

linguae & litterae

Publications of the School of Language & Literature
Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies

Edited by

Peter Auer · Gesa von Essen · Werner Frick

Editorial Board

Michel Espagne (Paris) · Marino Freschi (Rom)

Erika Greber (Erlangen) · Ekkehard König (Berlin)

Per Linell (Linköping) · Angelika Linke (Zürich)

Christine Maillard (Strasbourg) · Pieter Muysken (Nijmegen)

Wolfgang Raible (Freiburg)

6

De Gruyter

Constructions: Emerging and Emergent

Edited by Peter Auer and Stefan Pfänder

De Gruyter

ISBN 978-3-11-022907-3
e-ISBN 978-3-11-022908-0
ISSN 1869-7054

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Constructions : emerging and emergent / edited by Peter Auer, Stefan Pfänder.
p. cm. — (Linguae & litterae; 6)
ISBN 978-3-11-022907-3 (alk. paper)
1. Grammar, Comparative and general — Coordinate constructions.
I. Auer, Peter, 1954— II. Pfänder, Stefan.
P293.C66 2011
415—dc23

2011027835

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

© 2011 Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin/Boston

Printing: Hubert & Co. GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen

∞ Printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Germany

www.degruyter.com

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| PETER AUER and STEFAN PFÄNDER Constructions: Emergent or emerging? | 1 |
| PAUL HOPPER Emergent grammar and temporality in interactional linguistics | 22 |
| SIMONA PEKAREK DOEHLER Emergent grammar for all practical purposes: the on-line formatting of left and right dislocations in French conversation. | 45 |
| ARNULF DEPPERMAN Constructions vs. lexical items as sources of complex meanings. A comparative study of constructions with German <i>verstehen</i> | 88 |
| WOLFGANG IMO Online changes in syntactic gestalten in spoken German. Or: do garden path sentences exist in everyday conversation? | 127 |
| SUSANNE GÜNTNER Between emergence and sedimentation. Projecting constructions in German interactions | 156 |
| THIEMO BREYER, OLIVER EHMER and STEFAN PFÄNDER Improvisation, temporality and emergent constructions | 186 |
| PETER AUER and JAN LINDSTRÖM Verb-first conditionals in German and Swedish: convergence in writing, divergence in speaking | 218 |
| DAGMAR BARTH-WEINGARTEN and ELIZABETH COUPER-KUHLEN Action, prosody and emergent constructions: The case of <i>and</i> | 263 |
| Yael MASCHLER and SUSAN SHAER On the emergence of adverbial connectives from Hebrew relative clause constructions | 293 |

Constructions vs. lexical items as sources of complex meanings

A comparative study of constructions with German *verstehen*¹

1 Two views of non-compositionality

One point of departure for construction grammar is a semantic observation: There is a large number of cases in which the Frege principle does not apply. The Frege principle of compositionality predicts that the semantics of a complex expression is defined by the semantics of its constitutive parts and the semantic rules of their (morpho)syntactic combination (Lyons 1995: 204–209). Langacker (2000), e.g., claims that the meaning of a complex structure is almost never strictly compositional. This is not to be taken as a claim that compositionality can be discarded altogether. Rather, it is not enough for a full account of the semantics of complex morphological and phrasal structures. This observation motivates a basic tenet of construction grammar: Grammatical constructions are not only defined by formal properties; they also have a particular meaning (Goldberg 1995: 2006). With respect to phrasal constructions, this means that in addition to the semantics of its lexical units, the phrasal construction as such has its own irreducible meaning. It provides the instantiated construct with a specific meaning which may further specify or even contrast with the complex meaning that can be calculated on the basis of its lexical components and rules of semantic composition alone. The identity of a construction is thus based on the pairing of form and meaning (Croft 2001; Croft and Cruse 2004). This claim may be interpreted as a semantic criterion which can be tested for any linguistic structure: Only if a linguistic structure provides its own non-compositional contribution to the interpretation of a construct and if this contribution holds for all tokens it licenses is it a construction. Croft (2001) and Lang-

¹ I thank Daniela Heidtmann and Reinhold Schmitt for giving me access to their corpus of interactions from a film school, and Mechthild Elstermann for collecting instances of *verstehen*-constructions and assisting me in coding them. Very special thanks to Peter Auer, Stefan Engelberg, Per Linell, and Simona Pekarek-Doehler for close reading, insightful comments, and challenging criticism.

acker (2001) expand this claim of constructions being form–meaning pairings even further. They posit that constructions are linguistic signs which not only have semantic meaning, but which can also have their own pragmatic, rhetorical, textual, or discursive properties. Grammar and lexicon thus are not categorically distinct; rather, there is a constructional continuum ranging from (idiomatic) constructions which are fully specified to (most general) constructions which are fully schematic, with all sorts of partial specifications between these poles (Langacker 2000). In construction grammar approaches, the problem of non-compositionality is thus tackled by positing that the meaning of complex structures amounts to an integration of the semantic contributions of all different constructions which participate in a construct.²

