

Polysemy and coercion of clause-embedding predicates (CEPs)

AG 10

Marie-Luise Popp & Barbara Stiebels (Universität Leipzig)

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Changes in the program

The talks by Alda Mari and Michelle Li (both today) have been cancelled.

Introduction: Examples of polysemy I

The Tauya verb *esimene-* is interpreted as ‘know’ (with a nominal clause complement) and as ‘think’ (with a direct quote complement).

(1) Tauya (MacDonald 2013)

a. [Ne mei mene-a-na] **esimene**-e-ʔa.

3SG here be-3SG-SUB know-1/2SG-IND

‘I know he is here’

b. [[“Yuʔa sen-pi-ra pai ou-pa ni-pope-i-ʔa.”]

friend 1PL-GEN-TOP pig pierce-SS eat-HAB-3PL-IND

o-pa] **esimene**-pa

say-SS think-SS

‘they thought their friends always shot and ate pigs ...’

Introduction: Examples of polysemy II

The interpretation of the Neverver verb *ver-* ‘say, think, tell, want’ depends on the presence of the affix *-bor*, the applicative marker and the realis/irrealis distinction in the embedded clause.

(2) Neverver (Barbour 2012)

- a. Ni-**ver-bor** [ei **i**-vlem].
1SG.REAL-say-maybe 3SG 3SG.REAL-come
‘I think/assert that he came’
- b. Ei **i-ver** [te **i**-khitrokh mang adr
3SG 3SG.REAL-say COMP 3SG.REAL-see man.ANA PL
ati-vkhal].
3PL.REAL-fight
‘He_i said that he_i saw the men fight.’

Introduction: Examples of polysemy III

- c. I-**ver-ikh** na [i-ver [nimokhmokh ang
3SG.REAL-say-APPL 1SG 3SG.REAL-say female ANA
i-vu ij]].
3SG.REAL-go ANT
'He told me that the woman has gone.'
- d. Eii i-**ver-ikh** eii_i [i-ver [eii_i
3SG 3SG.REAL-say-APP 3SG 3SG.REAL-say 3SG
im-bbuvu si]].
3SG.IRR-DUP-go NEG
'He told him not to go'
- e. Mang i-**ver** me [**im**-delmus ar].
man.ANA 3SG.REAL-want just 3SG.IRR-whip 3NSG
'The man just wanted/intended to whip them.'

Introduction: Examples of polysemy IV

(3) Spanish *sentir* ‘hear, feel/sense, regret’

a. No la **sentí** entrar.
NEG 3SG.ACC.F hear.PST.PFV.1SG enter.**INF**

‘I didn’t hear her come in’

b. Quizá **sintió** **que** no le
maybe sense.PST.PFV.3SG COMP NEG 3SG.DAT
estaba diciendo la verdad.
be.PST.IMPF.1SG say.CNV the truth

‘maybe she sensed that I wasn’t telling her the truth’

c. **Siento** mucho **que** pienses de esa forma.
regret.1SG very COMP think.2SG.**SBJV** of DEM form
‘I’m very sorry that you feel that way’

Introduction: Examples of polysemy V

John saw Fred leave early.	<bare infinitive>	[direct perception]
John saw Fred leaving early.	<participle>	[direct perception]
John saw Fred owning a house.	<participle>	[imaginative]
John saw Fred to be a party-pooper.	<to-infinitive>	[belief]
John saw that Fred left early.	<finite complement>	[factive]

Table 1: Polysemy of *see*

Idiosyncratic polysemy I

(4) Polysemy of *ab-sehen* (off-see)

- a. Es ist noch nicht **ab-zu-sehen**, wann ein Urteil
it be.3SG yet not PT-to-see.INF when a sentence
gesprochen werden könnte.
speak.PTCP AUX.INF can.PST.SBJV.3SG
'one cannot foresee when a sentence could be passed'
- b. „**Sieht** man einmal **da-von ab**, dass die Bayern
see.3SG one even there-from PT that the Bavarians
traditioneller leben als die Berlin-er ...”
more.traditionally live than the Berlin-NOML
'if one ignores that the Bavarians live more traditionally
than the people from Berlin'

