erdboden gleichgemacht.  
 Das Dorf scheint dem Erdboden gleichgemacht.<sup>83</sup>  
 b. Die Mannschaft wappnet sich für die Aufgabe.  
 Deutschlands U 21 scheint für anspruchsvollere Aufgaben gewappnet.<sup>84</sup>

[10.152] These constructions are regularly attested with an additional experiencer dative (114). This dative expresses the role of the person making the inference. This role is not a lexical role of the main verb, but an additional role that is part of this evidential diathesis. Without this dative, the person making the inference is assumed to be the speaker, so the first person pronoun *mir* is mostly superfluous (114a,b). By using an explicit non-first person dative the inference can be assigned to another person (114c). Combined with a retained dative (as illustrated above) such an inferential dative can result in a sentence with two datives (114d).

- (114) a. Der Titel [...] scheint mir unglücklich gewählt.<sup>85</sup>  
 b. Sein Gesicht erschien mir vertrocknet.<sup>86</sup>  
 c. Aber der Streit [...] schien ihm längst beigelegt.<sup>87</sup>  
 d. Alles scheint mir dem sowjetischen Vorbild nachgeformt.<sup>88</sup>

[10.153] The light verb *scheinen* can also occur with a *zu sein* construction (115), which is analysed here as a stack of a *sein+Partizip* perfect (see Section 10.4.2) with

<sup>81</sup>Lasch 2016, citing DWDS: Nultsch, Wilhelm, Allgemeine Botanik, Stuttgart: Thieme 1964, S. 52.

<sup>82</sup>Lasch 2016, citing DWDS: Busch, Werner, Das sentimentalische Bild, München: Beck 1993, S. 284.

<sup>83</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 01.11.2016 (online).

<sup>84</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 10.09.2013 (online).

<sup>85</sup>Lasch 2016, citing DWDS: Der Spiegel 23.02.1987.

<sup>86</sup>Lasch 2016, citing DWDS: Blos, Wilhelm, Denkwürdigkeiten eines Sozialdemokraten, Band 1, München: G. Birk, 1914., S. 9306.

<sup>87</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 11.02.2010, Nr. 07.

<sup>88</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 20.03.1999.

a *scheinen+zu-Infinitiv* construction (see Section 12.4.10). The two examples in (115a,b) are thus two different constructions, though the semantic difference needs a more in-depth investigation.

- (115) a. Der Gast scheint abgereist.  
 b. Der Gast scheint abgereist zu sein.  
 c. Der Gast reist ab.  
 +> *sein+Partizip* perfect  
 = Der Gast is abgereist.  
 +> *scheinen+zu-Infinitiv* evidential  
 = Der Gast scheint abgereist zu sein.

### Attested verbs

The following attested verbs are only illustrative examples taken from the data analysed by Lasch (2016).<sup>89</sup> There are many more verbs possible in these constructions, but these lists present a good sample of the kind of verbs that are actually attested.

[10.154]

- *scheinen*: *abschließen, andeuten, anordnen, aufführen, aufgeben, aufheben, auflösen, aufrufen, aufzeichnen, ausschalten, ausschließen, beabsichtigen, beenden, begeistern, begründen, beseitigen, bestehlen, bestimmen, betreffen, einbetten, entfernen, entleihen, entscheiden, enttäuschen, erfinden, erledigen, löschen, erreichen, erschöpfen, falsifizieren, fassen, gebieten, hüllen, klären, lösen, machen, niederdrücken, retten, schließen, sichern, stützen, treffen, treiben, überfordern, überstehen, überwinden, überzeugen, umwittern, verbinden, verbreiten, verlieren, verstören, verwirklichen, vorzeichnen, wagen, wählen, würdigen, ziehen*
- *erscheinen*: *abschließen, anpassen, anzeigen, aufhängen, ausschalten, ausschließen, bedrohen, begrenzen, belasten, beziehen, binden, färben, geben, gefährden, kompromittieren, machen, rechtfertigen, sichern, verändern, verbinden*

#### 10.5.11 [ NA | -N ] *aussehen/wirken+Partizip* Anticausative (Sinnesantikausativ)

The verbs *aussehen* ‘to appear’ and *wirken* ‘to have an effect’ can be used as light verbs with participles in monoclausal constructions. With intransitive verbs

<sup>89</sup>Data accessed on 24 May 2012, available online at <https://goo.gl/xUng8v> for *aussehen*, <https://goo.gl/Xj7EW6> for *erscheinen*, <https://goo.gl/5YvKiw> for *scheinen* and <https://goo.gl/yCai8B> for *wirken*.

such constructions do not induce a diathesis (see Section 10.4.15). In contrast, with transitive verbs like *quälen* ‘to agonise’ (116a) or *verändern* ‘to change’ (116b) these constructions result in an anticausative diathesis. Inspired by the analysis by Diewald & Smirnova (ref-diewald2010: 177–191) I consider these expressions as evidentials that mark direct evidence by sensory experience. As a German name I propose to use the term *SINNESANTIKAUSATIV*.

- (116) a. Die Erinnerung quält ihn.  
Er wirkt gequält.  
b. Die Renovierung verändert den Bahnhof.  
Der Bahnhof sieht verändert aus.

[10.156]

The retention of the agent using a *von* phrase appears to be possible, though examples are rare (117). Note that the frequently occurring *wie von* phrases do not instantiate an agent. It seems like the retention of an agent is more acceptable with verbs describing a mental state, like *quälen* (116a), in contrast to verbs that describe a change of state, like *verändern* (116b). Because of the very rare attestation of such agents I consider these diatheses to be anticausatives, and not passives.

- (117) a. [...] deren Zweige übrigens schon von der Sonnenhitze schnell verdorrt aussahen.<sup>90</sup>  
b. Auch bei der Messe in Győr [...] wirkte der Papst [...] von Strapazen gezeichnet.<sup>91</sup>

[10.157]

Like the *(er)scheinen* evidential construction discussed previously (see Section 10.5.10), the *aussehen/wirken* construction is sometimes attested with an additional experiencer dative, expressing the role of the person making the evidential inference. However, with *aussehen/wirken* this is very rare (118). With *aussehen* (118a) it is only and very rarely attested in older examples and with *wirken* it seems to be more common to use an *auf* prepositional phrase instead of a dative (118b).

- (118) a. [...] der alte Kriegsheld sieht mir sehr determiniert aus [...].<sup>92</sup>  
b. Der Herr Assauer wirkte mir doch leicht angesäuselt.<sup>93</sup>  
Der Herr Assauer wirkte auf mich doch leicht angesäuselt.

<sup>90</sup>DWDS: Keil, Ernst (Hrsg.): Die Gartenlaube. Jg. 2 (1854).

<sup>91</sup>Lasch 2016, citing DWDS: Archiv der Gegenwart, 2001.

<sup>92</sup>DWDS: Wallenrodt, Johanna Isabella Eleonore von: Fritz, der Mann wie er nicht seyn sollte oder die Folgen einer übeln Erziehung. Bd. 2. Gera, 1800.

<sup>93</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 30.05.2003.

### Attested verbs

[10.158]

The following attested verbs are only illustrative examples taken from the data analysed by Lasch (2016).<sup>94</sup> There are many more verbs possible in these constructions, but these lists present a good sample of the kind of verbs that are actually attested.

- *aussehen* : *absperren, abtragen, angreifen, anregen, anstrengen, ausschlagen, ausstopfen, begehen, bekümmern, beschädigen, besetzen, drucken, durchleiden, einengen, einrichten, enttäuschen, entzücken, erhitzen, erschöpfen, handhaben, herstellen, improvisieren, knicken, marmorieren, niederschlagen, mitnehmen, möblieren, nähren, narkotisieren, pflegen, stechen, überwachen, verändern, verarbeiten, verbrennen, verjüngen, verlieren, vernichten, verschmutzen, verstören, verwüsten, vollenden, zerkratzen, zerrupfen, zerstreuen, zerzausen, zwingen*
- *wirken* : *ankleben, ankreiden, anspannen, aufmalen, auszeichnen, blockieren, darstellen, deplatziere, deprimieren, entkrampfen, erleichtern, ermatten, hacken, kalkulieren, konstruieren, machen, pflegen, planen, quälen, rupfen, schreiben, stressen, überladen, übertreiben, verändern, verbergen, verfehlen, verkümmern, verlieren, verschließen, verstören, verzerren, zeichnen, zerfetzen, zersplittern, zurechtstützen, zusammenhauen, zusammensuchen*

#### 10.5.12 [ NA | -N ] *geben/zeigen+Partizip* Reflexive anticausative (*Darstellungsantikausativ*)

The diatheses with *geben+Partizip* (119a) and *zeigen+Partizip* (119b) obligatorily need a reflexive pronoun. These two constructions are semantically rather similar as they both express an observable presentation of a state-of-mind.

[10.159]

- (119) a. Die Musik entspannt ihn.  
Er gibt sich entspannt.
- b. Das kommende Konzert motiviert das Orchester.  
Auch das Orchester zeigte sich motiviert.<sup>95</sup>

With some verbs it is possible to retain the original nominative subject (120). However, this seems to be relatively uncommon, so I classify this construction as anticausative and not as passive.

[10.160]

<sup>94</sup>Data accessed on 24 May 2012, available online at <https://goo.gl/xUng8v> for *aussehen*, <https://goo.gl/Xj7EW6> for *erscheinen*, <https://goo.gl/5YvKiw> for *scheinen* and <https://goo.gl/yCai8B> for *wirken*.

<sup>95</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.04.1999, Nr. 15.



- (120) a. Das Ergebnis beeindruckt sie.  
Selbst Rot-Grün gab sich von dem Ergebnis beeindruckt.<sup>96</sup>  
b. Der Unfall erschüttert sie.  
Das Hotelmanagement zeigte sich von dem tragischen Unfall erschüttert.<sup>97</sup>

[10.161] This construction frequently occurs with participles that are not transparently related to their meaning as finite verbs. For example, the verbs *reservieren* ‘to reserve’ and *aufräumen* ‘to clean up’ are only metaphorically related to their usage as states-of-mind participles in this construction (121).

- (121) a. Er gibt sich reserviert.  
b. Er gibt sich aufgeräumt.

#### Attested verbs

- *aufklären, beeindrucken, besiegen, entspannen, erfüllen, ermutigen, erschüttern, lösen, motivieren, schlagen, überzeugen, etc.*

#### 10.5.13 [ NA | –N ] *stehen*+*Partizip* Anticausative

[10.162] Some instances of *stehen* with a participle appear to have an anticausative effect. However, such examples are quite rare and also rather idiomatic (122). They are also close to depictive secondary predication (see Section 10.2.3). So, maybe this construction should not be treated as a grammaticalised diathesis.

- (122) a. Irgendjemand hat das Fenster geöffnet.  
b. Das kleine Fenster steht geöffnet.<sup>98</sup>

Most examples of finite *stehen* with a participle are no diathesis. Typically, the verb *stehen* is used in its literal meaning ‘to stand’ and the participle is a depictive secondary predicate describing the manner of the position (123a). Another frequent use of *stehen* with a participle is attested with text-manipulation verbs, like *schreiben, erwähnen, nennen, eintragen, vermerken*, etc. (123b,c). This seems to be a metaphorical usage of *stehen*, in the sense that letters “stand” on a page. The participle in these constructions is likewise a depictive secondary predicate.

<sup>96</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 04.03.2016 (online).

<sup>97</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 15.06.2016 (online).

<sup>98</sup> ~DWDS: Die Zeit, 11.08.1955, Nr. 32.

- (123) a. Das Planschbecken stand im Garten aufgebaut.  
b. Die Worte stehen auf der Titelseite geschrieben.  
c. Ein Erzählwettbewerb stand ausgeschrieben.<sup>99</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- *öffnen, schließen*

#### Further examples

- Vielleicht auch, weil er weiß, dass die Truppen hinter ihm nicht geschlossen stehen.<sup>100</sup>
- Wenn die SPD nicht geschlossen stehe, werde es schwierig, den Wahlkampf durchzustehen.<sup>101</sup>

#### 10.5.14 [ NA | -N ] *gehen+Partizip* Anticausative

The construction *gehen+Partizip* appears to be only possible in very few examples, like with *verlieren* ‘to lose’ (124). The retention of the agent as a dative is sometimes possible (124b). [10.164]

- (124) a. Ich verliere den Ring.  
b. Der Ring geht (mir) verloren.

The verb *gehen* is attested with various other participles, but these are different constructions. First, the construction (125a) is a fixed construction *es geht* with a dative experiencer and an adverb describing a personal feeling (see Section 9.3.8). This adverb can sometimes look like a participle, like *ausgezeichnet* ‘fine’ or *beschissen* ‘crappy’, but these are idiomatic and their meaning is only metaphorically related to their finite verbs, e.g. *auszeichnen* ‘to stand out’ and *bescheißen* ‘to screw somebody’. Second, the construction in (125b) has a participle as a depictive secondary predicate (see Section 10.2.3). In this sentence the verb *gehen* is the independent verb meaning ‘to walk’. [10.165]

- (125) a. Mir geht es ausgezeichnet/gut.  
b. Er geht gebückt.

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<sup>99</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 08.12.1999.

<sup>100</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 12.10.2004.

<sup>101</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 29.09.2012, Nr. 40.

### Attested verbs

- gewinnen, vergessen, verlieren

### Further examples

- Und mit ein wenig Glück hätte das Spiel auch gewonnen gehen können.<sup>102</sup>
- “Natürlich denke ich darüber nach, weshalb ich das tue”, sagt sie jetzt, den Blick auf die Straße gerichtet, “wie viel Lebensqualität mir verloren geht, was das überhaupt bringt.”<sup>103</sup>
- “Sehen Sie,” rief der Prinz mit Verdrusse, wie Sie sich von der Oberfläche hintergehen lassen, und wie leicht Sie mir gewonnen gehen!<sup>104</sup>
- Moderne Stiftungen [...] bringen Themen aufs Tapet, die sonst vergessen gehen.<sup>105</sup>

— [ OBJ > SBJ > ADJ ] —

#### 10.5.15 [ NA | pN ] werden+Partizip Passive (*Vorgangspassiv*)

[10.166]

The *werden+Partizip* VORGANGSPASSIV is the quintessential diathesis according to textbooks on German grammar. This diathesis promotes an accusative to nominative and (optionally) retains the original nominative, typically as a prepositional *durch* or *von* phrase (126), but see Section 6.2.6 for a discussion of the status of these prepositions. Pape-Müller (*ref-papemuller1980*: 77–85) discusses various other grammatical possibilities to express the agent. Any further arguments, like datives or governed prepositions, are simply retained (126c,d).

- (126) a. Der Handwerker hat das Haus angemalt.  
 b. Das Haus wird angemalt (durch den Handwerker).  
 c. Er schenkt mir den Schrank.  
 d. Der Schrank wird mir (von ihm) geschenkt.

[10.167]

A very peculiar construction occurs when a perfect ist stacked on top of a *werden* passive. The verb *werden* takes a *sein+Partizip* perfect (see Section 10.4.2) with a participle *geworden* when used as an independent verb meaning ‘to become’ (127a). However, as a light verb of the *Vorgangspassiv*, the participle of

<sup>102</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 16.11.2013, Nr. 47.

<sup>103</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 09.07.2017, Nr. 28.

<sup>104</sup>DWDS: Schiller, Friedrich: Der Geisterseher. Leipzig, 1789.

<sup>105</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 30.04.2014, Nr. 19.

*werden* in the perfect construction is the idiosyncratic wordform *worden* and not the expected *geworden* (127b). This seems to be the only use of the wordform *worden* in German, so any occurrence of *worden* is a definitive sign of a passive+perfect stack. Note that it is easy to find examples of *geworden* as well in this situation (127c,d), but the constructions with *worden* seems to be much more frequent. It is unclear to me whether there is any difference between the use of *worden* and *geworden* in such contexts.

- (127) a. Du bist aber groß geworden.  
 b. Die Tür ist geschlossen worden.  
 c. Tsipras schloss einen Rücktritt aus, der diskutiert geworden war, [...].<sup>106</sup>  
 d. Als die Krise in ihrer ganzen Dimension erkannt geworden sei, habe die Regierung gut reagiert.<sup>107</sup>

This *werden* passive typically occurs with transitive verbs with an accusative argument, though it is also frequently attested as an impersonal passive with intransitive verbs (see Section 10.5.1). Also some nominative+dative verbs allow for such an impersonal passive (see Section 10.5.3). Reflexive pronouns in the accusative case do not count as an accusative argument, as they will never be promoted to nominative subject. However, some verbs with an accusative reflexive pronoun allow for an impersonal passive (see Section 10.5.1). [10.168]

Not all transitive verbs allow for this *werden*+*Partizip* passive diathesis. For example, this diathesis is not possible for various verbs that also have a reflexive conversive diathesis (see Section 7.5.7), like *wundern* ‘to wonder’ (128a,b) or a non-reflexive conversive diathesis (Section 10.5.23), like *entsetzen* ‘to appall’ (128c,d). The passive is also not possible with verbs with obligatory quantified object (see Section 5.3.9), like *wiegen* ‘to weight’ (129a,b). Also verbs of possession, like *besitzen* ‘to possess’ (129c,d) do not allow for a passive.

- (128) a. Sein Verhalten wundert mich.  
 b. \* Ich werde gewundert durch sein Verhalten.  
 c. Sein Verhalten entsetzt mich.  
 d. \* Ich werde entsetzt durch sein Verhalten.

<sup>106</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.07.2015 (online).

<sup>107</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 06.04.2015, Nr. 13.

- (129) a. Der Lastwagen wiegt einen Zentner.  
 b. \* Ein Zentner wird von dem Lastwagen gewogen.  
 c. Ich besitze einen Hund.  
 d. \* Ein Hund wird von mir besessen.

### Attested verbs

The *werden+Partizip* passive is possible with almost all verbs that take an accusative argument, except for the following:

- Verbs with obligatory quantified objects (Section 5.3.9): *dauern, enthalten, kosten, messen, rechnen, sparen, umfassen, wachsen, wiegen, zunehmen*
- Some verbs with reflexive conversive (Section 7.5.7): *bekümmern, entwickeln, ergeben, empören, erstaunen, interessieren, freuen, kümmern, wundern*
- Some verbs with non-reflexive conversive (Section 10.5.23): *anstrengen, entsetzen, erbosen, erzürnen, verwundern*
- Some verbs of possession: *bekommen, besitzen, erhalten, kriegen*
- Other verbs without passive: *kennen, schmerzen (traurig machen)*

### 10.5.16 [ NA | pN ] *sein+Partizip* Passive (*Zustandspassiv*)

The second most widely discussed diathesis in the German grammatical literature (closely after the *werden+Partizip* passive) is the *sein+Partizip* ZUSTANDSPASSIV (ref-nedjalkov1988a; ref-rapp1996; ref-maienborn2007, just to cite a few major contributions to this topic). There is a long and ongoing discussion whether this construction should be considered a separate construction in its own right or not (see Section 10.2.7). Following the discussion by Maienborn (ref-maienborn2007) I will treat it as a separate construction here.

Most verbs with an accusative argument seem to allow for a *Zustandspassiv*, like for example with *öffnen* ‘to open’ (130a). The agent can optionally be retained, though often only with difficulty (130b). Inanimate agents appear to be most amenable to such retention (130c). Different from the other passives discussed here, the *Zustandspassiv* cannot be used as an impersonal passive with intransitive verbs (see Section 10.5.4). However, an impersonal variant for nominative+dative verbs is clearly attested (see Section 10.5.6).

- (130) a. Der Pförtner öffnet die Tür.  
 b. Die Tür ist <sup>?</sup>(durch den Pförtner) geöffnet.  
 c. Das Kronendach sei durch Holzeinschlag geöffnet, so daß mehr Sonnenlicht durchdringen und den Boden austrocknen könne.<sup>108</sup>

There are some transitive verbs that do not appear to allow a *Zustandspassiv*, like *ärgern* ‘to irritate’ (131a,b). Among those verbs without a *Zustandspassiv* there is a recurrent alternative to use a preverb to attain the expected meaning, like *verärgern* ‘to irritate’ (131c), see also Section 8.4.5. Maienborn (ref-maienborn2007 [10.174] 102–103) also discusses the claims in the literature that some verbs do not allow for a *Zustandspassiv*, but she dismisses such claims as the effect of pragmatic restrictions on their usage. At the end of this section I will list some verbs that appear to be at least problematic, if not completely impossible. However, the extent of applicability of the *Zustandspassiv* needs more in-depth corpus investigation.

- (131) a. Die Schüler ärgern den Lehrer.  
 b. \* Der Lehrer ist geärgert.  
 c. Der Lehrer ist verärgert.

Some transitive verbs have a *sein+Partizip* diathesis, but only with a rather strong semantic shift in the meaning of the verb. For example, *anhalten* means ‘to stop’, but *angehalten sein* means ‘to be admonished’ (132a). Likewise, *stören* means ‘to disturb’, but *gestört sein* means ‘to be crazy’ (132b) and *ergeben* means ‘to yield’, but *ergeben sein* means *to be devoted to* (132c).

- (132) a. Ich halte den Bus an.  
 Die Botschaften sind angehalten, Visa nicht auszustellen.<sup>109</sup>  
 b. Der Lärm stört den Mann.  
 Der Mann ist gestört.  
 c. Die Transaktionen ergaben einen hohen Gewinn.  
 Ich weiß aber, daß Herr Dulles dem Frieden ergeben ist.<sup>110</sup>

Crucially, there is an important difference between the *Zustandspassiv* (with *sein+Partizip*) and the highly similar *sein+Partizip+worden* construction. These are sometimes seen as free-choice alternatives, but they are clearly not interchangeable. There is a classical test in the literature to distinguish between the

<sup>108</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 29.09.1997.

<sup>109</sup> DWDS: Beförderungsverbot. In: Aktuelles Lexikon 1974–2000, München: DIZ 2000.

<sup>110</sup> DWDS: Archiv der Gegenwart, 2001 [1956].

two (ref-nedjalkov1988a: 412; ref-maienborn2007: 88). This test proposes to compare point-time and period-time adverbials. I repeat the examples from Maienborn here in (133). The claim is that period-time reference (*seit zwei Stunden*) is only compatible with *sein+Partizip* (133a,b), while point-time reference (*vor zwei Stunden*) is only compatible with *sein+Partizip+worden* (133c,d).

- (133) a. Das Fenster ist seit zwei Stunden geöffnet.  
 b. \* Das Fenster ist seit zwei Stunden geöffnet worden.  
 c. \* Das Fenster ist vor zwei Stunden geöffnet.  
 d. Das Fenster ist vor zwei Stunden geöffnet worden.

Unfortunately, this test does not work. I will lay out the problems with this test and then propose an alternative test based on gradual-time reference. The first problem concerns the claimed ungrammaticality of (133b). The problem is that I have no problem finding examples of such constructions. The combination of period-time reference with *sein+Partizip+worden* is mostly not ungrammatical at all (134).

- (134) a. Der Inhalt dieser Akte, die seit 1928 nicht mehr geöffnet worden war, erhellt plötzlich Grete Marksteins Leben.<sup>111</sup>  
 b. Der Schatz war in einer von zwei Tempelkammern aufbewahrt, die zuvor rund 150 Jahre lang nicht geöffnet worden waren.<sup>112</sup>

The second problem concerns the ungrammaticality of (133c). This sentence is indeed ungrammatical, but for a different reason. The sentence is ungrammatical because the past-time reference *vor zwei Stunden* is not compatible with the present tense of the light verb *ist* (see Section 10.2.6). Simply replacing the present tense (*ist*) with the past tense (*war*) resolves the ungrammaticality. So, in contrast to the claimed ungrammaticality, it is actually no problem to combine point-time reference with the *sein+Partizip* passive, as long as the tense agrees with the time (135).

- (135) a. Das Munch-Museum in Oslo war gestern wieder geöffnet.<sup>113</sup>  
 b. Die Fachmesse ist heute und morgen geöffnet.<sup>114</sup>

Third, the really peculiar observation in the proposed test is the grammaticality of example (133d), repeated here as (136a). This sentence has present tense

<sup>111</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 02.10.1999.

<sup>112</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.07.2011 (online).

<sup>113</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 25.08.2004.

<sup>114</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 27.02.2002.

(*ist*) but past time reference (*vor zwei Stunden*). This combination should not be possible, but the sentence is definitively grammatical. The solution to this conundrum is that this sentence is a stack of two different constructions: first a *werden+Partizip* passiv and then a *sein+Partizip* perfect applied on top (136b). Note that the *sein+Partizip* perfect of *werden* leads to the idiosyncratic participle *worden* (see Section 10.5.15). Crucially, the *sein+Partizip* perfekt is the culprit, as this *Perfekt* is the only German participle construction that allows for the combination of present tense with past time (see Section 10.2.6).

- (136) a. Das Fenster ist vor zwei Stunden geöffnet worden.  
 b. Jemand öffnete das Fenster vor zwei Stunden.  
     +> *werden+Partizip Vorgangspassiv*  
     = Das Fenster wurde vor zwei Stunden geöffnet.  
     +> *sein+Partizip Perfekt*  
     = Das Fenster ist vor zwei Stunden geöffnet worden.

This analysis of the *sein+Partizip+worden* construction as a stack of two constructions suggests a much easier test to differentiate that construction from the *sein+Partizip* passiv. The important observation (see Section 10.2.6) is that the two stacked constructions (*werden* passive and *sein* perfect) are both process-oriented, i.e. the action starts at the specified time reference. In contrast, the *sein+Partizip* passiv is result-oriented, i.e. the action is finished at the specified time reference. As proposed in Section 10.2.6, gradual time adverbials (e.g. *allmählich*, *schrittweise*, *in Zeitlupe*) are not compatible with an action that has already finished. And indeed, the combination of gradual time reference with the *sein+Partizip* is ungrammatical (137a), while there is no problem for the *sein+Partizip+worden* construction (137b).

[10.179]

- (137) a. \* Das Fenster ist in Zeitlupe geöffnet.  
 b. Das Fenster ist in Zeitlupe geöffnet worden.

### Attested verbs

[10.180]

Almost all transitive verbs allow for a *Zustandspassive*. The following verbs with accusative arguments do not seem to allow for this *sein+Partizip* passive construction:

- Impossible: *drücken* (*sorgen machen*), *feiern*, *fühlen*, *hören*, *kennen*, *kümmern*, *legen*, *loben*, *lohn*, *merken*, *mögen*, *quälen*, *riechen*, *schmecken*, *schätzen* (*hochachten*), *sehen*, *setzen*, *stecken*, *verlangen*, *wissen*, *zeigen*, *zwicken*



- Impossible, but alternation with a preverb available: *ärgern* (*verärgern*), *ekeln* (*anekeln*), *freuen* (*erfreuen*), *hassen* (*verhasst sein*), *heiraten* (*verheiraten*), *kratzen* (*zerkratzen*), *prügeln* (*verprügeln*), *wundern* (*verwundern*)
- Different meaning of participle: *anhalten*, *ergeben*, *stören*

### Further examples

- The following are examples in which the *Zustandspassiv* does not seem to be possible:
  - Er feiert seinen Geburtstag.  
\*Der Geburtstag ist gefeiert.
  - Er fühlt den Stich.  
\*Der Stich ist gefühlt.
  - Er hört das Geräusch.  
\*Das Geräusch ist gehört.
  - Das Leid der Armen kümmert mich.  
\*Ich bin gekümmert.
  - Ich lege/setze/stecke das Kind unter die Decke.  
\*Das Kind ist unter die Decke gelegt/gesetzt/gesteckt.
  - Das Ergebnis lohnt den Aufwand.  
\*Der Aufwand ist gelohnt.
  - Ich merke den Schmerz.  
\*Der Schmerz ist gemerkt.
  - Ich mag den Mann.  
\*Der Mann ist gemocht.
  - Die Schuldgefühle quälen ihn.  
\*Er ist gequält.
  - Ich rieche/schmecke den Braten.  
\*Der Braten ist gerochen/geschmeckt.
  - Er schätzt seinen Mitarbeiter.  
?Sein Mitarbeiter ist geschätzt.
  - Er sieht das Haus.  
\*Das Haus ist gesehen.
  - Ich weiß die Antwort.  
\*Die Antwort ist gewusst.
  - Ich zeige dir meine Schätze.  
\*Meine Schätze sind gezeigt.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>115</sup>Note the possibility of ‘Meine Schätze sind schnell gezeigt.’ This sentence appears to have a possible prospective interpretation.

## 10 Light-verb alternations with Partizip

- Ich zwicke deinen Arm.  
\*Dein Arm ist gezwickt.
  - Ich verlange eine Erklärung.  
\*Eine Erklärung ist verlangt.
- The following are further examples with verbs with which the *Zustands-passiv* is impossible, but with these verbs an alternation with a preverb is available:
- Sorgen drücken mich.  
Ich bin (\*gedrückt) bedrückt.
  - Das Essen ekelt mich.  
Ich bin (\*geekelt) angeekelt.
  - Die Aussicht freut mich.  
Ich bin (\*gefremt) erfreut.
  - Er hasst seinen Nachbarn.  
Der Nachbar ist (\*gehasst) verhasst.
  - Ich heirate meinen Freund.  
Mein Freund ist (\*geheiratet) verheiratet.
  - Ich kenne den Mann.  
Der Mann ist (\*gekannt) bekannt.
  - Er kratzt seinen Arm.  
Der Arm ist (\*gekratzt) zerkratzt.
  - Sein Verhalten wundert mich.  
Ich bin (\*gewundert) verwundert.
  - Er prügelt seine Kinder.  
Seine Kinder sind (\*geprügelt) verprügelt.

### 10.5.17 [ NA | pN ] *bleiben+Partizip* Passive (*Fortsetzungspassiv*)

The construction *bleiben+Partizip* is both used with intransitive verbs (see Section 10.4.10) and with transitive verbs (this section). The verb *bleiben* has even more uses as a light verb (see Section 11.4.2, 12.9.1) and it can also be used as a main verb with a meaning ‘to remain’. This wide variety of uses has led to quite some discussion in the German grammatical literature about the unity of all these constructions (ref-eroms2000: 404; ref-helbig2001: 163; ref-kramer2004; ref-schlucker2007: 152; ref-lasch2016: 72). Following the general approach in this book, all constructions are discussed separately. However, this in no way precludes any underlying connection between them (see Section 4.3.7 and the subsequent sections for a quick summary of the similarities and differences). The

German name *Fortsetzungspassiv* for the transitive *bleiben+Partizip* construction is adapted from Helbig & Buscha (ref-helbig2001: 163).

[10.182] This construction is closely related to the *sein+Partizip* passive (see Section 10.5.16) but adds a notion of continuation of the resulting state (138a). Like with the *sein* passive, it is often difficult to retain the agent with a *bleiben* passive (138b). However, many examples of retained agents can be found (139). The factors governing the possible retention of the agent need more research. Like with *sein* inanimate agents seem more receptive for retention.

- (138) a. Die Tür ist geöffnet.  
           Die Tür bleibt geöffnet.  
       b. ? Die Tür bleibt durch den Wind geöffnet.
- (139) a. Der Platz, inzwischen mit hohem Baumbestand, bleibt durch die  
           Oranienstraße geteilt.<sup>116</sup>  
       b. Die Raumtiefe bleibt durch einen Vorhang verborgen.<sup>117</sup>  
       c. Und die Mieter bleiben durch Gesetze und Verträge geschützt, auch  
           wenn ihre Wohnungen kein öffentliches Gut mehr sind.<sup>118</sup>

[10.183] The *bleiben+Partizip* is only possible with a small subset of all verbs that allow for *sein+Partizip*. For example, it seems at least odd (if not impossible) to use it with *schreiben* ‘to write’ (140a) or *waschen* ‘to wash’ (140b). Helbig & Buscha (ref-helbig2001: 163) offer an explanation for the restricted applicability of this construction. They propose that only verbs that describe reversible events allow for this diathesis.

- (140) a. \* Das Buch bleibt geschrieben.  
       b. \* Das Auto bleibt gewaschen.

### Attested verbs

- *fangen, füllen, öffnen, schließen, schützen, teilen, verbergen, verwarnen*, etc.

### Further examples

- Die Tür bleibt geschlossen.

<sup>116</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 02.08.2005.

<sup>117</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 06.04.2005, Nr. 15.

<sup>118</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 26.05.2004.

- Der Betrüger bleibt gefangen.
- Der Fußballer bleibt verwarnt.
- Das Fass bleibt gefüllt.

### 10.5.18 [ NA | pN ] *gehören+Partizip* Passive (*Normpassiv*)

The *gehören+Partizip* passive adds a normative aspect to the meaning of the passive. It expresses that something ought to happen. Early (short) discussions of this construction are given by Reis (**ref-reis1976**: 70) and Höhle (**ref-hohle1978**: 50–51), with slightly more elaboration later in Engel (**ref-engel1996**: 458), Eroms (**ref-eroms2000**: 405–412) and Szátmari (**ref-szatmari2002**: 179–182). More recent discussions are found in Stathi (**ref-stathi2010**) and Lasch (**ref-lasch2016**: 84ff.).

[10.184]

[10.185] This construction is widespread for transitive verbs like *verbrennen* ‘to burn something’ (141a). Any further arguments can be retained, like the dative *ihm* ‘to him’ with the verb *sagen* ‘to say’ (141b). The retention of the agent with a *durch* prepositional phrase seems to be perfectly possible (141c), although not frequent.<sup>119</sup>

- (141) a. Er verbrennt dieses Buch.  
           Dieses Buch gehört verbrannt.
- b. Hanna sagt ihm die Meinung.  
           Ihm gehört die Meinung gesagt.
- c. Der Schiedsrichter verwarnt den Spieler.  
           Der Spieler gehört verwarnt (durch den Schiedsrichter).

This construction is also attested with intransitive verbs as an impersonal passive, but that seems to be rare (see Section 10.5.7). However, impersonal passive are widespread for nominative+dative verbs (see Section 10.5.9).

#### Attested verbs

Various authors have listed verbs that allow for this construction. I have reproduced those lists here to illustrate the kind of verbs that can be used in this construction.

- Examples from (**ref-szatmari2002**: 180): *abnehmen, abnehmen (wegnehmen), abschaffen, abstellen, auftauen, ausmisten, behandeln, bestrafen, entsorgen,*

<sup>119</sup>There are no examples of *gehören+Partizip* with a retained agent in the corpus compiled by Lasch (**ref-lasch2016**), see <https://goo.gl/VPJbAb>. Höhle claims that the retention of the agent is not possible (**ref-hohle1978**: 50–51), though his examples seem perfectly acceptable to me.

*feiern, legalisieren, machen, reformieren, stoppen, trennen, überprüfen, verfilmen, verhängen*

- Examples from (ref-stathi2010: 335): *ablösen, abreißen, abschaffen, abschieben, abwählen, aufhängen, auflösen, ausmerzen, ausmustern, auspeitschen, aussortieren, austauschen, auswechseln, ausweisen, ausrotten, bedrohen, bestrafen, beschränken, beseitigen, bombardieren, diffamieren, disqualifizieren, einsperren, einschränken, eliminieren, entlassen, erschießen, hinrichten, kontrollieren, kritisieren, rausschmeißen, rauswerfen, schlachten, schlagen, schließen, steinigen, überwachen, umbringen, verbannen, verbieten, verhaften, vernichten, verprügeln, wegjagen, wegsperren*
- Examples from (ref-lasch2016: 452): *abbauen, ablösen, anreichern, absagen, abschaffen, abschneiden, abwählen, ändern, aufarbeiten, aufhängen, auflösen, aufnehmen, ausbauen, ausmerzen, ausschließen, aussortieren, beenden, begründen, beseitigen, besiegen, besteuern, bestrafen, diskutieren, eindämmen, einsperren, entkriminalisieren, entlassen, erschießen, ersetzen, erzählen, hauen, jäten, kappen, melken, nehmen, privatisieren, reformieren, schicken, schließen, schnallen, schützen, setzen, sprengen, stellen, streichen, testen, therapieren, trennen, überprüfen, übersetzen, umwenden, untersagen, verbieten, verbrennen, vergasen, verlachen, vertiefen, vertreiben, verweisen, ziehen*

### 10.5.19 [ NA | pN ] *machen*+Partizip Reflexive passive

[10.188]

This is yet another diathesis involving the light verb *machen*, this time with an obligatory reflexive pronoun. A summary of the various other possibilities of *machen*+Partizip is presented in paragraph 10.54 on page 469.