A competing approach to non-compositionality holds that the mental lexicon is a repository of underspecified meanings. In this view, complex non-compositional meanings can be accounted for by pragmatic principles of specification, elaboration, and selection of lexical meanings (e.g. Blutner 2004; Levinson 2000; Carston 2002).³ The semantic information which is tied to single lexical items is assumed to be richer than in construction grammar approaches: The mental lexicon comprises underspecified and polysemous meanings, rich information about valence structures, and lexically-driven syntactic properties, which constructionists often regard as being properties of higher-order generalized constructions (see Goldberg 2006). In addition, the lexical approach resorts to pragmatic mechanisms for the contextual determination of meaning, which normally do not play a role in constructionist accounts (however, see e.g. Fauconnier 2004).

In short, while constructionists do not regard the lexicon as a distinct module (e.g. Langacker 2000), “lexiconists” regard the lexicon as the basic locus of meaning and largely consequential for syntactic structure.

2 General research question

This paper investigates arguments which might be made for and against the two views on non-compositionality. This leads to the questions: To what extent do constructions constrain the meaning of phrasal structures? Are constructions the primary locus of linguistic meaning, or is the meaning of lexi-

² How this integration comes about is far from being clear, however.

³ There are also generative approaches which assume that semantic mechanisms operate on underspecified lexical meanings in cooperation with syntactic constraints (see Pustejovsky 1995; Jackendoff 1997, 2002).

cal items primary? The aim of this paper, thus, is to determine which role lexical vs. constructional meaning plays with regard to the meaning of complex phrasal structures, and how they both relate to origins of meaning which cannot be accounted for – neither on a lexical nor on a constructional basis. The question regarding the locus of meaning of phrasal structures thus leads to another question: Which role does sequential context play in determining the meaning of constructs in context, i.e. how are constructional, lexical, and contextual sources of meaning related to one another? Thus, the issue of compositionality must explore the context-sensitivity of constructions and the emergence of the (semantic and pragmatic) meaning of constructs in context.

These questions will be tackled by comparing two different constructions with the German lemma *verstehen* ('to understand'). Based on data from different corpora of spoken German (see 3.), the construction *verstehst du?* ('do you understand?') and the negative construction NP *nicht verstehen (können)* or *nicht verstehen (können) COMP*⁴ ('not (being able to) understand NP/COMP') are compared in terms of how the situated semantics and pragmatics of these two constructions can be accounted for within a constructionist vs. lexicalist framework. These constructions were chosen because they are the most frequent constructions with *verstehen* in the corpus investigated, and their study promises to be particularly revealing, as they are syntactically completely distinct. The detailed research questions are:

- How similar or specific are the semantics of *verstehen* in each of the constructs of both constructions? Is there a common overarching core-meaning or a similar/identical spectrum of polysemous meanings which covers all cases? This would support a lexicalist approach.
- How compositional or idiosyncratic is constructional meaning for the two constructions? Idiosyncratic meaning would support a constructionist account.
- Is constructional meaning invariant regarding all constructs of each construction? If there was much semantic and pragmatic variation between constructs of the same construction, but no invariant features shared by all constructs, then this would be a problem for a constructionist account.
- Are pragmatic functions tied to the specific constructions, or can they be accounted for in lexicosemantic terms?
- Which properties of meaning can neither be explained on constructional nor lexical grounds?

⁴ COMP means "complement clause".

3 Methodology and corpus

Combining quantitative and conversation analytic methods, this study draws on the analysis of 300 constructs with *verstehen* in naturally occurring interactions. The data come from the archive of spoken German at the Institute for the German Language (IDS Mannheim: www.agd.ids-mannheim.de). They cover a wide range of types of interaction: institutional talk (counselling, mediation, doctor-patient interaction, psychiatric intake-interviews, seminars in higher education, research interviews), mediated talk (talk shows, phone-ins, political debates), and leisure-time interaction among adolescents. For closer analysis, only metacommunicative uses of *verstehen*, which refer to the speaker's or partner's contributions to the ongoing interaction, were included. Other uses were excluded, such as "extracom-municative understanding" (*ich verstehe Chomskys Bücher nicht* 'I don't understand Chomsky's books'), "knowing a language" (*ich verstehe kein Chinesisch* 'I don't understand Chinese'), and "knowing something about a subject", which is mostly expressed by the prepositional construction *etwas von etwas verstehen* (*Ich verstehe nichts von Autos* 'I know nothing about cars'). The remaining 300 tokens were coded according to subject, object, sentence mood, negation, co-occurring connectives, co-occurring modal words, turn-position, sequential position, speech act type, and activity-type. The 300 instances of *verstehen* exhibit an enormous variation regarding constructional embeddings: It is realized in all grammatical persons, numbers, and moods, without an object, with a direct object, and with a prepositional object; it co-occurs with modal verbs like *können* ('can'), *dürfen* ('may'), *sollen* ('should'), modal *werden* ('will') and modal *sein* ('to be'); it is used with and without negation, in all sentential moods, and in discourse marker-constructions. *Verstehen* thus exhibits high grammatical productivity and flexibility as to its combinatory properties. Even in this rather limited (albeit pragmatically and discursively multifaceted) corpus, its use is not restricted to a small number of idiomatic constructions with lexical fixation. Still, there are some constructional schemata which are candidates for idiomatic constructions (see table 1).