Idiosyncratic polysemy II

- c. Wir **sehen** derzeit **da-von** **ab**, Polizisten
we see.1PL at.present there-from PT, policemen
dazu aufzufordern, die Anweisung zu ignorieren
there-to ask.INF the order to ignore.INF
'we refrain from asking the policemen to ignore the instructions'
- d. **Von** einer erneuten Über-prüf-ung der
from a renewed over-check-NOML the.GEN
Schul-leiter **sieht** Potsdam **ab**. [DWDS TS 2004]
school-directors see.3SG Potsdam PT
'Potsdam refrains from a new inspection of the school directors'

Idiosyncratic polysemy III

- e. Überhaupt hat es die Polizei **dar-auf ab-gesehen**,
anyway AUX.3SG it the police there-on PT-see.PTCP
den Rasern das Fahr-vergnügen zu
the.ACC speed.demons the drive-pleasure to
verleiden.
spoil.INF
'in general, the police intends to spoil the driving
pleasure of the speed demons'

Idiosyncratic polysemy IV

Reading		<i>dass</i>	V2	INTER	INF	NOML
‘foresee’	with modals	✓	–	✓	–	✓
‘intend (to reach)’	<i>auf</i> -PP complement	✓	–	–	✓	✓
‘disregard’	<i>von</i> -PP complement	✓	–	✓	–	✓
‘refrain from’	<i>von</i> -PP complement	??	–	–	✓	✓

Table 2: Reading-dependent clausal complementation of *absehen*

The readings ‘disregard’ (factive interpretation) and ‘refrain from’ (implicative predicate) both have integrated a negative meaning component. Apart from ‘foresee’ all other readings are intentional.

Interim summary for the previous examples

- ▶ The reading of the CEP may be influenced by the complement type. (This also includes the complementizer.)
- ▶ The reading of the CEP may be influenced by embedded verbal mood.
- ▶ The reading of the CEP may be influenced by its argument structure/realization.
- ▶ The reading of the CEP may be influenced by modal modification of the predicate.

Research questions I

Empirical issues:

- ▶ Which patterns of polysemy can be observed in CEPs? Are there predictable/systematic patterns of polysemy?
- ▶ Are there cross-linguistically frequent patterns of polysemy in clause-embedding predicates? (↗ Lind Sørensen & Boye, Serdobolskaya)
- ▶ Are there systematic meaning shifts or coercion mechanisms that lead to polysemy? (↗ Wechsler)
- ▶ To what extent are readings of polysemous/vague predicates bound to
 - ▶ a specific argument structure/realization, (↗ Schwabe)
 - ▶ a specific clausal complement type, (↗ Kastner)
 - ▶ the presence of certain modal markers? (↗ Bogal-Allbritten)
- ▶ Do certain clausal complement types enforce specific readings (e.g., factive interpretations) in some languages?

Research questions II

- ▶ Which effects does polysemy have for the syntax of clausal embedding?
- ▶ What triggers the choice of a certain complement? (☞ Meijer)
- ▶ Which role does the polysemy of CEPs play for their processing or acquisition?
- ▶ Which patterns of polysemy copying of CEPs can be observed in language contact? (☞ Rentzsch & Mitkovska)

Research questions III

Theoretical issues:

How should the emergence of specific readings of polysemous/vague predicates be modelled?

- ▶ Should it be modelled in the lexical entry of the respective clause-embedding predicate?
- ▶ Should it be modelled in the semantic representation of the clausal complement?
- ▶ Are the representations of both predicate and embedded clause semantically enriched?

Outline of the talk

- ▶ Brief illustration of colexification
- ▶ Recurrent meaning shifts: ‘promise’/‘threaten’
- ▶ Coercion
- ▶ Syntactic effects of polysemy (with a focus on NEG-raising)
- ▶ The role of polysemy and coercion for syntactic flexibility

- (5) Colexification of ‘hear’ and ‘feel’
 - a. Latin: *audire* vs. *sentire*
 - b. Catalan: *sentir* (besides *oir* ‘hear’)
 - c. Italian: *sentir* (besides *udire* ‘hear’)
 - d. Mwotlap: *yoñteg*
 - e. Bislama: *harem* (engl. *hear him*)
- (6) “A given language is said to colexify two functionally distinct senses if, and only if, it can associate them with the same lexical form.” [François 2008: 170]