- (142) a. Die Polizei verdächtigt ihn.  
b. Er macht sich bei der Polizei verdächtigt.

[10.189]

There are various more such *machen*+*sich*+Partizip constructions that do not appear to be transparently related anymore to the finite usage of the main verb (143). These appear to be lexicalised collocations that are rather frequent in German.

- (143) a. Ich mache mich auf alles gefasst.  
b. Ich mache mich um etwas verdient.  
c. Die Loyalität macht sich bezahlt.

#### Attested verbs

- *fürchten, verdächtigen*

### Further examples

- Alle fürchten die Hethiter.  
Ihre energische Expansion [...] hatte die Hethiter [...] gefürchtet gemacht.<sup>120</sup>

— [ OBJ > SBJ > ADJ ] —

### 10.5.20 [ ND | pN ] *bekommen/kriegen/erhalten+Partizip* Intransitive dative passive

The *bekommen* dative passive is typically found with verbs with a dative and an accusative argument (see the next Section 10.5.21). Leirbukt (ref-leirbukt1997: 64–67) only finds a single example without an accusative in his corpus, but he lists various examples as presented by other authors. Examples with verbs like *helfen* ‘to help’ are questionable (144a,b), but are widely attested inside a modal constructions (144c). [10.190]

- (144) a. Die Ärztin hilft mir.  
b. ? Ich bekomme geholfen (von der Ärztin).  
c. Ich bin krank und will geholfen bekommen!<sup>121</sup>

### Attested verbs

- Examples from Leirbukt (ref-leirbukt1997: 64): *applaudieren, assistieren, beipflichten, danken, drohen, gratulieren, heimleuchten, pfeifen, schmeicheln, widersprechen, zuarbeiten, zujubeln, zuwinken*

### Further examples

- Er bekommt zugearbeitet/beigepflichtet/gedankt.
- Auf diesem Wege möchte man gerne zum Geburtstag gratuliert bekommen.<sup>122</sup>
- Besonders aber hat Madame Lortzing die Schmeichelszenen mit dem Vater so schön und gut gespielt, daß sie bei jeder Scene hat applaudirt bekommen.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>120</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 16.02.2002.

<sup>121</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 12.01.2002.

<sup>122</sup>Attested online at <https://www.tafeldeko.de/news/geburtstagsgruesse-viele-moeglichkeiten-zu-gratulieren/>, accessed 16 July 2021.

<sup>123</sup>Gräf, Hans Gerhard (ed.) *Goethes Ehe in Briefen* p. 401, available online <https://books.google.de/books?id=vehYBQAAQBAJ&pg=PA401-IA2>, accessed 16 July 2021.

### 10.5.21 [ NDA | pNA ] *bekommen/kriegen/erhalten*+*Partizip* Dative passive (*Rezipientenpassiv*)

The dative passive is widely discussed in the German grammatical literature under the name *Rezipientenpassiv*. Leirbukt (ref-leirbukt1997) presents a major monograph-sized investigation of this construction. This diathesis promotes the dative argument to nominative subject. For example, the dative *dem Schüler* of the verb *abnehmen* ‘to take away’ (145a) is remapped to nominative *der Schüler* (145b). As with all passives, the original agent can be expressed with a *von* or *durch* prepositional phrase, though this is uncommon. Leirbukt (ref-leirbukt1997: 130) finds 10-20% expressed agents, most using *von*, and almost all being semantically animate.

- (145) a. Der Lehrer nimmt dem Schüler das Handy ab.  
b. Der Schüler bekommt das Handy (von dem Lehrer) abgenommen.

[10.192]

The choice between the light verbs *bekommen*, *kriegen* and *erhalten* does not seem to have any clear semantic impact, but is mainly determined stylistically and dialectally (ref-leirbukt1997: Ch. 4; ref-lenz2013: 427ff.).

#### Attested verbs

Leirbukt (ref-leirbukt1997: 68–99) lists hundreds of verbs organised in many semantic classes, which will not be repeated here.

#### Further examples

- Ich baue dir ein Haus.  
Du bekommst (von mir) ein Haus gebaut.
- Sie schneidet ihm die Haare.  
Er bekommt die Haare geschnitten.

### 10.5.22 [ NDA | pNA ] *haben*+*Partizip* Possessor passive (*Pertinenzpassiv*)

Transitive verbs that allow for a possessor-dative alternation (see Section 5.8.4) can be used in a very special *haben*+*Partizip* diathesis. For example, the possessor of the object of *reparieren* ‘to repair’ (146a) can alternatively be expressed as a dative (146b). In the *sein*+*Partizip* diathesis this dative is retained (146c). But this dative can also be promoted to subject in a special *haben*+*Partizip* construction

(146d). In isolation, the resulting sentence (146d) is highly ambiguous and has a strong preference for the plain reading ‘I have repaired the computer’. A special context is needed for this sentence to be understood in the intended beneficiary meaning ‘The computer has been repaired on my behalf’.

- (146) a. Der erfahrene Techniker hat meinen Rechner repariert.  
 b. Der erfahrene Techniker hat mir den Rechner repariert.  
 c. Mir ist der Rechner repariert  
 d. Ich habe den Rechner repariert.  
 (= Der Rechner ist für mich repariert worden.)

As extensively discussed by Leirbukt (**ref-leirbukt2000**) the beneficiary reading is preferred with an additional modal, for example with *wollen* ‘to want’ (147a). Further, the beneficiary interpretation is most easily obtained with verbs that are typically outsourced, i.e. verbs that describe actions that are often performed by somebody else, for example *die Haare schneiden* ‘to cut the hair’ (147b) or *das Bein brechen* ‘to break a leg’ (147c).

[10.195]

- (147) a. Ich will den Rechner repariert haben.  
 (= Ich will, dass mein Rechner repariert wird.)  
 b. Er hat die Haare geschnitten.  
 (= Ihm sind die Haare geschnitten worden.)  
 c. Ich habe das Bein gebrochen.  
 (= Mein Bein ist gebrochen.)

The retention of the original agent is only possible in very few situations (148a). However, retention is widespread with the light verb in the *Konjunktiv* (148b) and with the stacked modal construction (148c). Because of these possibilities I decided to classify this construction as a passive and not as an anticausative.

[10.196]

- (148) a. Er hat das Gesicht von tiefen Falten durchfurcht.<sup>124</sup>  
 b. Ich hätte den Rechner gerne von dem erfahrenen Techniker repariert.  
 c. Ich will den Rechner von dem erfahrenen Techniker repariert haben.

The possibility of this construction with intransitives is discussed by Rothstein (**ref-rothstein2007**: 295–296), but his examples (*öffnen*, *schließen*) are not applicable, because they are covert anticausatives (see Section 5.5.5). There are a few

<sup>124</sup>Example from Latzel (**ref-latzel1977a**: 301).



other intriguing examples without an accusative object, but they show a rather different remapping of roles as discussed in detail in Section 10.9.1.

[10.198] There is a long scholarly history describing this beneficiary reading of the *haben+Partizip* construction (e.g. ref-kruisinga1935: 122; ref-bech1955: 20–21; ref-stopp1957: 278; ref-seiler1973: 842–843; ref-latzel1977a: 289; ref-helbig1978: 42–43; ref-hohle1978: 46; ref-eroms2000: 395–396, 420–421). The first more in-depth discussion is by Leirbukt (ref-leirbukt1981; ref-leirbukt2000), followed by Hole (ref-hole2002), Rothstein (ref-rothstein2007), and most recently Lasch (ref-lasch2016: 87ff.) and Businger (ref-businger2017: Ch. 4). In the recent literature following Hole (ref-hole2002), this construction is known as the “Partizipiale *haben*-Konfiguration (PHK)”. I find this name rather cumbersome and uninformative. I propose to call this construction *PERTINENZPASSIV* as there is a strong connection to the *Pertinenzdativ* (see Section 5.8.4) and the *Rezipientenpassiv* (see Section 10.5.21).

There are various tests to disentangle the two *haben+Partizip* constructions (i.e. *Perfekt* and *Pertinenzpassiv*). Businger (ref-businger2017: 160–171) presents an extensive discussion of such criteria. I will describe only a few criteria here. In general, it is rather easy to force a *Perfect* interpretation, but much harder to force a *Pertinenzpassiv* reading.

- First, the two interpretations of the *haben+Partizip* construction have different temporal structures (see Section 10.2.6). The *Perfekt* is process-oriented and thus compatible with a gradual adverb like *allmählich*. In contrast, the *Pertinenzpassiv* is result-oriented and does not allow for such adverbs (149a).
- Second, the *Pertinenzpassiv* is incompatible with an explicit possessor, either as an adnominal genitive (149b) or as a dative (149c). Such examples can only be interpreted as a *Perfekt*.
- Third, the addition of *bekommen* at the end is only possible for the *Pertinenzpassiv* (149d).
- Finally, adding an explicit agent forces a passive reading. However, as noted above, the original agent cannot easily be retained in a *Pertinenzpassiv*, but an inanimate agent is sometimes possible (149e).

- (149) a. Ich habe den Rechner (allmählich) repariert.  
           (= *Perfekt*: Allmählich repariere ich den Rechner.)
- b. Ich habe meinen Rechner repariert.  
           (= *Perfekt*: Ich repariere meinen Rechner.)
- c. Ich habe mir den Rechner repariert.

- (= *Perfekt*: Ich repariere meinen Rechner.)
- d. Ich habe den Rechner repariert (bekommen).  
(= *Pertinenzpassiv*: Jemand repariert meinen Rechner.)
- e. Ich habe den Rechner (durch seinen Einsatz) repariert .  
(= *Pertinenzpassiv*: Er hat meinen Rechner repariert.)

A connection between the *Pertinenzpassiv* and the *bekommen* passive (Section 10.5.21) is repeatedly proposed (e.g. already in **ref-kruisinga1935**: 122) and regularly criticised (e.g. **ref-hole2002**: 172–173; **ref-businger2017**: 176–184). The basic observation is the parallel as shown in (150) with *haben+Partizip+bekommen* playing a similar role as *sein+Partizip+worden* (cf. Section 10.5.16). Although there is undoubtedly a similarity between (150a) and (150b), these two sentences are clearly different constructions. For example, both constructions have different temporal structures. The *Pertinenzpassiv* is result-oriented and not compatible with gradual time adverbs like *langsam* (151a). In contrast, the *bekommen+Partizip* construction is process-oriented and can easily be combined with such adverbs (150b).

- (150) a. Ich habe den Arm verbunden.  
(= Mir ist der Arm verbunden.)
- b. Ich habe den Arm verbunden bekommen.  
(= Mir ist der Arm verbunden worden.)
- (151) a. Ich habe den Arm langsam verbunden.  
(≠ Mir ist der Arm verbunden.)
- b. Ich habe den Arm langsam verbunden bekommen.  
(= Mir ist der Arm verbunden worden.)

It is crucial for the *Pertinenzpassiv* that the possessor of the accusative can also be expressed as a dative. It is neither verbs with just datives, nor with just accusative possessors, that allow for a *Pertinenzpassiv* (**ref-hole2002**: 175–177). The *Pertinenzpassiv*-interpretation is only available when both dative and possessor expressions are possible for the role of the beneficiary (cf. Section 5.8.4). More general, there is a curious and extremely fascinating parallel between different kinds of possessor-datives and different constructions with the light verb *haben*:

- (152a): Subject-possessor (Section 5.8.3) ~ *haben+am-Infinitiv* (Section 13.9.1)
- (152b): Object-possessor (Section 5.8.4) ~ *haben+Partizip* (this section)

- (152c): Location-possessor (Section 6.8.11) ~ *haben+Infinitiv* (Section 11.9.2)

- (152)
- Mein Haus brennt.  
Mir brennt das Haus.  
Ich habe das Haus am brennen.
  - Der Friseur schneidet meine Haare.  
Mir schneidet der Friseur die Haare.  
Ich habe die Haare geschnitten.
  - Der Affe sitzt auf meiner Schulter.  
Mir sitzt der Affe auf der Schulter.  
Ich habe den Affen auf der Schulter sitzen.

### Attested verbs

- Body tending: *kämmen, maniküren, ondulieren (Haare), rasieren, schneiden (Haare), streicheln, verbinden*
- Injury: *amputieren, auskugeln, brechen, verdrehen, verrenken, zerquetschen*
- Repair: *aktualisieren, korrigieren, reparieren, verbinden*
- Manipulation: *aufstellen, einbauen, einrüsten, versperren*

### Further examples

- Während der Brexit-Kampagne wetterte Boris Johnson unermüdlich gegen die Europäische Union - jetzt nimmt er als britischer Außenminister erstmals an einer Sitzung mit Amtskollegen in Brüssel teil. Erste Beobachtung: Er hat die Haare geschnitten.<sup>125</sup>
- Bei der zweiten Attacke, die wieder in ihrem Haus stattfindet, reißt sie ihm die Ski-Maske vom Gesicht, erkennt ihn und jagt ihm eine Schere durch die Hand, die sie von ihrem Schreibtisch ergattern konnte, woraufhin er flüchtet. Am nächsten Tag begegnen sie sich auf der Straße vor ihren Häusern. Er hat die Hand verbunden.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Attested online at [https://www.n-tv.de/der\\_tag/Boris-Johnson-in-Bruessel-ganz-handzahn-article18215036.html](https://www.n-tv.de/der_tag/Boris-Johnson-in-Bruessel-ganz-handzahn-article18215036.html), accessed 15 July 2021.

<sup>126</sup> Attested online at <https://andreas-huckele.de/elle-ein-film-von-paul-verhoeven-mit-isabelle-huppert-ein-kinoabend-zum-selberdenken/>, accessed 15 July 2021.

— [ OBJ > SBJ > PBJ ] —

### 10.5.23 [ NA | PN ] *sein+Partizip* Conversive (*Erlebniskonversiv*)

[10.202] Some emotional verbs like *verärgern* ‘to irritate’ (153a) evoke a special conversive diathesis with the light verb *sein* (ref-nedjalkov1988a: 422 calls these “emotive quasi-resultatives”). When used with a *sein+Partizip* construction, the original nominative subject (i.e. the cause of the emotional reaction, here *Nachricht* ‘notice’) can be retained as a governed preposition. This preposition differs between the various verbs that allow for such a diathesis. For example, the verb *verärgern* induces the preposition *über* (153b). The governed status of this preposition can be shown by using the *da(r)+Preposition*, *dass* paraphrase (153c), see Section 6.2.1.

- (153) a. Die Nachricht verärgert mich.  
 b. Ich bin verärgert über die Nachricht.  
 c. Ich bin verärgert darüber, dass die Nachricht verbreitet wurde.

Some verbs that allow for this *sein+Partizip* conversive diathesis (see Section 2.7.3.1 [10.203] for the term “conversive”) also allow for a reflexive conversive diathesis, as discussed in Section 7.5.7. For example, *amüsieren* ‘to amuse’ (154a) allows for both *sein+Partizip* (154b) and *haben+sich+Partizip* (154c). However, not all verbs allow for both diatheses. For example *ärgern* ‘to irritate’ does not allow the *sein+Partizip* conversive, but does allow the reflexive conversive (155). In contrast, the verb *anwidern* ‘to nauseate’ shows the reverse distribution (156).

- (154) a. Der Witz amüsiert mich.  
 b. Ich bin von dem Witz amüsiert.  
 c. Ich habe mich über den Witz amüsiert.
- (155) a. Der Witz ärgert mich.  
 b. \*Ich bin geärgert von dem Witz.  
 c. Ich habe mich über den Witz geärgert.
- (156) a. Der Witz widert mich an.  
 b. Ich bin angewidert von dem Witz.  
 c. \*Ich habe mich von dem Witz angewidert.

### Attested verbs

- in : *begründen, faszinieren, interessieren*
- mit : *beschäftigen, schmücken*
- über : *aufregen, begeistern, beunruhigen, empören, entsetzen, erbosen, erfreuen, erstaunen, erzürnen, überraschen, verärgern, verblüffen, verstören, verwundern*
- von : *amüsieren, anekeln, anstrengen, anwidern, beruhigen, entspannen, enttäuschen, erschöpfen, langweilen, quälen*

### Further examples

- Der Geruch hat ihn angewidert.  
Er ist angewidert von dem Geruch.
- Der Witz hat ihn amüsiert.  
Er ist amüsiert von dem Witz.
- Dein Benehmen hat ihn enttäuscht.  
Er ist enttäuscht von deinem Benehmen.
- Das Problem beschäftigt den Schüler.  
Der Schüler ist mit dem Problem beschäftigt.
- Die Nachricht verärgert mich.  
Ich bin verärgert über die Nachricht.
- Die Nachricht verstört mich.  
Ich bin verstört über die Nachricht.
- Die Schule langweilt mich.  
Ich bin gelangweilt von der Schule.
- Deine Massage entspannt mich.  
Ich bin entspannt durch deine Massage.
- Deine Leistung entsetzt mich.  
Ich bin entsetzt über deine Leistung.
- Die Rede erzürnt mich.  
Ich bin erzürnt über die Rede.
- Ein Desaster begründet die Hoffnung.  
Die Hoffnung ist im Desaster begründet.

#### 10.5.24 [ NA | PN ] *liegen+Partizip* Conversive

The few examples that exist with the *liegen+Partizip* diathesis (157a,b) all have a governed preposition *in* (157c).

- (157) a. Das Desaster begründet die Hoffnung.  
 b. Im Desaster liegt immer auch die Hoffnung begründet.  
 c. Die Hoffnung liegt darin begründet, dass ein Desaster Änderung verursacht.

[10.205] Most examples with a finite verb *liegen* and a participle have a different structure, like (158). In these examples the verb *liegen* has the literal meaning ‘to lie’ and the participle is a depictive secondary predicate (see Section 10.2.3).

- (158) a. Er liegt in der Kirche aufgebahrt.  
 b. Das Geschenk liegt in der Schublade versteckt.

#### Attested verbs

- *begründen, beschließen, verbergen*

#### Further examples

- Trotz aller Fehlritte und Peinlichkeiten, die sich Hannah und Co. leisteten, vergaß Girls nicht, dass im größten Desaster immer auch die Hoffnung auf einen Neustart begründet liegt.<sup>127</sup>
- Die Tatsachen aber sind hart, wie die Wahrheit, die in ihnen beschlossen liegt.<sup>128</sup>
- Radinsky begriff, welche Macht in Datenmassen verborgen liegt.<sup>129</sup>

— [ ADJ > SBJ > Ø ] —

#### 10.5.25 [ NpA | –NA ] *machen+Partizip* Conciliative

This is yet another diathesis involving the light verb *machen* (see paragraph 10.54 on page 469), for example attested with the verb *begehren* ‘to desire’ (159). The example with *beschämen* ‘to make ashamed’ is somewhat contrived (160). It is unclear, whether this alternation really should be classified as a separate diathesis. In the form as presented here, it is a nice example of a conciliative diathesis (see paragraph 2.103 on page 51 for the term “conciliative”).

[10.206]

<sup>127</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 13.02.2017 (online).

<sup>128</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.09.1964, Nr. 38.

<sup>129</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 26.01.2017, Nr. 03.

- (159) a. Ich begehre den Job (wegen der Bezahlung).  
 b. Die Bezahlung macht den Job begehrt.
- (160) a. Sie beschämt mich (durch ihre Großmut).<sup>130</sup>  
 b. Ihre Großmut macht mich beschämt.  
 Dieser Verweis machte den General sehr beschämt.<sup>131</sup>

### Attested verbs

- *begehren, beschämen*

## 10.6 Diathesis with promotion to subject

### — Opiniatives —

The four verbs *wissen* ‘to know’, *glauben* ‘to believe’, *sehen* ‘to see’ and *finden* ‘to find’ (and apparently only those four) allow for a construction with a participle, reminiscent of the Latin *accusativus cum participio*. This construction describes an opinion by somebody (expressed as a newly added nominative subject) about the veracity of a statement (of which the verb is expressed as a participle). Consequently, such a diathesis will be called an *OPINATIVE* here. This opinion is marked as either more certain (*wissen, finden*) or less certain (*glauben, sehen*).

Such opiniatives with *glauben* (161a) and *wissen* (161b) can be syntactically be identified by the possibility to paraphrase them with a *dass* finite complement clause. In contrast, the participle constructions with *finden* (162a) and *sehen* (162b) cannot directly be reformulated with a *dass* finite complement clause. The meanings of these verbs have been grammaticalised in this construction to mean something like *überzeugt sein* ‘to be sure’ (162a) and *glauben* ‘to believe’ (162b), respectively.

- (161) a. Sie glaubt ihn eingeschlafen.  
 (= Sie glaubt, dass er eingeschlafen ist.)  
 b. Sie weiß den Nachlass im Archiv gut aufgehoben.  
 (= Sie weiß, dass der Nachlass im Archiv gut aufgehoben ist.)

<sup>130</sup> Adapted from the DWDS dictionary available at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/beschämen>, accessed 23 September 2022.

<sup>131</sup> Bruce, Peter Henry: Des Herrn Peter Heinrich Bruce Nachrichten von seinen Reisen in Deutschland, Rußland, die Tartarey, Turkey, Westindien u.s.f. Leipzig, 1784.

- (162) a. Er findet das Kunstwerk gelungen.  
 (= Er ist überzeugt, dass das Kunstwerk gelungen ist.)  
 b. Er sieht seinen Erfolg bedroht.  
 (= Er glaubt, dass sein Erfolg bedroht ist.)

The participles in such constructions are either derived from patientive intransitive verbs, like  *einschlafen*  ‘to fall asleep’ (161a) or  *gelingen*  (162a), or transitive verbs, like  *aufheben*  ‘to take care’ (161b) or  *bedrohen*  (162b). These two possibilities lead to quite different diatheses. With intransitive clauses, like  *er schläft ein*  (161a), the erstwhile nominative turns into an accusative and a new nominative opinionator is introduced, i.e. a remapping pattern  $[-N | NA]$ . In contrast, with transitive clauses like  *das Archiv hebt den Nachlass auf*  (161b), the accusative does not change and the erstwhile nominative is dropped or can optionally be expressed with a prepositional phrase. Together with the newly introduced opinionator this leads to a remapping pattern  $[-NA | N_P A]$ . These two remapping patterns will be discussed separately below.

[10.209]

In identifying these constructions, care has to be taken (again) with the verbs  *finden*  and  *sehen* . These verbs occur in superficially similar constructions, as exemplified in (163), which actually have a completely different underlying structure. In these examples the verbs  *finden*  and  *sehen*  are used in their literal transitive meaning of finding/seeing an object. Additionally, these sentences are modified by a depictive secondary predicate in the form of a participle, as introduced in Section 10.2.3.<sup>132</sup> In these constructions, it is not possible to paraphrase the participle with a  *dass*  complement clause.

- (163) a. Sie findet ihn am Schreibtisch eingeschlafen.  
 (= Sie findet ihn, während er am Schreibtisch eingeschlafen ist.)  
 (≠ Sie findet, dass er am Schreibtisch eingeschlafen ist.)  
 b. Er sieht die Buchstaben verzerrt.  
 (= Er sieht die Buchstaben, aber die Buchstaben sind verzerrt.)  
 (≠ Er sieht, dass die Buchstaben verzerrt sind.)

As originally observed by Leirbukt ([ref-leirbukt2000](#)), all these constructions appear to be much more acceptable (and much more frequent) when they are stacked inside a modal verb like  *wollen*  (see Section 2.5 for the term “stacking”). Leirbukt only discusses  *sehen*  (164) and  *wissen*  (165) and seems to have missed

<sup>132</sup>The verb  *finden*  can also be combined with a regular adverb like in  *das finde ich gut* , see Section 9.3.6. This does not appear to be possible with the other opinative verbs  *wissen* ,  *glauben*  and  *sehen* .



the constructions with *glauben* and *finden*. He also discussed constructions with *haben*, but these are separated here as a completely different diathesis in Section 10.5.22.

- (164) a. ? Sie sahen in dem Interview ihre Namen nicht genannt.  
 b. Sie wollten in dem Interview ihre Namen nicht genannt sehen.
- (165) a. ? Die Belegschaft weiß das Wahlergebnis keinesfalls als Zustimmung verstanden.  
 b. Die Belegschaft möchte das Wahlergebnis keinesfalls als Zustimmung verstanden wissen.

[10.212]

Similarly, these opiniatives are much more acceptable (and much more frequent) when they form a stack in combination with a self-inflicting reflexive pronoun alternation (see Section 7.4.5). The reflexive marking indicates that the opinionator and the opined object are the same participant. This is possible both with intransitives (166) and transitives (167).

- (166) a. Ich scheitere.  
 b. ? Der Lehrer sieht mich gescheitert.  
 c. Ich sehe mich gescheitert.
- (167) a. Die Polizei verfolgt den Dieb.  
 b. ? Ich weiß den Dieb von der Polizei verfolgt.  
 c. Der Dieb weiß sich von der Polizei verfolgt.

— [ Ø > SBJ > OBJ ] — *Intransitiv Opiniativ*

#### 10.6.1 [ -N | NA ] *wissen+Partizip* Intransitive opinative

- (168) a. Das Kind schläft ein.  
 b. Sie weiß das Kind eingeschlafen.

#### Attested verbs

- *einschlafen*

#### 10.6.2 [ -N | NA ] *glauben+Partizip* Intransitive opinative

- (169) a. Der Sieg kommt.  
 b. Er glaubte den Sieg gekommen.

## 10 *Light-verb alternations with Partizip*

### Attested verbs

- *einschlafen, kommen, verirren*

### Further examples

- Als man die Band schon fast eingeschlafen glaubt kommt der Song zurück und kann mich diesmal sogar richtig begeistern.<sup>133</sup>
- Als die Tochter des Hauses, die schon längst für Jean Pauls Romane schwärmte, ihn sicher eingeschlafen glaubte, trat sie leise ins Zimmer, um ihn recht nach Herzenslust zu betrachten.<sup>134</sup>
- Erbarmen wir uns derer, die wir verirrt glauben.<sup>135</sup>

### 10.6.3 [ -N | NA ] *sehen+Partizip* Intransitive opinative

- (170) a. Die UN scheitert.  
b. Viele Menschen sehen die UN bereits gescheitert.  
(= Viele Menschen glauben, dass die UN bereits gescheitert ist.)

### Attested verbs

- *scheitern*

### Further examples

- Während viele Nichtregierungsorganisationen die UN bereits gescheitert sehen, hat Weltbank-Präsident James Wolfensohn noch Hoffnung.<sup>136</sup>

### 10.6.4 [ -N | NA ] *finden+Partizip* Intransitive opinative

- (171) a. Das Projekt scheitert.  
b. Ich finde das Projekt gescheitert.

### Attested verbs

- *gelingen, scheitern*

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<sup>133</sup> Attested online at <https://www.metal1.info/metal-reviews/code-nouveau-gloaming/>, accessed 11 March 2022.

<sup>134</sup> DWDS: Parthey, Gustav: Jugenderinnerungen. Bd. 2. Berlin, [1871].

<sup>135</sup> Heinrich Böll, *Für Alexander S. zum 65. Geburtstag*.

<sup>136</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 26.01.2005.

### Further examples

- Ich finde das Kunstwerk sehr gelungen.

— [ Ø > SBJ > ADJ ] — *Transitiv Opiniativ*

### 10.6.5 [ –NA | NpA ] *wissen+Partizip* Transitive opiniative

- (172) a. Das Archiv hebt den Nachlass auf.  
b. Ich weiß den Nachlass im Archiv gut aufgehoben.

The following example (173) from Leirbukt (2000) shows that any additional dative arguments are simply retained.

- (173) a. Jemand unterstellt die Ostgebiete dem Kontrollrat.  
b. Ich weiß die Ostgebiete dem Kontrollrat unterstellt.

### Attested verbs

- *aufheben, lieben, regeln, unterstellen, verstehen*

### Further examples

- ... wenn er die materiellen Fragen vor der Eheschließung geregelt weiß.<sup>137</sup>
- Sie schob den Hausarzt vor, den sie von dem Jungen wie einen Freund geliebt wußte.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>[10]</sup> Examples stacked with a modal verb:

- Mancher Regierungsvertreter möchte es so verstanden wissen.<sup>139</sup>
- Wenn ich dich nicht so gut aufgehoben gewußt hätte, wäre ich Dir nachgefahren.<sup>140</sup>

Examples stacked with a self-inflicting reflexive alternation:

<sup>137</sup> DWDS: Gerling, Reinhold: Was muß man vor der Ehe von der Ehe wissen? In: ders., Das große Aufklärungswerk für Braut- und Eheleute, Dresden: Buchversand Gutenberg 1933 [1901], S. 207.

<sup>138</sup> DWDS: Bodenreuth, Friedrich [d.i. Jaksch, Friedrich]: Alle Wasser Böhmens fließen nach Deutschland, Berlin: Büchergilde Gutenberg 1938 [1937], S. 22.

<sup>139</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 17.09.2017 (online).

<sup>140</sup> DWDS: Müller-Jahnke, Clara: Ich bekenne. In: Deutsche Literatur von Frauen, Berlin: Direct-media Publ. 2001 [1904], S. 52626.

## 10 *Light-verb alternations with Partizip*

- Er wusste sich verstanden.
- Hugo wusste sich geliebt.
- Er wusste sich von Gott geschaffen.
- Sie wusste sich umstellt.
- Er weiß sich verfolgt und beobachtet.
- Man [...] weiß sich dabei auch nicht gesichert vor der Mißdeutung der Fremden.<sup>141</sup>
- Sie wußten sich durch ihn gewahrt.<sup>142</sup>
- Bei seinen Taten und Reisen [...] weiß sich Dvorák beschützt vom “lieben Gott”.<sup>143</sup>

### 10.6.6 [ –NA | NpA ] *glauben+Partizip* Transitive opiniative

- (174) a. Der Wind zerreißt das Seil.  
b. Er glaubt das Seil vom Wind zerrissen.  
(= Er glaubt, dass das Seil vom Wind zerrissen ist.)

#### Attested verbs

- *benachteiligen, entschuldigen, erreichen, lieben, verfolgen, verlieren, verraten, zerreißen*

#### Further examples

- Er glaubte den Ring verloren.
- Er glaubte den Sieg erreicht.
- Hörte man ihn, man wunderte sich und glaubt ihn entschuldigt, Ja er hatte noch übriges Recht und vieles zu klagen.<sup>144</sup>

Examples stacked with a self-inflicting reflexive alternation:

- Er glaubte sich verraten/zurückversetzt/verfolgt/benachteiligt.
- Weil sie sich von ihrem Vater nicht geliebt glaubte, flüchtete Irmgard mit 17 Jahren trotz zu den Diakonissinnen, um Krankenschwester zu werden.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>141</sup>DWDS: Freud, Sigmund: Die Traumdeutung, Leipzig u. a.: Deuticke 1914 [1900], S. 80.

<sup>142</sup>DWDS: Baeck, Leo: Das Wesen des Judentums, Frankfurt a. M.: Kauffmann 1932 [1905], S. 17.

<sup>143</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 25.09.2003, Nr. 40.

<sup>144</sup>DWDS: Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von: Reinecke Fuchs. In zwölf Gesängen. Berlin, 1794.

<sup>145</sup>DWDS: Leinemann, Jürgen, Dr Spiegel 09.05.1988, S.140.

### 10.6.7 [ –NA | NpA ] *sehen+Partizip* Transitive opinative

- (175) a. Der Autor bricht das Vertrauen.  
b. Die Zeitung sieht das Vertrauen durch den Autor gebrochen.

#### Attested verbs

- *bestärken, bestätigen, brechen, nötigen, verpflichten, zwingen*

#### Further examples

- Während die WAZ das Vertrauen und den Gesellschaftervertrag gebrochen sieht und juristisch gegen Dichand vorgeht, wehrt sich Dichand publizistisch.<sup>146</sup>

[10] Examples stacked with a self-inflicting reflexive alternation:

- Ich sehe mich bestätigt.
- Ich sehe mich gezwungen/genötigt/verpflichtet [...].
- Ich sehe mich bestärkt durch viele Diskussionen und Privatmeinungen.
- Auch der Verwaltungsrath der »Steyrermühl« hat sich bemüsst gesehen, einen Rechtfertigungsversuch wegen der von ihm begangenen Stempelentwendung zu unternehmen.<sup>147</sup>

### 10.6.8 [ –NA | NpA ] *finden+Partizip* Transitive opinative

- (176) a. Das Alter verändert mich.  
b. Du findest mich vom Alter verändert?

#### Attested verbs

- *bestätigen, nötigen, verändern*

#### Further examples

- Um die Sache zu prüfen, habe er im Urlaub mal einen Nacktbadestrand aufgesucht - und dort das Bild aus der Sauna bestätigt gefunden.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>146</sup> DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 24.01.2003.

<sup>147</sup> DWDS: Kraus, Karl, Die Fackel, 20.03.1900, S.9.

<sup>148</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 15.02.2016 (online).

## 10 *Light-verb alternations with Partizip*

Examples stacked with a self-inflicting reflexive alternation:

- Er fand sich bestätigt.
- Sie fand sich genötigt, ja zu sagen.
- Es heißt, sie habe sich damals in einem Interview falsch zitiert gefunden.<sup>149</sup>

— [ ADJ > SBJ > OBJ ] —

### 10.6.9 [ pN | NA ] *machen+Partizip* Inverted passive with reflexive loss

One of the many different diathesis with the light verb *machen* (cf. paragraph [10.219] 10.54 on page 469). With the addition of the *machen+Partizip* diathesis, the reflexive pronoun is lost.

- (177) a. Ich eigne mich durch meine Qualifikation für den Job.  
b. Die Qualifikation macht mich geeignet für den Job.

#### Attested verbs

- *besaufen, eignen, konzentrieren*

#### Further examples

- Ich konzentriere mich (durch den Kaffee).  
Der Kaffee macht mich konzentriert.
- Ich besaue mich (mit Wein).  
Der Wein macht mich besoffen.

## 10.7 Diatheses with object demotion

Not attested.

## 10.8 Diatheses with promotion to object

Not attested.

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<sup>149</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 14.06.2010 (online).

## 10.9 Symmetrical diatheses

— [ OBJ > SBJ > OBJ ] —

### 10.9.1 [ DN | NA ] *haben+Partizip* Intransitive possessor passive

A few incidental intransitive verbs allow for a special variant of the possessor passive diathesis Section 10.5.22. In the possessor passive (*Pertinenzpassiv*), the possessor of an accusative object (178a) is remapped to nominative subject (178c). This is only possible with possessors that can alternatively be expressed as a dative (178b).

- (178) a. Der Friseur schneidet meine Haare.  
 b. Der Friseur schneidet mir die Haare.  
 c. Ich habe die Haare geschnitten.

A similar diathesis for the possessor of an intransitive subject is also attested, though it is very rare (cf. **ref-businger2017**: 162–163). An example is the verb *anschwellen* ‘to swell’, for which the possessor of the subject (179a) can be expressed as a dative (179b) and as a subject in a *haben+Partizip* construction (179c).

- (179) a. Sein Arm schwillt an.  
 b. Ihm schwillt der Arm an.  
 c. Er hat den Arm angeschwollen.

[10.224] A related, but different, diathesis with intransitive verbs uses the *haben+am-In-finitiv* constructions (180), discussed extensively in Section 13.9.1. This seems to be more widespread than the *haben+Partizip* diathesis with intransitives.

- (180) a. Meine Holzkohle glüht.  
 b. Mir glüht die Holzkohle.  
 c. Ich habe die Holzkohle am Glühen.