Like in other corpus-driven studies on constructions, the variety of cases encountered poses severe problems for precisely defining the formal and functional identity of the construction (see e.g. Imo 2007a; Barth-Weingarten 2006; Pekarek Doehler and Mueller 2006). Which parts of a construction are lexically fixed, which are semantically restricted, and which are fully schematic? The range of formal phenomena and their situated interpretation is much wider than one would guess. Problems emerging from this diversity

Table 1: Constructions with *verstehen* (numbers in brackets indicate occurrences)⁵

| |
|---|
| <p>(NP) <i>nicht verstehen (können)</i> / <i>nicht verstehen (können)</i> COMP (84) negative construction: ‘(can)not understand NP’ / ‘(can)not understand COMP’</p> <p><i>verstehen sie/verstehst (du)/verstehst ihr?</i> (31) ‘do you understand?’</p> <p><i>habe ich (NP) richtig verstanden (COMP)?</i> (13) ‘have I understood (NP) correctly (COMP)?’</p> <p><i>wenn ich sie/das recht/richtig verstehe</i> (11) ‘if I understand you/this correctly’</p> <p><i>so habe ich NP verstanden</i> (8) ‘that’s how I (have) understood NP’</p> <p>(NP) <i>verstehen (können)</i> / <i>verstehen (können)</i> COMP (8) ‘can understand NP/COMP’</p> <p><i>verstehen sie/verstehst du was/wie ich meine?</i> (4) ‘do you understand what/how I mean?’</p> <p><i>sie werden/du wirst verstehen</i> (3) modal semantics: ‘you will understand’</p> <p><i>NP zu verstehen ist/sind</i> (3) modal semantics: ‘NP is/are to be understood’</p> <p><i>verstehen unter ZITAT</i> (3) ‘understand by QUOTE’</p> <p><i>es versteht sich</i> (2) ‘it is understood COMP’</p> <p><i>verstehen NP als NP</i> (2) ‘understand NP as NP’</p> |
|---|

become acute, because “construction” is used as a context-free notion. Admittedly, Goldberg (1995: 68–69) writes: “Thus a construction may be posited because of something not strictly predictable about its frame semantics, its packaging of information structure, or its context of use”. Such an insight, however, does not lead to a methodologically informed way of dealing with context as a discriminatory property of constructions. Although there are elaborated accounts, which include descriptions of contextual conditions for constructions (see e.g. Kay 2004), we only rarely find an account of how to deal with functional dependencies of a construction based on its discursive context (however, see Auer 2006). The main reason for this shortcoming lies in the fact that there are few studies which analyse the functions of constructions with respect to their occurrence in interactional sequences and larger segments of authentic texts. Underspecified representations of constructional meaning might be a way to deal with contextual variation and dependence, but I am not aware of such an account. As the analyses in this paper will show, the context-sensitive adaptation of constructions does not only account for functional differences; it is also the reason for the wide range of formal variation.

⁵ Some of the instances would be better translated with *get* than *understand*, which is nevertheless used throughout in order to clarify the internal structure of the construction.

In the following analysis, the two most frequent constructions with *verstehen* are compared with respect to their semantic and pragmatic properties: (NP) *nicht verstehen (können)* (COMP) (negative construction) and *verstehen sie/verstehst (du)/verstehst ihr?* ('do you understand?'). These two constructions not only occur often enough for a principled comparison; they also differ in many syntactic respects. Because of this, they are apt candidates for determining whether constructional difference entails semantic and pragmatic difference, or rather lexical identity is at the heart of situated meaning. For each construction, some statistical figures are presented.⁶ Then, instances of each construction are subjected to a detailed sequential analysis (see ten Have 2007; Deppermann 1999) in order to find pragmatic and interactional motivations for the quantitative distributions in the data. This conversation analytic methodology includes an analysis of the interactional practices of turn-design which guide the production of and the reaction to the constructions under study. The approach taken here is thus informed by interactional approaches to constructions, such as Auer (2007), Deppermann (2007), Imo (2007b), and Ford, Fox and Thompson (2002). Only by this methodology is it possible to study the emergent process of the formal adaption and interpretation of constructs to the situated contingencies of the interactional environments for which they are produced.

4 *Verstehst du?* 'Do you understand?'

The construction *verstehst du?* belongs to the class of discourse markers.⁷ More precisely, it is regarded as a tag question – a "Rückversicherungssignal" (Schwitalla 2007: 87) or "Vergewisserungssignal" (Imo 2007b: 286–288), i.e. a checking device – which is defined by its function of eliciting a recipient's

⁶ Existing corpora of spoken German only allow for descriptive measures. A corpus-linguistic analysis using inferential statistics (see e.g. Stefanowitsch and Gries 2003) would require much larger samples from machine-readable corpora than are currently available.

