
Modeling the usage of *so* in spoken and written German

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In our contribution, we present a study on the use of the polyfunctional and highly ambiguous word *so* in different spoken and written registers of German. We argue that modality is only one of the parameters influencing the usage of *so* and that other parameters may have a stronger influence.

The German word *so* – similar but not identical to English *so* – has been the subject of many studies (cf. Hennig 2006, Hirschmann 2024, Lenerz & Lohnstein 2005, among many others). German *so* has many grammatical functions and readings. Most have been described both for spoken and written registers, such as the adverbial *so* (*und jetzt haben wir s so getauscht dass ich dieses große Sonnenzimmer habe* – *and now we have changed in a way that I have this big sunny room* [CoNNAR corpus, p06c04_L2C1_free_ch2]) prenominal uses (*so Grundsätze sind einfach so irrelevant* – *such principles are simply quite irrelevant* [CoNNAR corpus, p06c03_L1_free_ch2]), or intensifying cases (*cool dass man nich so lange Fahrwege hatte* – *cool that you did not have such long travel distances* [CoNNAR corpus, p01c01_L1_free_ch1]). There are also functions that seem to be found predominantly in one modality such as *so* as a hesitation or planning marker (*der scheint so f (...) der scheint so von alleine davon zu fahren* – *he seems like (...) he seems like to drive away by himself* [CoNNAR corpus, p03c01_L1_pix1_ch2]).

We conduct multifactorial corpus analyses of the corpora CoNNAR (<https://vivo.sfb1412.hu-berlin.de/display/n3651>) and RUEG (<https://hu-berlin.de/rueg/>). We control for different grammatical functions and different readings of *so* on the one hand and different register-related factors (including modality) on the other. This allows us to examine which role modality plays in the distribution of *so* among other relevant factors.

References: • Hirschmann, H. (2024). Das pränominale *so* und seine lexikalischen Varianten im Deutschen – eine syntaktische, konstruktions- und variationslinguistische Beschreibung. In M. Felfe, D. Höllein & K. Welke (ed.), *Regelbasierte Konstruktionsgrammatik: Musterbasiertheit vs. Idiomatizität?*. Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111334042-006> • Hennig, M. (2006). *So, und so, und so weiter. Vom Sinn und Unsinn der Wortklassifikation. Zeitschrift für germanistische Linguistik*, 34(3), 409–431. • Lenerz, J., & H. Lohnstein (2005). „Nur so“ – Strukturaspekte der Vergleichskonstruktion. In F. J. D’Avis (ed.), *Deutsche Syntax: Empirie und Theorie*, 81–103. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.