#### Attested verbs

- *einwachsen, schwellen, zufrieren*

### Further examples

- Ihm sind Haare im Auge eingewachsen.  
Er hatte Haare im Auge eingewachsen.
- Wenn Sie bemerken, dass Sie Ihr Bein oder sogar zwei Beine geschwollen haben, dann die Frage: “Was tun?”<sup>150</sup>
- Wenn Sie Ihre Lippen geschwollen haben, müssen Sie behandelt werden.<sup>151</sup>

— [ Ø > SBJ > Ø ] —

#### 10.9.2 [ –NA | N–A ] *machen+Partizip* Commutative

One of the many different diathesis with the light verb *machen* (cf. paragraph 10.54 on page 469). This diathesis is only attested with the verb *vergessen* ‘to forget’ (181). Crucially, the person forgetting something, i.e. the nominative in (181a), is not the same participant as the person causing the forgetting, i.e. the nominative in (181b). [10.225]

- (181) a. Er vergisst den Verlust.  
b. Ich mache den Verlust vergessen.

#### Attested verbs

- *vergessen*

#### 10.9.3 [ –NA | N–A ] *geben+Partizip* Commutative

This diathesis with *geben+Partizip* is apparently only possible with the main verb *verlieren* ‘to lose something’. Crucially, the person losing something (182a) is not necessarily the same person as the person declaring the loss (182b). [10.226]

- (182) a. Irgendjemand verliert den Ring.  
b. Ich gebe den Ring verloren.

#### Attested verbs

- *verlieren*

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<sup>150</sup> Attested online at <https://clione.ru/de/treatment/treatment-has-swelled-up-the-leg-what-to-do-if-swelling-and-redness-of-the-feet>, accessed 13 Mai 2017.

<sup>151</sup> Attested online at [https://de.iliveok.com/health/warum-ist-die-lippe-geschwollen\\_106329i16005.html](https://de.iliveok.com/health/warum-ist-die-lippe-geschwollen_106329i16005.html), accessed 16 July 2021.



# 11 Light-verb alternations with *Infinitiv*

## 11.1 Introduction

Constructions with a light verb and an infinitive are common in German. Most familiar to German speakers are infinitives used in combination with modal verbs like *müssen* or *wollen* (1a), see Section 11.4.7. More intriguingly, infinitives can be used with *sein* to express the rationale for the absence of the subject (1b), see Section 11.4.3. Less widely discussed is a construction of *haben* with an infinitive and an adverbial to express the fortunate circumstances in which the nominative subject finds itself (1c), see Section 11.4.6.

- (1) a. Die Schülerin muss/darf/will/kann die Pflanzen gießen.
- b. Die Schülerin ist die Pflanzen gießen.
- c. Die Schülerin hat gut reden.

[11.2]

All these examples mentioned above are constructions that do not show any role-remapping, i.e. they exhibit epithesis. In contrast, there are also various light verbs that induce a diathesis when used together with an infinitive. For example, *lassen* induces a causative/permisive diathesis (2a), see Section 11.6.2. Likewise widely acknowledged are verbs of perception like *sehen* that give rise to an experiencer construction (2b), see Section 11.6.6. Less widely discussed is the diathesis of *haben* with an infinitive of a position verb, expressing that the nominative subject is some kind of agent/experiencer mixture (2c), see Section 11.9.2.

- (2) a. Die Lehrerin lässt den Schüler ihre Pflanzen gießen.
- b. Die Lehrerin sieht den Direktor ihre Pflanzen gießen.
- c. Die Lehrerin hat ihre Pflanzen auf der Fensterbank stehen.

Following Bech (ref-bech1955) such constructions are often designated as *Erster Status* in the German grammatical literature. However, this name is not very transparent nor particularly mnemonic, so I prefer to use the more descriptive

designation “light-verb+infinitive” construction, often simply abbreviated to INFINITIVE construction.

There are twelve frequently occurring diatheses that use a light-verb+infinitive construction and for which I propose a German name, as listed below. Note that the *lassen+Infinitiv* construction occurs in many different guises. A discussion comparing and distinguishing them can be found in Section 11.2.5.

- [SBJ › Ø] *lassen* MÖGLICHKEITSBEWERTUNG (see Section 11.5.1)
- [SBJ › Ø] *sein* ZUSTANDSBEWERTUNG (see Section 11.5.3)
- [SBJ › ADJ] *heißen* AUFFORDERUNGSDesubJEKTIV (see Section 11.5.4)
- [OBJ › SBJ › ADJ] *lassen* PERMISSIVPASSIV (see Section 11.5.5)
- [OBJ › SBJ › PBJ] *lassen* PERMISSIVKONVERSIV (see Section 11.5.7)
- [OBJ › SBJ › OBJ] *lassen* PERMISSIVINVERSIV (see Section 11.9.1)
- [OBJ › SBJ › OBJ] *haben* ORTSPERTINENZINVERSIV (see Section 11.9.2)
- [Ø › SBJ › ADJ] *lassen* PASSIVKAUSATIV (see Section 11.6.1)
- [Ø › SBJ › OBJ] *lassen* PERMISSIVKAUSATIV (see Section 11.6.2)
- [Ø › SBJ › OBJ] *schicken* DIREKTIVKAUSATIV (see Section 11.6.3)
- [Ø › SBJ › OBJ] *machen* AUFFORDERUNGSKAUSATIV (see Section 11.6.4)
- [Ø › SBJ › OBJ] *sehen/hören/fühlen/spüren* PERZEPTIV (see Section 11.6.6 ff.)

## 11.2 Characterising infinitive constructions

### 11.2.1 Identifying the infinitive

The German INFINITIV (cf. [ref-duden2009: 443](#)) is straightforwardly identified as a wordform ending in *-en* (3a) with an allomorph *-n* after stems ending in *-el/-er* (3b). This infinitive is used as the citation form of a verb in German, for example occurring as the index entry in dictionaries. Note that there is widespread syncretism between the infinitive and the finite 1st and 3rd person plural of most verbs. For example, the wordform *werden* in (3c) is a finite 1st person plural, while *laufen* is an infinitive. This can be ascertained by changing the subject to the singular (3d), which shows the different agreement of the finite form *werde*, while the infinitive *laufen* does not change.

- (3) a. *lauf-en, versteh-en, werd-en*  
 b. *sammel-n, bedauer-n, änder-n*  
 c. Wir werden laufen.  
 d. Ich werde laufen.

### 11.2.2 Nominal predication

Functionally, the INFINITIV is a nominal form of the verb. Consequently, it regularly occurs preceded by a determiner. In such usage, German orthography urges for the capitalisation of the infinitive, e.g. *das Laufen* ‘the running’ (4a). This nominal nature of the infinitive contrasts nicely to the adjectival nature of the participle, e.g. *gelaufene* (4b), as discussed in the previous chapter (see especially Section 10.2.8).

- (4) a. Das Laufen fällt mir schwer.  
b. Die selten gelaufene Distanz fällt mir schwer.

[11.7] Given the nominal nature of the infinitive, there is a close connection between light-verb+infinitive constructions and nominal predication, i.e. constructions of a light verb with a bare noun. Nominal predication in German is typically constructed with the light verbs *werden*, *sein* or *bleiben* (ref-duden2009: 812–813). The parallel between infinitives and nouns is obvious with the future meaning of *werden* (5a), see Section 11.4.9, and the continuative meaning of *bleiben* (5b), see Section 11.4.2. However, as illustrated in (5c), the meaning of *sein*+noun (“identification”) is quite different from *sein*+infinitive (“absentive”), see Section 11.4.3.

- (5) a. Ich werde Vater.  
Ich werde wenig schlafen.  
b. Ich bleibe Vater.  
Ich bleibe lieber sitzen.  
c. Ich bin Vater.  
Ich bin dann mal einkaufen.

[11.8] Modal verbs (see Section 11.4.7) are normally not used for nominal predication. However, in recent political framing the nominal predication *Kanzler können* ‘to know how to be a chancellor’ has become famous (6a), even leading to other modal verbs being used in the same construction, like *dürfen* (6b). Kubczak (ref-kubczak2016) investigates the parallels between such usage of modal verbs and nominal constructions of ability (6c).

- (6) a. Kurt Beck, der kann Kanzler.<sup>1</sup>  
b. Rosier darf Kanzler!<sup>2</sup>  
c. Er kann den Dialekt dieser Gegend.

<sup>1</sup>Nürnberger Nachrichten, 30.04.2007: 3, cited from Kubczak (ref-kubczak2016: 128).

<sup>2</sup>Süddeutsche Zeitung, 03.08.2011, cited from Kubczak (ref-kubczak2016: 129).

A further kind of nominal predication uses the verb *heißen* ‘to be called’ (ref-duden2009: 813), indicating that the subject has a particular name (7a). Instead of a noun it is also possible to use infinitives, either without *zu* (7b) or with *zu* (7c). Both these constructions indicate equation, and it is unclear whether there is any difference between the equations with or without *zu*. Interestingly, both the subject and the predicate in such sentences need to be infinitives (and both either with or without *zu*). Note that the light verb *heißen* can also be used in a (somewhat old-fashioned) causative construction (29d), which seems to be completely separate from the equational usage (see Section 11.6.5).

- (7) a. Dieses Sternbild heißt Großer Bär.<sup>3</sup>
- b. Die Symbole abschaffen heißt die Freimaurerei abschaffen.<sup>4</sup>  
      Von den Erwachsenen lernen, heißt Reife beweisen.<sup>5</sup>
- c. Diese Wahrheit zu akzeptieren, hieße zu resignieren.<sup>6</sup>  
      Eine Katze zu haben, heißt, sich um ein Lebewesen kümmern zu müssen.<sup>7</sup>
- d. Der Henker hieß ihn niederknien.

Structurally similar to nominal predication, possession can be indicated by using the verb *haben* with a noun phrase. In this construction the possessed nouns typically need a determiner (8a). With mental states like *Schmerzen* ‘pain’ or *Geduld* ‘patience’ it is possible to use the same *haben* construction with bare nouns (8b). Compare that possessive use of *haben* to the two different constructions using *haben* with an infinitive. The *Ortspertinenzinversiv* construction (8c) still includes a sense of possession, see Section 11.9.2. The subject of this construction (here *Sportler* ‘sportsman’) is necessarily the possessor of the object in the prepositional phrase (here *Nase* ‘nose’). In contrast, the *Fortunativ* construction (8d) has no relation to possession at all, see Section 11.4.6 .

- (8) a. Ich habe eine Tasse.
- b. Ich habe Geduld/Schmerzen.
- c. Der Sportler hat einen Tropfen an seiner Nase hängen.
- d. Er hat leicht reden.

<sup>3</sup>Duden-Grammatik (ref-duden2009): 813

<sup>4</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 20.11.2017, Nr. 47.

<sup>5</sup>In: Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache: *Wörterbuch zur Verbvalenz*. Grammatisches Informationssystem grammis. <https://grammis.ids-mannheim.de/verbs/view/400556/1>, accessed 27 September 2021.

<sup>6</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 25.07.2005.

<sup>7</sup>Duden-Grammatik (ref-duden2009): 813

### 11.2.3 ACI *accusativus cum infinitivo*

Given the immense influence of Latin grammar on grammatical theory, it is no surprise that the classical Latin concept of an *accusativus cum infinitivo* (ACI) is often used to describe a similar phenomenon in German. The term ACI describes a sentence structure that is the result of a clause alternation in which an originally nominative subject ends up as an accusative, while the verb is expressed as an infinitive.

[11.12] This ACI is very widespread in Latin, but in German it is only attested with a few light-verb+infinitive diatheses that add a new subject (see Section 11.6), namely causative light verbs like *schicken* ‘to send’ (9a) and perception light verbs like *sehen* ‘to see’ (9b). As a cover term for all diatheses adding a new subject I have proposed the term *NOVATIVE* (see Section 2.7.3.2). So, in the terminology as used in this book, an ACI sentence structure is the result of a novative diathesis expressed with a light-verb+infinitive voice.

- (9) a. Er kauft den Tisch.  
       Sie schickt ihn den Tisch kaufen.  
       b. Der Mann putzt den Tisch.  
       Sie sieht den Mann den Tisch putzen.

[11.13] Such diatheses regularly result in sentences with two separate noun phrases in the accusative, namely when an accusative argument was already present before the diathesis. Such double accusatives are highly unusual in German outside of these constructions (see Section 5.3.8).

Although the surface structure of all these constructions in German is clearly monoclausal, underlyingly there might be differences (see *ref-harbert1977* for a discussion). For example, light verbs like *schicken* only allow for a monoclausal infinitive construction (10a,b), while light verbs like *sehen* additionally allow for a biclausal *dass* alternative (10c,d).

- (10) a. Sie schickt ihn den Tisch kaufen.  
       b. \* Sie schickt, dass er einen Tisch kauft.  
       c. Sie sieht ihn den Tisch kaufen.  
       d. Sie sieht, dass er den Tisch kaufen.

Speyer (*ref-speyer2018a*) discusses the history of ACI constructions in German, arguing that they are originally Germanic (and possibly even proto-Indo-European) and not calques from Latin.

### 11.2.4 IPP *Ersatzinfinitiv*

The *ErsatzInfinitiv* is a special syntactic phenomenon attested in West-Germanic languages (ref-schmid2005; ref-schallert2014). It concerns the participle of some of the light verbs that are used with infinitives, like *können*, *sehen* or *lassen*. For example, the verb *sehen* has a regular perfect with *haben* and a participle *gesehen* (11a). However, when *sehen* is used as a light verb with an infinitive, then the perfect can alternatively consists of *haben* with an infinitive *sehen* (11b). Because the infinitive is used instead of the expected participle, this phenomenon is known as an *ErsatzInfinitiv* or “infinitive instead of a participle” (Lat. *infinitivus pro participium*, IPP). Diachronically this is a relatively recent development, probably starting in the 14th/15th century (ref-jager2018; see also ref-coupe2015: Ch. 7 for a detailed diachronic study of IPP in Dutch).

- (11) a. Sie sieht, dass er den Tisch putzt.  
       Sie *hat gesehen*, dass er den Tisch putzt.  
       b. Sie sieht ihn den Tisch putzen.  
       Sie *hat ihn den Tisch putzen gesehen*.  
       Sie *hat ihn den Tisch putzen sehen*.

Based on data from various West-Germanic languages and dialects, Schmid (ref-schmid2005: 32–33, 106) proposes a hierarchy of verb types that show this phenomenon (12). German fits nicely in this hierarchy (almost by definition, because German was used to propose the hierarchy in the first place). The German verbs inducing an IPP are causative *lassen*, modals *dürfen/können/mögen/müssen/sollen/wollen* and also *brauchen*, perception verbs *hören, sehen* and benefactive *helfen*. [11.17]

- (12) Implicational scale of IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* verbs  
       causatives < modals < perception verbs < benefactives < duratives <  
       inchoatives < control verbs

However, this hierarchy should be interpreted rather loosely. The designation “causative” on the hierarchy is a misnomer. The verb *lassen* also induces the IPP in its other uses, viz. possibility and permission (see the next Section 11.2.5). Conversely, other causative constructions do not induce an IPP, namely those with *schicken* (see Section 11.6.3) and *machen* (see Section 11.6.4). Likewise, while the perception verbs *hören* and *sehen* allow for an IPP, the syntactically similar perception verbs *fühlen* and *spüren* do not (see Section 11.6.6 ff.). [11.18]

Further, the IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* is not obligatory for benefactive *helfen* and neither for the perception verbs *sehen* and *hören*, but it is obligatory for modal verbs. [11.19]

This would actually nicely correspond to a connected region on the hierarchy, were it not for the verb *lassen*, which also allows for both infinitive and participle (13). However, according to Enzinger (ref-enzinger2012: 34) the construction with the participle *gelassen* only allows for a permissive reading (13b). If this is confirmed, then the hierarchy could be extended by adding “permissives” close to “benefactives” to again obtain a connected region on the hierarchy for optional IPP.

- (13) a. Sie hat mich die Kleider waschen *lassen*.  
           (causative = Sie verursacht, dass ich die Kleider wasche.)  
           (permissive = Sie erlaubt, dass ich die Kleider wasche.)  
       b. Sie hat mich die Kleider waschen *gelassen*.  
           (only permissive = Sie hat erlaubt, dass ich die Kleider wasche.)

### 11.2.5 The many guises of *lassen+Infinitiv*

It has been widely observed that there is a large variety of uses of the *lassen+Infinitiv* construction in German (e.g. ref-eisenberg2006a: 369–371; ref-kotulkova2010a; ref-pitteroff2014). In this chapter I will distinguish six different diatheses that all use the *lassen+Infinitiv* construction, as summarised in Table 11.1. These six constructions are clearly diachronically related, and also synchronically they are very similar. However, they cannot be reduced to a single (abstract) construction with transparent and productive derivations leading to these six different diatheses as distinguished here. I will succinctly summarise these different options here. For a detailed discussion, see the sections as indicated in the table. Note that there is an additional usage of *lassen* with a participle that is discussed in Section 10.4.11.

Table 11.1: Different diatheses with a *lassen+Infinitiv* construction

Section	Remapping	German Name	Reflexive	Interpretation
11.5.1	[N   –]	<i>Möglichkeitsbewertung</i>	yes	possibility
11.5.5	[NA   <sub>p</sub> N]	<i>Permissivpassiv</i>	yes	possibility/permission
11.5.7	[NA   PN]	<i>Permissivkonversiv</i>	yes	permission
11.9.1	[ND   AN]	<i>Permissivinversiv</i>	yes	permission
11.6.2	[–N   NA]	<i>Permissivkausativ</i>	no	causation/permission
11.6.1	[–NA   N <sub>p</sub> A]	<i>Passivkausativ</i>	no	causation

[11.21]

The six diatheses can be divided into two major groups depending on the use of the reflexive pronoun. The first four diatheses in Table 11.1 (with interpretation permission/possibility) obligatorily have a reflexive pronoun. The last two variants (with interpretation causation/permission) do not have a reflexive pronoun, although they can optionally have one. Basically, when the reflexive pronoun can be removed by a paraphrase, then the construction is of the latter causation/permission type. Note that the possibility of removal is often context-dependent, because exactly the same sentence can have differing structures (and correspondingly differing interpretations) depending on the context in which it occurs.

Quickly summarised, there are three possibilities of removable reflexive pronouns. First, the reflexive can be a possessor dative, like *mir* in (14a). In such sentences, the participant to which the reflexive pronoun refers is necessarily the possessor of another role, here of the accusative *Haare* ‘hair’. This can be easily tested as the reflexive pronoun can be paraphrased as a possessive pronoun *meine* (cf. Section 5.8.4). Second, the reflexive can be a beneficiary dative (14b), which can easily be tested because the reflexive pronoun can be paraphrased by a *für* phrase (cf. Section 6.8.9)

[11.22]

- (14) a. Ich lasse mir die Haare schneiden.  
       Ich lasse meine Haare schneiden.  
       b. Ich lasse mir eine Suppe kochen.  
       Ich lasse für mich eine Suppe kochen.

Third, a reflexive pronoun, like *sich* in (15a), can have self-inflicting reflexive reference replacing a noun phrase. To test for this option, it should be possible to replace the reflexive pronoun by another participant, like *seine Katze* ‘his cats’ (15b). Further tests for such self-inflicting reflexive reference are illustrated in (15c), viz. the possibility of (i) negation of the reflexive (*nicht sich*) and (ii) syntactic emphasis of the reflexive (*nur sich selbst*), see also Chapter 7, especially paragraph 7.67 on page 275.

[11.23]

- (15) a. Der König lässt sich durch die Stadt tragen.  
       b. Der König lässt seine Katze durch die Stadt tragen.  
       c. Der König lässt nicht sich, sondern seine Katze durch die Stadt tragen.  
       Der König lässt nur sich selbst durch die Stadt tragen.

[11.24]

Returning to the classification of the *lassen* constructions in Table 11.1, the last two diatheses (i.e. those without obligatory reflexive pronouns and with causation/permission interpretation) are both promotions. They are novative diatheses



that introduce a completely new role into the sentence as a nominative subject. In contrast, the first four diatheses in Table 11.1 (i.e. those with obligatory reflexive pronouns and permission/possibility interpretation) are all demotions. They are closely related, but can be differentiated by their specific remapping of roles.

[11.25] So, there are the two closely related *lassen+Infinitiv* diatheses with promotion, which will be called *Permissivkausativ* and *Passivkausativ*. Although both are similar, there are various differences between these two causative diatheses. First, the erstwhile nominative is demoted to an accusative in the *Permissivkausativ* (16), while it is demoted to an optional *von* prepositional phrase in the *Passivkausativ* (17). Second, there are various verbs that allow for a *Permissivkausativ* but not for a *Passivkausativ*. For examples, the verb *antworten* ‘to answer’ (17c,d) is not compatible with a *Passivkausativ*. Finally, the *Permissivkausativ* can both have a causative (16a) and a permissive (16b) reading, while the *Passivkausativ* cannot have a permissive interpretation, only the causative interpretation is possible (17b).

(16) PERMISSIVKAUSATIV

- a. Die Schüler schreiben einen Test.  
Der Lehrer lässt die Schüler einen Test schreiben.  
(= Der Lehrer sorgt dafür, dass die Schüler einen Test schreiben.)
- b. Die Schüler gehen nach Hause.  
Der Lehrer lässt die Schüler nach Hause gehen.  
(= Der Lehrer erlaubt, dass die Schüler nach Hause gehen.)

(17) PASSIVKAUSATIV

- a. Der Schüler putzt den Tisch.
- b. Der Lehrer lässt den Tisch (von dem Schüler) putzen.  
(= Der Lehrer verursacht, dass der Tisch geputzt wird.)  
(≠ Der Lehrer erlaubt, dass der Tische geputzt wird.)
- c. Der Lehrer antwortet dem Schüler.
- d. \* Der Vater lässt dem Schüler von dem Lehrer antworten.

Next are the four closely related *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv* diatheses with demotion. First, the *Permissivpassiv* is attested with transitive verbs, like *besteigen* ‘to climb’ (18a) or *kämmen* ‘to comb’ (18b). The accusative (*den Berg, seine Kinder*) is promoted to nominative subject and the erstwhile subject (*die Besucher, der Vater*) is demoted to an optional *von* prepositional phrase. A reflexive pronoun is obligatory present and cannot be replaced, negated nor focussed. When the new

[11.26]

nominative subject is inanimate, the diathesis has an epistemic meaning expressing the possibility of the action, viz. ‘it is possible’ (18a). In contrast, when the new subject is animate, then typically a permissive interpretation ‘it is allowed’ is preferred (18b), though a possibility-reading is also viable.

(18) PERMISSIVPASSIV

- a. Die Besucher besteigt den Berg.  
Der Berg lässt sich (von Besuchern) besteigen.  
(= Es ist möglich, den Berg zu besteigen.)
- b. Der Vater kämmt seine Kinder.  
Die Kinder lassen sich (vom Vater) kämmen.  
(= Sie erlauben, dass sie gekämmt werden.)

Second, the *Permissivkonversiv* is attested with verbs that describe the evocation of a state-of-mind, like *empören* ‘fill with outrage’ (19a) or *belustigen* ‘to amuse’ (19b). The animate accusative is promoted to nominative (with an obligatory reflexive pronoun) and the original subject is demoted to a governed *von* prepositional phrase. The governed status of this phrase can be shown by the possible *davon, dass* paraphrase (19c). Some of these verbs, like *empören* (19a) prefer a negation in this diathesis. Other, like *belustigen* (19b) prefer not to have a negation.

[11.27]

(19) PERMISSIVKONVERSIV

- a. Dieser Witz empört mich.  
Ich lasse mich nicht von diesem Witz empören.
- b. Die Burschen belustigen mich.  
Man [...] lässt sich von den Burschen belustigen.<sup>8</sup>
- c. Ich lasse mich davon belustigen, dass die Burschen singen.

Third, the *Permissivinversiv* occurs with verbs that take a nominative and a dative argument. It typically applies to verbs with which the dative is animate, like *gefallen* ‘to like’ (20). This dative is promoted to nominative subject (with an obligatory dative reflexive pronoun) and the erstwhile nominative is demoted to accusative. Just like with the previous *Permissivkonversiv*, this diathesis also has verbs that prefer a negation, like *gefallen* ‘to like’ (20a) and verbs that do not, like *schmecken* ‘to taste’ (20b).

<sup>8</sup>DWDS: Kisch, Egon Erwin: Der rasende Reporter, Berlin: Aufbau-Taschenbuch-Verl. 1925, S. 7.

(20) PERMISSIVINVERSIV

- a. Dein Ton gefällt mir nicht.  
Ich lasse mir deinen Ton nicht gefallen.
- b. Das Bärenfleisch schmeckt ihm.  
Er lässt sich das Bärenfleisch schmecken.<sup>9</sup>

[11.29] Finally, with agentive intransitive verbs like *wandern* ‘to hike’ (22a), the *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv* construction leads to a special diathesis, called *Möglichkeitsbewertung* here. The nominative subject is removed and an evaluative adverbial is necessary, like *gut* ‘well’ (21a). Although the nominative is removed, this construction often occurs without a valency-simulating pronoun *es*. Verbs with a governed preposition, like *warten auf* ‘to wait for’ (22b) are slightly different because when the governed preposition is retained, then (i) the valency simulating *es* is impossible and (ii) no evaluative adverbial is necessary (see Section 11.5.2).

(21) MÖGLICHKEITSBEWERTUNG

- a. Die Familie wandert im Wald.  
Im Wald lässt (es) sich gut wandern.
- b. Der Kunde wartet auf ein Tattoo.  
Auf ein Tattoo lässt sich warten.<sup>10</sup>

## 11.3 Deponent verbs without alternations

[11.30] There do not appear to be any infinitives that do not also occur as a finite verb. A possible phenomenon to investigate further in this context are noun+verb compounds that do not have finite forms, like *bauchreden*, *bausparen*, *ehebrechen* or *wettlaufen*. Although the second part of these compounds are verbs that clearly can be finite (*reden*, *sparen*, *brechen*, *laufen*), the whole compound cannot be used as a finite verb. However, the question is, whether these lexemes should be classified as verbs in the first place. They only occur as an infinitive, so they are more like nouns. However, they can occur in light-verb+infinitive constructions as discussed in this chapter.

<sup>9</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 22.11.1985, Nr. 48.

<sup>10</sup> Attested online at [https://www.t-online.de/nachrichten/deutschland/id\\_89453948/corona-lockerungen-die-haeme-ueber-die-friseuroeffnungen-ist-entlarvend-.html](https://www.t-online.de/nachrichten/deutschland/id_89453948/corona-lockerungen-die-haeme-ueber-die-friseuroeffnungen-ist-entlarvend-.html), accessed 15 September 2021.

## 11.4 Alternations without diathesis

### — Aspect —

#### 11.4.1 *tun+Infinitiv* Verb focus

[11.31]

The *tun+Infinitiv* construction (ref-schwarz2004) is considered substandard and frowned upon in written German (22a). However, it is widespread in German dialects and also frequent in the spoken standard language (ref-erb2001: Ch. 5). The acceptability is strongly improved for many German speakers with fronting of the infinitive (22b), putting focus on the verb meaning and losing any aspectual implication (ref-schwarz2004: 15–18). This second usage is more akin to English *do-support* than to a progressive aspect.

- (22) a. ? Ich tu dir das Buch schenken.  
b. Schenken tu ich dir das Buch.

#### 11.4.2 *bleiben+Infinitiv* Continuative (*Zustandskontinuativ*)

The construction *bleiben+Infinitiv* (cf. ref-eisenberg2006a: 351; ref-engel1996: 476) is typically used with position verbs like *sitzen* ‘to sit’ or *liegen* ‘to lie’ (23a). This construction with *bleiben* indicates that the position is being maintained. Transitive verbs also appear to be possible, but examples are difficult to find (23b), see also further examples below. Note that the combination of *bleiben* with an infinitive of a position verb is often considered to be a single word in German orthography (23c). This construction does not induce an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (23c).

- (23) a. Nora bleibt morgens immer ewig liegen.<sup>11</sup>  
b. ? Er bleibt ihr Briefe schicken.  
c. Nora ist morgens immer liegegeblieben. (\*liegenbleiben)

#### Attested verbs

- Single words from the DWDS dictionary: *stehenbleiben*, *klebenkleiben*, *hängenbleiben*, *liegenbleiben*, *sitzenbleiben*, *steckenbleiben*
- Other stative verbs: *bestehen*, *erhalten*, *haften*, *hocken*, *wohnen*
- Other verbs: *laufen*, *leben*, *schicken*, *vergessen*

<sup>11</sup>Schlücker (ref-schlucker2007): 142

## Further examples

- Drehe ich den Regler wieder nach rechts um Warmwasser zu fragen geht der Brenner wieder an und bleibt laufen obwohl kein Warmwasser gezapft wird.<sup>12</sup>
- Und wenn jemanden eine Schlange biss, so sah er die eherne Schlange an und blieb leben.<sup>13</sup>
- Die TPP-Grundzüge bleiben erhalten.<sup>14</sup>
- Seine künstlerischen Leistungen bleiben bestehen, auch wenn man sie nun in anderem Licht betrachtet.<sup>15</sup>
- Immer mehr bleiben hocken, wenn eine neue Übung beginnt.<sup>16</sup>

11.4.3 *sein+Infinitiv Absentive (Absentiv)*

[11.33]

The ABSENTIVE is a construction that expresses that the subject participant is currently not present because of an activity that is being pursued. The grammatical concept was originally proposed by de Groot (**ref-groot2000**). For German, this phenomenon is widely discussed in the literature (cf. **ref-vogel2007**: 269ff.; **ref-abraham2008**; **ref-konig2009**).

[11.34]

For example, an activity like *schwimmen* ‘to swim’ can be used in the infinitive with the light verb *sein* to indicate absence because of the swimming (24a). This construction is typically used with intransitive verbs, though there does not seem to be a strict prohibition of more complex activities with more arguments (24b). This construction does not induce an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (24c).

- (24) a. Ich schwimme.  
       Ich bin schwimmen.
- b. Ich bringe dem Nachbarn den Teller zurück.  
       Ich bin nur mal kurz dem Nachbarn den Teller zurückbringen.
- c. Ich bin dem Nachbarn den Teller zurückbringen gewesen. (\*sein)

The absentive can only be used with verbs that clearly include agency, so typical patientive verbs like *einschlafen* ‘to fall asleep’ do not allow for this construction (cf. Section 10.4.2). In contrast, a verb like *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ does allow for an

<sup>12</sup> Attested online at <https://www.haustechnikdialog.de/Forum/t/242166/Viessmann-Vitopend-100-bleibt-laufen>, accessed 24 September 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Lutherbibel 1984: 4.Mose 21:9

<sup>14</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 28.11.2017 (online).

<sup>15</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.11.2017 (online).

<sup>16</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 25.01.1996.

## 11 Light-verb alternations with Infinitiv

absentive construction, though it needs a suitable context (25b). However, not all verbs with a *haben* perfect (often analysed as “agentive”, see Section 10.4.1) allow for an absentive, for example *sitzen* ‘to sit’ does not allow for it (25c).

- (25) a. \* Ich bin einschlafen.  
b. Ich bin dann mal schlafen!  
c. \* Ich bin auf den Stuhl sitzen.

### Attested verbs

- Agentive verbs: *arbeiten, bringen, laufen, rennen, schlafen, schwimmen, zurückbringen*
- Not possible with non-agentive verbs: *abkühlen, ankommen, aufstehen, bluten, einschlafen, fallen, husten, niesen, scheitern, stürzen, verrosten, wachsen, weinen*

### 11.4.4 *gehen/fahren+Infinitiv* Abitive (*Abitiv*)

Parallel to the *sein+Infinitiv* absentive, the light verbs *gehen* ‘to go’ and *fahren* ‘to drive’ can also be used to indicate (intended) absence because of an activity (26a). In accordance to their lexical meaning, these two light verbs place a focus on the movement away, leading to the absence. I propose the term ABITIVE (from Lat. *abire* ‘to depart, to go away’) for this construction. This term explicitly evokes a relation to the ABLATIVE, which is a nominal category that expresses a motion away from something. The verbal abitive construction does not induce an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (26c).

[11.36]

- (26) a. Er besucht seinen Freund.  
Er geht/fährt seinen Freund besuchen.  
b. \* Er geht einschlafen.  
c. Er ist seinen Freund besuchen gegangen/gefahren. (\*gehen/fahren)

### Attested verbs

Probably exactly the same verbs as can be used with *sein+Infinitiv* absentive can also be used with *gehen/fahren+Infinitiv*, so they will not be repeated here (see Section 11.4.3).

### 11.4.5 *kommen+Infinitiv* Aditive (*Aditiv*)

Contrasting to the *gehen/fahren+Infinitiv* abitive there is also a *kommen+Infinitiv* construction to express a movement towards a location where an activity takes place (27a). I propose the term ADITIVE (from Lat. *adire* ‘to approach’) for this verbal category. The parallel nominal case is called ALLATIVE, which also includes the prefix *ad-*, though with internal sandhi. This verbal aditive construction does not induce an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (27b).

- (27) a. Er kommt hier immer die Zeitung lesen.  
 b. Er ist hier immer die Zeitung lesen gekommen. (\*kommen)

#### Attested verbs

- probably exactly the same verbs as can be used with *sein+Infinitiv* absentive can also be used with *kommen+Infinitiv* (see Section 11.4.3).

### 11.4.6 *haben+Infinitiv* Fortunate (*Fortunativ*)

The construction *haben+Infinitiv* describes a situation in which the subject is in a fortunate situation to do something, so I propose to call this construction FORTUNATIVE (from Lat. *fortunatus* ‘blessed, lucky’). This construction obligatorily needs an adverb, most frequently *leicht* ‘easy’ (28a) or *gut* ‘well’ (28b). Only incidentally other adverbs are attested, like *klug* ‘clever’ (28c). The main verb seems to be restricted to intransitives, most frequent are *reden* ‘to talk’ and *lachen* ‘to laugh’. Utterance verbs appear to be particularly common in this construction. The only examples with transitive verbs involve incorporated-like objects, which makes such constructions arguably intransitive (28d).

[11.40] This construction with *haben* is closely related to similar constructions with an obligatory adverbial evaluation, like with the light verbs *sein* (see Section 11.5.3]) and *lassen* (see Section 3.3.4). A major difference is that *haben* only occurs with positive adverbials, while *sein* and *lassen* also allow the negative counterparts.

- (28) a. Er hat leicht reden.  
       Nike hatte leicht protzen.<sup>17</sup>  
 b. Er hat gut lachen.

<sup>17</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 13.07.1998.

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Der Kanzler hat gut schimpfen.<sup>18</sup>

c. Du hast klug reden.<sup>19</sup>

d. Wer im Rohr sitzt, hat gut Pfeifen schneiden.<sup>20</sup>

### Attested verbs

- Utterance verbs: *protzen, reden, sagen, schimpfen, trösten, verbieten*
- Others: *beweisen, lachen, regieren*

### Further examples

- Jungen haben leicht sagen: “Mädchen sind doof.”<sup>21</sup>
- Wer behauptet, es laufe in der Geschichte alles auf das gleiche hinaus, und als Beweis dafür Szenen liefert, die immer auf das gleiche hinauslaufen, der hat leicht beweisen.<sup>22</sup>
- Ach, Roswitha, der Geheimrat hat leicht verbieten, und Du hast es auch leicht, all’ das nachzusprechen.<sup>23</sup>
- Der Herr Baron hat leicht trösten; ich bin und bleib’ unglücklich, wenn ich meinen Casperl nimmer sieh.<sup>24</sup>
- Wer aber geliebt ist, hat leicht regieren.<sup>25</sup>

### — Modality —

The traditional modal verbs *dürfen/können/mögen/müssen/sollen/wollen* and the modal-like light verbs *werden* and *brauchen* are frequently used in constructions with infinitives. There do not seem to be any restrictions on which verbs can occur as infinitives in such constructions. This is noteworthy because all other constructions as discussed in this book have restrictions on the verbs that can be used with them (cf. Section 1.3.4)

[11.41]

<sup>18</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 14.12.2002.

<sup>19</sup>DWDS: Neutsch, Erik: *Spur der Steine*, Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verl. 1964 S.7.

<sup>20</sup>DWDS: Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm (Hrsg.): *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon*. Bd. 3. Leipzig, 1873.