⁷ In this text, discourse markers are neither regarded as connectives (cf. Fraser 2006 and Blakemore 2002), nor as a specific word-class. "Discourse marker" is used here with reference to formally fixed units of expression which are not syntactically integrated (occurring mostly at TCU-beginnings and endings), which thus have no syntactic function and no truth-conditional meaning (cf. Imo 2007b: 61–66). They encode functions pertaining to the interactional, thematic, or epistemic level (cf. Schiffrin 1987). In line with the generalized notion of "construction", as is advocated, e.g., by Croft (2008:2001) and Goldberg (2006), discourse markers are categorized as constructions, although they are usually single words. However, among them are also some petrified multi-word formulae, such as *you know*, *I mean* and *you see*.

response. This class not only contains particles like *ne/nicht?* ('right?', see Jefferson 1981), *ja?*, *oder?*, and *gell?* ('right?'); there are also some lexical formulae which have become petrified as discourse markers in German, such as *nicht wahr?* (literally 'not true?') oder *verstehst/weißt du wie ich meine?* ('do you understand/know what I mean?'). The emergence of discourse markers from verbs of perception and cognition is one well-known path of grammaticalization; in German, this concerns *siehst du?* ('do you see?'), *hörst du?* ('do you hear?'), *verstehst du?* ('do you understand?'), *weißt du?* ('do you know?'), and *ich meine* ('I mean').⁸ Previous research states that *verstehst du?* is used for maintaining contact and monitoring the listener's reception, because it prompts him/her to produce some reaction which displays whether s/he has understood and accepted the speaker's turn (e.g. Zifonun, Hoffmann and Strecker 1997: 384). Moreover, it is said to segment complex turns into TCUs (Stein 2003). My analysis purports to show that *verstehst du?* is only rarely used as a post-positioned tag to elicit a response. Attending to its position in relation to speakers' turn-design, *verstehst du?* is mostly a pre-positioned discourse marker which retrospectively displays that the main point of a speaker's turn has not been taken up adequately and it projects⁹ a reformulation of this main point which calls for an adequate response.

4.1 Formal properties of *verstehst du?*

Verstehst du? (see also Imo 2007b: 286–288) can be realized in different morphosyntactic variants of number and social deixis: *verstehen sie/verstehst du/verstehst ihr?* There is also a cliticized, univocal variant (*verstehste?*). Apart from regional phonetic variation, the construction is formally fixed: It is only used in the present tense indicative. There are several features which point to the grammaticalized status of the construction:

1. As already pointed out, it is phonetically and morphosyntactically reduced in many cases;

⁸ For the development of stance markers from mental verbs, see e.g. Thompson (2002); on *I think/remember/mean*, Auer and Günthner (2005); for a more general discussion on the relationship between matrix verb-constructions and grammaticalized discourse marker-constructions in German, see Imo (2007b).

⁹ "Projection" means expectations about the continuation of talk-in-interaction. Projections can be relevant on several planes: syntax, semantics, topical development, sequencing of actions, turn-taking, etc. (cf. Auer 2005). Projections arise from units of interactional practice (grammatical forms, words, prosody, TCUs, etc.). They rely on linguistic, interactional, and social expectations about routine uses of these units.

2. In contrast to the general valence frame of the verb *verstehen*, there is neither a direct object nor is it used as a matrix sentence which subcategorizes a complement;
3. The construction is never embedded syntactically.

In particular, the second feature provides for the identity of the discourse marker-construction in contrast to regular grammatical variants of *verstehen* – that is, the imperative (e.g. *bitte verstehen sie das* ('please understand this'), *verstehen sie mich bitte richtig* ('please understand me'), and its use in questions (*verstehen sie das?* ('do you understand this?')) – which are much rarer and which are not individual, lexically fixed constructions.

4.2 Distribution of *verstehst du?*

The distribution of *verstehst du?* in the data shows that it is used as a post-positioned tag-question calling for a response only in a minority of cases (see table 2): In only 25.8% of the cases (eight of 31) does a verbal response of the recipient follow *verstehst du?*, and in only 12.9% of cases (four of 31) is it followed by a pause of more than 0.2 seconds, which would offer the recipient the opportunity to react. Instead, the speaker continues his/her turn in 93.5% of the instances (29 of 31), and 80.6% of the time (25 times out of 31), this is done without any pause. More than 70% (21 of 30 cases) of the *verstehst du?*-tokens are prosodically integrated with the TCU that follows. In contrast, only 25.8% (eight of 31) are prosodically integrated with the previous TCU, while 41.9% (13 of 31) are set apart from the previous TCU by more than a micro-pause of less than 0.2 seconds. The quantitative results show that *verstehst du?* is preferentially produced in one prosodic contour with the following TCU, but not with the previous TCU. *Verstehst du?* is thus overwhelmingly used pre-positioned to an upcoming turn, projecting more talk to come, i.e. a reformulation (as the qualitative study below will show).