Colexification II

Sense 1	Sense 2	#Languages	#Predicates
'ask, request'	'ask (a question), inquire'	40	42
'think, reflect'	'think, be of an opinion'	61	78
'believe'	'think, be of the opinion'	24	26
'know'	'understand'	28	30
'feel'	'hear'	19	21

Table 3: Colexifications according to the CLICS database

Polysemy of ‘promise’/‘threaten’ I

- (7) German *drohen* ‘threaten’/*versprechen* ‘promise’
- a. Das Gebäude **droht** einzustürzen.
the building threaten.3SG collapse.INF
[Outcome evaluated negatively; e.g., by the homeowner]
 - b. Das Gebäude **verspricht** einzustürzen.
the building promise.3SG collapse.INF
[Outcome evaluated positively; e.g., by an estate agency
with construction plans for the property]

Polysemy of ‘promise’/‘threaten’ II

- (8) Spanish *prometer* ‘promise’, *amenazar* ‘threaten’
- a. El gobierno ha **prometido** rebajar los
the government has promised reduce.INF the
impuestos.
taxes
 - b. La carrera **promete** ser interesante.
the race promises be.INF interesting
 - c. Los sindicatos **amenazaron** con ir a la
the trade.unions threaten.PRET.3PL with go.INF to the
huelga.
strike
 - d. El castillo **amenaza** (con) derrumbar=se.
the castle threaten.3SG with collapse.INF=REFL

The same contrast can be observed with French *menacer* ‘threaten’/*promettre* ‘promise’.

Polysemy of ‘promise’/‘threaten’ III

	‘threaten’		‘promise’	
	speech act	prospective	speech act	prospective
Ukranian	<i>po-grožuvaty</i>	<i>za-grožuvaty</i>	<i>obicjaty</i>	
Russian	<i>ugrožat’</i> <i>grozit’</i>		<i>obeščat’</i>	
Polish	<i>(za)grazác</i>		<i>obiecać</i>	<i>zapowiadać (REFL)</i>
Czech	<i>(po)hrozit</i>		<i>slibovat/příslibit</i>	

Table 4: Interpretation of equivalents of ‘threaten’ and ‘promise’

Unlike in Russian and Ukranian, Polish/Czech equivalents of ‘promise’/‘threaten’ do not allow infinitival complements.

The best-discussed case of coercion in verbs is the reinterpretation resulting from the type clash between verbs that select eventive arguments and their non-eventive DP objects.

- (9)
- a. Mary enjoyed/began [reading the book]_{event}.
 - b. Mary enjoyed/began [the book]_{event}.
 - c. The goat enjoyed [the book]_{event}.

As a satellite-framed language (Talmy 1985/2007), German may encode the manner of action in the base entry of verbs.

(10) German: satellite-framed

Der Mann torkel-te_{Manner} [in die Kneipe]_{Path}.
the man stagger-PST.3SG in the bar

(11) Spanish: verb-framed

La botella entró_{Path} a la cueva (flotando_{Manner})
the bottle moved in the cave floating

Verbs of sound emission may be coerced into verbs of motion (if the sound emission is causally connected to the motion).

- (12) Straßenbahnen quietschen um die Ecke. [DWDS TS 2002]
trams screech.3PL around the corner

Likewise, verbs of (sound) emission may be coerced into utterance verb readings.

Coercion of sound emission verbs I

- (13) a. $\lambda x \lambda s$ [EMIT_SOUND(x)(s) & MANNER(s)]
b. $\rightarrow \lambda p \lambda x \lambda s$ [EMIT_SOUND(x)(s) & MANNER(s) & COMMUNICATE(x,p)(s)]
- (14) a. **quäkte** der rachsüchtige Bush **zurück**, Chirac
screech.PST.3SG the vindictive Bush back Chirac
habe vor allem die Cheeseburger von
AUX.SBJV.3SG above all the cheeseburger.PL from
gestern gemocht. [DWDS BZ 2004]
yesterday like.PTCP
- b. Ich **zischte**, dass er nie mehr um diese Zeit bei
I hiss.PST.1SG that he never more at this time at
mir klingeln soll. [DWDS BZ 2002]
1SG.DAT ring.INF should

Coercion of sound emission verbs II

- (15) Ukranian (Y. Kushnir, p.c.)
Babcia **zitchala/ kryčala/** **skyglyla** ščo
grandmother sigh.PST/ scream.PST/ howl.PST COMP
ciny rostut'.
price.PL rise.3PL

Coercion of facial expression predicates

Even predicates of facial expression may be turned into utterance predicates (e.g., *lächeln* ‘smile’ or *grinsen* ‘grin’).

