# How to do (different) things with (the same) words. Grammaticalization, multifunctionality, and the diachrony of German *so*

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The originally adverbial element *so* performs a number of different functions in present-day German. As a lexical item, for instance, it has a (deictic-)modal meaning expressing the contextually defined way in which a situation or a state is to be interpreted (1). It may also surface in correlative constructions in which it resumes some types of preposed adverbial clauses (2), or function as what looks like a prefield expletive without yielding any semantic / deictic content (3). In other cases, it introduces a main clause, conveying e.g. a sense of completion resulting from some previous situation or utterance that licenses the spell-out of the following sentence:

(1)  Ich hoffe, dass es nicht **so** ist. (**so**$_1$)
     'I hope it is not so.'
(2)  Wenn das wirklich stimmt, **so** müsste die CD doch den besseren Klang haben. (**so**$_2$)
     'If that were the case, then this CD should sound better (than the other one).'
(3)  Verwundert dürften sich vor allem die Chefs der Rentenversicherung die Bezüge ihrer Kollegen aus der Abteilung Gesundheit angesehen haben. **So** erhält der Präsident der Bundesversicherungsanstalt 7815 Euro im Monat. (**so**$_3$)
     'The leaders of the Pension Fund must have been astonished learning how much their co leagues from the Health division earn. The president of the Federal Insurance Institute r ceives a salary of 7815 euros every month.'
(4)  **So**, jetzt können wir das Fahrzeug anlassen. (**so**$_4$)
     'Now we can start the car.'

**AG 6**

In this paper, I will propose that the occurrences of *so* illustrated above, although being formally identical, are to be categorized as different lexical entries on the basis of their function, which in turn intimately correlates with their level of semantic bleaching and has consequences for the syntactic behavior of this element. To account for this lexico-grammatical categorization and assuming an articulate C-domain à la Rizzi (1997), I will contend that each of these items is the result of a different syntactic derivation resulting from distinct degrees of semantic/referential content and syntactic integration.

Expectedly, a diachronic investigation of these elements reveals that they have not emerged simultaneously in the lexicon of German: on the basis of diachronic data spanning from $so_1$ Old High German (750–1050) to Early New High German (1350–1650), I will show that while has been part of the German lexicon since the earlies stages of the language, $so_2$ is grammaticalized in Middle High German (1050–1350) and functions as a generalized resumptive until the Early New High German period, when it begins to specialize onto certain types of adverbial clause. Expletive $so_3$ seems to originate between Middle and Early New High German, where it is only sporadically attested, but it is in the modern stage that its use flourishes in the written prose. For $so_4$, whose scope is limited to colloquial spoken German, it can be speculated – in the absence of substantial written evidence – that it represents the most recent unit to have emerged in the system.