<sup>21</sup>DWDS: *Die Zeit*, 20.10.1978, Nr. 43.

<sup>22</sup>DWDS: *Die Zeit*, 28.04.1972, Nr. 17.

<sup>23</sup>DWDS: Fontane, Theodor: *Effi Briest*. Berlin, 1896.

<sup>24</sup>DWDS: Pocci, Franz von: *Lustiges Komödienbüchlein*. Bd. 4. München, 1871.

<sup>25</sup>DWDS: Eckermann, Johann Peter: *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*. Bd. 3. Leipzig, 1848.



### 11.4.7 Modal light verbs

[11.42]

The modal verbs *dürfen/können/mögen/möchten/müssen/sollen/wollen* are extensively discussed in the German grammatical literature and will therefore not be discussed in any detail here (e.g. see **ref-duden2009**: 556ff.). These modal verbs induce an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (29).

- (29) a. Er will das Haus bauen.  
b. Er hat das Haus bauen wollen (\*gewollt).

[11.43]

An interesting supplementary effect that these modal verbs have on diathesis (first observed by **ref-leirbukt2000**) concerns the interpretation of the *haben+Partizip* construction. This *haben+Partizip* construction has two different interpretations (30a), either *Perfekt* (see Section 10.4) or *Pertinenzpassiv* (see Section 10.5.22). In most uses, the *Perfekt* interpretation is the preferred reading. However, with an additional modal light verb the *Pertinenzpassiv* interpretation is strongly preferred (30b).

- (30) a. Er hat sein Auto repariert.  
(*Perfekt* = Er reparierte sein Auto selbst.)  
(*Pertinenzpassiv* = Irgendjemand hat das Auto für ihn repariert.)  
b. Er will sein Auto repariert haben.  
(*Pertinenzpassiv* = Er will, dass irgendjemand das Auto für ihn repariert.)

### 11.4.8 *brauchen+Infinitiv* Negative obligation

The light verb *brauchen* ‘to need’ is typically used with a *zu-Infinitiv* together with a negation or a modal particle like *nur* or *bloß* (31a), see Section 12.4.6. However, it also occurs (with the same negative polarity) without the particle *zu* (31b). Without *zu* it seems to be more typically used in sentences without objects. Whether there is any semantic difference between the usage with or without *zu* needs more in-depth investigation. When it is used without *zu* it seems only logical to include *brauchen* in the set of modal verbs (cf. **ref-duden2009**: 556). The light verb *brauchen* is also similar to the modal verbs in that it induces an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (31c).

- (31) a. Du brauchst nur noch zu unterschreiben.  
b. Du brauchst nur noch unterschreiben.  
c. Du hättest doch nur noch unterschreiben brauchen!

#### 11.4.9 *werden+Infinitiv* Future/presumption

The light verb *werden* is traditionally classified as a temporal auxiliary used for future reference, but it is actually only very rarely used as a marker of temporal future. The *Präsens* is mostly used with future time reference in German (32a). It is probably better to consider the *werden+Infinitiv* construction together with the other modal verbs because its usage typically includes a modal implicature of an expectation/presumption (on behalf of the speaker) that the event will take place (32b). There is a long discussion about the merits of this classification of *werden* as a modal verb in the German grammatical tradition (e.g. ref-fabriciushansen1986: 141ff.), even with suggestions of evidential usage (ref-diewald2010: 170). Crucially, the *werden+Infinitiv* can also be used with past-time reference like *damals* (32c).

- (32) a. Der Feind greift morgen vielleicht an.  
 b. Der Feind wird morgen vielleicht angreifen.  
 c. Seine Mutter wird sich damals gefreut haben.<sup>26</sup>

It is undecidable whether the *werden+Infinitiv* construction induces an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* or not, because constructions that would trigger such an IPP do not exist. A *werden+Infinitiv* (33a) is incompatible with a stacked participle construction, like a *sein* perfect (33b), a *werden* passive (33c), or a *gehören* passive (33d).

[11.46]

- (33) a. Die Biene wird mich stechen.  
 (= *werden+Infinitiv*)  
 b. \* Die Biene ist mich stechen geworden/werden.  
 (= stack of *werden+Infinitiv* +> *sein+Partizip Perfekt*)  
 c. \* Ich werde (von der Biene) stechen geworden/werden.  
 (= stack of *werden+Infinitiv* +> *werden+Partizip Vorgangspassiv*)<sup>27</sup>  
 d. \* Ich gehöre stechen geworden/werden.  
 (= stack of *werden+Infinitiv* +> *gehören+Partizip Normpassiv*)

<sup>26</sup>Duden-Grammatik (ref-duden2009): 211

<sup>27</sup>Note that the reversed stack is perfectly possible, viz. *Ich werde (von der Biene) gestochen werden*, which is a stack of *werden+Partizip Vorgangspassiv* +> *werden+Infinitiv Futur*. However, this stack does not help decide whether an IPP occurs with the *werden* future.

## — Other epitheses —

11.4.10 *lassen+Infinitiv Reflexiv* intransitive

The construction *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv* is attested in many different variants, for a summary see Section 11.2.5. There is a special situation in which this construction can be used with intransitive verbs without diathesis. This is a highly restricted usage that only occurs with intransitive verbs that describe both (i) an action that can be performed by an agent and (ii) an event that occurs by natural force, like *fallen* ‘to fall’ (34). [11.47]

- (34) a. Er fällt.  
b. Er lässt sich fallen.

[11.48] This construction is completely transparent (35) as a stack of a *lassen* causative (Section 11.6.2) and a self-inflicting reflexive (Section 7.4.5). So, this epithesis is not an alternation in its own right and thus does not deserve to have its own section in this book. Notwithstanding, I have added this section to document the very small and semantically interesting class of intransitive verbs that allow for this combination.

- (35) Er fällt.  
+> *Permissivkausativ* = Ich lasse ihn fallen.  
+> *Selbstbezogenes Reflexiv* = Er lässt sich fallen.

## Attested verbs

- *absacken, fallen, gehen, gleiten, hineinplumpsen, hinfallen, hinunterfallen, hinunterrutschen, sinken, schweben, treiben, zurückfallen*

## Further examples

- Man stößt sich ab und lässt sich gleiten.<sup>28</sup>
- Wer zur Düsternis neigt, lässt sich sinken.<sup>29</sup>
- Juventus ließ sich zurückfallen, Gladbach übernahm wieder das Kommando im Mittelfeld.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 14.06.2002.

<sup>29</sup>Attested online at [https://www.welt.de/print/welt\\_kompakt/print\\_literatur/article174151886/Der-Stoff-der-wilden-Jahre.html](https://www.welt.de/print/welt_kompakt/print_literatur/article174151886/Der-Stoff-der-wilden-Jahre.html), accessed 28 September 2022.

<sup>30</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 03.11.2015 (online).

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- Frei wie ein Vogel schwingte ich mich auf in die Höhen und lasse mich schweben.<sup>31</sup>
- Es war klein, sie musste sich rückwärts hineinquetschen, ihre Füße landeten auf einer Schräge, sie ließ sich hinunterrutschen.<sup>32</sup>
- Gegen 14 Uhr läuft er in voller Montur mit Sauerstoff-Flasche und Neoprenanzug auf das große Wasserbassin zu und lässt sich hineinplumpsen.<sup>33</sup>
- Ich stelle mich neben sie an die Wand, lasse mich absacken, sitze auf dem Boden.<sup>34</sup>

### Notes

The verb *gehen* ‘to walk’ has become lexicalised in this construction as *sich gehen lassen* meaning ‘to lose one’s control’ (36).

- (36) a. Er geht nach Hause.  
b. Er lässt sich gehen.

### 11.4.11 *lernen+Infinitiv* Assistive

The verb *lernen* ‘to learn’ can both occur in a construction with an infinitive (37a) and with *zu* plus infinitive (37b), see also Section 12.2.2. There is an obvious parallel to the verbs *lehren* ‘to teach’ (Section 11.6.12) and *helfen* ‘to help’ (Section 11.6.13), both of which add a new participant (the “teacher” and the “helper”, respectively). The verb *lernen* does not add a new participant, although there is a strong implication of an unspoken teacher (37b), except in case of natural developmental processes (37a).

- (37) a. Das Baby läuft.  
Das Baby lernt laufen.  
b. Ich schreibe meiner Oma monatlich einen Brief.  
Ich lerne meiner Oma monatlich einen Brief (zu) schreiben.

<sup>31</sup>Attested online at <https://www.katrinelihn.de/2016/die-kraft-der-alpen/>, accessed 28 September 2022.

<sup>32</sup>DWDS: Pressler, Mirjam: Malka Mai, Weinheim Basel: Beltz & Gelberg 2001, S. 167.

<sup>33</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 26.10.1999.

<sup>34</sup>DWDS: Bach, Tamara: Marsmädchen, Hamburg: Verlag Friedrich Oetinger 2003, S. 57.

11.4.12 *legen+Infinitiv*

The light verb *legen* with infinitive only appears to be used in a single expression with the main verb *schlafen* ‘to sleep’ (38). This construction obligatorily needs a reflexive pronoun.

(38) Er legt sich schlafen.

## 11.5 Diatheses with subject demotion

– [ SBJ > Ø ] –

11.5.1 [ N | – ] *lassen+Infinitiv* Reflexive impersonal+evaluative  
(*Möglichkeitsbewertung*)

[11.52]

When used with intransitive verbs like *arbeiten* ‘to work’ (39a), the construction *lassen+Infinitiv* leads to an impersonal construction removing the nominative subject. This construction obligatorily includes a reflexive pronoun and an adverbial that expresses an evaluation, like *gut* ‘well’ (39b). The expected valency-simulating pronoun *es* is typically present, but it seems possible to leave it out. The conditioning of the presence or absence of *es* needs more investigation (cf. ref-kunze1996: 649). Besides the obvious evaluation as given by the adverb, this diatheses adds an epistemic notion of possibility to the meaning of the verb. There is a clear parallel to the impersonal construction without *lassen* in (39c), see Section 9.5.1. This *lassen+Infinitiv* diathesis invokes an *ErsatzInfinitiv* (39d).

- (39) a. Ich arbeite zuhause.  
 b. Zuhause lässt (es) sich gut arbeiten.  
 c. Zuhause arbeitet es sich gut.  
 d. Früher hat es sich hier immer gut arbeiten lassen. (\*gelassen)

[11.53] The attested adverbials are both positive (*gut, leicht, frei*) and negative (*schlecht, schwer*). It is possible to find examples without an adverbial, but these always have a strong evaluative conversational implicature (cf. Section 9.3.1 for verbs with a similar effect). For example, in the examples in (40) the implication is that the life or dreams are good.

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- (40) a. Hier lässt es sich leben.<sup>35</sup>  
b. Hier lässt es sich träumen!<sup>36</sup>

This diathesis complex *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv+Adverb* can structurally be analysed as a stack of two constructions (see Section 2.5 for the notion of a stack). It appears to combine an unmarked impersonal reflexive diathesis (41a), see Section 9.5.1, with a causative *lassen+Infinitiv* diathesis (41b), see Section 11.6.2. However, the productive combination of these two diatheses does not result in the *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv+Adverb* construction (41c). For that reason, I consider this combination to be a separate grammaticalised diathesis, i.e. a **FIXED STACK**.

- (41) a. Zuhause arbeitet es sich gut.  
b. Irgendjemand lässt mich zuhause arbeiten.  
c. Zuhause lässt es sich gut arbeiten.

This diathesis is not possible with many patientive intransitive verbs like *platzen* [11.55] ‘to burst’ (42a,b) or *bluten* ‘to bleed’ (42c,d). However, note that this group of patientive intransitives is a different group of patientive intransitives than those that take a *sein+Partizip* perfect (cf. Section 10.4.2).

- (42) a. Der Ballon platzt.  
Der Ballon ist geplatzt.  
b. \*Zuhause lässt es sich gut platzen.  
c. Der Patient blutet.  
Der Patient hat geblutet.  
d. \*Hier lässt es sich schwer bluten.

### Attested verbs

- Possible with some agentive intransitives: *agieren, atmen, laufen, leben, schwimmen, singen, spielen, springen, tanzen, träumen*
- Not possible with some patientive intransitives: *bluten, duften, husten, niesen, platzen*

### Further examples

- An der frischen Luft lässt es sich frei atmen.
- Auf unbefestigtem Gelände lässt sich freier agieren.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 05.01.2012, Nr. 02.

<sup>36</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 12.12.2013, Nr. 50.

<sup>37</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 06.11.1997.

### 11.5.2 [ NP | –P ] *lassen+Infinitiv* Reflexive impersonal+governed preposition

Intransitive verbs with a governed prepositional phrases, like *zweifeln* ‘to doubt’ (43a), show an impersonal *lassen+Reflexiv* diathesis similar to the previous one. When the governed prepositional phrase is expressed (below with the preposition *an*), then there are various syntactic difference to real intransitives. First, the adverbial evaluation does not appear to be necessary anymore. Second, the status of the valency-simulating *es* is unclear in such examples, though my impression is that with governed prepositional phrases the pronoun *es* is left out by default (43b). Whether there really is a difference in the status of *es* depending on the presence of governed prepositional phrases needs more research.

- (43) a. Ich zweifele an der Ernsthaftigkeit der Aussage.  
 b. An der Ernsthaftigkeit der Aussage lässt <sup>?</sup>(es) sich zweifeln.

This diathesis appears to be possible with almost all intransitive verbs with a governed preposition. I have only been able to find a few exceptions, like *stinken nach* ‘to stink of something’ (44).

- (44) a. Der Müll stinkt nach Fisch.  
 b. \* Nach Fisch lässt (es) sich stinken.

#### Attested verbs

- *streiten, zweifeln*
- Not possible with: *riechen, stinken*

#### Further examples

- Über das Wetter lässt sich schlecht streiten.<sup>38</sup>

### 11.5.3 [ N | – ] *sein+Infinitiv* Impersonal+evaluative (*Zustandsbewertung*)

As attested in the famous German saying *Im Dunkeln ist gut munkeln*, this diathesis is rather formulaic, but astonishingly widespread and productive. It consists of the verb *sein* with an infinitive and an evaluative adverb. Only the adverbs *gut*, *schlecht*, *leicht* and *schwer* appear to be possible. This diathesis is highly frequent

<sup>38</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 02.03.2017 (online).

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with a location phrase (45a). However, other adverbial phrases are also attested (45b). The verbs used in this diathesis are typically agentive, though incidental examples with patientive verbs are also attested, like with *einschlafen* (45c), see also the further examples below.

- (45) a. Auf der Terrasse des Kulm ist gut verweilen.<sup>39</sup>  
b. Mit einem neutralen Deutschland ist schwer leben.<sup>40</sup>  
c. Mit Vorhängen ist gut einschlafen.

### Attested verbs

- Agentive verbs: *fasten, leben, munkeln, sitzen, schwärmen, verweilen*
- Patientive verbs: *ankommen, bleiben, einschlafen, sterben*

### Further examples

- Zwischen den Stühlen ist schlecht sitzen.<sup>41</sup>
- In Abu Dhabi ist leicht schwärmen.<sup>42</sup>
- Bei vollem Magen ist gut fasten.<sup>43</sup>
- Wenn das Wasser an die nahen Felsen schwappt und in den Spalten gurgelt, dann ist gut einschlafen.<sup>44</sup>
- Katholisch bin und heiße ich, katholisch leb' und sterbe ich, so kann ich nicht verderben, katholisch ist gut sterben.<sup>45</sup>
- Hier ist gut Ankommen und Bleiben.<sup>46</sup>

— [ SBJ > ADJ ] —

### 11.5.4 [ N | p ] *heißen+Infinitiv* Modal subject demotion (*Aufforderungsdesubjektiv*)

The light verb *heißen* with an infinitive appears in various different constructions.<sup>49]</sup> One of them is the widespread desubjective usage with intransitive verbs, like

<sup>39</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 13.12.1996, Nr. 51.

<sup>40</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 12.05.1989, Nr. 20.

<sup>41</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.12.1995, Nr. 50.

<sup>42</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 30.03.2011, Nr. 13.

<sup>43</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 11.07.1998.

<sup>44</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 03.03.2001.

<sup>45</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 28.06.1968, Nr. 26.

<sup>46</sup>Capitalisation as attested online at <https://www.evangelisch.de/blogs/stilvoll-glauben/133455/07-04--2016>, accessed 26 September 2022.



with *warten* ‘to wait’ (46a). The original subject is demoted, but can optionally be retained as a *für* prepositional phrase. As there is no new subject introduced, an obligatory valency-simulating pronoun *es* is introduced.

Transitive verbs can be used in this construction, but only when the object does not have an article (46b). Such objects can be interpreted as incorporated objects, and there is a recurrent debate in German orthography whether such objects should be written separated by a space or not. Semantically, this *heißen+Infinitiv* construction is very close to the *gelten+zu-Infinitiv* (see Section 12.5.5). Both express a kind of externally induced necessity (i.e. a modal *müssen*).

- (46) a. Alles andere wartet.  
       Für alles andere heißt es warten.<sup>47</sup>  
       b. Und dann heißt es Daumen drücken.<sup>48</sup>

[11.61]

It is debatable whether this construction is coherent or not. When *heißen* is interpreted as a modal predicate expressing obligation, then it is clearly coherent (47a). However, there is another interpretation of *heißen* as a lexical predicate with the meaning ‘to be named, to denote’ (see also paragraph 11.9 on page 549). In that interpretation it is mostly written with a colon, and that construction is not coherent (47b).

- (47) a. (Es ist bekannt, dass) es dann Daumen drücken heißt.  
       b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) es dann heißt: Daumen drücken.

Exactly the same construction *heißen+Infinitiv* can be also be used as a causative, although this usage is slightly old-fashioned (see Section 11.6.5). Sometimes both diatheses are possible, like with *niederknien* ‘to kneel down’ (48a). Counterintuitively, the effect is that *heißen+Infinitiv* can induce both a causative subject promotion (48b) and a modal subject demotion (48c).

- (48) a. Er kniete nieder.  
       b. Der Henker hieß ihn niederknien.  
       c. Vor dem Henker hieß es für ihn niederknien.

### Attested verbs

- Intransitive verbs: *warten*
- Transitive verbs without objects or with incorporated objects: *Daumen drücken*

<sup>47</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 17.04.2017, Nr. 13.

<sup>48</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 03.08.2017, Nr. 29.

– [ OBJ > SBJ > ADJ ] –

### 11.5.5 [ NA | pN ] *lassen+Infinitiv* Reflexive passive (*Permissivpassiv*)

With most transitive verbs the light verb *lassen* with a reflexive pronoun and an infinitive results in a passive diathesis with an epistemic interpretation that something is possible, like with *schließen* ‘to close’ (49). The original subject can be retained as an optional prepositional phrase with *von*. This diathesis invokes an *ErsatzInfinitiv* (49c).

- (49) a. Ich schließe den Schrank.  
 b. Der Schrank lässt sich (von mir) schließen.  
 (= Es ist möglich, dass ich den Schrank schließe.)  
 c. Gestern hat sich der Schrank noch schließen lassen. (\*gelassen)

There is a different interpretation available with verbs like *kämmen* ‘to comb’ (50a). The *lassen* passive (50b) here typically has a deontic interpretation that something is permitted (50c). This different interpretation seems to correlate strongly with the animacy of the new subject. In this example, the new subject (*Kinder* ‘children’) is animate, and then a permission interpretation is preferred. However, the possibility interpretation is still available, though dispreferred (50d).

[11.64]

- (50) a. Der Vater kämmt die Kinder.  
 b. Die Kinder lassen sich kämmen.  
 c. (= Die Kinder erlauben, dass sie gekämmt werden.)  
 d. (= Es ist möglich die Kinder zu kämmen.)

The dual interpretation of this passive fits in right in the middle between others diatheses with the same *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv* construction. To the one side, with intransitive verbs this construction leads to a complete drop of the subject. In a sense, this absence can be interpreted as the extreme form of being inanimate. Consequently, only the epistemic interpretation (“possibility”) is available (see Section 11.5.1). To the other side, verbs that give rise to a conversive diathesis (Section 11.5.7) or an inversive diathesis (Section 11.9.1) all have an animate new subject. Consequently, these diatheses have a deontic interpretation (“permission”).

Just as discussed previously with intransitives (see Section 11.5.1), the *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv* diathesis might appear to be a transparent combination of two separate diatheses, namely a *Passivkausativ* with *lassen*, see Section 11.6.1 and a reflexive anticausative, see Section 7.5.2. Depending on the order of application, stacking these two diathesis leads to different results. The first option (51a) is very similar to the intended result (51c), but the implied agent is wrong. The second option (51b) leads to a completely different construction. So, the fixed combination *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv* is arguably a new construction, called *Permissivpassiv* here.

- (51) a. Der Bauer schließt den Schrank.  
       +> *Passivkausativ* = Ich lasse den Schrank schließen.  
       +> *Reflexiv Antikausativ* = Der Schrank lässt sich (von mir) schließen.  
       b. Der Bauer schließt den Schrank.  
       +> *Reflexiv Antikausativ* = Der Schrank schließt sich.  
       +> *Passivkausativ* = Ich lasse den Schrank sich schließen.  
       c. Der Schrank lässt sich (vom Bauer) schließen.

[11.67] It is possible to find ambiguous constructions like (52a), see also Kunze (ref-kunze1996: 650ff.). In this example, the transparent combination of a *lassen* causative with a self-inflicting reflexive leads to the causative interpretation as in (52b), while the *Permissivpassiv* as discussed in this section leads either to a deontic interpretation ('permission', viz. *dürfen*) as in (52c) or an epistemic interpretation ('possibility', viz. *können*) as in (52d).

- (52) a. Der König lässt sich tragen.  
       b. (= Der König sorgt dafür, dass er selbst getragen wird.)  
       c. (= Der König erlaubt, dass jemand ihn trägt.)  
       d. (= Es ist möglich, den König zu tragen.)

[11.68] Any additional arguments can be retained in this diathesis. For example, an additional dative argument of a ditransitive verb like *zuschreiben* 'to attribute' (53a) simply remains a dative after a *Permissivpassiv* (53b). In contrast, the causative+reflexive combination leads to a completely different result with such ditransitive verbs (53c). This is noteworthy, because this causative+reflexive stack results in exactly the same surface structure as the *Permissivpassiv* with the transitive examples above in (52). Not so with ditransitives like with *zuschreiben* (53a). The *Permissivpassiv* (53b) promotes the accusative to subject (*die Texte* 'the texts') and leaves the dative alone (*dem Autor* 'the author'). In contrast, the causative+reflexive

combination (53c) results in a promotion of the dative to subject and leaves the accusative alone (see Section 11.6.1). Connected to this structural difference is a semantic difference. With the *Permissivpassiv* the new sentence has an inanimate subject (53b), so the only available interpretation is epistemic (“possibility”). In contrast, with the causative+reflexive diathesis the new sentence describes causation (53c).

- (53) a. Ich schreibe dem unbekannten Autor die Texte zu.  
b. Die Texte lassen sich dem unbekannten Autor zuschreiben.  
(= Es ist möglich, ihm die Texte zuzuschreiben.)  
c. Der unbekannte Author lässt sich die Texte zuschreiben.  
(= Er sorgt dafür, dass die Texte ihm zugeschrieben werden.)

A few verbs, like *übersehen* ‘to overlook’ (54a) or *erläutern* ‘to elucidate’ (54b),<sup>[11.69]</sup> only seem to allow for this diathesis with an obligatory evaluative adverbial like *leicht* ‘easy’ or *schwer* ‘difficult’. This is reminiscent of the same construction with intransitives (see Section 11.5.1). More research is needed to establish what kind of transitive verbs necessarily need such an additional adverbial, if it is at all really obligatory.

- (54) a. Der Dozent übersieht den Rechtschreibfehler.  
Solch ein Rechtschreibfehler lässt sich leicht (vom Dozenten)  
übersehen.  
b. Der Dozent erläutert den Begriff.  
Der Begriff lässt sich nur schwer (vom Dozenten) erläutern.

### Attested verbs

- Most transitive verbs: *bezweifeln*, *kämmen*, *schminken*, *schließen*, *tragen*, etc.
- Ditransitive verbs: *zuschreiben*, etc.
- Verbs that need an evaluative adverbial: *übersehen*, *erläutern*

### Further examples

- Ich bezweifle die Lösung.  
Die Lösung lässt sich bezweifeln.
- Irgendjemand schminkt sie.  
Sie lässt sich schminken.

- Jemand treibt dem Leben den Ernst aus.  
Dem Leben lässt sich der Ernst [...] nicht austreiben.<sup>49</sup>

### 11.5.6 [ ND | pN ] *lassen+Infinitiv* Dative reflexive passive

[11.70]

A small group of verbs, like *helfen* ‘to help’ (55a) and *gratulieren* ‘to congratulate’ (55b) show a dative reflexive passive with a permissive interpretation. Crucially, in this diathesis the original dative is turned into a nominative subject while the old subject is demoted to a *von* prepositional phrase. The obligatory reflexive pronoun is in the dative (55b). This diathesis obligatory has an *ErsatzInfinitiv* (55c).

- (55) a. Sie hilft ihm.  
Er lässt sich (von ihr) helfen.  
(= Er erlaubt, dass sie ihm hilft.)
- b. Sie gratuliert mir.  
Ich lasse mir (von ihr) gratulieren. (= Ich erlaube, dass sie mir gratuliert.)
- c. Sie hat sich gratulieren lassen. (\*gelassen)

There seem to be only very few verbs with a dative (but not accusative) that allow for this passive diathesis. Various other verbs with a dative show a reflexive inversive diathesis, to be discussed separately (see Section 11.9.1).

#### Attested verbs

- *entfliehen, gratulieren, helfen, imponieren*

#### Further examples

- Etwas imponiert mir.  
Ich lasse mir nicht davon imponieren, aber ich rechne damit.<sup>50</sup>
- Jemand entflieht dem Landleben.  
Doch diesem Landleben lässt sich auch leicht entfliehen.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 31.03.2010, Nr. 14.

<sup>50</sup>DWDS: Die Grenzboten. Jg. 65, 1906, Viertes Vierteljahr.

<sup>51</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 01.06.2011, Nr. 23.

– [ OBJ > SBJ > PBJ ] –

11.5.7 [ NA | PN ] *lassen+Infinitiv* Reflexive conversive  
(*Permissivkonversiv*)

For some transitive verbs the *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv* diathesis has a slightly different structure and interpretation from the previously described passives (see Section 11.5.5). For example, this diathesis with *empören* ‘to appall’ (56a,b) only has a permissive interpretation (‘allowing something to happen’) (56c). The epistemic interpretation (‘it is possible that something happens’) is not available (56d). This restriction is consistent with the fact that the new subject in this diathesis is always human. This usage of *lassen* necessarily needs an *ErsatzInfinitiv* (56e).

- (56) a. Der Witz empört ihn.  
b. Er lässt sich nicht von diesem Witz empören.  
c. (= Er erlaubt nicht, dass er von diesem Witz empört wird.)  
d. (≠ Es ist nicht möglich, dass er von diesem Witz empört wird.)  
e. Er hat sich nicht empören lassen. (\*gelassen)

This diathesis is attested for a subset of those verbs that allow for a reflexive conversive (see Section 7.5.7). For example, *empören* allows a reflexive conversive with retention of the original subject as an *über* governed prepositional phrase (57a). In contrast, the governed preposition in the *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv* diathesis is always *von* (57b). [11.73]

- (57) a. Er empört sich über den Witz.  
Er empört sich darüber, dass der Witz rassistisch ist.  
b. Er lässt sich nicht von dem Witz empören.  
Er lässt sich nicht davon empören, dass der Witz rassistisch ist.

This diathesis can be analysed as a transparent combination of a *Passivkausativ* (Section 11.6.1) and a *Reflexiv Anticausativ* (Section 7.5.2) as shown in (58). However, the intermediate step in this derivation is ungrammatical.

- (58) Der Witz empört ihn.  
+> *Passivkausativ* = \*Etwas lässt ihn (von dem Witz) empören.  
+> *Reflexiv Antikausativ* = Er lässt sich (von dem Witz) empören.

Verbs like *empören* ‘to appall’ that describe negative emotions strongly prefer an additional negation in the *lassen+Infinitiv+Reflexiv* diathesis (59a). Conversely,

verbs describing positive emotions like *begeistern* ‘to enthuse’ typically do not use a negation with this diathesis (59b).

- (59) a. ? Ich lasse mich von diesem Witz empören.  
b. Ich lasse mich von diesem Witz begeistern.

#### Attested verbs

- Typically with negation (verbs of negative emotions): *ärgern, beruhigen, erschrecken, empören, erzürnen, langweilen, quälen, stören*
- Typically without negation (verbs of positive emotion): *begeistern, belustigen, erheitern, unterhalten*

#### Further examples

- Davon lasse ich mich nicht ärgern/stören.
- Ich lasse mich nicht schnell erschrecken, sagen wir es so.<sup>52</sup>
- Mehr als zwei Minuten lässt man sich von so jemandem nicht langweilen.<sup>53</sup>
- Davon lasse ich mich begeistern.
- Man steht in bequemen Intervallen und liest die Zeitung oder lässt sich von den Burschen belustigen.<sup>54</sup>
- Eine Mehrheit von 59 Prozent dagegen lässt sich von Büttenreden erheitern.<sup>55</sup>

## 11.6 Diatheses with promotion to subject

— [ Ø > SBJ > ADJ ] —

### 11.6.1 [ –NA | NpA ] *lassen+Infinitiv* Passive causative (*Passivkausativ*)

The *lassen+Infinitiv* causative diathesis can be used with almost all German verbs, as discussed in the next Section 11.6.2. In that diathesis, the original nominative subject is demoted to an accusative (60a). However, there also exists a variant of that causative, which will be discussed in this section. In this variant, the original nominative is expressed with a *von* prepositional phrase (60b), or it can even be

<sup>52</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 26.10.2003.

<sup>53</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.05.2000, Nr. 21.

<sup>54</sup>DWDS: Kisch, Egon Erwin: Der rasende Reporter, Berlin: Aufbau-Taschenbuch-Verl. 1925, S. 7.

<sup>55</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 05.03.2011 (online).

dropped altogether (60c). This results in an embedded “passive” reading with an unknown agent (cf. ref-enzinger2012: 26). The resulting construction obligatorily takes an *ErsatzInfinitiv* (60d).

- (60) a. Der Mitarbeiter wäscht die Teller.  
       Sie lässt den Mitarbeiter die Teller waschen.  
       b. Sie lässt die Teller von dem Mitarbeiter waschen.  
       c. Sie lässt die Teller waschen.  
       d. Sie hat die Teller waschen lassen. (\*gelassen)

These two variants of the causative are of course closely related. However, there are important differences between them. To improve the clarity of the analysis, the current *von*-variant is given a separate name here. The demotion of the original subject to an optional *von* phrase is reminiscent of a passive, and for this reason I propose to call this diathesis *Passivkausativ*. This following arguments justify the distinction between this *Passivkausativ* and the other causative construction (called *Permissivkausativ*, see Section 11.6.2).

- First, (by definition) the *Passivkausativ* does not retain the original subject as an accusative, but uses an optional *von* prepositional phrase. This phrase is typically not present, and the complete absence of the original subject from a sentence is a telltale sign that a causative *lassen* construction is a *Passivkausativ*.
- Second, the semantics of the *Passivkausativ* are purely causative. There is no alternative permissive interpretation possible, which is available for the other causative construction (hence the name *Permissivkausativ* for that one).
- Third, some verbs cannot be used with the *Passivkausativ*, though they can be used with the other causative construction.
- Finally, the *Passivkausativ* is prone to have additional reflexive pronouns added on top of the causative diathesis. This is not possible with the other causative construction.

Expanding on the second characteristic, the *Passivkausativ* strictly has causative semantics. It can only be used to express that the new subject is causing something to happen (61a). In contrast, the *Permissivkausativ* often allows for a different permissive interpretation (hence the name). Depending on the context it can be used either to express causation or permission (61b).

[11.78]



- (61) a. Sie lässt die Teller (von dem Mitarbeiter) waschen.  
 (= causation: Sie sorgt dafür, dass die Teller gewaschen werden.)  
 (≠ permission: Sie erlaubt, dass die Teller gewaschen werden.)
- b. Sie lässt den Mitarbeiter die Teller waschen.  
 (= causation: Sie beauftragt ihn, die Teller zu waschen.)  
 (= permission: Sie erlaubt, dass er die Teller wäscht, obwohl andere Aufgaben warten.)

[11.79] Expanding on the third characteristic from above: The *Passivkausativ* seems to be restricted (or maybe even completely impossible) for verbs that do not have an accusative argument, like *antworten* ‘to answer’ (62a). The *Passivkausativ* seems to be impossible (62b), but the *Permissivkausativ* is unproblematic for such verbs (62c).

- (62) a. Der Lehrer antwortet dem Schüler.  
 b. \* Der Dekan lässt dem Schüler vom Lehrer antworten.  
 c. Der Dekan lässt den Lehrer dem Schüler antworten.

Intransitive verbs like *einschlafen* ‘to fall asleep’ (63a) likewise do not take a *Passivkausativ* because the *von* construction is not possible with intransitives (63b). Intransitives are thus analysed as having a *Permissivkausativ* (63c). This analysis also nicely matches the semantic interpretation, because many intransitive verbs both allow for a causative and a permissive reading in *lassen* constructions (63c).

- (63) a. Das Baby schläft ein.  
 b. \* Ich lasse vom Baby einschlafen.  
 c. Ich lasse das Baby einschlafen.  
 (= permission: Ich erlaube, dass das Baby einschläft, indem ich es in Ruhe lasse.)  
 (= causation: Ich Sorge dafür, dass das Baby einschläft, indem ich es in den Schlaf wiege.)

Further, as observed in the literature (ref-nedjalkov1976: 7; ref-enzinger2012: 27), the *Passivkausativ* is impossible with some verbs like *ausziehen* ‘to take off’ (64a,b). The *Permissivkausativ* with a double accusative is no problem (64c). This impossibility seems to be related to the availability of an endoreflexive diathesis (see Section 7.7.1), but that connection has to be investigated further. Note that

with a different object (64d) or with a subject reflexive (64e) this construction is perfectly possible.

- (64) a. Sein Sohn zieht die Jacke aus.  
 b. \* Er lässt die (eigene) Jacke von seinem Sohn ausziehen.  
 c. Er lässt seinen Sohn die (eigene) Jacke ausziehen.  
 d. Er lässt das Baby von seinem Sohn ausziehen.  
 e. Er lässt sich von seinem Sohn ausziehen.

So the *Passivkausativ* can only be applied to verbs that have an accusative argument. Any additional arguments are simply retained, like a ditransitive dative (65a) or an obligatory location (65b).

- (65) a. Ich schicke dem Jubilar einen Blumenstrauß.  
 Sie lässt dem Jubilar einen Blumenstrauß schicken.  
 b. Ich spucke die Kerne in eine Schale.  
 Sie lässt die Kerne in eine Schale spucken.

Expanding on the fourth characteristic from above: The *Passivkausativ* is often attested with reflexive pronouns. These are completely transparent self-inflicting reflexive pronouns that are added after the causative diathesis is applied. There are three different kinds of reflexive pronouns, exemplified here with the verb *waschen* ‘to wash’ (66a).

[11.83]

First, after the application of the *Passivkausativ*, the accusative (*den Teller*) can be replaced by a self-inflicting reflexive pronoun (66b). This accusative pronoun (*mich*) is clearly a self-inflicting reflexive pronoun because it can be negated as *nicht nur mich* (66c), and it can be syntactically stressed as *nur mich selbst* (66d).

- (66) a. Die Aushilfe wäscht den Teller.  
 Ich lasse den Teller (von der Aushilfe) waschen.  
 b. Ich lasse mich waschen.  
 c. Ich lasse nicht nur mich waschen.  
 d. Ich lasse nur mich selbst waschen.