- (16) a. Marihuana-Joe lach-te, er sei aber
Marihuana-Joe laugh-PST.3SG he be.SBJV.3SG but
Jimmy. [DNB 1989 S148 891675639]
Jimmy
- b. »Ob es Heringe gibt?«, grinst er ins Telefon.
if it herrings give.3SG grin.3SG he in.the phone
[DWDS Zeit 2008]

- (17) Russian (Y. Kushnir, p.c.)
Babuška **uchmylialas’** što ona priprjatala
grandmother grin.PST.REFL COMP she smuggle.PST
sigarety u kasy.
cigarette.PL at check.out.GEN

Coercion: emotive-factive interpretation I

Another productive coercion pattern is the interpretation of emission predicates as emotive-factive predicates.

- (18) DDR-ler **grinsen** schadenfroh **dar-über**, daß die
GDR-NOML grin.3PL with.gloating there-over that the
bundesrepublik-anischen Benzin-preise mittlerweile
FRG-ADJ gas-prizes in.the.meantime
auch das östliche Niveau erreicht haben. [DWDS KK 1986]
also the eastern level reach.PTCP AUX.3PL

Coercion: emotive-factive interpretation II

- (19) Czech (P. Biskup, p.c.)
Vzdychá nad tím že Trump vyhrál
moan/groan.3SG about DEM.INS COMP Trump win.PST
volby.
election.PL.ACC

Complementation preferences of coerced predicates

Troyke-Lekschas (2013) studied the behavior of 160 (157) sound emission verbs (60% may be used as speech verbs). Her sub-study of the clausal complementation pattern of 30 sound emission verbs revealed the following preference hierarchy.

- (20) Preference hierarchy of coerced sound emission verbs
direct speech complements > V2-complements >
dass-complements > (interrogative complements >)
infinitival complements

Syntactic effects of polysemy

Several syntactic constructions are sensitive to the polysemy of clause-embedding predicates.

- ▶ Dual use of predicates as control and raising predicates
- ▶ Use of predicates as parenthetical predicates
- ▶ NEG-raising
- ▶ Syntactic flexibility in clausal complementation

- (22) Bis heute, **bedauert** Sick, hätten viele Frauen
until today, regret.3SG Sick AUX.PST.SBJV.3PL many women
sich noch nicht von der Vorstellung gelöst, dass
REFL yet not from the idea move.away.PTCP that
... [DWDS Zeit 2009]

NEG-Raising I

- (23) a. I don't think that Peter will get the job.
b. I think that Peter won't get the job.
- (24) a. I don't regret that I kissed her.
b. #I regret that I didn't kiss her.
- (25) a. Ich hoffe nicht, dass mein Auto kaputt ist.
1SG hope.1SG NEG that my car broken be.3SG
b. #I don't hope that my car is broken.

NEG-Raising II

	‘wish’	‘hope’	‘expect (think)’	‘expect (demand)’
Spanish	esperar	esperar	esperar ✓	esperar
Chinese	xīwàng ✓	xīwàng ✓	qīwàng ✓	?
Italian	augurarsi	sperare	aspettarsi ✓	aspettarsi
Swedish	att önska	att hoppas	att förvänta ✓	att förvänta
Danish	at ønske	at håbe ✓	at forvente ✓	at forvente
Norwegian	å ønske	å håpe ✓	å forvente ✓	å forvente
Lithuanian	linkėti ✓	tikėti	tikėti ✓	tikėti
Indonesian	ingin ✓	berharap	menduga ✓	berharap
Hungarian	kíván ✓	remél ✓	?	elvár
Swahili	kutarajia	kutarajia	kutarajia ✓	kutaka

Table 5: NEG-raising predicates (Popp 2016); ✓: predicates/readings with NEG-raising

NEG-Raising III

The asymmetry within the polysemous predicates suggests that the semantics of a predicate is accessible to NEG-Raising. This claim finds support in a grammaticality judgment study (scale: 1 (worst) - 11 (best)) conducted with native speakers of German.