In 25.8% of the instances analysed (eight of 31 cases), speakers use *verstehst du?* as a third position turn-preface, reacting to the partner's uptake of the speaker's prior turn. Preceding responses are often minimal (such as response particles, paraphrases, turn-completions; cf. Bublitz 1988). In line with expectations from previous studies, *verstehst du?* never occurs as a preface to second pair parts, i.e., it never occurs in answers, confirmations, second assessments, etc. or when initiating a new topic. Most strikingly, 70% of the cases are produced by professors, who use *verstehst du?* in the context of instruction. So, there seems to be some prototypical relation to a specific interactional genre. The data suggest that *verstehst du?* is a means to structure

Table 2: Distribution of *verstehst du?* in relation to turn-taking and turn-construction

| <i>Sequential design</i> | <i>Relative frequency (n/N)</i> |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>Relation to prior talk:</i> | |
| prosodically integrated | 25,8% (8/31) |
| Precedent: pause (>0.2 sec.) | 41,9% (13/31) |
| Precedent: addressee's turn | 25,8% (8/31) |
| <i>Relation to following talk:</i> | |
| Turn-continuation | 93,5% (29/31) |
| Use as a turn-preface (prosodically integrated with ensuing TCU) | 70% (21/30) |
| Parenthetical insertion into ongoing turn | 6,5% (2/31) |
| Next event: pause (> 0.2 Sek.) | 12,9% (4/31) |
| Next event: response | 25,8% (8/31) |

a speaker's multi-unit turn (see Houtkoop and Mazeland 1986). More precisely, it seems to have a projective function regarding a topically coherent continuation of the ongoing turn.

4.3 Conversation analytic findings

The figures in table 2 show how *verstehst du?* is used, but they do not explain how these uses are motivated. Detailed sequential analysis of single cases is needed to determine precisely what the sequential conditions for using *verstehst du?* are, how it is coordinated with the partner's activities, which turn-types precede and which follow *verstehst du?*, and what function it has for the production of a multiunit turn. From a conversation analytic perspective as well as from a constructionist point of view, we want to know whether the uses of *verstehst du?* are really just one coherent practice. This can only be the case if we can show that the deviant cases, which do not match the most frequent distributional pattern, are nevertheless produced according to the same general orientation, but employed in a context-sensitive manner. From a distributional point of view, deviant cases need to be accounted for as cases which can be explained by the need to adapt talk to specific sequential affordances in order to comply with the general function of *verstehst du?*.

4.3.1 *Verstehst du?* as an index of relevance and insistence

A primary use of *verstehst du?* is this: The speaker signals that s/he has made a relevant point which needs to be acknowledged and accepted by the addressee, but from the speaker's point of view, the addressee has not yet displayed his/her understanding and acceptance of this point clearly enough.¹⁰

Lack of uptake is most evidently at issue, when *verstehst du?* is used turn-initially in an insisting response following a partner's turn. This is the case in the following extract from a seminar at a film school in which two professors and four students discuss a script for a film. The professor had criticized the opinion of one student, who claimed a pickpocket would not be prestigious enough as a good protagonist. The professor argues that a good plot does not depend on a glamorous hero, but rather that there is a lot at stake for the protagonist. When one of the students confirms this, the professor insistently repeats his objection.

1 Pitching: *Taschendieb_00:28:01–00:29:09*

- 01 HA: *es kommt NUR darauf AN, ((clears throat)) welche beDEUTung;*
 'It only matters ((clears throat)) which importance'
 02 (1.2)
 03 *das ZIEL, (-- für den <<f>HE:Lden> hat.*
 'the goal has for the hero'
 04 (3.6)
 05 *und es kommt NUR darauf an d; (-) dass:- (--)*
 'and it only matters that'
 06 *SIE den HELden so BAUen- =*
 'you build the hero in a way'
 07 *=dass der ZUSchauer <<dim>sich mit dem HELden*
identifizieren kann.>
 'that the spectator can identify with the hero'
 08 *(---) kann um einen teller ERB<<p>sensuppe gehen.>*
 'can be about a bowl of pea soup'
 09 (1.0)
 10 KA: *oder um den norMAlen Lebensunterhalt;*
 'or about normal living'
 11 [*des is eben so-]*
 'that's it'
 12 HA: [*<<f>ja> aber äh verst] <<all>verSTEHN sie ich GLAUbe sie*
machen>
 'yes but PRT underst do you understand I think you are
 making'

¹⁰ In this way, *verstehst du?* is what Jefferson (1981) terms a "post-response pursuit of response token". However, in contrast to other tokens that do this, *verstehst du?* projects a reformulation of the speaker's point which was not responded to adequately from his/her point of view.

