

German Complex Prepositions: The Development of *mit Hilfe* and *mit Ausnahme*

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This paper addresses the development of German complex prepositions following the general syntactic pattern [P N P/GEN] (cf. Quirk & Mulholland, 1964; Seppänen et al., 1994; Lindqvist, 1994; Hoffmann, 2005; Tyler & Evans, 2003). Not only do they vary regarding their lexical specification (Hüning et al., 2020) but also in their degree of development as reflected in their degree of structural solidification.

The study, which is focused on the combination of the preposition *mit* 'with' with two deverbal nouns *Hilfe* 'help' and *Ausnahme* 'exception', reveals two different developmental pathways.

In present day German, *Hilfe* shows very restricted combinatorial possibilities (cf. (1)) according to the characteristics of complex prepositions (e.g. use of article, presence of modifier (cf. Hüning et al., 2020)) as well as two possible orthographic realisations: In (2) the complex preposition is still written as separate words, whereas in (3) *mit* and *Hilfe* appear as univertation reflecting a shift in morphosyntax.

- (1) *Zudem hatte Waigel seine Haushalte mehrfach nur **mit Hilfe**/*mit einer **Hilfe**/*mit **wunderbarer Hilfe** von Erlösen aus dem Verkauf von Staatsvermögen stützen können.* [DWDS, Die Zeit, 01.07.1999, Nr. 27]
'Moreover, Waigel had been able to support his budgets several times only with the help/*with a help/*with wonderful help of proceeds from the sale of state assets.'
- (2) *Die Familie klagte **mit Hilfe** eines Rechtsanwaltes gegen die Ablehnung.* [DWDS, Welt am Sonntag, 10.06.2018]
'The family sued against the rejection with the help of a lawyer.'
- (3) *Nur **mithilfe** der Bioinformatik lassen sich die Ergebnisse der modernen Genomforschung für die Entwicklung neuer Therapieansätze und Medikamente sinnvoll nutzen* [DWDS, Berliner Zeitung, 19.12.2002]
'It is only with the help of bioinformatics that results of modern genome research can be used meaningfully for the development of new therapeutic approaches and medicines.'

For *Ausnahme*, however, a slightly increase in the use of article and modifier in recent times is identifiable (4). Additionally, there is only one documented way of writing (i.e. (5)).

- (4) *Von einer Lehrentwicklung ist in der ganzen langen Geschichte des japanischen Buddhismus, **mit einziger Ausnahme** des 13. Jahrhunderts, nichts zu finden.* [Karl Munzinger, Die Japaner, 1898]
'In the entire long history of Japanese Buddhism, with the sole exception of the 13th century, there is no evidence of any doctrinal development.'
- (5) *Innerhalb von fünf Tagen kann die Firma ein neues Zahnbürstenmodell bis in jedes noch so abgelegene Bergdorf Chinas bringen, **mit Ausnahme**/***mitausnahme** Tibets.* [DWDS, Die Zeit, 02.12.1999, Nr. 49]
'Within five days, the company can bring a new toothbrush model to every remote mountain village in China, with the exception of Tibet.'

Being (originally) multi-word expressions, complex prepositions are located at the interface between lexicon and syntax. Taking the differences such as those between *Hilfe* and *Ausnahme* into account leads to two questions: (i) How did they develop from a diachronic point of view, and (ii) how do they behave concerning their syntactic use?

Answering these questions leads to the resulting question as to (iii) how different they really are and if *mit Ausnahme* could follow the same path as *mit Hilfe*.

Using German corpus data from the 17th to the 19th century (Deutsches Textarchiv [DTA], c. 1600-1900) this investigation is intended to address these issues from a constructionalist point of view interested in divergent constructionalisation pathways in what appears superficially to be a homogenous group.

References

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