Second, a dative reflexive pronoun (*mir*) can occur (67a), which can be a possessor of-accusative dative (see Section 5.8.4), that can be paraphrased with a possessive pronoun *meine Teller* (67b). Third, this dative reflexive pronoun can also be a beneficiary dative (see Section 6.8.9), that can be paraphrased as *für mich* (67c).

- (67) a. Ich lasse mir die Teller waschen.  
b. (= Ich lasse meine Teller waschen.)  
c. (= Ich lasse die Teller für mich waschen.)

With an additional dative argument of a ditransitive verb, like *verbieten* ‘to forbid’, the self-inflicting reflexive is typically applied to this dative (68a). With possessor-of-location datives (see Section 6.8.11), any reflexive dative is the possessor of this location (68b).

- (68) a. Mein Vater verbietet mir das Rauchen.  
Meine Mutter lässt mir das Rauchen nicht (von meinem Vater) verbieten.  
Ich lasse mir das Rauchen nicht (von meinem Vater) verbieten.  
b. Der Künstler sticht ein Tattoo in ihren Arm.  
Ich lasse (von dem Künstler) ein Tattoo in ihren Arm stechen.  
Ich lasse ihr ein Tattoo in den Arm stechen.  
Ich lasse mir ein Tattoo in den Arm stechen.

[11.87] These options might appear obviously different, but in practice it is often quite confusing to determine what is going on in a specific sentence. There are two reasons for this confusion. First, the dative and accusative reflexive pronoun are identical in the third person (*sich*). Second, there are also various grammaticalised combinations of *lassen+Infinitiv* with a reflexive pronoun, which have clearly different meanings but often look quite similar (see Section 11.2.5 for a survey). To illustrate such possible confusion, I have collected some very similar constructions below in (69), which turn out to be all semantically and structurally different. The proposed analyses are listed in Table 11.2.

- (69) a. Der König lässt sich selbst kämmen.  
(= Er sorgt dafür, dass jemand gekämmt wird, nämlich er selber.)  
b. Der König lässt sich widerwillig kämmen.  
(= Er erlaubt, dass er gekämmt wird.)  
c. Der König lässt sich einfach kämmen.  
(= Es ist möglich, den König zu kämmen.)  
d. Der König lässt sich die Haare kämmen.  
(= Er sorgt dafür, dass seine eigenen Haare gekämmt werden.)  
e. Der König lässt sich die Haare seines Hundes kämmen.  
(= Er sorgt selbstsüchtig dafür, dass andere Haare gekämmt werden.)  
f. Der König lässt sich den Kuchen schmecken.

- (= Der Kuchen schmeckt dem König.)
- g. Der König lässt sich den Kuchen schenken.  
(= Er sorgt dafür, dass jemand ihm einen Kuchen schenkt.)
- h. Dem König lässt sich ein Kuchen schenken.  
(= Ein Kuchen ist ein passendes Geschenk für den König.)

Table 11.2: Analysis of the sentences in (69)

	Case of reflexive	Analysis of reflexive constructions with a <i>lassen</i> diathesis in (69)	cf. Section
a.	accusative	Causative + self-reflexive of an accusative argument	7.4.5
b.	accusative	Reflexive passive with a permission interpretation	11.5.5
c.	accusative	Reflexive passive with a possibility interpretation	11.5.5
d.	dative	Causative + self-reflexive of a possessor dative	5.8.4
e.	dative	Causative + self-reflexive of a beneficiary dative	6.8.9
f.	dative	Reflexive inersive of a verb with a dative ( <i>schmecken</i> )	11.9.1
g.	dative	Causative + self-reflexive of a dative argument	7.4.8
h.	accusative	Reflexive passive of a verb with a recipient ( <i>schenken</i> )	11.5.5

– [ Ø > SBJ > OBJ ] –

### 11.6.2 [ –N | NA ] *lassen+Infinitiv* Permissive causative (*Permissivkausativ*)

Although the *lassen+Infinitiv* is widely acknowledged in German grammar as a causative, the actual semantics are more variable than that. Basically there seem to be two major interpretations, a causative and a permissive (70b). Consequently, I propose to call this diathesis *Permissivkausativ*. Enzinger (ref-enzinger2012: 6–7) calls the permissive reading *Kontinuativ* as this interpretation typically expresses that a situation is allowed to persist or continue. This diathesis typically invokes the IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (70c). However, the use of participle *gelassen* is possible (70d), but seems to be restricted to the permissive interpretation (ref-enzinger2012: 34).

[11.88]

- (70) a. Ich wasche die Kleider.  
b. Sie lässt mich die Kleider waschen.  
(= causation: Sie verursacht, dass ich die Kleider wasche.)  
(= permission: Sie erlaubt, dass ich die Kleider wasche.)  
c. Sie hat mich die Kleider waschen lassen.  
d. Sie hat mich die Kleider waschen gelassen.  
(= permission: Sie hat erlaubt, dass ich die Kleider wasche.)

[11.89]

In almost all sentences both the causative and the permissive interpretation of the *Permissivkausativ* seem to be possible. Only the context seems to determine which interpretation is intended. In isolation, only very few verbs prefer one or the other interpretation. For example, *schauen* ‘to watch’ (71a) only allows for a permissive reading, while *sehen* ‘to see’ (71b) only allows for a causative interpretation. More research is needed to establish what kind of verbs likewise restrict the interpretation of the *Permissivkausativ*.

- (71) a. Meine Tochter schaut eine grausame Fernsehserie.  
Ich lasse meine Tochter die grausame Fernsehserie schauen.  
(= permission: Ich erlaube, dass sie die Fernsehserie schaut.)  
(≠ causation: Ich zeige ihr die Fernsehserie.)  
b. Meine Tochter sieht die grausame Fernsehserie.  
Ich lasse meine Tochter die grausame Fernsehserie sehen.  
(≠ permission: Ich erlaube, dass sie die Fernsehserie schaut.)  
(= causation: Ich zeige ihr die Fernsehserie.)

This diathesis can be applied to verbs of all argument structures. There is always a new nominative introduced, and the old nominative is demoted to an accusative. Other arguments are simply retained. If there is already an accusative present (72), then the resulting construction simply has two accusative constituents. Such double accusatives are unusual in German because most role-remappings lead to a chain of remappings to not end up with identically marked constituents (see Section 2.6 on the notion of a “chain”). Additionally, any datives (72a) or prepositional phrases (72b) are simply left untouched by this diathesis.

[11.90]

- (72) a. Ich schreibe meiner Oma einen Brief.  
Meine Mutter lässt mich meiner Oma einen Brief schreiben.  
b. Der Vater ärgert sich über die vielen Staus.

Die Nachrichten lassen meinen Vater sich über die vielen Staus  
ärgern.

There are some verbs that do not allow for this diathesis (cf. **ref-nedjalkov1976: 17**), like *gefallen* ‘to like’ (73a,b). Such incompatible verbs probably all have a non-agent as nominative subject. However, the restrictions to the applicability of the *Permissivkausativ* need more in-depth investigation.

- (73) a. Der Schlitten gefällt dem Jungen.  
b. \* Der Verkäufer lässt den Schlitten dem Jungen gefallen.

This causative construction cannot be combined with any kind of reflexive pronouns, with only very few exceptions to this generalisation. These restrictions basically appear to be semantic in nature, as mostly it does not make sense to explicitly cause oneself to do something. Other paraphrases seem more natural for such intended meanings, like *sich zwingen* (74a). In some examples an intended reflexive is preferably expressed with a *Passivkausativ* (Section 11.6.1), using a *von* phrase instead of an accusative (74b). In exceptional occasions a reflexive possessor dative is possible, but I only know of a single suitable example, namely with the verb *wachsen* ‘to grow’ when related to the growing of hair (74c). Note that such reflexive possessor datives are very common with the *Passivkausativ* (Section 11.6.1), but not with the current *Permissivkausativ*. Finally, there is a very small group of intransitives that allows for a combination of *lassen+Infinitiv* with a self-inflicting reflexive, like *treiben* ‘to flow’ (74d). This special class of verbs is discussed separately in Section 11.4.10.

[11.92]

- (74) a. \* Ich lasse mich die Kleider waschen.  
(= Ich zwingen mich die Kleider zu waschen.)  
b. \* Die Kinder lassen den Vater sich kämmen.  
(= Die Kinder lassen sich vom Vater kämmen.)  
c. Ich lasse mir den Bart wachsen.  
d. Ich lasse mich treiben.

#### Attested verbs

- Not possible with verbs with non-agent subjects: *ähneln, bekommen, beschweren, besitzen, gefallen, interessieren, kennen, missfallen, sich befinden, verunglücken*

### 11.6.3 [ -N | NA ] *schicken+Infinitiv* Causative (*Direktivkausativ*)

The verb *schicken* allows for a construction with an infinitive (75). This diathesis expresses not a direct causation, but more a directive to somebody to do something. This diathesis does not invoke the IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (75c).

- (75) a. Er schläft.  
 b. Ich schicke ihn schlafen.  
 c. Ich habe ihn schlafen geschickt. (\*schicken)

[11.94] The meaning of the light verb *schicken* in this diathesis is rather close to the meaning of the full verb *schicken* ‘to send’ (76a). The diathesis with infinitive seems to be restricted to agentive intransitives (76b,c).

- (76) a. Ich schicke ihn nach Hause.  
 b. \* Er schickte mich einschlafen.  
 c. \* Er schickte mich fallen.

[11.95] There is a frequent sentence structure of *schicken* with the infinitive of the transitive verb *holen* ‘to fetch something’. There do not appear to be many transitive examples.

- (77) a. Ich hole Bier.  
 b. Er schickt mich Bier holen.

#### Attested verbs

- Agentive intransitives: *duschen, einkaufen, schlafen*, etc.
- Transitives: *holen, aufräumen*

#### Further examples

- Du hast noch mehr als einmal gearbeitet und mich schlafen geschickt.<sup>56</sup>
- Doch als sie ihn später ein zweites Mal Wasser holen schickt, kommt Sachin aufgeregt zurück ...<sup>57</sup>
- Wenn Manne seine Diener, zwei beflissene Penner, Bier holen schickt, dann ...<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup>DWDS: Mauthner, Fritz: Wörterbuch der Philosophie. In: Bertram, Mathias (Hg.) Geschichte der Philosophie, Berlin: Directmedia Publ. 2000 [1910], S. 24606.

<sup>57</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 06.12.2012, Nr. 50.

<sup>58</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 10.02.2005, Nr. 07.

- Gegen Nürnberg ließ Fairchild, diesmal wieder Angreifer, seinen aufgestauten Frust verbal an Referee Chvatal aus, der ihn mit einer Spieldauerstrafe duschen schickte.<sup>59</sup>
- Die Mutter schickt ihn sein Zimmer aufräumen.<sup>60</sup>

#### 11.6.4 [ -N | NA ] *machen+Infinitiv* Causative (*Aufforderungskausativ*)

The verb *machen* can be used with an infinitive to express a causative meaning. This typically is found with intransitives, like *lachen* ‘to laugh’ (78a), though incidental transitives are also attested, like *vergessen* ‘to forget’ (78b). Although this construction might look like an English calque (‘he makes me laugh’), it is already attested in early German examples (78c), so it seems to be an old Germanic construction. This diathesis does not invoke the IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (78d).

[11.96]

- (78)
- a. Ich lache.  
Der Clown macht mich lachen.
  - b. Ich vergesse die Verabredung.  
Der Stress macht mich die Verabredung vergessen.
  - c. Das Pulver von eines Schwanen Beiner auf eines Kopf gestreuet soll  
alsbald die Haar ausfallen machen.<sup>61</sup>
  - d. Der Clown hat mich lachen gemacht (\*machen).

#### Attested verbs

- Intransitives: *flattern, frösteln, lachen, leiden, schaudern, weinen*
- Transitives: *hinnehmen, vergessen*

#### Further examples

- Der Lärm macht mich schaudern.
- Die Diktatur machte die Menschen ihr Schicksal passiv hinnehmen.
- Und der harte Bass brandet in so tückischen Wellen durch die Halle, dass er die Hosenbeine flattern macht.<sup>62</sup>
- Spengler führt vor, wie der Gang der Geschichte die Menschen Idee und Wirklichkeit der eigenen Freiheit vergessen macht.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 19.02.2004.

<sup>60</sup>I thank Yvonne Treis for suggesting this example.

<sup>61</sup>DWDS: Zeiller, Martin: *Centvria III. Variarvm Quæstionvm*. Bd. 3. Ulm, 1659.

<sup>62</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 31.05.2007 (online).

<sup>63</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 21.12.2017, Nr. 49.



### 11.6.5 [ -N | NA ] *heißen+Infinitiv* Causative

The verb *heißen* can also be used with an infinitive to express a causative meaning (cf. ref-engel1996: 489), though this is rather old-fashioned (79a,b). This diathesis does not invoke the IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (79c). Note that there is a different, apparently completely independent, desubjective usage of *heißen+Infinitiv* (see Section 11.5.4). [11.97]

- (79) a. Er kniete nieder.  
 b. Der Henker hieß ihn niederknien.  
 c. Der Henker hat ihn niederknien geheißén (\*heißén).

#### Further examples

- Eins von den Kindern hieß er zum Doktor laufen.<sup>64</sup>
- Hierauf hat mich der Vater in sein Arbeitsgemach geführt, hat mich auf den weichsten Sessel niedersitzen geheißén.<sup>65</sup>

### — [ Ø > SBJ > OBJ ] — *Perzeptiv*

[11.98] The following perception verbs (Lat. *verba sentiendi*, German *Wahrnehmungsverben*) are regularly discussed as a special class in the German grammatical literature: *sehen* ‘to see’, *hören* ‘to hear’ and *fühlen/spüren* ‘to feel’ (e.g. ref-eisenberg2006a: 266; ref-kotulkova2010; ref-enzinger2012: 23; ref-fuss2017: 235–243; ref-konopka2021) [11.99]

These verbs are special because they can occur both in a biclausal construction with a finite *dass* complement clause and in a monoclausal construction with an infinitive. This class of verbs is not completely homogeneous because only *sehen* and *hören* can optionally occur with an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv*. These two verbs are also by far the most frequent in actual usage (ref-konopka2021). I propose to also include the verbs *riechen* ‘to smell’ and *finden* ‘to find’ (but in this construction it means ‘to detect’) in this class of verbs, although their use in infinitive constructions is much more restricted. When used in a coherent construction with an infinitive, I propose the German name PERZEPTIV for such constructions.

### 11.6.6 [ -N | NA ] *sehen+Infinitiv* Experiencer

The verb *sehen* ‘to see’ can both be used with a finite *dass* complement clause (80a) and with an infinitive construction (80b). This infinitive construction optionally [11.99]

<sup>64</sup>DWDS: Ganghofer, Ludwig: Der Dorfapostel, Stuttgart: Adolf Bonz 1900, S. 124.

<sup>65</sup>DWDS: Rosegger, Peter: Die Schriften des Waldschulmeisters. Pest, 1875.

allows for an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (80c,d).

- (80) a. Ich sehe, dass du dem Jungen ein Buch gibst.  
b. Ich sehe dich dem Jungen ein Buch geben.  
c. Ich habe dich dem Jungen das Buch geben sehen/gesehen.  
d. Die Mutter war sehr ängstlich und hat ständig ihre Kinder unter einem Auto liegen sehen.<sup>66</sup>  
Bei ihrer Flucht habe sie auf den Hoteltreppen viele Leichen liegen gesehen.<sup>67</sup>

### 11.6.7 [ -N | NA ] *hören+Infinitiv* Experiencer

The verb *hören* ‘to hear’ can both be used with a *dass* complement clause (81a) and with an infinitive construction (81b). This infinitive construction optionally allows for an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (81c,d).

[11.100]

- (81) a. Ich höre, dass du das Lied singst.  
b. Ich höre dich das Lied singen.  
c. Ich habe dich das Lied singen hören/gehört.  
d. Während meiner Recherche habe ich Ulrike nicht singen hören.<sup>68</sup>  
Dort hat mich ein Erzieher auf dem Flur singen gehört.<sup>69</sup>

### 11.6.8 [ -N | NA ] *fühlen+Infinitiv* Experiencer

The verb *fühlen* ‘to feel’ can both be used with a *dass* complement clause (82a) and with an infinitive construction (82b). This infinitive construction does not allow for an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (82c,d).

[11.101]

- (82) a. Er fühlt, dass die Ameisen über seinen Arm laufen.  
b. Er fühlt die Ameisen über seinen Arm laufen.  
c. Er hat die Ameisen über seinen Arm laufen gefühlt (\*fühlen).  
d. Auf so anrührende Weise wie in Asmara haben wir uns selten unterhalten gefühlt.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup>In: Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache: *Wörterbuch zur Verbvalenz*. Grammatisches Informationssystem grammis. <https://grammis.ids-mannheim.de/verbs/view/400881/14>, accessed 22 July 2021.

<sup>67</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 27.11.2008, Nr. 48.

<sup>68</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.01.2018, Nr. 01.

<sup>69</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 15.09.2016 (online).

<sup>70</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 16.12.2010, Nr. 51.

### 11.6.9 [ -N | NA ] *spüren+Infinitiv* Experiencer

The verb *spüren* ‘to feel’ can both be used with a *dass* complement clause (83a) and with an infinitive construction (83b). This infinitive construction does not allow for an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (83c,d).

- (83) a. Er spürt, dass die Ameisen über seinen Arm laufen.  
b. Er spürt die Ameisen über seinen Arm laufen.  
c. Er hat die Ameisen über seinen Arm laufen gespürt (\*spüren).  
d. Und Pfau der habe sein Herz bis zum Hals hoch klopfen gespürt.<sup>71</sup>

### 11.6.10 [ -N | NA ] *riechen+Infinitiv* Experiencer

[11.103]

The verb *riechen* ‘to smell’ can be used with a *dass* complement clause (84a) and in very few cases it is also attested with an infinitive construction (84b). This infinitive construction does not allow for an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (84c,d).

- (84) a. Er riecht, dass seine Mutter Milchreis kocht.  
b. Er riecht seine Mutter Milchreis kochen.  
c. Er hat seine Mutter Milchreis kochen gerochen (\*riechen).  
d. Er schlug sich querfeldein, nahm meilenweite Umwege in Kauf, wenn er eine noch Stunden entfernte Schwadron Reiter auf sich zukommen roch.<sup>72</sup>

#### Further examples

- Seine Majestät hatte einen Streit im Haus gehört und etwas brennen gerochen.<sup>73</sup>
- Ich war gerade 20 Minuten draußen und hab bei 8°C zwei Familien unabhängig voneinander Grillen gerochen.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 30.11.1996.

<sup>72</sup>DWDS: Süskind, Patrick: Das Parfum, Zürich: Diogenes 1985, S. 4.

<sup>73</sup>William M. Thackeray: Die Rose und der Ring. Übersetzung Jörg Karau 2009. Attested online at <https://www.joergkarau-texte.de/PDF/Die%20Rose%20und%20der%20Ring.pdf>, accessed 22 July 2021.

<sup>74</sup>Note the non-standard capitalisation. Attested online at <https://twitter.com/oerthelius/status/1368214157347221508>, accessed 13 September 2021.

### 11.6.11 [ -N | NA ] *finden+Infinitiv* Experienter

[11.104]

The verb *finden* (literally meaning ‘to find’, but in this construction the meaning is closer to *feststellen* ‘to detect’) cannot be used with a *dass* complement clause (85a). However, it is attested with an infinitive, similar to the previous *verba sentiendi* (85b). This infinitive construction typically occurs with position verbs like *stehen*, *liegen*, *sitzen*. This construction does not allow for an IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (85c,d).

- (85) a. Er stellte fest (\*findet), dass sein Teller auf dem Tisch steht.  
 b. Er fand seinen Teller auf dem Tisch stehen.  
 c. Er hat seinen Teller auf dem Tisch stehen gefunden (\*finden).  
 d. Er [...] rauchte den Joint auf, den er dort liegen fand.<sup>75</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- Position verbs: *stehen*, *liegen*, *sitzen*

#### Further examples

- Der gütige Herr wollte weiterschreiten, als er einen Dritten bitterlich weinend am Straßenrand sitzen fand.<sup>76</sup>
- Indessen hatte Perdikkas die Stadt, gegen die er gesandt war, bereits von den Einwohnern verlassen gefunden.<sup>77</sup>

— [ Ø > SBJ > OBJ ] —

### 11.6.12 [ -N | NA ] *lehren+Infinitiv* Assistive

The verb *lehren* ‘to teach’ can be used as a light verb with infinitive. The construction induces a novative diathesis in which a new role (“the teacher”) is introduced as a nominative and the erstwhile nominative is demoted to accusative (86a,b). Atypically for a light-verb construction, the meaning of the light verb *lehren* remains completely transparently related to the full verb with the meaning ‘to teach’. There is an alternative construction with *zu-Infinitiv* (see Section 12.2.2)

[11.105]

<sup>75</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 02.10.1998.

<sup>76</sup>DWDS: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 1995 [1945].

<sup>77</sup>DWDS: Droysen, Johann Gustav: Geschichte Alexanders des Großen. Hamburg, 1833.

that appears to have a highly similar meaning. More research is needed to elucidate any difference between these two constructions (86b,c). The *lehren+Infinitiv* diathesis does not invoke the IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (86d).

- (86) a. Der Junge schwimmt.  
b. Die Mutter lehrt den Jungen schwimmen.  
c. Die Mutter lehrt den Jungen zu schwimmen.  
d. Die Mutter hat den Jungen schwimmen *gelehrt*.

There does not seem to be any syntactic restriction on the main lexical verbs that can be used in this diathesis. Any verb can be used as long as the verb can sensibly be conceived as something that can be taught. Any other arguments of the lexical verb simply are retained, which regularly leads to double accusatives (87a,b).

[11.106]

- (87) a. Ich wasche mich.  
b. Sie lehrt mich mich waschen.

### 11.6.13 [ -N | ND ] *helfen+Infinitiv* Assistive

[11.107]

The verb *helfen* ‘to help’ can be used as a light verb with infinitive. The construction induces a novative diathesis in which a new role (“the helper”) is introduced as a nominative and the erstwhile nominative is demoted to dative (88a,b). Atypically for a light-verb construction, the meaning of the light verb *helfen* remains completely transparently related to the full verb with the meaning ‘to help’. There is an alternative construction with *zu-Infinitiv* (88c), see Section 12.2.2, that appears to highly similar. More research is needed to elucidate any difference between these two constructions. The *helfen+Infinitiv* diathesis allows for the IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv*, but it is not obligatory (88d).

- (88) a. Ich trage den Koffer.  
b. Er hilft mir den Koffer tragen.  
c. Er hilft mir den Koffer zu tragen.  
d. Er hat mir den Koffer tragen *geholfen*.  
Er hat mir den Koffer tragen *helfen*.

Any lexical verb can be used in this construction as long as the verb can sensibly be conceived as something that can be helped with. Other arguments of the lexical verb are simply retained. However, the *helfen+Infinitiv* construction

seems to be dispreferred when the lexical verb has many arguments (89a,b). It appears to be more typical of constructions with only a single lexical argument (89c,d). Note that this construction is also typically used without the beneficiary of the helping being expressed, i.e. the agent of the lexical verb is dropped (89d).

- (89) a. Ich schreibe dir einen Brief.  
b. Sie hilft mir dir einen Brief schreiben.  
c. Sie hilft mir schreiben.  
d. Sie hilft den Brief schreiben.

### 11.7 Diatheses with object demotion

Not attested.

[11.109]

### 11.8 Diatheses with promotion to object

Not attested.

[11.110]

### 11.9 Symmetrical diatheses

— [ OBJ > SBJ > OBJ ] —

#### 11.9.1 [ ND | AN ] *lassen+Infinitiv* Dative reflexive inersive (*Permissivinversiv*)

Most of the verbs with a dative (but no accusative) do not allow for a reflexive *lassen+Infinitiv* construction. The few that do allow for such a construction, like *einfallen* ‘to occur to somebody’ (90), have an animate dative and they show a special diathesis. The dative turns into a nominative subject and the erstwhile nominative turns into an accusative. This diathesis needs an obligatory dative reflexive pronoun. The resulting construction has a permissive meaning and obligatorily needs an *Ersatzinfinitiv* (90b). This diathesis is not a stack of two separate diatheses. The combination of a *lassen* causative and a reflexive anticausative leads to a completely different structure (90c).

- (90) a. Ihm fällt etwas Neues ein.  
b. Er lässt sich etwas Neues einfallen. (\*eingefallen)  
c. Ihm fällt etwas Neues ein.

+> *Passivkausativ* = ?Irgendjemand lässt ihm etwas Neues einfallen.

+> *Reflexiv Antikausativ* = ?Etwas Neues lässt sich ihm einfallen.

Just like with the *Permissivkonversiv* (see Section 11.5.7) there seems to be a difference between verbs that typically take negation in this construction, like *entgehen* ‘to miss’ (91b), and verbs that prefer no negation, like *schmecken* ‘to taste’ (91a).

- (91) a. Das Bärenfleisch schmeckt ihm.  
           Er lässt sich das Bärenfleisch schmecken.<sup>78</sup>  
       b. Der Spaß entgeht mir.  
           Den Spaß lasse ich mir nicht entgehen.

#### Attested verbs

- Typically without negation: *einfallen*, *geschehen*, *schmecken*
- Typically with negation: *entgehen*, *entgleiten*, *entwischen*, *gefallen*, *passieren*■

#### Further examples

- Dein Ton gefällt mir nicht.  
       Ich lasse mir deinen Ton nicht gefallen.
- Den Kuß lasse ich mir gefallen.<sup>79</sup>
- Das Leben läßt sich unsere Eingriffe geschmeidig geschehen.<sup>80</sup>

#### 11.9.2 [ NDL | ANL ] *haben+Infinitiv* Possessor inersive (*Ortspertinenzinversiv*)

The construction of a light verb *haben* with an infinitive (cf. **ref-hole2002**: 183–185) is attested with various position verbs like *hängen* (92a). Such constructions obligatorily need a location phrase (92b). The hanging object is expressed as an accusative, and the new nominative subject of the *haben+Infinitiv* construction is necessarily the dative possessor of the location (92c), see Section 6.8.11. By using this diathesis, the new nominative subject is presented as a curious mix of both being in control and being a helpless experiencer at the same time. This diathesis does not invoke the IPP *ErsatzInfinitiv* (92d).

<sup>78</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 22.11.1985, Nr. 48.

<sup>79</sup>DWDS: Brief von Irene G. an Ernst G. vom 07.12.1939, Feldpost-Archive mkb-fp-0270.

<sup>80</sup>DWDS: Strittmatter, Erwin: Der Laden, Berlin: Aufbau-Verl. 1983, S. 213.

## 11 Light-verb alternations with Infinitiv

- (92) a. Er hat einen Tropfen an der Nase hängen.  
b. \* Er hat einen Tropfen hängen.  
c. Ein Tropfen hängt an seiner Nase.  
Ein Tropfen hängt ihm an der Nase.  
d. Er hat einen Tropfen an der Nase hängen *gehabt* (\*haben).

The new nominative subject appears to have multiple possible paraphrases. It mostly is the possessor of the location, as in (92), but there are also examples in which it is the possessor of the original subject, as in (93). In such examples the new subject of the *haben+Infinitiv* diathesis is not related to a dative. It is not completely clear to me how to best approach such examples, but they seem to be related to the *haben+am-Infinitiv* diathesis, as discussed below.

- (93) Ich habe das Auto auf dem Parkplatz stehen.  
(= Mein Auto steht auf dem Parkplatz.)  
(≠ Das Auto steht auf meinen Parkplatz.)  
(≠ Das Auto steht mir auf dem Parkplatz.)

There is a curious parallel between this diathesis and the *haben+am-Infinitiv* diathesis, see Section 13.9.1. Both use the light verb *haben* with an infinitive, they show a similar role-remapping, and semantically they are also highly similar. However, they are used with different verbs. Syntactically, the first difference is that the dative in the current *haben+Infinitiv* diathesis is the possessor of the locational object, here *Nase* ‘nose’ (94a), while the dative in the *haben+am-Infinitiv* diathesis is the possessor of the nominative subject, here *Wohnung* ‘house’ (94b). The second difference is, of course, the extra *am* preposition. It is a tantalising thought that this *am* preposition is somehow related to the fact that there is no obligatory location present in that diathesis.

- (94) a. Ein Tropfen hängt ihm an der (seiner) Nase.  
Er hat einen Tropfen an seiner Nase hängen.  
b. Die (seine) Wohnung brennt ihm.  
Er hat seine Wohnung am brennen.

### Attested verbs

- Position verbs: *liegen, stehen, sitzen, hängen, stecken*
- Manner-of-position verbs: *haften, kleben, lehnen, pendeln*



### Further examples

- Der Teller steht auf dem Tisch.  
Er hat seinen Teller auf dem Tisch stehen.
- Viola Kleßmann aus Charlottenburg gehört nicht zu denen, die am Ende einen roten Punkt an ihrer Teilnehmernummer kleben haben.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 28.07.2003.



# 12 Light-verb alternations with *zu-Infinitiv*

## 12.1 Introduction

[12.1] Besides diatheses with regular infinitives, as discussed in the previous chapter, there are also light-verb constructions with *zu* and an infinitive. The German particle *zu* is historically an allative ‘towards’ preposition related to English *to*. In the German orthography, the *zu* element is regularly separated from the infinitive by a space. However, morphologically the *zu-Infinitiv* is clearly one word and should be considered a special non-finite form of the verb, alongside the participle and the infinitive (see Section 12.2.1).

[12.2] The *zu-Infinitiv* can be combined with various light verbs to form a monoclausal construction. This is widespread without diathesis, for example with light verbs *pflanzen* (1a), see Section 12.4.1, and *haben* (1b), see Section 12.4.5. However, the main focus of this chapter is on light verbs that induce diathesis when used with the *zu-Infinitiv*, for example a passive with *sein* (1c), see Section 12.5.8, and an anticausative with *stehen* (1d), see Section 12.5.6.

- (1) a. Sie pflegte laut zu lachen.  
b. Die Schüler haben die Aufgaben zu lösen.  
c. Hunde sind an der Leine zu führen.  
d. Ein weiterer Beschäftigungsabbau steht zu befürchten.

Following Bech (ref-bech1955), constructions with a *zu-Infinitiv* are often designated as *Zweiter Status* in the German grammatical literature. However, this name is not very transparent nor particularly mnemonic, so I prefer to simply use the term *zu-Infinitiv* construction.

One of the central issues with sentences that include a *zu-Infinitiv* is the question whether such sentences are biclausal or monoclausal. There is actually a grammaticalisation cline with (non-coherent) biclausal structures on the one side and (coherent) monoclausal structures on the other side (see Section 12.2.2). The

[12.3]

major aim of this chapter is to list and discuss all grammaticalised coherent monoclausal *zu-Infinitiv* constructions of the German language, all diatheses as well as all epitheses. The biclausal constructions are deliberately excluded. There is a strong tendency for the monoclausal *zu-Infinitiv* constructions to express some kind of imperfective aspect and/or modality, as opposed to participle constructions (Chapter 10) that tend to express perfective meanings.

The following eight diatheses with a *zu-Infinitiv* are attested regularly in German, so I propose a German name for them. Note that the light verbs *sein* and *geben* are both used in two different diatheses. Especially the two *geben* diatheses are remarkably different, both structurally and semantically.

- [SBJ > Ø] *sein* UNPERSÖNLICHES MODALPASSIV (see Section 12.5.1 ff.)
- [SBJ > ADJ] *geben* MÖGLICHKEITSDSUBJEKTIV (see Section 12.5.4)
- [SBJ > ADJ] *gelten* NOTWENDIGKEITSDSUBJEKTIV (see Section 12.5.5)
- [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] *gehen* UNMÖGLICHKEITSANTIKAUSSATIV (see Section 12.5.7)
- [OBJ > SBJ > Ø] *stehen* ERWARTUNGSANTIKAUSSATIV (see Section 12.5.6)
- [OBJ > SBJ > ADJ] *sein* MODALPASSIV (see Section 12.5.8)
- [OBJ > SBJ > OBJ] *bleiben* RESTINVERSIV (see Section 12.9.1)
- [Ø > SBJ > OBJ] *geben* MÖGLICHKEITSKAUSSATIV (see Section 12.6.1)

## 12.2 Defining the *zu-Infinitiv*

### 12.2.1 Morphological structure

The combination of *zu* with an infinitive is regularly written as two separate words in German orthography, like with *zu kaufen* ‘to buy’ in (2a). However, the combination is written as one word when the verb has a separable preverb, like *ein-*, to form *einzukaufen* ‘to shop’ (2b). With such preverbs, *zu* is inserted between the preverb and the verbal stem.

- (2) a. Du brauchst nichts zu kaufen.  
b. Du brauchst nichts einzukaufen.

[12.7] From a purely grammatical perspective, *zu* is clearly bound morphology when used with an infinitive (cf. ref-duden2009: 439; ref-haider2010: 272–273), because (i) it is always unstressed and (ii) it is not separable from the infinitive, not even by preverbs like *ein-*. The combination of *zu* plus infinitive is thus best considered to be a grammaticalised non-finite verb form of German, alongside the *Partizip* and the *Infinitiv*. I propose to simply call it the *zu-Infinitiv*.

Probably the only reason that simplex verbs still have a written space between *zu* and the infinitive is that homographs would be introduced when the two parts would be written without a space. For example, the *zu*-Infinitiv of the verb *schließen* ‘to close’ would be *zuschließen* with unstressed *zu* and a main stress on *schließ* (3a), while the regular Infinitiv of the verb *zuschließen* ‘to lock’ would be *zuschließen* with stressed *zu* (3b). Obviously, an alternative orthographic choice would be to indicate the primary stress in such (rare) cases of possible confusion (e.g. by a diacritic). Or even more stringently, ideally the usage of the space in (3) would be reversed, i.e. write the *zu*-Infinitiv without space and detach stressed preverbs with a space. However, the current usage is strongly entrenched in the German orthography and is unlikely to change. Yet, this should not distract from the fact that morphologically *zu* in a *zu*-Infinitiv (3a) is clearly bound morphology, while the *zu*-preverb (3b) has a much weaker morphological bond.

- (3) a. Du brauchst die Tür nicht zu schließen.
- b. Du musst die Tür nicht zuschließen.

### 12.2.2 Grammaticalisation

The element *zu* in the *zu*-Infinitiv is obviously related to the preposition *zu*, <sup>[12.9]</sup> which has a bewildering number of different uses in German.<sup>1</sup> Diachronically, there has been a development from an originally allative meaning ‘towards’ via a purpose meaning ‘with the intention to’ to the usage of *zu* in complement clauses. This grammaticalisation pathway is widespread worldwide (ref-haspelmath1989) and well described for Germanic languages (e.g. ref-smirnova2016 for German; ref-los2005 for English).

This grammaticalisation pathway can be further extended as shown in (4). The verb *lehren* ‘to teach’ can actually be used in all three syntactic stages. In the first stage, the verb *lehren* is used with a *zu*-Infinitiv complement clause that is expressed after the main clause. Such constructions are non-coherent and thus consist of two clauses. In the second stage, the verb *lehren* can also be used with a *zu*-Infinitiv, but now this infinitive is incorporated into the main clause. Such constructions are coherent and thus consist of just a single clause. Finally, in the third stage, the verb *lehren* is used with a bare infinitive without *zu*. Such constructions are always monoclausal.

- (4) Grammaticalisation pathway of infinitive constructions  
 Stage 1: *zu*-Infinitiv biclausal (*Ich habe ihn [gelehrt], [zu tanzen].*)

<sup>1</sup>For example, see the listing of the DWDS at <https://www.dwds.de/wb/zu>.

Stage 2: *zu-Infinitiv* monoclausal (*Ich habe ihn [zu tanzen] [gelehrt].*)

Stage 3: *Infinitiv* monoclausal (*Ich habe ihn [tanzen] [gelehrt].*)

As an illustration of these three different uses of the verb *lehren*, I have added a corpus example of each usage in (5), which show the various constructions in subordinate position to clarify the structural differences.