- 13 *einen RICHTigen- (-) also einen RICHTich äh;*
 `a real PRT a real PRT'
- 14 *mh dramaTURgischen denkfehler den wir ↑JETZT,*
 `PRT dramaturgical mistake of reasoning which we now'
- 15 *(---) am beGINN unserer ARbeit miteinander AUSräumen müssen.*
 `at the beginning of our work together need to get rid of'
- 16 (2.0)
- 17 *es kommt NUR darauf an was das ziel für DIE:sen-*
 `It is only important what the goal for this'
- 18 *(--) DIEses indivIduum dass sie jetzt SCHAFFen MÜSsen,*
 `this individual that you must create now'
- 19 *(---) beDEUTet.*
 `means'

The extract starts with a professor's instruction (lines 01–08) on how to construct a protagonist. The student KA confirms this instruction by reformulating the upshot (lines 10–11.). Obviously, the professor does not accept her turn as a sufficient display of understanding. In particular, the rather vague reference to *norMAlen lebensunterhalt* ('normal living', line 10) runs counter to a maxim which the professor advocates, namely that a character needs to be created with reference to concrete actions. The professor responds to the student's reformulation with an adversative turn: "*ja aber verst verstehen sie*" (line 12). The turn-beginning is produced in overlap with the student's reaction; it projects that the student does not understand the instruction well enough from the professor's perspective. The recycled turn-beginning and its prosodical integration with the upcoming turn shows that the professor is not using *verstehen sie* to elicit a response, but that he is projecting a reformulation. This reformulation is not delivered immediately, however, and the professor first gives an account why the point he is insisting on is extremely important for the students: The professor criticizes the students' conception as a dramaturgical mistake of reasoning, (*dramaTURgischen denkfehler*, line 14), which needs to be abolished (*JETZT [...] AUSräumen müssen*, line 15). Then follows the reformulation, which is iconically indexed by the repetition of the formula *es kommt NUR darauf an* ('it only matters', line 17), which serves to mark the upshot. The turn which is prefaced by *verstehen sie?* thus consists of an upgraded reformulation of the prior criticism..

Verstehst du? is a discourse marker construction, which is used here in a canonical sequential pattern, which runs like this:

1. A: Main point
2. B: Inadequate uptake (from A's point of view)
3. A: *Verstehst du?*
4. Reformulation of main point
5. B: Repair of uptake

In this way, *verstehst du?* is used as a display of an inadequate uptake. “Inadequacy” from A’s point of view may relate to various matters: ‘The response might have been minimal, disaffiliative, or, as in extract 1, misaligned in terms of being premature or displaying some misunderstanding of A’s prior turn. In this way, B’s turn is taken to index a deficit in the observable achievement of intersubjectivity. This deficit may have different sources and may concern different levels of meaning. Accordingly, the more specific local functions of *verstehst du?* in its sequential context vary.

Verstehst du? works both retrospectively and prospectively: Retrospectively, it upgrades the relevance of the point the speaker has made, but at the same time, it projects a reformulation and perhaps an expansion of this point as the topic of the upcoming turn. Its projective force is furthermore made clear by prosodic integration with the turn-continuation. The *verstehst du?*-construction has a double temporal scope, i.e. it belongs to both the previous and the present turns of the speaker. Its temporal-indexical interpretive properties, which emerge out of its routine use in canonical sequences, are thus:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| A: Main point | } retrospective interpretation |
| B: Inadequate uptake (from A’s point of view); | |
| A: <i>Verstehst du?</i> | } of prior interaction |
| Reformulation of main point | } Projection of turn-continuation |
| B: Adequate uptake | |
| | } and preferred reaction |

As far as the topic is concerned, the construction indexes only one topic, i.e. the speaker’s position as expressed by the speaker’s prior turn, which will now be elaborated. This temporally double and topically single scope makes the construction a marker of relevance and insistence. In such cases, *verstehst du?* is not used as a tag, which prompts ratification, but rather as a call for enhanced attention and more profound and observable cognitive processing, which is prompted by the speaker’s diagnosis that the addressee still has not achieved sufficient understanding.

Although grammaticalized, the original lexical semantics of the verb *verstehen* is still present in the construction, albeit in the negative: Adequate understanding on the part of the listener has not yet been reached from the speaker’s point of view. The professor allocates the students a task of understanding, which is cognitive (*denkfehler*, ‘mistake of reasoning’, line 14), but also practical, because it calls for a practical accomplishment (*schaffen müssen*, ‘must create’, line 18). So, not only the meaning of “grasping intellectually” is at issue, but also the meaning of “acceptance” and “confirmation of knowledge”.

Verstehst du?-constructions are used when the achievement of intersubjectivity becomes problematic. They occur in the context of repeated initiatives and repeated accounts of positions which B reacts to only minimally or not in the way A expects. In the data, such problems arise when

- B overtly rejects A's position,
- B produces reactions which make it obvious for A that the B lacks relevant knowledge and misunderstands A's prior turns,
- B does not respond at several TRPs,
- B departs in his behaviour from essential normative expectations, so that A starts to doubt whether B can be regarded as a competent member.