	Subject: person	
	1st	3rd
NEG in MC	7	9
NEG in EC	7.5	8

Table 6: Medians of *erwarten* 'expect'

	Subject: person	
	1st	3rd
NEG in MC	7	4
NEG in EC	11	10

Table 7: Medians of *hoffen* 'hope'

NEG-Raising IV

	<i>hoffen</i>	<i>erwarten</i>
NEG in MC	0.044	0.146
NEG in EC	0.9	0.343

Table 8: Mann-Whitney-U test: Significance levels of *Subject* (1st vs. 3rd)

- (26) a. Er hoffe nicht, dass Diekmeier
he hope.SBJV.3SG NEG that Diekmeier
ausfalle, sagte Labbadia. [DWDS BZ 2004]
be.absent.SBJV.3SG say.PST.3SG Labbadia
- b. Er hofft nicht auf einen Wahl-sieg.
he hope.3SG NEG on a election-victory
[DWDS BZ 2000]

NEG-Raising V

	Non-preferential			Preferential		
	<i>think</i>	<i>believe</i>	<i>seem</i>	<i>hope</i>	<i>wish</i>	<i>expect/demand</i>
Spanish/Italian	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Swedish/Danish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Lithuanian	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Indonesian	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Hungarian	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Swahili	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Chinese	✓	✓	n.a.	✓	✓	✗

Table 9: Preferentiality in NEG-Raising predicates

- (27) ?*I am of good hope to pass the test.
- (28) Ich bin guter Hoffnung die Klausur zu bestehen.
 I be.1SG good.GEN hope the test to pass.INF

Syntactic flexibility in German: Introduction

Many clause-embedding predicates in German show a striking syntactic flexibility in terms of admissible clausal complement types. 437 predicates of the ZAS database (1745 predicates; Stiebels et al. 2017) may select all 5 complement types.

dass-clauses are the default finite clausal complement type.

- ▶ About 96% of the predicates in the ZAS database may occur with a *dass*-clause.
- ▶ *dass*-clauses are excluded for intensional interrogative predicates.
- ▶ *dass*-clauses are excluded for some event-coherent predicates (= implicative predicates, modal predicates, phasal predicates).
- ▶ *dass*-clauses are excluded for certain predicates that prefer direct speech complements or V2-complements

Infinitival clauses I

Wrt. infinitival complements, German is less restrictive than other languages.

- ▶ About 83% of the predicates may occur with an infinitival complement, even factive predicates, which are banned as infinitive embedders in other languages.
- ▶ Since (Standard) German does not allow WH-infinitives, interrogative/inquisitive predicates do not select infinitival complements.
- ▶ Infinitival complements are less common with utterance predicates.
- ▶ Restrictions on control readings may require obligatory control shift contexts for the embedding of infinitival complements (e.g. *verhindern* 'hinder')

Infinitival clauses II

- ▶ Infinitival complements are enhanced by modal and aspectual modification of the embedded predicate.

- (29) a. Wir fragten, ob er denn **bereue**, 1974
we ask.PST.1PL if he then regret.SBJV.3SG 1974
zurückgetreten **zu sein**. [DWDS BZ 1994]
resign.PTCP to AUX.INF
- b. Es ist das erste Mal in meinem Leben, dass ich
it is the first time in my life that 1SG
bereue, nicht tanzen **zu können**. [DWDS Zeit 2013]
regret.1SG not dance.INF to can.INF

V2-complements

V2-complements are selected by assertive predicates.

- ▶ About 47% of the predicates may occur with a V2-complement.
- ▶ V2-licensors:
 - ▶ Non-factive attitude predicates
 - ▶ Utterance predicates
 - ▶ Preference predicates
 - ▶ Predicates of certainty
 - ▶ Some desiderative predicates
 - ▶ Some verbs of perception
 - ▶ Predicates of dreaming and imagination
- ▶ Not all licensors embed finite verb-final clauses (complementizer *dass*) as well.