- (5) a. Wahrscheinlich auch, weil ihn die Erfahrung [gelehrt hat], niemals nie [zu sagen].<sup>2</sup>  
 b. Unser Abgott Theodor Fontane dagegen, der uns so vieles in Stadt und Land [zu sehen] [gelehrt hat], scheint die Berliner Galerie kaum besucht zu haben.<sup>3</sup>  
 c. Was hast du den Indios für Possen angerichtet, daß sie dich so schön [tanzen] [gelehrt haben]?<sup>4</sup>

Constructions in the second stage of this grammaticalisation pathway are the focus of this chapter: monoclausal *zu-Infinitiv* constructions. This kind of construction is attested with various light verbs that are coherent when used with *zu-Infinitiv*, like *haben* (6). A simple test for coherence is to embed a sentence like (6a) inside another main clause like *es ist bekannt, dass* ‘it is known that’ (see Section 1.3.1). Coherent monoclausal constructions, i.e. stage 2 in (4), can then be identified by the obligatory position of the finite verb (*hat*) at the end of the clause (6b). A finite verb occurring before the *zu-Infinitiv* is not possible in a monoclausal construction (6c).

- (6) a. Sie [hat] noch viele Jahre [zu leben].  
 b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) sie noch viele Jahre [zu leben] [hat].  
 c. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) sie [hat] noch viele Jahre [zu leben].

Because there is a grammaticalisation cline, there are various verbs that can be used in more than one of these three different stages, as summarised in (7). Most verbs with a *zu-Infinitiv* actually only allow for the first option: biclausal non-coherent complement constructions (7a). These fall outside of the scope of this book. At the other extreme, some verbs only allow for monoclausal *Infinitiv* construction (7g). These were already discussed in the previous Chapter 11. The verbs that allow for both stage 2 and 3 with the same meaning (6f) were also

<sup>2</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 28.07.2013 (online).

<sup>3</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 11.06.1998.

<sup>4</sup>DWDS: Perutz, Leo: Die dritte Kugel, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt 1988 [1915], S. 5.

already included in the previous chapter and will not be discussed here again (*heißen*, *helfen*, *lehren* and *lernen*).

- (7) Intermediate stages on the grammaticalisation pathway
- a. **Only stage 1 possible** (only biclausal *zu*-Infinitiv): e.g. *schwören* ‘to vow’, *fragen* ‘to ask’
  - b. **Both stage 1 and 2 possible with the same meaning** (biclausal and monoclausal *zu*-Infinitiv): e.g. *anfangen* ‘to begin’, *versuchen* ‘to attempt’
  - c. **Both stage 1 and 2 possible with different meanings** (biclausal and monoclausal *zu*-Infinitiv): e.g. *wissen* ‘to know’ vs. ‘can’, *drohen* ‘to threaten’ vs. ‘there is evidence for it’
  - d. **Only stage 2 possible** (only monoclausal *zu*-Infinitiv): *pflügen* lit. ‘to nurse’ but here meaning ‘to do habitually’
  - e. **Both stage 2 and 3 possible with different meanings** (both monoclausal *zu*-Infinitiv and Infinitiv), e.g. *bekommen* ‘covert experience’ vs. ‘recipient subject’
  - f. **Both stage 2 and 3 possible with the same meaning** (both monoclausal *zu*-Infinitiv and Infinitiv): e.g. *brauchen* ‘to require, need’, *helfen* ‘to help’
  - g. **Only stage 3 possible** (only monoclausal Infinitiv): e.g. *müssen* ‘must’, *können* ‘can’

In between these extremes there are various further possibilities. Most prominently, there is the group of verbs that allow for both stage 1 and 2 without any obvious differences in meaning (7b). These are widely discussed in the German grammatical literature under the heading MODALITÄTSVERBEN. Various lists can be found, for example in Wurmbrand (ref-wurmbrand2003: 318–319) and Colomo (ref-colomo2010: 167–175), citing earlier literature. A short survey of various structural and semantic aspects of this group is presented in Rapp & Wöllstein (ref-rapp2013). From a quick search in the DWDS corpus it appears that the following verbs are the most interesting for further research. These verbs are frequently attested with both sentence structures, but without obvious differences in meaning between those structures: *anfangen*, *aufhören*, *beabsichtigen*, *beginnen*, *erlauben*, *gedenken*, *glauben*, *heißen*, *helfen*, *hoffen*, *lehren*, *lernen*, *lieben*, *sich lohnen*, *machen*, *meinen*, *streben*, *trachten*, *sich trauen*, *vergessen*, *versuchen*, *vorgeben*, *wagen*, *wünschen*. Examples with the verb *wünschen* ‘to wish’

are shown in (8). These verbs will not be further discussed in this chapter, but they deserve more research.

- (8) a. Es gebe viele Stimmen in der CSU, die ihm gewünscht hätten, eine längere Auszeit zu nehmen.<sup>5</sup>  
 b. Das war es was er zu hören gewünscht hatte.<sup>6</sup>

All verbs in the remaining possibilities (8c–e) have some special use with a *zu-Infinitiv*. The explicit claim is that this chapter presents a complete list of all such verbs. However, special care has to be taken with polysemies. Some of the verbs that are discussed in this chapter occur both in stage 1 and stage 2, but with clearly different meanings. For example, in its lexical meaning *versprechen* means ‘to promise’ and then it is not coherent (9a). In contrast, in its evidential meaning *versprechen* means something like ‘there is evidence for it’ and then it is coherent (9b). Although this correlation is not perfect, there seems to be a very strong tendency for the different meanings to also show different syntactic constructions (see Section 12.4.11).

[12.15]

- (9) a. Er verspricht rechtzeitig nach Hause zu kommen.  
 (Es ist bekannt, dass) er verspricht rechtzeitig nach Hause zu kommen.  
 b. Der Film verspricht eine Sensation zu werden.  
 (Es ist bekannt, dass) der Film eine Sensation zu werden verspricht.

There is some overlap between the constructions discussed in this chapter and the HALBMODALVERBEN as introduced by Eisenberg (e.g. ref-eisenberg2006a: 362–365) and discussed in much detail in Colomo (ref-colomo2010: Ch. 6). However, that term is defined in a much more restricted way to include only *pflügen*, *scheinen*, *drohen* and *versprechen*. The focus of the present chapter is more widely expanded. Crucially, Eisenberg’s *Halbmodale* do not include the monoclausal *zu-Infinitiv* verbs with the most obvious modal meanings, viz. *haben*, *brauchen*, *wissen* and *verstehen* (see Section 12.4.3 ff.).

[12.16]

### 12.3 Deponent verbs without alternations

[12.17] This is not attested. Note that theoretically such verbs might occur in German, but as far as I am aware there do not exist any examples. The necessary observation would be a lexical verb that can occur in a *zu-Infinitiv* construction (10a), but

<sup>5</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.11.2011 (online).

<sup>6</sup>DWDS: Fontane, Theodor: Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg. Bd. 4: Spreeland. Berlin, 1882.



cannot be used as a finite verb (10b). The verb *überzeugen* in (10) is thus not an example of this hypothetical phenomenon, as the second sentence then should have been ungrammatical.

- (10) a. Der Lehrer weiß seine SchülerInnen zu überzeugen.  
b. Der Lehrer überzeugt seine SchülerInnen.

## 12.4 Alternations without diathesis

### — Aspect —

#### 12.4.1 *pflegen+zu-Infinitiv* Habitual (*Habitativ*)

[12.18]

The lexical verb *pflegen* means ‘to nurse, to maintain’. However, in combination with a *zu-Infinitiv* the verb *pflegen* is one of the clearest examples of a construction that is always coherent, while at the same time it has a completely different meaning from its other uses. The *pflegen+zu-Infinitiv* expresses a habitual aspect, meaning approximately something like ‘to usually do something’ (11a,b). Examples proving coherence are shown in (11c,d).

[12.19] Colomo (ref-colomo2010: 246–256) argues that the real semantic content of *pflegen+zu-Infinitiv* is not the habitual aspect, but that it is more closely related to modal meanings of other *zu-Infinitiv* constructions. However, that analysis needs a lot of semantic trickery, and I do not see what is gained from it. I propose to simply consider the *pflegen+zu-Infinitiv* a HABITUATIV in German.

- (11) a. Sie lacht laut.  
b. Sie pflegte laut zu lachen.  
c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) sie laut zu lachen pflegte.  
d. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) sie pflegte laut zu lachen.

#### 12.4.2 *belieben+zu-Infinitiv* Habitual

The verb *belieben* can be used with a *zu-Infinitiv*, but only in rather archaic and mostly ironic usage. When interpreted literally, such structures convey a habitual action by the subject. However, interpreted ironically it normally means that the speaker disagrees with the action (12a). This even leads to contexts in which the construction is used to express ‘you should reconsider your actions’ (12b).

[12.20]

- (12) a. Der Herr beliebte zu scherzen.  
b. Schmöller beliebe zu überlegen, dass er in diesem Satze seine Meinung plötzlich ändert.<sup>7</sup>

— Modality —

#### 12.4.3 *wissen/verstehen+zu-Infinitiv* Ability (*Abilitiv*)

The construction *wissen+zu-Infinitiv* is only mentioned in passing in the German grammatical literature (e.g. ref-engel1996: 483; ref-holl2010: 10; ref-duden2009: 426). This omission is all the more striking as it is widely acknowledged that the inflection of *wissen* shows various similarities to the *Modalverben* (ref-duden2009: 458–459, 481–482). Actually, it is quite obvious that the *wissen+zu-Infinitiv* construction has a modal meaning expressing capability, i.e. ‘to be able to’ (13a). This construction is obligatorily coherent (13b,c). [12.21]

- (13) a. Der Lehrer weiß die Schüler zu begeistern.  
b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) der Lehrer die SchülerInnen zu begeistern weiß.  
c. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) der Lehrer weiß die SchülerInnen zu begeistern.

Even less mentioned is *verstehen+zu-Infinitiv* (cf. ref-engel1996: 483), which likewise has a modal meaning of ‘to be able to’ (14a). This construction is also obligatorily coherent (14b,c), but it appears to be less frequent than *wissen+zu-Infinitiv* above. [12.22]

- (14) a. Er versteht zu siegen.  
b. Er hat zu siegen verstanden.<sup>8</sup>  
c. \* Er hat verstanden zu siegen.

#### Further examples

- Ich weiß deinen Einsatz zu schätzen.
- Ich weiß ihn nirgends einzuordnen.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup>dwds: Menger, Carl: Die Irrthümer des Historismus in der deutschen Nationalökonomie. Wien, 1884.

<sup>8</sup>dwds: Der Tagesspiegel, 04.10.2000.

<sup>9</sup>Attested online at <https://www.philaseiten.de/cgi-bin/index.pl?PR=51029>, accessed 26 October 2021.

### 12.4.4 *vermögen+zu-Infinitiv* Negative ability

[12.23]

The construction *vermögen+zu-Infinitiv* is an expression from a more formal register meaning ‘to be capable of something (with effort)’ (cf. **ref-engel1996**: 482). It is typically used with negation (15a) and it is obligatorily coherent (15b). Incidental cases without negation are also attested (15c).

- (15) a. Wie lange genau, vermag er nicht zu sagen.<sup>10</sup>  
 b. Wie lange genau, hat er nicht zu sagen vermocht.  
 c. Bisher habe die Industrie es vermocht, Rohstoffe immer noch effizienter und noch billiger zu fördern.<sup>11</sup>

### 12.4.5 *haben+zu-Infinitiv* Obligation (*Obligativ*)

[12.24]

The *haben+zu-Infinitiv* construction is extensively discussed in Holl (**ref-holl2010**). It has a clear modal meaning of obligation, i.e. ‘must’ (16a). There is a direct parallel to the English *to have to* construction. This construction is obligatorily coherent (16b).

- (16) a. Die Schüler lösen die Aufgaben.  
 Die Schüler haben die Aufgaben zu lösen.  
 b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) die Schüler die Aufgaben zu lösen haben.

[12.25] The examples in (17) suggest that this construction sometimes means ‘can’ instead of ‘must’. It is unclear to me how widespread this usage is. It might be connected to the occurrence of the particle *noch*, but that needs a more in-depth investigation.

- (17) a. Er hat noch ein Jahr zu leben.  
 b. Die Bürger haben nur noch indirekt etwas zu sagen.<sup>12</sup>

### Further examples

- Was hat das zu bedeuten?
- Du hast ihm zu helfen!
- Der Bundesgerichtshof hat jetzt diese Streitfrage zu entscheiden.
- Er hat nichts zu befürchten.
- Der Fürst hatte (über) dieses Land zu befehlen.

<sup>10</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 23.06.2015, Nr. 25.

<sup>11</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 26.03.2015, Nr. 13.

<sup>12</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 16.04.2015, Nr. 16.

#### 12.4.6 *brauchen+zu-Infinitiv* Negative obligation

The verb *brauchen* ‘to need’ is similar to its English counterpart in many ways. As a lexical verb it expresses a necessity for something (18a). It can also be combined with a *zu-Infinitiv*, though in German this construction has negative polarity, i.e. it obligatorily needs either a modal particle *nur* or *bloß* (18b) or a negative element (18c). It is typically combined with one of the following negative elements: *nicht, nichts, wenig, kein, niemand, nie, kaum, ohne dass*. Just like with English *to need* there is a tendency for the meaning of negated *nicht brauchen* to shift from expressing a non-necessity to a non-obligation (18c).

- (18) a. Ich brauche ein Handtuch.  
 b. Du brauchst nur zu rufen.  
 c. Niemand braucht es zu wissen.

In colloquial usage *brauchen* can also be used without *zu* (19a), bordering on being a proper *Modalverb* (see Section 11.4.8). The *brauchen+zu-Infinitiv* construction is obligatorily coherent (19b). [12.27]

- (19) a. Er braucht seine Kleider nicht selber (zu) waschen.  
 b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) er seine Kleider nicht selber zu waschen braucht.

#### 12.4.7 *gehören+zu-Infinitiv* Obligation

The construction *gehören+zu-Infinitiv* expressed an obligation (20). It can be attested sporadically in older German texts with a modal meaning of ‘to ought to do something’ (ref-lasch2018: 177–181). This construction disappears from the DWDS corpus around 1800. The example below is from a 19th century collection of proverbs, which typically retain extinct grammatical constructions. The few attested examples indicate that it was a coherent construction. [12.28]

- (20) Den Kauffleuthen vnd Bawren gehört zu trawen vnd glauben zu halten mit dem grossen hauffen.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup>DWDS: Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm (Hrsg.): Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. Bd. 2. Leipzig, 1870.

### 12.4.8 *suchen+zu-Infinitiv* Conative (*Konativ*)

[12.29] The verb *suchen* ‘to search’ has a special usage with a *zu-Infinitiv* expressing the meaning ‘to attempt to do something’ (21a). In this usage, the meaning of *suchen* is very close to the meaning of *versuchen* ‘to try’. It seems to be restricted to a high-education written register in German. Crucially, in this meaning the verb *suchen* is a light verb because the construction *suchen+zu-Infinitiv* is obligatorily coherent (21b,c). Note that the semantically similar lexical verb *versuchen* is not obligatorily coherent.

[12.30] There is an old tradition in Latin grammar to describe one of the possible meanings of the Latin present tense as a “conative present” (from Lat. *conor* ‘to try’) when it should be translated as an attempted action. Thus, it seems fitting to call the *suchen+zu-Infinitiv* diathesis a CONATIVE.

- (21) a. Skrupulös, vorsichtig und diszipliniert sucht Lindner deren Fehler zu vermeiden.<sup>14</sup>  
 b. Mit ihrem Namen ist ein blutiges Ereignis verbunden, das sie erfolglos zu verhindern gesucht hatte.<sup>15</sup>  
 c. \* ... ein Ereignis, ... das sie erfolglos gesucht hatte zu verhindern.

### 12.4.9 *denken+zu-Infinitiv* Cogitative (*Kogitativ*)

In most contexts, the verb *denken* means ‘to think, to believe’. In this meaning, a *zu-Infinitiv* construction is not coherent (22a,b). In contrast, with a *zu-Infinitiv* in a coherent construction, the verb *denken* means ‘to plan, to intend’ (22c,d). This usage of *denken* is arguably somewhat special, either old-fashioned or simply slightly poetic. I propose to call this coherent monoclausal construction a *cogitative* (from Lat. *cogitare* ‘to plan, to intend’).

- (22) a. Er denkt, mich überraschen zu können.  
 (Es ist bekannt, dass) er denkt, mich überraschen zu können.  
 b. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) er mich überraschen zu können denkt.  
 c. Ich denke ihn zu überraschen.  
 (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich ihn zu überraschen denke.  
 d. ? (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich denke, ihn zu überraschen.

<sup>14</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 27.11.2017, Nr. 48.

<sup>15</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.05.2003, Nr. 20.

### Further examples

- Weil damals eine schicksalhafte Wahlschlacht anstand, die Putin für sich zu gewinnen dachte.<sup>16</sup>
- Der Prinz besah sich einige neue Juwelen, die er heimlich zu tragen dachte.<sup>17</sup> ■

### — Evidentiality —

#### 12.4.10 *scheinen+zu-Infinitiv* Inferential evidence (*Imperfektinferenz*)

The coherent construction *scheinen+zu-Infinitiv* (23) is similar to the English *seem to* construction. Because of this similarity, there has been a long tradition of applying a subject-raising analysis to this construction in German (see [ref-olsen1981](#): 134–146 for a summary and refutation). However, the raising analysis is not used anymore, at least since Olsen (see also [ref-pafel1989](#); [ref-diewald2010](#): 177–191 for later analyses). Diewald & Smirnova ([ref-diewald2010](#): 182) analyse *scheinen+zu-Infinitiv* as an inferential evidential in which the speaker expresses some confidence in the claimed event based on deduction from available knowledge. So, this construction is an inferential evidential. As a German name I propose IMPERFEKTINFERENZ in opposition to the *Perfektinferenz* when used with a participle (see Section 10.4.14). [12.32]

- (23) a. Er scheint ihm ein Buch zu geben.  
b. Ich habe gesehen, wie er ihm ein Buch zu geben scheint.  
c. \* Ich habe gesehen, wie er scheint ihm ein Buch zu geben.

A special characteristic of this construction is that an additional dative experiencer can sometimes be added (24a). Very sparingly *erscheinen* instead of *scheinen* is used with a *zu-Infinitiv* (24b). The light verb *erscheinen* is much more commonly attested with a participle (see Section 10.4.14). [12.33]

- (24) a. Das Kind scheint mir zu schlafen.  
b. Viele von ihnen hatten während des Vorwahlkampfes Hillary Clinton unterstützt, weil ihnen die Vorstellung eines schwarzen Präsidenten einfach zu kühn, zu vermessen erschien.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 05.01.2006, Nr. 02.

<sup>17</sup> DWDS: Klepper, Jochen: Der Vater, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann 1962 [1937], S. 452.

<sup>18</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 06.11.2008, Nr. 46.

### 12.4.11 *drohen/versprechen+zu-Infinitiv* Direct evidence (*Bewertungsevidenz*)

A detailed discussion of *drohen* and *versprechen* is presented by Diewald & Smirnova (ref-diewald2010: 191–217). Basically, when used with a *zu-Infinitiv*, both verbs can either have a speech-act usage (25), meaning ‘to threaten’ and ‘to promise’, respectively, or they can have a grammaticalised light-verb usage with an evidential meaning (26). There is a very strong tendency that the speech-act usage is syntactically non-coherent, while evidential usage is coherent (ref-reis2005: 136–140).

(25) Speech-act usage (non-coherent)

- a. Er hatte dem Konzern gedroht, Lebensmittel zu vergiften.<sup>19</sup>
- b. Er hat versprochen, Marihuana zu legalisieren.<sup>20</sup>

(26) Evidential usage (coherent)

- a. Das führt zu einem Problem, das Johanna Knüppel in den Wahnsinn zu treiben droht.<sup>21</sup>
- b. Die Pfänder hinter den Papieren waren Immobilien, deren Wert ständig weiter zu steigen versprach.<sup>22</sup>

[12.35] Diewald & Smirnova (ref-diewald2010: 191–217) analyse the coherent light-verb usage of *drohen* and *versprechen* as marking a direct evidential, i.e. the speaker of the utterance has first-hand evidence for the proposition (27). There are various differences between *drohen* and *versprechen*. First, *drohen* is very frequent in its evidential coherent reading (80% of all occurrences), while *versprechen* (10% of all occurrences) is not (corpus counts from ref-diewald2010: 214). Second, *drohen* can be used with animate/human subjects, while *versprechen* is restricted to inanimate subjects. Third, *drohen* does not have strong restrictions as to which verbs can be used as infinitive. The verbs are typically non-agentive but possibly intentional (ref-diewald2010: 197–199). In contrast, *versprechen* only allows for a restricted set of verbs that do not express agency (ref-diewald2010: 212). Finally, *drohen* implies a negative evaluation from the speaker’s point of view, while *versprechen* implies a positive evaluation. Because of this evaluation I propose to use the German name BEWERTUNGSEVIDENZ for this construction.

<sup>19</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 14.10.2015 (online).

<sup>20</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 05.05.2016 (online).

<sup>21</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.12.2017, Nr. 51.

<sup>22</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 15.08.2017 (online).

(27) Evidential interpretation of light-verb usage

- a. *drohen*: “The speaker has (had) perceptual access to certain pieces of information which s/he interprets as pointing towards the described event (which is evaluated negatively from the speaker’s point of view).” (ref-diewald2010: 195)
- b. *versprechen*: “The speaker has perceptual access to certain pieces of information which s/he interprets as pointing towards the described event (which is evaluated positively from the speaker’s point of view).” (ref-diewald2010: 209)

**Attested verbs**

- *drohen*: there are no strict restrictions, though agentive verbs are atypical.
- *versprechen*: not with agentive verbs, most frequently used with *werden*, *enthalten*, *weichen*, *bieten*.

— Covert causation —

**12.4.12 *kommen+zu-Infinitiv* Covertly caused state (*Verborgenes Zustandskausativ*)**

The verb *kommen* ‘to come’ can be used with a *zu-Infinitiv* of some intransitive verbs to express a state that is reached (28).<sup>23</sup> This construction conveys that there is some unexpressed force or agent that has caused the state to be reached, so I propose to call this construction a COVERTLY CAUSED STATE. The meaning can be described as ‘something happened, which led to the subject being in a specific state’. A parallel construction is frequently attested with nouns, like *Sie kam zu Reichtum/Ehren* (cf. Section 13.2.5).

- (28) a. Plötzlich ist er neben ihr zu liegen gekommen.<sup>24</sup>  
b. Jetzt ist sie hier im Torf auch zu blühen gekommen.<sup>25</sup>

This construction appears to be restricted to intransitive verbs. It might seem as if transitive verbs also can occur in this constructions, like with *helfen* in (29a).

[12.37]

<sup>23</sup>See also Lesart 44 von *kommen* in the *Wörterbuch zur Verbalenz*, available online at <https://grammis.ids-mannheim.de/verbs/view/400724/44>, accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>24</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.08.1992, Nr. 33.

<sup>25</sup>Attested online at <https://www.orchideenkultur.net/index.php?topic=23522.0>, accessed 27 September 2021.



However, such examples are always examples of the literal *kommen*, i.e. the subject is intentionally moving towards some place to perform an action. Such constructions are not coherent, and the *zu-Infinitiv* seems to be an abbreviated version of an adverbial *um zu-Infinitiv* subordinated clause (29b).

- (29) a. Sie kamen ihm zu helfen.  
 b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) Sie gekommen sind (um) ihm zu helfen.  
 c. Wir dürfen nicht zulassen, dass die Stationierung von Truppen zum Surrogat für Politik wird und dass Truppen, die in der Absicht zu helfen gekommen sind, im Laufe der Zeit als Eindringlinge und Besatzer wahrgenommen werden.<sup>26</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- *liegen, wohnen, leben, glauben, blühen, sprechen, stehen*

#### Further examples

- Er kam auf das Thema zu sprechen.
- Sie kam neben mir zu stehen.
- Sie kam im Zug zu sitzen.
- Das kann dir teuer zu stehen kommen.
- Sie ist zu glauben gekommen.

#### 12.4.13 *bekommen/kriegen+zu-Infinitiv* Covertly caused experience (*Verborgenes Rezipientenkausativ*)

[12.38] Jäger (ref-jäger2013) presents a detailed examination of the *bekommen/kriegen+zu-Infinitiv* construction (30). She concludes that the subject of such sentences is typically an experiencer (ref-jäger2013: 235). The centrality of the experiencer role is reminiscent of the *bekommen/kriegen/erhalten+Partizip* dative passive diathesis, in which the recipient is promoted to subject (see Section 10.5.21). However, both structurally and semantically these two constructions are clearly different.

<sup>26</sup> Attested online at ><https://docplayer.org/40817735-Clausewitz-gesellschaft-e-v-jahrbuch-eine-zusammenfassung-von-beitraegen-aus-der-arbeit-der-gesellschaft-2006.html>>, accessed 3 November 2021.

- (30) Ich habe auch sonst mancherlei zu sehen bekommen, was anderer Augen versagt bleibt.<sup>27</sup>

Jäger performed a corpus investigation and found that 77% of all examples used a verb of sensation (ref-jäger2013: 83), like *spüren* ‘to feel’ (31a). The second largest group with about 16% were verbs of consumption (ref-jäger2013: 161), like *essen* ‘to eat’ (31b). Various agentive verbs make up a third group of about 6% (ref-jäger2013: 201), like *packen* ‘to grasp’ (31c). [12.39]

Similar to the previous *kommen+zu-Infinitiv* construction (see Section 12.4.12), there is always some unexpressed force or agent at work that causes the subject to experience something, even with verbs that do not describe an experience, e.g. (31c). So I propose to call this construction a COVERTLY CAUSED EXPERIENCE. [12.40]

- (31) a. Das hat auch Wiesbaden zu spüren bekommen.<sup>28</sup>  
 b. Den Tag über bekommen sie nichts Warmes zu essen.<sup>29</sup>  
 c. Die Nacht war dunkel, und ich bekam nachher den Jammerkerl zu packen.<sup>30</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- Verbs of sensation: *sehen, hören, spüren, fühlen, verspüren, kosten, merken, wissen*
- Verbs of consumption: *essen, lesen, trinken, kaufen, fressen, schlucken*
- Other agentive verbs: *tun, packen, sprechen, greifen*

## 12.5 Diatheses with subject demotion

### – [ SBJ > Ø ] – *Unpersönlicher Modalpassiv*

#### 12.5.1 [ N | – ] *sein+zu-Infinitiv Impersonal*

The *sein+zu-Infinitiv* construction is typically used with transitive verbs as a passive with modal meaning expressing obligation or possibility (see Section 12.5.8). With intransitive verbs such a passive would lead to an impersonal construction,

<sup>27</sup>Cited in Jäger (ref-jäger2013: 11), originally from DWDS: Janitschek, Maria (1902): *Die neue Eva*, Leipzig: Seemann, S. 36138.

<sup>28</sup>DWDS: *Die Zeit*, 13.03.1958, Nr. 11.

<sup>29</sup>DWDS: Frisch, Karl von: *Erinnerungen eines Biologen*, Berlin: Springer 1957, S. 7.

<sup>30</sup>DWDS: Scheerbart, Paul: *Immer mutig!* In: *Deutsche Literatur von Lessing bis Kafka*, Berlin: Directmedia Publ. 2000 [1902], S. 144560.

but this seems to be very rare (contrary to the claim in **ref-holl2010**: 18). The example given by Holl is doubtful (32a). A better example is *anhalten* (32b). In both examples the removed subject is not replaced by a valency-simulating pronoun *es*.

- (32) a. Ab 22 Uhr ist zu schlafen.<sup>31</sup>  
 b. Zum Schutz von ein- und aussteigenden Fahrgästen ist langsam zu fahren und nötigenfalls anzuhalten.<sup>32</sup>

### Attested verbs

- *anhalten, fahren, schlafen*

### 12.5.2 [ NP | -P ] *sein+zu-Infinitiv* Impersonal+governed preposition

It is slightly more common to find impersonal *sein+zu-Infinitiv* constructions with governed prepositions, though this usage is still very rare (33). Note that the original nominative subject cannot be retained in another form, and it is not replaced by a valency-simulating pronoun *es*. Because of the parallel to the *Modalpassiv* (see Section 12.5.8) I will call this diathesis UNPERSÖNLICHER MODALPASSIV, although the name “passive” is actually not fitting in this case. Just as with the *Modalpassiv*, this construction can have either a deontic *müssen* interpretation (33a) or a dynamic *können* meaning (33b), the latter typically with negation.

- (33) a. Auf Ernst war wie immer lange zu warten.<sup>33</sup>  
 b. Mit ihm ist nicht zu spaßen.

### Attested verbs

- *antworten auf, arbeiten an, lachen über, spaßen mit, warten auf*

### Further examples

- Daran ist zu arbeiten.<sup>34</sup>
- Und noch über einen Engel ist zu lachen, wenn man der Erzengel ist.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Holl (**ref-holl2010**): 18

<sup>32</sup>DWDS: o. A.: Verkehrskunde für die Führerscheinklassen 1-3-4, Remagen: Verkehrs-Verl. 1965, S. 109.

<sup>33</sup>Holl (**ref-holl2010**): 18

<sup>34</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 28.10.1999, Nr. 44.

<sup>35</sup>DWDS: Vischer, Friedrich Theodor von: Ästhetik oder Wissenschaft des Schönen. Bd. 1. Reutlingen u. a., 1846.

### 12.5.3 [ ND | -D ] *sein+zu-Infinitiv* Impersonal+dative

Similar to the previous section, impersonal *sein+zu-Infinitiv* is possible with some verbs taking a dative object, though this usage is exceedingly rare (34). Just like in the previous section, the original nominative subject cannot be retained and, while removed, it is not replaced by a valency-simulating pronoun *es*. Also this construction can have either a deontic *müssen* interpretation (34a) or a dynamic *können* meaning (34b), the latter typically with negation.

[12.43]

- (34) a. Und den Orchestermusikern ist zu gratulieren.<sup>36</sup>  
 b. Auch ihm war nicht zu trauen.<sup>37</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- *beitreten, gedenken, gratulieren, helfen, trauen*

#### Further examples

- Wer wirklich reif sein will für die Reifeprüfung, dem ist zu helfen.<sup>38</sup>
- Den tragenden Gründen dieser Stellungnahme ist beizutreten.<sup>39</sup>
- Auch mehrerer Einzelarbeiten zur Geschichte der Ostsiedlung ist zu gedenken.<sup>40</sup>

— [ SBJ > ADJ ] —

### 12.5.4 [ NA | pA ] *geben+zu-Infinitiv* Subject demotion (*Möglichkeitsdesubjektiv*)

Transitive verbs can be used in a *geben+zu-Infinitiv* construction, demoting the nominative subject (cf. *ref-engel1996*: 488). The removed nominative subject is replaced by a valency-simulating pronoun *es*, so the finite verb is always in the third person singular, resulting in fixed expressions *es gibt* or *es hat gegeben*. The original nominative subject can be retained by a *für* prepositional phrase (35b). This construction is obligatorily coherent (35c).

[12.44]

<sup>36</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 21.12.1990, Nr. 52.

<sup>37</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 15.09.2005, Nr. 38.

<sup>38</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 02.10.2000.

<sup>39</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 17.02.1984, Nr. 08.

<sup>40</sup>DWDS: Jahresberichte für deutsche Geschichte, 1939, S. 354.

- (35) a. Seine Fans kaufen ein Gesamtpaket.  
 b. Stattdessen gibt es für seine Fans ein Gesamtpaket zu kaufen.<sup>41</sup>  
 c. Stattdessen hat es für seine Fans ein Gesamtpaket zu kaufen gegeben.

Semantically, this construction expresses an option that is available to the original subject. Structurally, the subject is demoted (or even unexpressed). Because of these two characteristics I propose the somewhat cumbersome German designation *MÖGLICHKEITSDESUBJEKTIV*. Note that the same *geben+zu-Infinitiv* construction is also used for a semantically and structurally quite different causative construction, namely the *Möglichkeitskausativ* (see Section 12.6.1).

This construction is commonly used with an quantified adverb like *viel/genug/reichlich/nichts* (36b) instead of an nominal accusative object (36c). Also, *geben+zu-Infinitiv* is typically used without the retained subject in a *für* phrase (37a). Without a retained subject, the expression of a full nominal accusative is more widespread (37b).

- (36) a. Die Reisenden entdecken das Land.  
 b. Es gibt für Reisende noch viel zu entdecken.  
 c. \* Es gibt für Reisende das Land zu entdecken.
- (37) a. Es gibt reichlich zu trinken.  
       Gestern hat es reichlich zu trinken gegeben.  
 b. Ich gewinnen einen Preis.  
       Es gibt einen Preis zu gewinnen.

### Further examples

- Noch einen anderen Grund gibt es für Nadella die freien Hersteller zu umgarnen.<sup>42</sup>
- Es gibt jetzt wichtigeres zu tun.
- Es gibt nichts zu klagen/essen/sehen/lachen/beachten/bereden/hören.
- Es gibt noch viele Geschenke einzupacken.
- Es gibt noch viele Probleme zu lösen.

<sup>41</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 11.12.2013 (online).

<sup>42</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 03.04.2014, Nr. 15.

### 12.5.5 [ NA | pA ] *gelten+zu-Infinitiv* Subject demotion (*Notwendigkeitsdesubjektiv*)

[12.47]

The verb *gelten* can be used with a *zu-Infinitiv* by demoting the original subject to an (optional) *für* prepositional phrase (38a). As there is no replacement for the subject of the sentence, a valency-simulating pronoun *es* is introduced. This results in a fixed expression *es gilt* (cf. **ref-engel1996**: 488–489). This construction expresses a necessity, close to a modal ‘must’, and is mainly used in a formal written register.

The *gelten+zu-Infinitiv* construction is typically coherent, viz. the finite verb *gilt* appears at the end of a subordinate clause (38a). However, it is possible to find non-coherent examples (38b), indicating that this construction is not completely grammaticalised into a monoclausal construction. The coherent usage appears to be the more widespread, though.

[12.48]

- (38) a. Lanz verteidigt den Sieg.  
       Jetzt gilt es für Lanz den Sieg zu verteidigen.<sup>43</sup>  
       b. Das alles ist die Aufgabe, die es zu lösen gilt.<sup>44</sup>  
       c. Das ist eine Tradition, die es gilt zu erinnern und zu erhalten.<sup>45</sup>

#### Further examples

- Da war also der Punkt an dem es einzusetzen galt.<sup>46</sup>
- Das ist der Jackpot, den es für uns zu knacken gilt.<sup>47</sup>
- MINT-Berufe sind noch echte Männerdomänen, die es für Frauen zu erobern gilt.<sup>48</sup>
- Es gilt jetzt den Tisch zu putzen.
- Es galt vielleicht einen Selbstmord zu verhüten.
- Es galt keine Zeit zu verlieren.

<sup>43</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 02.11.2012 (online).

<sup>44</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 05.07.2017, Nr. 28.

<sup>45</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 09.11.1996.

<sup>46</sup>Bech (**ref-bech1955**): 220–222

<sup>47</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 16.11.2010 (online).

<sup>48</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 13.06.2008, Nr. 25.

— [ OBJ > SBJ > Ø ] —

### 12.5.6 [ NA | -N ] *stehen+zu-Infinitiv* Anticausative (*Erwartungsantikausativ*)

The construction *stehen+zu-Infinitiv* is used as an anticausative, expressing the expectation that the original accusative will come to pass. Examples with an explicit accusative noun phrase as in (39a) are actually rare. Typically, this diathesis is found with cognitive predicates expressing an expectation (ref-engel1996: 481; ref-holl2010: 10, fn. 4), like *befürchten* ‘to fear’, with a *dass* complement clause (39b). Functionally, this complement clause has the same status as an accusative object, which becomes the subject after the application of the *stehen+zu-Infinitiv* diathesis.