All four problems are present in extract 2. The extract is from a mediation session. Mrs. Heuler (B) raises accusations which the other parties, including the mediator (C), consider to be ridiculous. The mediator and her opponent's advocate try to persuade her to withdraw her accusations, but she does not react at most TRPs. When she does respond, however, she defends her accusations with absurd arguments. The following extract starts in the midst of an extensive multi-unit turn in which the mediator tries to convince Mrs. Heuler once again to drop her charge and abstain from appealing to court.

2 Mediation 3001.22 B_00.03.25-00.03.41 (Kartoffelklau)

- 01 C: <<all>wenn sie jetzt> zum geRICHT gehen frau (.) heuler?
'if you go now to court Mrs. Heuler'
- 02 (--> dann KRIEgen sie <<all>m:öglicherweise schon> allein
'then possibly you get PRT already'
- 03 <<dim>eine STRAfe in dieser höhe;
'a fine of this amount'
- 04 **verSTEHN se?**>
'do you understand?'
- 05 B: hört mal zu:.
'listen-PL PRT'
- 06 C: <<all>da werden se SCHON> eine strafe möglicherwei' in-
'there you will PRT possibly a fine of'
- 07 (-) wenn FÜNfhundert (REIchen).
'if five-hundred are enough'
- 08 (-) hörn sie wenn sie verURteilt werden,=
'listen-SG if you are convicted'
- 09 =woran ich eigentlich ich mein ich bin: hier nicht das geRICHT,
'what I actually I mean I am not the court here'
- 10 (-) aber nach der beWEISlage-
'but according to the evidence available'

The mediator adds "*verSTEHN sie*" with high-rise "question-intonation" (line 04) as a tag to her turn, in which she insists that Mrs. Heuler should not appeal to the court. Mrs. Heuler does not respond to the mediator's pre-

vious turns. “*VerSTEHN sie*” is used here as a tag, serving as an understanding-check to solicit a hitherto lacking response. Because the tag is added to the prior TCU without a delay, which would call for a turn-transition, the use of *verSTEHN sie?* does not seem to be motivated (only) locally, but it points to a more global problem of accomplishing intersubjectivity. This problem is not solved, but it is confirmed in the extract: Instead of responding to the mediator’s argument, Mrs. Heuler asks her opponents to listen, as if they, not she, were the primary target of the mediator’s turns (line 05). Obviously, the mediator is so embarrassed by this unexpected response that she produces an incoherent, anacoluthic turn (lines 06–10). This turn reformulates her prior argument (line 06), partially recycling her prior construction (*da kriegen sie [...] schon eine strafe*, line 03–05 vs. *da werden sie schon eine strafe*, line 06). It follows another discourse marker construction *hörn sie* (‘listen’, line 08), which is similar to *verstehn sie* and which also employs a mental verb (line 09). The mediator thus takes up the lexeme *hören* from Mrs. Heuler’s command “*hört (.) mal (.) ZU*” (line 05) and redirects it against Mrs. Heuler herself. “*Hörn sie*” is a discourse marker, which like *verstehen sie?* indexes a problem of understanding and acceptance, but in addition to the latter, it makes the recipient’s lack of attention an issue. *Verstehen sie?* and *hören sie?* can also both be used as a reproaching device in order to ask the addressee to comply with the basic requirements of interactional participation. Extract 2 thus differs from extract 1, because *verstehen sie?* here is used as a turn-final tag and not as a turn-initial projector. However, it also deals with inadequate uptake of the speaker’s position, and the speaker also reformulates her position after the recipient does not respond to *verstehst du?* with an aligning response. Thus, despite the differences in the sequential organisation of *verstehst du?* regarding turn-design and turn-taking, the more general function of dealing with a problem of a lack of intersubjectivity and projecting the need to recycle the speaker’s main point due to lingering inadequate uptake is identical.

Problems with achieving intersubjectivity, however, can be much more local. In Extract 3, the professor HA objects to an argumentation produced by the student Cornelius (CO). When the student does not respond, the professor uses *verstehen sie?* to elicit a response.

3 Pitching: Bernd2_00:10:07–00:10:19

- 01 CO: [(...)]
 02 HA: [cornelius] *verZEIHung*;
 'Cornelius excuse me'
 03 (-) *das is nun einfach dahe (.) daHIN geredet*;
 'now this is simply just chatter'
 04 (--) 'äh er kann doch nun was ↑TU:N um die frau zu
überZEUGen oder?
 'PRT he can PRT do something in order to convince the woman
 PRT?'
 05 (---) *er kann doch [RAUS]gehen und den RA<<t>sen mähen;>*
 'he can PRT go out and mow the lawn.'
 06 CO: [ja?]
 'yes?'
 07 HA: (--) *also äh' (-) äh ver[stehn] sie (.) <<p>ähm;>*
 'PRT PRT PRT do you understand? PRT'
 08 CO: [okay.]
 'okay'
 09 RA: <<f>na ja,
 'well'
 10 (-) *aber [er hat ja]*
 'but he has PRT'
 11 CO: [aber (--) ich meine
 'but I mean'