Interrogative complements I

- ▶ About 55% of the predicates license interrogative complements.
- ▶ Karttunen's (1977) classes of question-embedding predicates:
 - ▶ verbs of retaining knowledge: *know, be aware, recall, remember, forget*
 - ▶ verbs of acquiring knowledge: *learn, notice, find out, discover*
 - ▶ verbs of communicating (knowledge): *tell, show, indicate, inform, disclose*
 - ▶ decision verbs: *decide, determine, specify, agree on, control*
 - ▶ verbs of conjecture: *guess, predict, bet on, estimate*
 - ▶ opinion verbs: *be certain about, have an idea about, be convinced about*
 - ▶ inquisitive verbs: *ask, wonder, investigate, be interested in*
 - ▶ verbs of relevance: *matter, be relevant, be important, care, be significant*
 - ▶ verbs of dependancy: *depend on, be related to, have an influence on, be a function of, make a difference to*

Interrogative complements II

- ▶ Further classes
 - ▶ predicates of surprise: *amaze, amazed, amazing, surprise*
 - ▶ predicates of concern: *concern, about, as to, regarding*
 - ▶ predicates of disbelief: *doubt, doubtful, question, questionable*
- ▶ Semifactive predicates tend to allow both embedded polar and embedded wh-questions.
- ▶ True factive predicates tend to allow only embedded wh-questions.

Nominalized complements

- ▶ About 88% of the predicates license nominalized complements.
- ▶ A structural requirement for nominalized complements is case assignment. Predicates that do not assign case to their clausal complements cannot license nominalized complements (e.g., *sich weigern* ‘refuse’).
- ▶ Many utterance predicates do not license nominalized complements (= case restriction?/inaccessibility of nominalized complements as speech act reports?).
- ▶ Factive predicates and predicates that take eventive complements are often cited as canonical licensors of nominalized complements (e.g., *absagen* ‘cancel’ strongly prefers nominalized complements).

Clashes in the combinatorial potential of CEPs

- ▶ Infinitival/interrogative complements clash in the case of interrogative predicates (no WH-infinitives in German).
- ▶ V2/nominalized complements should clash in many cases.
- ▶ Some supposed clashes are not real because the clausal arguments differ in their propositional content or because the clausal arguments represent different roles in the argument hierarchy of the respective CEP (e.g., subject vs. object).

Coercion is mainly found with V2-complements but sometimes also in other contexts.

Syntactic flexibility in German: distribution I

Example	<i>dass</i>	V2	INF	NOML	INTER	#predicates
betrauern	✓			✓		41
anschwindeln	✓	✓				25
darangehen	✓		✓			19
beeilen			✓	✓		15
schnattern	✓				✓	13
ausfragen				✓	✓	7
entbieten		✓	✓			1
nachfragen			✓		✓	1
		✓			✓	0
		✓		✓		0

Table 10: Predicates with 2 complement types (ZAS database 2017)

Infinitival complements with interrogative predicates

The following examples illustrate how the reinterpretation of *anfragen/nachfragen* ‘ask, inquire’ as ‘ask, beg’ feeds the use of an infinitival complement.

- (30) a. *an-fragen* (at-ask/inquire)
wenn die Feuerwehr bei uns **an-gefragt**
if the fire.brigade at 1PL.DAT PT-ask.PTCP
hätte, [ihre Anlage unterzubringen] ...
AUX.PST.SBJV.3SG their equipment put.INF
[DWDS BZ 2001]
- b. *nach-fragen* (after-ask/inquire)
Wir haben mehrfach **nach-gefragt**, das Gold
1PL AUX.1PL multiple.times PT-ask.PTCP the gold
sehen zu dürfen. [DWDS PNN 2005]
see.INF to be.allowed.INF

Syntactic flexibility in German: distribution I

Example	<i>dass</i>	V2	INF	NOML	INTER	#predicates
abgewöhnen	✓		✓	✓		412
aufarbeiten	✓			✓	✓	74
angiften	✓	✓			✓	32
anlügen	✓	✓	✓			26
beleidigen	✓	✓		✓		14
austesten	✓		✓		✓	8
zaudern			✓	✓	✓	4
aufstacheln		✓	✓	✓		2
		✓		✓	✓	0
		✓	✓		✓	0

Table 11: Predicates with 3 complement types (ZAS database 2017)