Complement clauses typically move towards the end of the sentence in German, and then the first position of the sentence has to be filled. A position-simulating pronoun *es* is frequently used, resulting in a widespread collocation *es steht zu-Infinitiv* (39b). However, this pronoun *es* is removed when the first position of the sentence is filled otherwise, so this *es* has a completely different status compared to the obligatory valency-simulating *es* of *es gibt zu-Infinitiv* (Section 12.5.4) and *es gilt zu-Infinitiv* (Section 12.5.5).

- (39) a. Ich befürchte einen weiteren Beschäftigungsabbau.  
Ein weiterer Beschäftigungsabbau steht zu befürchten.<sup>49</sup>
- b. Jemand befürchtet, dass ihr Nachfolger das anders handhaben wird.  
Es steht zu befürchten, dass ihr Nachfolger das anders handhaben wird.<sup>50</sup>
- c. So steht zu befürchten, dass sich die innenpolitischen Gräben noch vertiefen.<sup>51</sup>

Except for the verbs of expectation, there are two incidental, but quite frequent, verbs that can be used in this construction, namely *lesen* ‘to read’ (40a) and *verkaufen* ‘to sell’ (40b). Semantically, these do not seem to express any notion of expectation. Crucially, the *stehen+zu-Infinitiv* construction is coherent with these two verbs (40c,d).

<sup>49</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 15.01.1999.

<sup>50</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 12.05.2016 (online).

<sup>51</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.05.2015, Nr. 19.

- (40) a. Es stand zu lesen, dass die Mannschaft gegen den Trainer spielen würde.<sup>52</sup>  
b. Luxuriöse Villa auf der Insel Brač steht zu verkaufen.<sup>53</sup>  
c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) es hier zu lesen steht.  
d. (Es ist bekannt, dass) das Haus zu verkaufen steht.

#### Attested verbs

- Verbs of positive expectation: *bedenken, befürchten, erwarten, fürchten, hoffen, vermuten*
- Verbs of negative expectation: *bezweifeln*
- Others: *lesen, verkaufen*

#### 12.5.7 [ NA | –N ] *gehen+zu-Infinitiv* Negative anticausative (*Unmöglichkeitantikausativ*)

The *gehen+zu-Infinitiv* anticausative (41a) seems to be typical for an informal register. Most examples include a negation, and only very few examples without negation are attested (41b,c). The construction expresses that something is impossible (or, without negation, possible).

- (41) a. Ich lösche die Datei.  
Die Datei geht nicht zu löschen.  
b. Die temporäre Datei geht zu löschen, aber nicht die exe.<sup>54</sup>  
c. Das Radio geht zu reparieren.<sup>55</sup>

There is a special idiomatic construction *VERB, was zu VERB ging* (42) that includes the *gehen+zu-Infinitiv* construction. There does not seem to be any obvious semantic relation to the monoclausal construction as illustrated above.

[12.53]

<sup>52</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 03.09.2012 (online).

<sup>53</sup> Attested online at <https://www.croatia-property.net/de/property/luxuriöse-villa-auf-der-insel-brac-zu-verkaufen-1991/>, accessed 8 November 2021.

<sup>54</sup> Attested online at <https://administrator.de/forum/windows-7-probleme-nach-laufwerksbuchstaben-zuweisung-von-wechseldatentraegern-112602.html>, accessed 8 November 2021.

<sup>55</sup> Helbig & Buscha (ref-helbig2001): 166



- (42) a. Die Sozialdemokraten haben [...] verhindert, was nur zu verhindern ging.<sup>56</sup>  
 b. Die [...] Hochschulen haben versucht zu retten, was zu retten ging.<sup>57</sup>  
 c. Was zu privatisieren ging, ist privatisiert.<sup>58</sup>

### Attested verbs

- *ändern, bauen, beheben, kitten, löschen, reparieren, rezipieren, schneiden, stopfen, verschließen*

### Further examples

- Dieses Glas geht nicht zu schneiden weil es Sicherheitsglas ist.<sup>59</sup>
- Leichtes Balsa geht zu schneiden, vor allem wenn es dunkles Balsa ist.<sup>60</sup>
- In den übrigen Abspielminuten fragt man sich: wie diese Musik eigentlich zu rezipieren geht.<sup>61</sup>
- Ein Maul mehr ging nicht zu stopfen.<sup>62</sup>
- So sehr, dass eigentlich nichts mehr zu kitten geht.<sup>63</sup>
- ... der Bescheid, daß die Rampe auf keinen Fall zu bauen geht.<sup>64</sup>
- ... einen Flurschaden, der möglicherweise gar nicht mehr zu beheben ginge.<sup>65</sup>
- Unser Quartier lag in einem Kellergeschoß, und mein Zimmer ging nicht zu verschließen.<sup>66</sup>
- Was einmal geschehen, das geht nicht zu ändern.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>56</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 23.09.2000.

<sup>57</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 17.05.2000.

<sup>58</sup> DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 14.07.2003.

<sup>59</sup> Attested online at <https://www.gutefrage.net/frage/schneiden-einer-feuerfesten-scheibe>, accessed 8 November 2021.

<sup>60</sup> Attested online at <https://www.rc-network.de/threads/portalfräse-mit-laser-nachrüsten.370360/page-4>, accessed 8 November 2021.

<sup>61</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 05.09.2009, Nr. 20.

<sup>62</sup> DWDS: Am Ende der Welt X. Herzschnalzen Blog, 2010-06-01.

<sup>63</sup> DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 21.07.2001.

<sup>64</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 22.07.1977, Nr. 30.

<sup>65</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 03.11.1972, Nr. 44.

<sup>66</sup> DWDS: Liliencron, Adda Freifrau von: Krieg und Frieden, Erinnerungen aus dem Leben einer Offiziersfrau. In: Simons, Oliver (Hg.) Deutsche Autobiographien 1690–1930, Berlin: Directmedia Publ. 2004 [1912], S. 45055.

<sup>67</sup> DWDS: Wander, Karl Friedrich Wilhelm (Hrsg.): Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon. Bd. 1. Leipzig, 1867.

– [ OBJ > SBJ > ADJ ] –

### 12.5.8 [ NA | pN ] *sein+zu-Infinitiv* Passive (*Modalpassiv*)

[12.54] When used with transitive verbs, the *sein+zu-Infinitiv* construction is a passive diathesis with a modal meaning. A passive is defined here as a promotion of the accusative object to nominative subject and the demotion (and possibly complete deletion) of the original subject. Authors that argue against a passive status for this construction simply use other criteria for what counts as “passive” (cf. *ref-holl2010*: 19).

Depending on the context, various modal interpretations are possible for the *sein+zu-Infinitiv* construction, as illustrated in (43). These examples show a *müssen* interpretation in (43a), a *dürfen* interpretation in (43b), a *können* interpretation in (43c) and a *nicht brauchen* interpretation in (43d). The *müssen* and *können* interpretations appear to be the most frequent.

- (43) a. Ich führe einen Hund an der Leine.  
Hunde sind (von ihren Besitzern) an der Leine zu führen.
- b. Ich öffne das Fenster.  
Das Fenster ist (nur von bestimmte Personen) zu öffnen.
- c. Du löst die Aufgabe.  
Die Aufgabe ist (für dich) leicht zu lösen.
- d. Ich erwarte Hagel.  
Hagel ist nicht zu erwarten.

There are various syntactic differences between the major *müssen* and *können* interpretations (*ref-holl2010*: 18–21). First, with the *müssen* interpretation (43a) it is possible to retain the original agent with a *von* prepositional phrase, but this is very uncommon. In contrast, the *für* agent retention (43c) is only possible with the *können* interpretation. Second, a *können* interpretation can be forced by adding adverbials (including negation) like *einfach* ‘easily’ (44a) or *schön* ‘beautifully’ (44b).

[12.56]

- (44) a. Das Pult ist zu bedienen.  
Das Pult ist einfach zu bedienen.
- b. Der Weg ist zu gehen.  
Der Weg ist schön zu gehen.

Verbs without an accusative argument can be used in the *sein+zu-Infinitiv* construction to form an impersonal passive, though this is rare (see Section 12.5.1 and

subsequent sections). In contrast, most verbs with an accusative argument allow for this diathesis, but not all of them do. Holl (ref-holl2010: 19) argues that there is a difference between the verbs that allow for a *sein+zu-Infinitiv* passive and those verbs that allow for a *werden+Partizip* passive (cf. Section 10.5.15), as exemplified with *bekommen* ‘to get’ (45). There are indeed a few more verbs that can be used with *sein+zu-Infinitiv* but not with *werden+Partizip* (e.g. *entwickeln*, *erhalten*, *kriegen*, *messen*, *rechnen*), but overall there actually appears to be quite a good match between the applicability of both passives.

- (45) a. \* Die Bücher werden am Schalter im Lesesaal bekommen.  
 b. Die Bücher sind am Schalter im Lesesaal zu bekommen.

### Attested verbs

[12.58]

The following verbs with accusative arguments do not allow for a *sein+zu-Infinitiv* passive. There is strong overlap with the verbs that do not allow for a *werden+Partizip* passive (cf. Section 10.5.15).

- Verbs with obligatory quantified objects (Section 5.3.9): *dauern*, *enthalten*, *kosten*, *sparen*, *umfassen*, *wachsen*, *wiegen*, *zunehmen*
- Verbs with reflexive conversive (Section 7.5.7): *bekümmern*, *empören*, *ergeben*, *erstaunen*, *interessieren*, *freuen*, *kümmern*, *wundern*
- Verbs of possession: *besitzen*
- Other verbs without passive: *kennen*, *schmerzen* (*traurig machen*, *mit Akkusativ*)

### Further examples

- Ein Loblied ist zu singen auf dieses Buch.<sup>68</sup>
- Mein Rücktritt war nur politisch zu begründen.
- Die Aufgabe ist unmöglich zu lösen.
- Kriterien sind zu entwickeln.<sup>69</sup>
- Das ist leicht zu rechnen.<sup>70</sup>
- Denn Leistung ist schwer zu messen.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 09.06.2005, Nr. 24.

<sup>69</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.09.2008, Nr. 39.

<sup>70</sup>Attested online at <https://wohnwagen-forum.de/wwf/forum/index.php?thread/67750-stromzähler/&pageNo=2>, accessed 9 November 2021.

<sup>71</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 21.09.2017 (online).

## Notes

The verb *kennen* ‘to be acquainted with’ used to be possible in this construction. The most recent example that I have been able to find is from Hugo von Hofmannsthal (46). [12.59]

(46) Sie ist schwer zu kennen.<sup>72</sup>

## 12.6 Diatheses with promotion to subject

— [ Ø > SBJ > OBJ ] —

### 12.6.1 [ –NA | NDA ] *geben+zu-Infinitiv* Novative (*Möglichkeitskausativ*)

The *geben+zu-Infinitiv* construction has two rather different uses. It can be used with subject demotion and a modal meaning (see Section 12.5.4) or with subject promotion and a causative/permissive meaning (this section). With subject promotion it is widely used with verbs of cognition that take an embedded clause, like *bedenken* ‘to consider’ (47a). Embedded in the *geben+zu-Infinitiv* construction, this results in a novative construction with a meaning ‘to offer to consider’ (47b). Such constructions are coherent (47c,d). [12.60]

- (47) a. Ich bedenke, dass es schon spät ist.  
b. Er gibt mir zu bedenken, dass es schon spät ist.  
c. Er hat mir zu bedenken gegeben, dass es schon spät ist.  
d. \* Er hat mir gegeben zu bedenken, dass es schon spät ist.

This novative construction is also widely attested with other verbs, e.g. *trinken* ‘to drink’ (48). With those verbs, the meaning of the *geben+zu-Infinitiv* diathesis is very close to lexical *geben* ‘to give’. For example *geben zu trinken* often simply means ‘hand over some drink to be consumed’ (48a). However, it can also mean ‘cause food to be consumed’, typically in the context of little children (48b). Whatever the exact meaning, this construction is always coherent, as can be seen from the position of the verb *geben* in the examples below. [12.61]

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<sup>72</sup>DWDS: Hofmannsthal, Hugo von: Der Schwierige. In: Deutsche Literatur von Lessing bis Kafka, Berlin: Directmedia Publ. 2000 [1917], S. 92458.

- (48) a. Soldaten hätten ihnen zu essen und zu trinken gegeben.<sup>73</sup>  
 b. Als Großmütter ihren Enkeln mit der Flasche ungesüßte Schokolade zu trinken gaben.<sup>74</sup>

### Attested verbs

- Verbs of cognition: *bedenken, denken, erkennen, erwägen, verstehen*
- Verbs of consumption: *beißen, essen, fressen, trinken, saufen, schlucken*
- Other agentive verbs: *leben, lesen, lernen, lösen, tragen, schaffen (arbeiten), tun*

### Further examples

- Er gibt dem Kind Milch zu trinken.
- Er gibt mir viel zu tragen.
- Er gab mir ein Problem zu lösen.
- Ich gebe ihm eine Tasche zu tragen.
- Diese Tagebücher gab sie mir zu lesen.<sup>75</sup>
- »Das Blut dieser Frau komme über Sie und Ihre Kinder«, gab der Baron ihm noch zu schlucken.<sup>76</sup>
- Die Liftjungen geben mir aber heute zu schaffen!<sup>77</sup>

### Notes

[12.62]

The verb *leben* ‘to live’ is used in this construction with a slightly different meaning. As illustrated in (49a) it does not mean ‘to cause to live’ but ‘to predict to remain alive’. The *geben+zu-Infinitiv* construction with the verb *denken* ‘to think’ is typically stacked inside a modal *sollen/müssen+Infinitiv* (49b) or a perfect *haben+Partizip* (49c).

- (49) a. Der Arzt gab mir noch drei Wochen zu leben.  
 b. Sollte das nicht den Pazifisten zu denken geben?  
 c. Hoffentlich hat die Sendung auch Lehrern zu denken gegeben.

<sup>73</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 12.05.2015 (online).

<sup>74</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.03.2013, Nr. 11.

<sup>75</sup>DWDS: Müller-Jahnke, Clara: Ich bekenne. In: Deutsche Literatur von Frauen, Berlin: Direct-media Publ. 2001 [1904], S. 52490.

<sup>76</sup>DWDS A. Zweig, Junge Frau, S. 203.

<sup>77</sup>DWDS: Kafka, Franz: Amerika. In: Deutsche Literatur von Lessing bis Kafka, Berlin: Directmedia Publ. 2000 [1914], S. 105459.

## 12.7 Diatheses with object demotion

Not attested.<sup>[3]</sup>

## 12.8 Diatheses with promotion to object

Not attested.

[12.64]

## 12.9 Symmetrical diatheses

— [ OBJ > SBJ > OBJ ] —

### 12.9.1 [ NA | DN ] *bleiben+zu-Infinitiv* Inversive (*Restinversiv*)

The *bleiben+zu-Infinitiv* diathesis shows many intricate details that are in need<sup>[65]</sup> of a much deeper investigation than I can offer here. I have only been able to find a few short discussions of this construction in the literature, none of which go into much detail (ref-hohle1978: 48–50; ref-engel1996: 478–479; ref-colomo2010: 196–197).

Basically, this diathesis is an passive-like construction, with the accusative being promoted to nominative subject. However, different from a passive, the original subject can be retained as a dative (50a). For that reason this diathesis is classified as an INVERSIVE. Because the demotion (nominative to dative) is “larger” than the promotion (accusative to nominative), this diathesis can be considered a “demoted” inersive. Just like all diatheses, this construction is coherent (50b).

Semantically, this diathesis expresses that (some part of) the grammatical patient is still left over to be applied to the verb, so there is something still to be considered. For this reason I propose to use the German name RESTINVERSIV for this diathesis.

- (50) a. Der Inspektor klärt den Fall.  
Dem Inspektor bleibt nur noch der letzte Fall zu klären.  
b. Ich habe gehört, dass dem Inspektor nur noch der letzte Fall zu klären bleibt.

The retention of the subject as a dative is rare in real usage (51a-c). However, a frequent phenomenon with the *bleiben+zu-Infinitiv* diathesis is that a quantified adverb is used instead of a nominal object, for example *viel*, *genügend*, *wenig*,

*nichts anderes* (52). In such examples, the retention of the subject as a dative is widespread (52b). All such constructions are clearly coherent (52c).

- (51) a. Jetzt bleibt nur noch, diesen Entwurf zu diskutieren.  
 [...] weil jetzt nur noch dieser Entwurf zu diskutieren bleibt.<sup>78</sup>  
 b. Der Wahlleiter klärt den Wahltermin.  
 Vorher jedoch bleibt der Wahltermin zu klären.<sup>79</sup>  
 c. Ich berücksichtige den Glücksanspruch der Mutter.  
 Aber ebenso bleibt der Glücksanspruch der Mutter auch zu berücksichtigen.<sup>80</sup>
- (52) a. Ich entdecke hier viel.  
 b. Hier bleibt mir noch viel zu entdecken.<sup>81</sup>  
 c. (Es ist bekannt, dass) mir hier noch viel zu entdecken bleibt.

The *bleiben+zu-Infinitiv* is commonly used with verbs that take a complement clause, like *abwarten* ‘to wait and see’ (53a). This construction is also coherent, because the order in the subordinate clause is *abzuwarten bleibt* and not *bleibt abzuwarten* (53b). The original *ob* complement clause, now twice embedded, remains extraposed at the end of the sentence. Retention of the original subject as dative seems impossible with such complement-taking verbs.

- (53) a. Ich warte ab, ob Paul wirklich kommt.  
 Es bleibt abzuwarten, ob Paul wirklich kommt.<sup>82</sup>  
 b. Wir müssen Geduld haben, weil abzuwarten bleibt, ob Paul wirklich kommt.

### Attested verbs

- Verbs with complement clauses: *abwarten, beachten, berichten, diskutieren, entscheiden, erledigen, erwägen, hoffen, prüfen, sehen, untersuchen, wünschen*
- Agentive verbs: *anmelden, berücksichtigen, einräumen, entdecken, klären, tun*

<sup>78</sup>Höhle (ref-hohle1978): 49

<sup>79</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 30.10.1987, Nr. 45.

<sup>80</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 02.10.1970, Nr. 40.

<sup>81</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 09.03.2003.

<sup>82</sup>Holl (ref-holl2010): 10

### Further examples

- Jetzt bleibt nur noch dieser eine Schrank einzuräumen.<sup>83</sup>
- Zu diskutieren bleibt der mögliche Molekularmechanismus der Konversion.<sup>84</sup>
- Der Zentrale bleibt noch genügend zu entscheiden, wenn man den Landtagen wieder mehr zu tun gibt.<sup>85</sup>
- Viel bleibt nicht mehr zu berichten.<sup>86</sup>
- Ansonsten bleibt den Soldaten wenig zu tun.<sup>87</sup>
- Auf Erden bleibt der Kirche deshalb nichts anderes zu tun, als die Leidenden zu trösten auf den Jüngsten Tag.<sup>88</sup>
- Mir bleibt nur noch, Privatinsolvenz anzumelden.<sup>89</sup>

### Notes

The situation with verbs that take a dative argument, like *danken* ‘to thank’ or *antworten* ‘to answer’, needs more investigation. The *bleiben+zu-Infinitiv* construction seems to result in sentences with a double dative (54b). However, this construction does not appear to be coherent (54c,d).

- (54) a. Ich danke dem Veranstalter für diese Ausstellung.  
b. Mir bleibt, dem Veranstalter zu danken für diese Ausstellung.<sup>90</sup>  
c. Ich bin fast fertig, weil mir nur noch bleibt, dem Veranstalter zu danken.  
d. ? Ich bin fast fertig, weil mir nur noch dem Veranstalter du danken bleibt.

There is yet another construction with *bleiben* and a *zu-Infinitiv*, shown in (55), that needs more investigation. Basically, the *zu-Infinitiv* clauses seem to be subordinate to the nouns *Ratschlag* ‘advice’ (55a) and *Anspruch* ‘aspiration’ (55b). However, a better analysis is probably to consider these nouns as hidden

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<sup>83</sup>Colomo (ref-colomo2010): 196

<sup>84</sup>DWDS: Bresch, Carsten: *Klassische und molekulare Genetik*, Berlin u. a.: Springer 1965 [1964], S. 174.

<sup>85</sup>DWDS: *Der Tagesspiegel*, 16.10.2003.

<sup>86</sup>DWDS: *Berliner Zeitung*, 24.02.1996.

<sup>87</sup>DWDS: *Die Zeit*, 01.01.1993, Nr. 01.

<sup>88</sup>DWDS: *Die Zeit*, 16.09.2010, Nr. 38.

<sup>89</sup>DWDS: *Die Zeit*, 22.09.2005, Nr. 39.

<sup>90</sup>DWDS: *Die Zeit*, 02.05.1969, Nr. 18.



predicates, approximately the same as *Ratschlag geben* ‘to give advice’ (55c) and *Anspruch haben* ‘to have an aspiration’ (55d). Then the *bleiben+zu-Infinitiv* construction is a regular anticausative here. However, note that this construction does not appear to be coherent.

- (55) a. Es bleibt der Ratschlag, Objekte gut zu prüfen.<sup>91</sup>  
 b. Es bleibt der Anspruch, die Region zu befrieden.<sup>92</sup>  
 c. Jemand gab den Ratschlag, die Objekte gut zu prüfen.  
 d. Jemand hat den Anspruch, die Region zu befrieden.

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<sup>91</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 24.12.2004.

<sup>92</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 15.10.1998, Nr. 43.



# 13 Light-verb alternations with *Präpositionsinfinitiv*

## 13.1 Introduction

[13.1] This final chapter investigates a class of constructions that consist of a light verb with a preposition, an article and an infinitive, like the *sein+am-Infinitiv* progressive (1a), see Section 13.4.1, or the *haben+am-Infinitiv* inersive (1b), see Section 13.9.1. German has various such grammaticalised monoclausal constructions, which are superficially similar, but syntactically clearly different from clauses with ordinary prepositional phrases. The grammaticalised combination of a preposition, an article and an infinitive will be called a *Präpositionsinfinitiv* and it is proposed as a fourth non-finite verbform alongside *Partizip*, *Infinitiv* and *zu-Infinitiv*.

- (1) a. Ich bin am Arbeiten.  
b. Der Jongleur hat unzählige Teller am Drehen.

[13.2] Such constructions appear to be relatively new to the German language. There is some historical research on the *sein+am-Infinitiv* progressive, and a few tentative examples have been observed as early as the 16th century (ref-gargyan2010: 124–132). However, this construction only becomes regularly attested in the 19th century. The other constructions discussed in this chapter have not yet been properly diachronically investigated, but my impression is that these are all relatively recent developments. Accordingly, these constructions are often considered colloquial and are regularly avoided in formal written language.

In German orthography, when an infinitive is used as a noun (as most clearly indicated by a preceding article) than it should be written with a capital letter. Consequently, I have written all infinitives with capitals in this chapter. However, there is quite a bit of uncertainty about this in daily orthographic practice. For example, both capitalised and non-capitalised forms of the *am* progressive are frequently attested in contemporary German (ref-gargyan2010: 67–68, 73–74).

The morphosyntactic characteristics of the *Präpositionsinfinitiv* are discussed in detail in Section 13.2.2. In identifying a *Präpositionsinfinitiv*, care has to be

taken to distinguish it from other highly similar constructions. First, a *Präpositionsinfinitiv* is a monoclausal construction, distinct from other similar, but underlyingly biclausal subordinate structures, like with *träumen von* ‘to dream of’ in (2a), see Section 13.2.3. Second, the *Präpositionsinfinitiv* is different from adverbial phrases with infinitives, like goal-oriented *zum Schwimmen* ‘with the intent to swim’ in (2b), see Section 13.2.4.

- (2) a. Sie träumt vom Schwimmen.  
b. Er läuft zum Schwimmen durch die halbe Stadt.

The result of this strict demarcation is that only very few clearly grammaticalised constructions with a *Präpositionsinfinitiv* can be identified. The handful of epitheses and the three diatheses that are presented in this chapter are all constructed with just a few light verbs, namely *haben*, *sein*, *bleiben*, *gehen*, *fahren*, *kommen* and *halten*. I propose the following German names for the three diatheses:

[13.5]

- [PBJ > SBJ > Ø] *sein zum* AUSLÖSERSUBJEKTIVIERUNG (see Section 13.5.1)
- [OBJ > SBJ > OBJ] *haben am* PERTINENZINVERSIV (see Section 13.9.1)
- [Ø > SBJ > OBJ] *halten am* FORTSETZUNGSKAUSATIV (see Section 13.6.1)

## 13.2 Defining the *Präpositionsinfinitiv*

### 13.2.1 The *Präpositionsinfinitiv*

The *Präpositionsinfinitiv* is a grammaticalised construction that will be distinguished from the superficially identical “regular” combination of a preposition with an article and an infinitive. This distinction is rather subtle and there is quite some individual variation, indicating that the *Präpositionsinfinitiv* is still in its early stages of grammaticalisation. I will first discuss the general characteristics of regular preposition+article+infinitive combinations, only to subsequently argue that the *Präpositionsinfinitiv* (3a) is different, see Section 13.2.2. Various highly similar structures will be distinguished from the *Präpositionsinfinitiv* in the ensuing sections, namely (i) governed prepositional subordination (3b), see Section 13.2.3, (ii) adverbial modification (3c), see Section 13.2.4 and (iii) the *Funktionsverbgefüge* (3d), see Section 13.2.5.

[13.6]

- (3) a. Der Vater kommt gerade vom Einkaufen.  
(‘vom Einkaufen’ = *Präpositionsinfinitiv*, Section 13.2.2)  
b. Der Husten kommt sicher vom Rauchen.

- (‘vom Rauchen’ = Governed prepositional subordination, Section 13.2.3)
- c. Der Senior kommt täglich zum Schwimmen.  
(‘zum Schwimmen’ = Adverbial modification, Section 13.2.4)
  - d. Das Prinzip kommt bald zur Anwendung.  
(‘zur Anwendung’ = *Funktionsverbgefüge*, Section 13.2.5)

### 13.2.2 Grammatical structure

[13.7] The central part of a *Präpositionsinfinitiv* is the infinitive verbform. An infinitive is basically a noun derived from a verb (see Section 11.2.2). As a noun, an infinitive can regularly be preceded by an article, forming a noun phrase, like *das Schreiben* ‘the writing’ (4a). And as a noun phrase, it can be preceded by a preposition to form a prepositional phrase *durch das Schreiben* ‘by writing’ (4b). The infinitive can also have additional attributive modifiers, e.g. adjectives like *schnell* ‘fast’ (4c), modifying prepositional phrases like *im Dunkeln* ‘in the dark’ (4d) or modifying genitive phrases like *eines Tagebuchs* ‘of a diary’ (4e). Syntactically, the position of the preposition+article+infinitive phrase in the sentence is flexible. Specifically, it does not have to occur immediately before the finite verb at the end of a subordinate clause (4f). Finally, under some morphophonological circumstances the preposition and article fuse together, leading to contractions like *beim*, from *bei+dem* (4g). All these possibilities show that the infinitive operates exactly like a regular noun inside a prepositional phrase.

- (4) a. [Das Schreiben]<sub>NP</sub> fällt ihm schwer.
- b. [Durch das Schreiben]<sub>PP</sub> ist er berühmt geworden.
- c. [Durch das schnelle Schreiben]<sub>PP</sub> ist er müde geworden.
- d. [Durch das Schreiben im Dunkeln]<sub>PP</sub> ist er blind geworden.
- e. [Durch das Schreiben eines Tagebuchs]<sub>PP</sub> hat er viel gelernt.
- f. (Es ist bekannt, dass) er sich [durch das Schreiben]<sub>PP</sub> von seinen Dämonen befreit hat.
- g. [Beim Schreiben]<sub>PP</sub> ist er eingeschlafen.

[13.8] Different from (4), some preposition+article+infinitive combinations have special characteristics indicating that they are grammaticalised into bound morphology, namely the preposition and article are (i) fused, (ii) unstressed and (iii) inseparable, and the whole phrase (iv) cannot be modified and (v) is positionally fixed.

I will call such grammaticalised combinations *PRÄPOSITIONSINFINITIV*. They behave syntactically like a non-finite verbform, on a par with the *Partizip*, *Infinitiv* and *zu-Infinitiv*. For example, they regularly occur in the so-called “right sentence bracket” at the end of a clause, in which all German non-finite verbs are placed.

By definition then, a combination of preposition+article+infinitive is a grammaticalised *Präpositionsinfinitiv* when the following characteristics hold. These characteristics will be illustrated in more detail below. [13.9]

- (i) The preposition and the article are obligatorily fused.
- (ii) The fused preposition/article is always unstressed (e.g. contrastive focus is not possible).
- (iii) The fused preposition/article is inseparable into its component pieces.
- (iv) The infinitive does not allow for any attributive modifiers, such as prenominal adjectives, post-nominal genitives or prepositional phrases.
- (v) In subordinate position, the preposition+article+infinitive combination is inseparable, placed immediately in front of the sentence-final finite verb.

To illustrate these characteristics, I will contrast a location phrase *am Tisch* [13.10] ‘at the table’ (5a) with a grammaticalised phrase *am Arbeiten* ‘at work’ in the *sein+am-Infinitiv* progressive construction (5b). Superficially, these two sentences look structurally similar. For example, both have a fused preposition+article *am*, from *an+dem*.

- (5)    a. Ich sitze am Tisch.  
           b. Ich bin am Arbeiten.

However, there are many structural differences. First, the locational *am* can take contrastive stress (6a), while the progressive *am* cannot (6b). This difference arguably stems from the fact that the progressive *am* does not have any obvious alternatives. Note though that, contrary to this claim, a linguistically hyper-aware speaker could use a contrastive example as in (6b), because there is indeed a slight difference between the *am* progressive (see Section 13.4.1) and the *beim* frequentative (see Section 13.4.4). [13.11]

- (6)    a. Ich sitze ám Tisch, nicht áuf dem Tisch.  
           b. ? Ich bin ám Arbeiten, nicht béim Arbeiten.

Next, in the locational usage the fused preposition+article combination can be separated into two words (7a). This is not possible in the grammaticalised progressive construction (7b), cf. Gárgyán (ref-gargyan2010: 71).

- (7) a. Ich sitze an dem Tisch.  
b. \* Ich bin an dem Arbeiten.

Additionally, attributive adjectives are possible in the locational usage (9a), but not in the progressive construction (9b), cf. Gárgyán (ref-gargyan2010: 69). Other modifiers, like genitives, relative clauses or prepositional clauses are likewise not well-formed in the grammaticalised progressive construction.

- (8) a. Ich sitze am schönen Tisch.  
b. \* Ich bin am harten Arbeiten.

Finally, the syntactic flexibility of a location phrase like *am Tisch* is much greater than the progressive *am Arbeiten*. This is most clearly illustrated by adding an adverb like *gerne* ‘gladly’ and then embedding the whole construction into a subordinate position. In the locational example, the adverb can occur both before and after the prepositional phrase (9). In contrast, the adverb can only occur before and not after the prepositional phrase in the progressive construction (10). Crucially, this shows that the phrase *am Arbeiten* cannot be separated from the finite verb *bin* in subordinate position. This kind of restriction is consistent with analysing *am Arbeiten* as a non-finite verb form.<sup>1</sup>

- (9) a. (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich gerne am Tische sitze.  
b. (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich am Tisch gerne sitze.
- (10) a. (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich gerne am Arbeiten bin.  
b. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) ich am Arbeiten gerne bin.

### 13.2.3 Governed prepositional subordination

[13.15] Verbs with governed prepositions show many characteristics of a *Präpositionsinfinitiv*. However, they are classified here as a different kind of construction. By definition (see Section 6.2.1), governed prepositions allow for a biclausal subordinate paraphrase with *da(r)+Präposition*, *dass*, like with *reden über* ‘to talk about’ in (11a). Alternatively, most such governed prepositions also allow for a similar construction with a subordinate *zu-Infinitiv* (11b). As a third alternative only the

<sup>1</sup>Gárgyán (ref-gargyan2010: 35, 179–181) investigates the co-occurrence of adverbial prepositional phrases in progressive sentences. She finds various postposed examples, although they appear less frequent than preposed ones. Unfortunately, she did not explicitly investigate progressives in subordinate position. The few examples cited do not show anything intervening between the *am* phrase and the final *sein* in subordinate position.

### 13 Light-verb alternations with Präpositionsinfinitiv

infinitive can be used, leading to a construction very close to a *Präpositionsinfinitiv* (11c).

- (11) a. Sein Vater redet darüber, dass Rauchen ungesund ist.  
b. Sein Vater redet darüber, nicht mehr zu rauchen.  
c. Sein Vater redet übers Rauchen.

Such a “bare subordinate infinitive” is possible with almost all verbs that have a governed preposition. Below I have added some corpus examples for *träumen von* ‘to dream of’ (13a), *hindern an* ‘to hinder’ (13b) and *klagen über* ‘to lament’ (13c). Frequent collocations with a similar structure are *Freude haben an* (12d) and *Spaß haben an* (12e).

[13.16]

- (12) a. Ich träume vom Autofahren.<sup>2</sup>  
b. So werden die Cannabispflanzen am Blühen gehindert.<sup>3</sup>  
c. Übers Altwerden klagte er oft und verhöhnte alles, was kam, ihn zu ehren.<sup>4</sup>  
d. Ich habe Freude am Lesen.  
e. Ich habe Spaß am Leben.

Such prepositional phrases with bare subordinate infinitives, like with *neigen zu* ‘to tend to’ (13a), show various similarities to a *Präpositionsinfinitiv*. For example, the preposition and the article cannot be separated into *zu dem* (13b). Additionally, the prepositional phrase cannot be separated from a finite verb in subordinate sentence-final position, e.g. with an adverb like *immer* ‘always’ in between (13c).

- (13) a. Der RB-Fan neigt zum Klatschen.<sup>5</sup>  
b. \* Der RB-Fan neigt zu dem Klatschen.  
c. \* (Es ist bekannt, dass) der RB-Fan zum Klatschen immer neigt.

However, in contrast to a *Präpositionsinfinitiv*, modification of the infinitive is possible. This is illustrated here with genitives in prepositional constructions with *bringen zu* (14a) and *abhalten von* (14b). These genitives are actually retained arguments of the verbs in the infinitive. For example in (14b), the phrase *vom*

<sup>2</sup>DWDS: Zeit Magazin, 16.05.2013, Nr. 21.

<sup>3</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.06.2015, Nr. 25.

<sup>4</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 12.07.1956, Nr. 28.

<sup>5</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 27.04.2014, Nr. 17.



*Besuchen des Spiels* is derived from the clause *sie besuchen das Spiel*, in which *Spiel* ‘game’ is the object of *besuchen* ‘to visit’. Adjectival modification is illustrated with governed prepositions of the verbs *profitieren von* (14c) and *einladen zu* (14d).

- (14) a. Die Stadt [...] versucht, ihn auf anderen Wegen [zum Aufgeben des Hofs] zu bringen.<sup>6</sup>  
 b. Mit erhöhten Ticketpreisen sollten die Hooligans [vom Besuchen des Spiels] abgehalten werden.<sup>7</sup>  
 c. Ebay profitiert [vom boomenden Einkaufen] im Internet.<sup>8</sup>  
 d. Mehrere Bänke sollen [zum besinnlichen Sitzen] [...] einladen.<sup>9</sup>

Summarising, verbs with a governed preposition allow for a construction that is very close to the *Präpositionsinfinitiv*. However, governed prepositions with infinitives are transparently related to biclausal subordinate constructions and retain characteristics of biclausality. Still, governed prepositions seem to be a good starting point for future developments of new *Präpositionsinfinitiv* constructions. For this to happen, however, a verb with a governed preposition has to establish a new (grammaticalised) meaning when used with a bare infinitive.

A possible example in an early stage of a grammaticalisation is the verb *denken*. The verb *denken* has various slightly different meanings. Crucially in the current context, the combination *denken an* means ‘to remember, to not forget’ (15a). This preposition *an* is a governed preposition and can be used with a subordinate *daran, dass* construction (15b) or a *daran+zu-Infinitiv* construction (15c). A different meaning of *denken* ‘to plan, to consider’ is attested without *an*, but with a *zu-Infinitiv* (15d), see also Section 12.4.9. Contradictorily, *denken+ans-Infinitiv* has the meaning ‘to plan’ (15e), i.e. it does not have the same meaning as *denken an*. The meaning of the *denken+ans-Infinitiv* construction is thus separated from *denken an* and might be classified as a *Präpositionsinfinitiv*.