- (31) a. die Masse der Dresden-er zur Plünder-ung
the mass of Dresden-NOML to.the loot-NOML
der Geschäfte ... **auf-zu-stacheln** ... [DWDS Zeit 2005]
the.GEN shops PT-to-stir.INF
- b. ein Aufwiegl-er ... der die Einwohner von Szalva
a stir.up-NOML who the inhabitants of Szalva
da-mit auf-stachelte. es habe der
there-with PT-stir.PST.3SG it have.SBJV.3SG the
orthodoxe Bischof ...
orthodox bishop

- (32) *ab-raten* (off-advise) ‘advise against’
- a. Er **riet** [von der Schaff-ung eines
he advise.PST.3SG from the create-NOML a.GEN
Ein-parteien-systems] **ab**. [DWDS Zeit 1979]
one.party-system.GEN off
- b. Meine wenigen Bekannten hatten mir
my few acquaintances AUX.PST.3PL 1SG.DAT
ab-geraten, [die Reise würde mir nur das
off-advise.PTCP the trip would 1SG.DAT only the
ganze nächste Jahr verderben]. [DWDS K-Be 1969]
whole next Jahr spoil.INF

Syntactic flexibility in German: distribution I

Example	<i>dass</i>	V2	INF	NOML	INTER	#predicates
abwägen	✓		✓	✓	✓	281
abmahnen	✓	✓	✓	✓		109
aufdecken	✓	✓		✓	✓	63
anblaffen	✓	✓	✓		✓	41
		✓	✓	✓	✓	0

Table 12: Predicates with 4 complement types (ZAS database 2017)

- (33) a. Man brachte uns in ein Büro,
wo uns [die Entlass-ung aus der
where 1PL.DAT the dismiss-NOML out the
DDR-Staatsbürgerschaft] **mit-geteilt** wurde.
GDR-citizenship PT-share.PTCP AUX.PST.3SG
[DWDS K-Be 1994]
- b. Thierse **teilte** am Abend **mit**, [er
Thierse share.PST.3SG at.the evening PT he
bedaure den Entschluss]. [DWDS BZ 2003]
regret.SBJV.3SG the.ACC decision

mit-teilen (with-share) 'inform' II

- c. Am Donnerstag **teilte** RTL **mit**, [künftig
at.the Thursday share.PST.3SG RTL PT in.future
ausführlich über Beach-volleyball zu berichten].
in.detail about beach-volleyball to report.INF
[DWDS BZ 2005]
- d. Sotheby's **teilte** nicht **mit**, [wem der
Sotheby's share.PST.3SG not PT who.DAT the
Schmuck zuletzt gehört hatte].
jewelry last belong.PTCP AUX.PST.3SG
[DWDS BZ 2004]
- e. Die Ärzte **teilten** ihm **mit**, [dass er
the doctors share.PST.3PL he.DAT PT that he
querschnittsgelähmt ist]. [DWDS TS 2004]
paraplegic be.3SG

Covert mediating predicates I

In (34), *beharren* seems to select the interrogative complement via a covert mediating predicate such as ‘know’/‘knowledge’.

(34) *beharren* ‘insist’

Ich möchte auch nicht darauf **beharren**, [wer nun
1SG want.1SG also not there-on insist.INF who now
wirklich für “Mad The Swine” verantwortlich ist].
really for “Mad the Swine” responsible be.3SG
[IDS wpd 2011]

Covert mediating predicates II

Since *abbringen* preferably selects actional complements, it is plausible to assume a covert mediating predicate such as ‘believe’/‘belief’ in (35).

- (35) *ab-bringen* (off-bring) ‘prevent s.o. from doing s.th.’
Nur war er nicht davon **ab-zu-bringen**, [er
but be.PST.3SG he NEG there-from PT-to-bring.INF he
sei auf der anderen Seite des Berg-es
be.SBJV.3SG on the other side the.GEN mountain-GEN
herunter-gefallen]. [DNB 2006 S20 974566632]
PT-fall.PTCP

Summary

- ▶ Polysemy plays an important role in clausal embedding.
- ▶ Coercion facilitates the syntactic flexibility of CEPs, in German especially for the selection of V2-complements.
- ▶ Syntactic flexibility is also facilitated by semantic enrichment of the embedded clause (especially in the case of infinitival complements).
- ▶ Readings of polysemous CEPs are influenced by their argument structure/realization, modal markers in the matrix clause, complement type, and verbal mood in the embedded clause.