<sup>6</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 25.10.2017 (online).

<sup>7</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 04.08.2013 (online).

<sup>8</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.10.2012 (online).

<sup>9</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 17.01.2003.

- (15) a. Bitte denke an die Kinder!  
 b. Bitte denke daran, dass du die Kinder abholen sollst.  
 c. Bitte denke daran, die Kinder abzuholen.  
 d. Er denkt morgen zu verreisen.  
 e. Viele Junge denken ans Auswandern.<sup>10</sup>

[13.21] Another candidate for grammaticalisation is the verb *bringen*. The verb *bringen* without *zu* means ‘to bring’ (16a) and has a rather different meaning from *bringen zu* ‘to provoke, to cause’ with a governed preposition *zu* (16b). This might be a first step in a development towards a new *Präpositionsinfinitiv* construction. However, currently there is simply a bifurcation between the verb *bringen* and the verb *bringen zu*. Crucially, *bringen zu* allows for modification of the infinitive (16c). However, a completely grammaticalised *Präpositionsinfinitiv* is arguably not far off for this construction.

- (16) a. Sie bringt mich nach Hause.  
 b. Sie bringt mich immer zum Weinen.  
     Sie bringt mich immer dazu, zu weinen.  
 c. [...] wenn [...] ein wilder Föhn [...] die weichen Schneemassen [...] zum schnellen Schmelzen bringt.<sup>11</sup>  
     Wer es zum aktiven Offizier gebracht hat [...].<sup>12</sup>  
     Er hätte vielleicht sogar auf diese Art seine Flucht zum guten Ende bringen können.<sup>13</sup>

An example of a light verb with a *Präpositionsinfinitiv* that has already become separated from its lexical meaning is *kommen+zum-Infinitiv* ‘end of movement’ (17a), see Section 13.4.7. This construction has a different meaning and structure from *kommen+zu-Infinitiv* ‘covertly caused state’ (17b), see Section 12.4.12. Crucially, both are separate from the lexical meaning *kommen zu* ‘to get round to do something’ with a governed prepositional phrase (17c), see Section 6.3.1. Lastly, all these constructions are different from the plain lexical meaning of *kommen* ‘to come, to arrive’ (17d), illustrated here with an optional *zum-Infinitiv* as a goal-oriented adverbial modification (‘*um zu*’), see the next Section 13.2.4.

[13.22]

- (17) a. Durch die Vollbremsung kam das Auto ruckhaft zum Stehen.

<sup>10</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 04.03.2013, Nr. 10.

<sup>11</sup>DWDS: Voß, Richard: Zwei Menschen, Stuttgart: Engelhorn 1911 [1949], S. 52.

<sup>12</sup>DWDS: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 1995 [1945].

<sup>13</sup>DWDS: Seghers, Anna: Das siebte Kreuz, Berlin: Aufbau-Taschenbuch-Verl. 2002 [1942], S. 207.

- (= *kommen+zum-Infinitiv* ‘end of movement’, Section 13.4.7)
- b. Nach dem Umzug kam der Fernseher neben dem Esstisch zu stehen.  
(= *kommen+zu-Infinitiv* ‘covertly caused state’, Section 12.4.12)
- c. Durch die Überlastung kam die Feuerwehr nicht zum Feuerlöschen.  
(= *kommen zu* ‘to get round to do something’, Section 6.3.1)
- d. Nach drei Stunden kam endlich die Feuerwehr zum Feuerlöschen.  
(= *kommen (um zu)* ‘to come, to arrive (with a purpose)’,  
Section 13.2.4)

### 13.2.4 Adverbial modification

[13.24] Another phenomenon that looks like a *Präpositionsinfinitiv*, but has to be strictly separated from it, are prepositions with infinitives that function as adverbial modifiers in the sentence. These are constituents that consist of a preposition, an article and an infinitive, like *zum Laufen*, in which the preposition and the article are obligatorily fused. However, they have an adverbial status in the sentence. Because adverbials are syntactically optional, the easiest test for such adverbial usage is to simply leave them out. The resulting sentence should still be grammatical.

[13.24] There are a few common adverbial uses that can be identified by the possibility of a very specific paraphrase. First, teleological (“goal oriented”) *zum-Infinitiv* adverbials are especially common, like, *zum Schwimmen* in (18a). Such adverbials can be paraphrased as ‘with the intent to’, or in German as *um zu+Infinitiv*. A second frequently used adverbial phrase is the temporal *beim-Infinitiv*, meaning ‘while’ (18b). In German such usage can be paraphrased by *während+Infinitiv*. Other prepositions with infinitives are less frequent in adverbial function. Some incidental locational examples can also be found, like an allative (‘from’) *vom-Infinitiv* (18c) or ablative (‘to’) *zum-Infinitiv* (18d).

- (18) a. Er ist [zum Schwimmen] durch die halbe Stadt gelaufen.  
(= um zu schwimmen)
- b. Er verletzt sich [beim Schälen einer Avocado].  
(= während des Schäleins)
- c. Er nimmt den Zug [von dem täglichen Einkaufen] nach Hause.  
(= vom Einkaufen kommend)
- d. Er fährt mit dem Bus [zum Grillen an der Lahn].  
(= zum Ort, wo gegrillt wird)

[13.25] These adverbials do not adhere to most of the characteristics of the *Präpositionsinfinitiv*, except for the fact that the preposition and article are typically fused.

However, the preposition and article can optionally be separated (18b), the whole phrase can move rather freely inside the sentence (18a), and the infinitive can be modified by a genitive (18b), an adjective (18c), or a prepositional phrase (18d).

### 13.2.5 The *Funktionsverbgefüge*

The analysis of the so-called *Funktionsverbgefüge* has a fifty-years long history<sup>[26]</sup> in German linguistics (cf. **ref-heine2020** for a survey). This term is used to refer to grammaticalised constructions that commonly consist of a light verb with a prepositional phrase, like *zur Verfügung stehen* ‘to be available’, *in Zorn geraten* ‘become enraged’ or *in Zweifel ziehen* ‘to cast doubt’ (**ref-heine2020**: 17). Syntactically these phrases are strongly lexicalised and, as can be gleaned from the English translations, they are semantically on a par with individual verbs. They are widely discussed in the German literature and even the infamous Duden grammar includes an extensive eight-page discussion (**ref-duden2009**: 418–425). A common distinction is made between basic noun-verb combinations under the heading *Funktionsverbgefüge mit akkusativisch angeschlossenen Verbsubstantiv* (**ref-duden2009**: 419) and a combination of a verb with a prepositional phrase under the heading *präpositional angeschlossene Funktionsverben* (**ref-duden2009**: 422).

[13.27] There clearly is a lot of similarity between such a prepositional *Funktionsverbgefüge* and the *Präpositionsinfinitiv* as discussed in this chapter. The *Funktionsverben* that are typically used in a *Funktionsverbgefüge* show a lot of overlap with the light verbs that are discussed throughout this book. And indeed, the English term “light verb” has recently been used as a translation of the German term *Funktionsverb* (**ref-fleischhauer2019**; **ref-fleischhauer2021**; **ref-fleischhauer2021a**). However, a *Funktionsverbgefüge* is obviously different in that it includes either (i) a noun (e.g. *Zorn* ‘anger’), or (ii) a noun derived from a verb with nominalising derivational morphology (e.g. *Verfügung* ‘disposal’ from *verfügen* ‘to have at one’s disposal’ + *-ung*), or (iii) a zero-derived noun (*Zweifel* ‘doubt’ from *zweifeln* ‘to doubt’). In contrast, the *Präpositionsinfinitiv* as discussed in this chapter employs infinitives.

Of course, as explained above, an infinitive is also a nominalised verbform, which once more emphasises the strong affinity between the *Funktionsverbgefüge* and the *Präpositionsinfinitiv*. However, the crucial syntactic difference between them is the same difference as discussed previously with prepositional subordination (see Section 13.2.3). The deverbal nouns of a *Funktionsverbgefüge* can still be modified by retained arguments or modifiers, like genitives (19a) or adjectives (19b), which is impossible for a *Präpositionsinfinitiv*.

- (19) a. Ich stelle es zur Verfügung des Bundes.  
Besondere Lufteinheiten müßten [...] zur Verfügung des  
Völkerbundes gestellt werden.<sup>14</sup>
- b. Ich ziehe es in ernste Zweifel.  
Am wenigsten freilich Finnland, dessen Fortbestand als selbständiger  
Staat auch wohl in Rußland selbst nicht mehr in ernste Zweifel  
gezogen wird.<sup>15</sup>

### 13.3 Deponent verbs without alternations

[13.29] Not attested.

### 13.4 Alternations without diathesis

#### — Temporal Aspect —

#### 13.4.1 *sein+am-Infinitiv Progressive (Progressiv)*

The *sein+am-Infinitiv* progressive has already extensively been investigated (ref-krause2002; ref-gargyan2010) and I will not repeat all results from those investigations here. This construction can be used with intransitive verbs to mark an ongoing activity (20a). It is considered colloquial and frowned upon in formal writing, but it is in widespread use. Transitive verbs can only be used with incorporated objects without article (20b), which are arguably intransitive (see Section 5.2.5). The variant with a separated object without article is only used in a small patch at the Dutch border of the German-speaking area (20c).<sup>16</sup>

- (20) a. Der Feind greift an.  
Der Feind ist am Angreifen.
- b. Der Millionär kauft Häuser.  
Der Millionär ist am Häuserkaufen.
- c. ? Der Millionär ist Häuser am Kaufen.

It is important to realise that this section only deals with the *sein+am-Infinitiv* construction. There are various other grammaticalised progressive constructions

<sup>14</sup>DWDS: Archiv der Gegenwart, Bd. 2, 15.11.1932.

<sup>15</sup>DWDS: Vossische Zeitung (Abend-Ausgabe), 11.03.1922.

<sup>16</sup>Verlaufsform mit ‘am’. In: Elspaß, Stephan & Robert Möller. 2003ff. Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache (AdA). Online at <https://www.atlas-alltagssprache.de/r10-f10abcd>, accessed 29 November 2021.

that are similar, but should be kept distinct. The *sein+im-Infinitiv* is a progressive of change (see Section 13.4.2) and the *bleiben+am-Infinitiv* construction is a continuative progressive (see Section 13.4.3). In contrast, the *sein+beim-Infinitiv* construction is not analysed as a progressive here, but as an absentive (see Section 13.4.4).

### 13.4.2 *sein+im-Infinitiv* Progressive change (*Mutativprogressiv*)

Gárgyán (ref-gargyan2010: 42–43) only briefly mentions the *sein+im-Infinitiv* progressive as a variant of the *am* progressive. The *im* variant is frequently attested in the fixed expression *im Kommen sein* ‘to be approaching’ (21a). From a quick search in the DWDS corpus it is quite obvious that the *sein+im-Infinitiv* progressive has a straightforward semantic profile that is different from the *sein+am-Infinitiv*. The *im-Infinitiv* is used either for processes that are increasing, like *wachsen* ‘to grow’ (21b) or for processes that are decreasing, like *abklingen* ‘to abate’ (21b). Summarising, the *sein+im-Infinitiv* is a progressive with an additional connotation that something is changing.

[13.32]

- (21) a. Aber der Frühling ist im Kommen.<sup>17</sup>  
b. Die Spaßgesellschaft ist im Wachsen.<sup>18</sup>  
c. Die Schwellung ist im Abklingen.<sup>19</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- Become less: *abflauen*, *abklingen*, *abnehmen*, *aussterben*, *schwinden*, *sinken*, *verblassen*, *verschwinden*
- Become more: *anrollen*, *ansteigen*, *entstehen*, *steigen*, *wachsen*, *zerfallen*, *zunehmen*

#### Further examples

- Eine eigene Fahrerflotte sei im Entstehen.<sup>20</sup>
- Die nächste Husten-, Schnupfen- und Erkältungswelle ist im Anrollen.<sup>21</sup>
- Die Kommunistische Partei in Italien war im Erstarken.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup>DWDS: Langer Winter. Schneeschmelze | Texte, 2010-02-16.

<sup>18</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 06.09.2001.

<sup>19</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 03.08.1995.

<sup>20</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.02.2016 (online).

<sup>21</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 15.11.2011, Nr. 46.

<sup>22</sup>DWDS: Umerziehung in Westdeutschland. Eine Deutsche Weise, 2012-02-24.

### 13.4.3 *bleiben+am-Infinitiv* Progressive continuative (*Kontinuativprogressiv*)

Parallel to the *sein* progressive there is also a *bleiben* progressive, which combines the progressive aspect with an added continuative aspectual meaning. The most frequent collocation is with the verb *leben* ‘to live’ (22a), but many other agentive intransitive verbs can also be used in this construction. However, this construction appears to be less productive than the *sein* progressive.

- (22) a. Also sind wenigstens die am Leben geblieben.<sup>23</sup>  
 b. Das Schiff muss immer schön am schwimmen bleiben.<sup>24</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- *dampfen, jammern, kämpfen, leben, schwimmen*

#### Further examples

- Ich habe zu sorgen, daß meine Schornsteine am dampfen bleiben.<sup>25</sup>
- „Ich bin am kämpfen, daß ich meinen alten Lohn wiederkriege“, sagt er, „da muß man am kämpfen bleiben.“<sup>26</sup>
- Bestes Beispiel dafür, dass dieser Blog hauptsächlich durch Silkroad Artikel am leben bleibt.<sup>27</sup>
- Dann seit ihr mit 16 Euro im Monat und viel Zeit auch bald 100ff und müsst nicht immer am jammern bleiben.<sup>28</sup>

#### — Spatial Aspect —

### 13.4.4 *sein+beim-Infinitiv* Recurrent absence (*Absentivfrequentativ*)

[13.34] The *sein+beim-Infinitiv* construction (34a) seems to be very similar to the *sein+am-Infinitiv* progressive (e.g. they are deemed functionally indistinguishable in ref-gargyan2010).

<sup>23</sup> DWDS: Kant, nicht Keller. Oder?. Not quite like Beethoven, 2009-11-19.

<sup>24</sup> Attested online at <https://freiamtplus.ch/blog-home-switcher/660-operette-mit-historischem-hintergrund.html>, accessed 26 November 2021.

<sup>25</sup> DWDS: Gall, Lothar: Krupp, Berlin: Siedler 2000, S. 81.

<sup>26</sup> DWDS: Die Zeit, 29.05.1981, Nr. 23.

<sup>27</sup> DWDS: Das Diamond Gaming Network eröffnet Silkroad Privatserver. the-pain.net, 2011-02-03.

<sup>28</sup> DWDS: Russisches Silkroad Online angekündigt. the-pain.net, 2009-07-07.

41–42). However, that is the wrong comparison. The *sein+beim-Infinitiv* is actually functionally similar to the *sein+Infinitiv* absentive (23b), see Section 11.4.3. The *sein+beim-Infinitiv* likewise signifies that the subject is not present (absentive), but it adds an extra aspectual dimension, namely that the activity is performed regularly or habitually. I will use the term “frequentative” for this aspect.

- (23) a. Ich bin beim Arbeiten.  
b. Ich bin Arbeiten.

This construction is normally used with agentive intransitive verbs. However, there are some special examples that show a curious role-reversal with transitive verbs. For example, the verb *Haareschneiden* ‘to cut hair’ (24a) consists of a transitive verb *schneiden* ‘to cut’ with an incorporated object *Haare* ‘hair’. Incorporation is a widespread technique in German to reduce the valency of the verb (see Section 5.2.5). Crucially, the nominative of the sentence *sie* ‘she’ is the experiencer of the cutting (i.e. she is the cuttee), not the agent (i.e. she is not the cutter). So, there seems to be some kind of anticausative diathesis going on here. However, I will not analyse this sentence as an anticausative. As an alternative, I propose to interpret the infinitive *Haareschneiden* as a metonymic replacement for the location *Friseur* ‘barber’ (24b). Whatever the eventual preferred analysis will be, this example is a fascinating structure that has to be investigated further.

[13.35]

- (24) a. Sie war beim Haareschneiden.<sup>29</sup>  
b. Sie war beim Friseur.

Another detail that might lead to confusion is the construction *dabei sein* with a *zu-Infinitiv* (25a). Although *bei* might look like a governed preposition (see Section 13.2.3), there is a semantic mismatch. The subordinate *dabei sein* construction in (25a) is a progressive, while the *Präpositionsinfinitiv* in (25b) is an absentive. The meanings of these two constructions appear to have been drifting apart. A possible analysis of (25a) is to consider the verb *dabeisein* as a distinct verb with a directional preverbial *dabei-* (see Section 9.2.5).

[13.36]

- (25) a. Ich bin dabei einzukaufen.  
b. Ich bin beim Einkaufen.

Finally note that a *beim* phrase can also be a temporal adverbial (see Section 13.2.4). In such usage there is no *sein+beim-Infinitiv* construction. This is

<sup>29</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 19.10.2001.



the case in (26), for example. The main predicate (in the *dass* complement clause) is *kein Hindernis sein* ‘to be no obstacle’ and not *beim Geldverdienen sein* ‘to be making money’. Consequently, the *beim* phrase is only an adverbial modifier to the main predicate in this example.

- (26) Immerhin kann man unterstellen, dass Latein-Lernen kein Hindernis ist beim Geldverdienen.<sup>30</sup>

### Attested verbs

- Agentive intransitive verbs: *arbeiten, aufholen, aufstehen, einkaufen, skifahren, weggehen*
- Anticausative-like constructions: *binden, fettabsaugen, haareschneiden*

### Further examples

- Ich war beim Aufstehen.<sup>31</sup>
- Gouverneur Frederic Mishkin war beim Skifahren.<sup>32</sup>
- Ich bin alleine, meine Frau ist beim Einkaufen.<sup>33</sup>
- Aber der männliche Nachwuchs ist beim Aufholen.<sup>34</sup>
- Keiner soll allein sein beim Weggehen.<sup>35</sup>

### Notes

[13.38]

The two examples in (27) are further cases of the anticausative-like usage, as described above for the infinitive *Haareschneiden*.

- (27) a. Sie war beim Fettabsaugen.<sup>36</sup>  
 b. Meine Diplomarbeit ist beim Binden.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>30</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 05.01.2005.

<sup>31</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 09.11.2001.

<sup>32</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 31.01.2008, Nr. 06.

<sup>33</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 10.03.2001.

<sup>34</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 21.08.1996.

<sup>35</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 19.10.2002.

<sup>36</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 14.11.2001.

<sup>37</sup>DWDS: verwaltungmodern.de, 2007-04-10.

### 13.4.5 *gehen/fahren+zum-Infinitiv* Recurrent movement towards (*Abitivfrequentativ*)

[13.39]

The *gehen/fahren+zum-Infinitiv* construction basically expresses a movement towards a place at which the verb will be performed. It is typically used with agentive intransitive verbs like *einkaufen* ‘to shop’ (28a) or *schwimmen* ‘to swim’ (28b). There is a close connection to the *gehen/fahren+Infinitiv* abitive construction, which also expresses a movement towards an activity (see Section 11.4.4). The current construction with the *zum-Infinitiv* adds a frequentative/habitual aspect to the activity. It is often attested with adverbs like *regelmäßig* to emphasise this aspectual notion.

- (28) a. Ich fahre gleich zum Einkaufen.  
b. Ich gehe regelmäßig zum Schwimmen.

This construction is normally used with agentive intransitive verbs. However, [13.40] there is a special variant with transitive verbs like *massieren* ‘to massage’ (29). Conspicuously, in the example below the subject *ich* is the massagee (i.e. the patient of the massage) not the masseuse. This suggests a kind of anticausative diathesis. I have not followed up on this idea because (i) this usage seems to be rare, and (ii) I think that the verb *massieren* can here be interpreted as metonymically replacing the place where the activity takes place (29b). However, this construction needs more investigation (just like the similar examples in Section 13.4.4).

- (29) a. Ah ja, und dann bin ich zum Massieren gegangen.<sup>38</sup>  
b. Ich bin zum Massagesalon gegangen.

Care has to be taken not to confuse the current abitive-frequentative construction with a lexical usage of *gehen/fahren*. Especially when there is also a teleological *zum* adverbial (see Section 13.2.4), then such sentences look highly similar. For example, the sentences in (30) are almost identical to the examples in (28). Yet, the sentences in (30) are crucially different. The *zum* phrases in these sentences are adverbials that express the reason for the lexical *gehen/fahren* ‘to go/drive’. This interpretation can be tested by the possibility of an *um+zu-Infinitiv* paraphrase. Because this is possible, these sentences are not examples of the *gehen/fahren+zum-Infinitiv* abitive-frequentative.

[13.41]

- (30) a. Ich fahre gleich zum Einkaufen in die Stadt.

<sup>38</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 17.06.1994, Nr. 25.

(= Ich fahre in die Stadt um einzukaufen.)

- b. Ich gehe regelmäßig zum Schwimmen ins Schwimmbad.  
(= Ich gehe ins Schwimmbad um zu schwimmen.)

### Attested verbs

- Agentive intransitive verbs: *baden, beichten, einkaufen, essen, fischen, joggen, schlittenfahren, schwimmen, spielen, tanzen*
- Anticausative-like constructions: *massieren*

### Further examples

- Das können wir nämlich deshalb so gut, weil wir immer mit den Kleinen zum Schlittenfahren gegangen sind.<sup>39</sup>

#### 13.4.6 *kommen+vom-Infinitiv* Recurrent movement from (*Aditivfrequentativ*)

[13.42] The opposite of the previous *gehen+zum-Infinitiv* (see Section 13.4.5) is the *kommen+vom-Infinitiv* expressing movement towards (31). There is a straightforward change in preposition, opposing *gehen zum* ‘to go to’ with *kommen von* ‘to come from’. There also exist a *kommen+zum-Infinitiv* construction, which, however, has a completely different semantics (see Section 13.4.7 below).

Just like the previous *gehen+zum-Infinitiv*, the *kommen+vom-Infinitiv* has an additional frequentative/habitual aspect. This construction expresses that the movement is done regularly as a matter of habit. This stands in opposition to the *kommen+Infinitiv* aditive construction (without preposition *von*) that does not include this habitual aspect (see Section 11.4.5).

[13.43]

- (31) a. Er kommt vom Einkaufen.  
b. Das hat meine Mutter nämlich damals getan, wenn ich nachts um drei vom Tanzen kam.<sup>40</sup>

This construction is very close to an adverbial modification as discussed in Section 13.2.4. For example, compare the previous examples (31) with the adverbial examples below in (32). In the examples below the *vom* prepositional phrase is an optional adverbial modification that can be left out.

<sup>39</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 20.02.1998.

<sup>40</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 04.11.1999, Nr. 45.

- (32) a. Er nimmt den Zug (vom Einkaufen) nach Hause.  
b. Ich laufe nachts (vom Tanzen) nach Hause.

### Attested verbs

Probably the same verbs as for the *gehen+zum-Infinitiv* (see [sec:zuminfinitive-gehen]) can be used for the *kommen+vom-Infinitiv*. They will not be repeated here.

[13.45]

#### 13.4.7 *kommen+zum-Infinitiv* End of movement (*Bewegungsende*)

The *kommen+zum-Infinitiv* has a very specific interpretation to indicate that a movement has reached an endpoint. For example *kommen zum Stehen* (33a) means ‘to grind to a halt’. The same construction can also be used metaphorically for other activities that come to a standstill, like the *Friedensverhandlungen* ‘peace negotiations’ in (33b). There only appear to be a handful of verbs that can be used in this construction and they all describe that a state is reached at the end of a movement. For want of a better term, I will use the German name *BEWEGUNGSENDE* for this construction.

- (33) a. Das Auto kommt vor der Ampel zum Stehen.  
b. Die Friedensverhandlungen im Jemen sind zum Erliegen  
gekommen.<sup>41</sup>

Besides this stative usage, there are a few other sentence patterns that look similar, but are actually distinct. First, there is a *zum* adverbial structure with a teleological, meaning ‘with the goal to’. This can be paraphrased in German with *um zu* (34a). This is a widespread possibility for a *zum-Infinitiv* that is not specific for a combination with *kommen* (see Section 13.2.4). Second, there is an interpretation of *kommen zu* meaning ‘to get around to do something’ (34b). In this usage, the preposition *zu* is a governed preposition and can be paraphrased in German with *dazu+zu-Infinitiv* (34c). This is a lexically separate meaning of the verb *kommen* with a governed prepositional subordination (see Section 13.2.3). Third, there is a highly frequent fixed expression *zum Tragen kommen* ‘to bring to bear’ (34d). Such lexicalised expressions are known in the German literature as *Funktionsverbgefüge* (see Section 13.2.5). All these sentence patterns do not have to be distinguished from the stative *kommen+zum-Infinitiv* construction illustrated above in (33).

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<sup>41</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 07.07.2017 (online).

- (34) a. Kaum jemand sei zum Baden gekommen.<sup>42</sup>  
 (= Kaum jemand kommt um zu baden.)  
 b. Ich bin in den letzten Tagen nicht zum Schreiben gekommen.<sup>43</sup>  
 (= Ich habe keine Zeit gehabt zum Schreiben.)  
 c. Ich bin nicht dazu gekommen, dir einen Brief zu schreiben.  
 d. Die Stärke des Gegners wäre nicht zum Tragen gekommen.<sup>44</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- *erliegen, halten, liegen, sitzen, stehen, stoppen*

#### Further examples

- Bei Balesfeld im Kreis Bitburg-Prüm hatte sich der Wagen eines Pärchens überschlagen und war auf einer Landstraße auf dem Dach zum Liegen gekommen.<sup>45</sup>
- Endlich bin ich auf einem der wackligen Holzstuhl zum Sitzen gekommen.<sup>46</sup>
- In der ganzen Branche sei diese Dynamik aber fast zum Stoppen gekommen.<sup>47</sup>

## 13.5 Diatheses with subject demotion

— [ PBJ > SBJ > Ø ] —

### 13.5.1 [ NP | -N ] *sein+zum-Infinitiv* Emotional trigger subject (*Auslösersubjektivierung*)

The construction *sein+zum-Infinitiv* drops the nominative subject and promotes a governed preposition to subject. Such a role-remapping is rather unusual in German. In another diathesis, the *Kreationssubjektivierung* (see Section 6.5.7), it is a creation manufactured by the subject that is promoted to subject. In the present construction, it is the trigger of an emotional reaction that is promoted to subject.

<sup>42</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 18.05.2017, Nr. 21.

<sup>43</sup>DWDS: Brief von Ernst G. an Irene G. vom 28.10.1939, Feldpost-Archive mkb-fp-0270.

<sup>44</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 18.08.2005.

<sup>45</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 27.07.2016 (online).

<sup>46</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 21.09.1984, Nr. 39.

<sup>47</sup>DWDS: Der Tagesspiegel, 12.09.2002.

[13.49]

The *sein+zum-Infinitiv* diathesis appears only to apply to verbs of emotion, like *heulen* ‘to cry’ (35). This emotion is triggered by something which is expressed with an *über* governed prepositional phrase (35a). Using this diathesis, the trigger is promoted to subject and the original subject is dropped and cannot be retained in any form (35b). Typically this diathesis is used without explicitly expressing the trigger at all. As a result, the new sentence after the diathesis lacks a subject, and thus a valency-simulating pronoun *es* is commonly attested in this construction (35c).

- (35) a. Ich heule über den Schaden.  
       Ich heule darüber, dass der Schaden so groß ist.  
       b. Der Schaden ist zum Heulen.  
       c. Es ist zum Heulen.

#### Attested verbs

- Verbs of emotion: *empören, heulen, kotzen, lachen, totlachen, verrücktwerden, verzweifeln, weinen*

#### Further examples

- Es ist zum Verzweifeln.
- Es ist zum Totlachen.
- Die ganze Person ist zum Empören.<sup>48</sup>

### 13.6 Diatheses with promotion to subject

— [ Ø > SBJ > OBJ ] —

#### 13.6.1 [ –N | NA ] *halten+am-Infinitiv* Continuative causative (*Fortsetzungskausativ*)

The *halten+am-Infinitiv* construction is used with agentive intransitive verbs, most typically with *laufen* ‘to walk’ (36a). However, the subject of the agentive intransitive has to be an inanimate entity for the diathesis to be possible. The *halten+am-Infinitiv* diathesis adds a new participant to the intransitive event that causes the process to continue. This construction is also frequently attested with

[13.50]

<sup>48</sup> Attested online at <https://headtopics.com/de/analyse-trumps-problemzone-3271583>, accessed 9 November 2021.

verbs describing heat production, like *kochen* ‘to cook’ (36b). However, these cooking verbs appear to be mostly used in a metaphorical sense. Surely, expression like *halten am Kochen* ‘to keep something cooking’ can be used in a literal sense in a conversation about cooking. However, such expressions are more frequently used in a metaphorical sense of ‘to keep the discussion alive’ (36b).

- (36) a. Der so erzeugte Druck hielt die Partnerschaft am Laufen.<sup>49</sup>  
 b. Photos, Interviews und Indiskretionen halten den Topf am Kochen.<sup>50</sup>

[13.51] There are also some examples with the light verb *erhalten* instead of *halten* (37), but there is no obvious difference in meaning. The verb *erhalten* most frequently occurs in the collocation with *am Leben* ‘alive’.

- (37) a. Schwimmen kann der Rochen nur in einer Nährstofflösung, die die Herzmuskelzellen am Leben erhält.<sup>51</sup>  
 b. Das Feuer, das den Geist der Liebe lebendig erhält, kann nur von oben her entzündet und am Brennen erhalten werden.<sup>52</sup>

The semantically opposite *hindern am* ‘to prevent’ is not (yet) grammaticalised. Although it is frequently used with *am+Infinitiv* (38a), it does not show the characteristics of a grammaticalised *Präpositionsinfinitiv* (see Section 13.2.2). For example, it can be used with an adjectival modifier (38b) and the preposition *am* can also be separated into *an dem* (38c).

- (38) a. Zwei Zeugen hätten die sechsköpfige Gruppe am Betreten gehindert.<sup>53</sup>  
 b. Er hat die Pommern nicht nur am rechtzeitigen Entkommen gehindert [...].<sup>54</sup>  
 c. [...] haben sie ihn so lange an dem Ziel seines Lebens gehindert.<sup>55</sup>

#### Attested verbs

- *drehen, laufen, leben, lesen*
- Verbs of heating: *brennen, brodeln, glimmen, kochen, köcheln, lodern, siedern, schwelen*

<sup>49</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 28.05.1999.

<sup>50</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 20.01.1961, Nr. 04.

<sup>51</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 08.07.2016 (online).

<sup>52</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 02.08.1951, Nr. 31.

<sup>53</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 14.03.2014, Nr. 11.

<sup>54</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 20.03.2014, Nr. 13.

<sup>55</sup>DWDS: Die Zeit, 27.04.1990, Nr. 18.

### Further examples

- Wer die Münze nicht am drehen halten kann, muss anscheinend einen Schnaps auf Ex trinken.<sup>56</sup>
- Deshalb posten moderatoren immer in jedem thread und halten die diskussion am kochen.<sup>57</sup>
- Das hält die SSH-Verbindung länger am leben.<sup>58</sup>
- Die Frage, ob und wie A und B zusammenkommen, ist aber nicht das, was mich am Lesen hält.<sup>59</sup>
- Zubereitung: Den Fond erhitzen und am Sieden halten.<sup>60</sup>

## 13.7 Diatheses with object demotion

Not attested.

## 13.8 Diatheses with promotion to object

Not attested.

## 13.9 Symmetrical diatheses

— [ OBJ > SBJ > OBJ ] —

### 13.9.1 [ DN | NA ] *haben+am-Infinitiv* Dative inersive (*Pertinenzinversiv*)

The *haben+am-Infinitiv* construction is a fascinating construction that needs much more research (cf. **ref-businger2017**: 323–325). It is a colloquial construction that is virtually unattested in traditional corpora. However, in more informal usage online it is reasonably easy to find examples.

The basic clause of this diathesis has an agentive intransitive verb, like *brennen* ‘to burn’ (39a). This diathesis targets the (often implicit) possessor of the intransitive subject. Crucially for this diathesis to work, this possessor is some kind of experiencer of the event. Such experiencer possessives can alternatively

<sup>56</sup> Attested online at <https://pippin-unterwegs.de/hogmanay-in-glasgow/>, accessed 20.11.2021.

<sup>57</sup> DWDS: Die Schönheit Des Simplex, 2005-06-29.

<sup>58</sup> DWDS: Konstantin Filtschew WebLog, 2008-10-13.

<sup>59</sup> DWDS: Von Genrebetrachtungen und Happy Ends. Katastrophengebiet, 2011-06-05.

<sup>60</sup> DWDS: KOCHWERKSTATT Wo es so lecker ist!. koch-werkstatt.de, 2006-03-09.



be expressed as a dative (39b), see Section 5.8.3. The *haben+am-Infinitiv* diathesis now promoted this dative to subject and the old subject is demoted to accusative (39c).

- (39) a. Die Wohnung (des Studenten) brennt.  
 b. Dem Studenten brennt die Wohnung.  
 c. Der Student hat die Wohnung am Brennen.

This means that the subject of a *haben+am-Infinitiv* construction (here *Der Student* ‘the student’) is always inherently the possessor of the object of this construction (here *die Wohnung* ‘the apartment’). I included the word *pertinenz* as part of the German name for all diatheses that include such an inherent possessor in the role-remapping. The current diathesis is thus called *PERTINENZINVERSIV*. This diathesis is closely related to the *Ortspertinenzinversiv*, see Section 11.9.2. Both diatheses are semantically and structurally similar, though curiously the *Ortspertinenzinversiv* uses a *haben+Infinitiv* construction without *am*.

#### Attested verbs

- *brennen, drehen, funktionieren, glühen, laufen, schlafen*

#### Further examples

- Alex, wie ihn alle nennen, hatte immer was am Laufen.<sup>61</sup>
- Jetzt, am Anfang der Arbeit an diesem Projekt komme ich mir vor wie ein Jongleur, der unzählige Teller in der Luft am Drehen hat.<sup>62</sup>
- Aber auf das Geschiss, bis wir mal die Holzkohle am Glühen haben, können wir gut und gerne verzichten.<sup>63</sup>
- Das Problem vieler Anfänger ist, daß sie immer alles gleich am funktionieren haben wollen, ohne sich vorher zu informieren.<sup>64</sup>
- Als ich sie vorhin endlich am Schlafen hatte (halb zehn oder so :-? ) bin ich duschen.<sup>65</sup>
- Nehmen wir an ich habe daheim die Wohnung am Brennen.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup>DWDS: Berliner Zeitung, 10.12.2005.

<sup>62</sup>Businger (ref-businger2017): 324

<sup>63</sup>Businger (ref-businger2017): 324

<sup>64</sup>Businger (ref-businger2017): 324

<sup>65</sup>Businger (ref-businger2017): 324

<sup>66</sup>Businger (ref-businger2017): 324



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# Encyclopaedia of German Diatheses

A diathesis is a sentence structure that reshapes the expression of the roles of a verb. This book presents an encyclopaedic survey of diathesis in German. Currently almost 250 different German diatheses are described in this book, some highly productive, some only attested for a handful of verbs. The main goal of this book is to present this wealth of grammatical possibility in a unified manner, while at the same time attempting to classify and organise this diversity. A summary of the about 80 most prominent diatheses is also provided, including many newly minted German names, because most of these diatheses did not have a German name yet.

Except for diathesis this book also aims to completely catalogue its counterpart: epithesis. An epithesis is a derived sentence structure in which the marking of the roles is not changed. Basically, these are the grammaticalised constructions expressing tense-aspect-mood-evidentiality in German. The list of major epitheses is also quite long (about 40 constructions), but it is quite a bit smaller than the list of major diatheses (about 80 constructions). This indicates that from a purely grammatical perspective, diathesis ('grammatical voice') is about a two-times more elaborate topic than epithesis ('tense-aspect-mood marking') in German.

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