Having produced his objection, the professor shows by using the tag *oder?* with high-rise “question-intonation” (line 04) and leaving a pause after it that he expects the student to produce an agreement. The student, however, does not react, and the professor carries on with his argumentation, adding an example (line 05), which again makes turn-transition relevant, because the turn ends reaching the speaker’s lowest pitch register and is followed by a pause. At this TRP, the student again does not show whether he aligns with the professor’s position. Resuming his turn with “*also äh verstehn sie?*” (line 07), the professor now projects an insisting reformulation of his position. *Verstehen sie?* here does not seem to be simply a tag which allocates the turn to the student. Both the discourse markers – “*also äh' (-) äh?*” before *verstehn sie* and *ähm* (line 07) after it – are turn-holding devices which project an expansion of his argument. The student now shows his sensitivity to the fact that his uptake has repeatedly been made relevant by producing an agreement token, which, however, is only used to mitigate a following disagreement (see *aber* ‘but’, line 11). Meanwhile, the second professor, RA, claims the floor (lines 09–10).

Verstehen sie? is again used in an environment where B does not give in to A’s standpoint. It is not used as a means to elicit some reaction, but it projects a self-reformulation of the upshot of the speaker’s position. Recipients can anticipate the projected turn-continuation and preempt it by directly reacting

to *verstehst du?*, even if no TRP is reached. In the face of the partner taking the turn, the producer of *verstehst du?* can forgo the reformulation and wait until the partner produces a satisfactory response to his position:

So, recipients sometimes use the temporal-indexical interpretive properties of the *verstehst du?*-construction, which retrospectively indexes a prior inadequate uptake on the recipient's part, while prospectively projecting a reformulation of the speaker's point, which calls for a repair of the prior response. The recipient thus can cut the projected sequence short by immediately delivering a repair of his/her uptake which preempts the reformulation of the speaker's main point.

1. A: Main point
2. B: Inadequate uptake (from A's point of view)
3. A: *Verstehst du?*
4. B: Repair of uptake

This is what happens in extract 3: After the intervention of the second professor RA, the student CO starts to produce an elaborate response to the professor's argumentation (line 11). In such contexts, *verstehst du?* actually becomes a tag which serves to elicit a response from B. This is paradoxical, because it projects a turn-continuation of the speaker, which, however, is framed as a subsidiary activity, and which becomes necessary because of a lack of uptake. But precisely because of this subsidiary property, the projected turn-continuation can be preempted by a repaired, upgraded response from the recipient, who may understand that the speaker may abort his/her turn if the recipient starts to deliver a more adequate response from the speaker's point of view.

In sum, one use of *verstehst du?* occurs in a context in which the accomplishment of intersubjectivity becomes problematic from the speaker's point of view, because the recipient does not display an uptake which is sufficient for the speaker. In some of the cases in the corpus, *verstehst du?* is used as a tag calling directly for a repaired and enhanced response. In most cases, however, it projects a reformulation and establishes a conditional relevance for a repaired uptake of the reformulation. The bridge between these two sequential patterns may consist both of preemptive cases as in Extract 3, where B anticipates the reformulation, and of varying expectations of the producer of *verstehst du?*: If A assumes that B is able to produce a repaired response immediately, A may produce *verstehst du?* as a tag which allocates the turn to B to elicit a direct response; if A assumes that B is not yet able to do so, A integrates *verstehst du?* with a following reformulation, leaving no room for an immediate response, but implying that it is due after the reformulation.

4.3.2 *Verstehst du?* indicating problems of formulation

Problems of achieving intersubjectivity may arise from a speaker's problems of formulation, i.e. of conceptualization or encoding. In these cases, it is neither a lack of uptake nor a lack of understanding or acceptance on the part of the listener which causes failure, but is rather the speaker's fault. In these cases, *verstehst du?*-constructions index that the speaker him/herself assumes that s/he has not yet managed to produce a formulation which should provide for an adequate understanding on the part of the listener. This use of *verstehst du?* co-occurs with other indices of problems of formulations, such as hesitation phenomena, cut-offs, self-repairs, reformulations, accounts, etc. A case in point is extract 4, in which the professor repeatedly tries to convey to the students what is essential for a good story.

4 Pitchings: Journalistin3_00.43.05–00.43.25

- 01 HA: DENKT bitte:; (-) an DIEse;(-) an diese WARNung- und DENKT
 dran-
 'please mind this this warning and mind that'
- 02 ??: (-) [.hh,]
- 03 HA: [dass-]
 'that'
- 04 (-) 'äh <<all>auf der ANdern seite> 'äh-
 'PRT on the other side PRT'
- 05 (-) **verstehst ihr**;
 'do you understand'
- 06 (--) es MUSS: n geWISser;
 'there must be a certain'
- 07 (--) ä::h äh äh <<all>äh> SCHAUwert;
 'PRT PRT PRT PRT show value'
- 08 (-) in der geschichte DRIN sein-
 'in the story'
- 09 (--) sonst is sie wieder nich: <<all>richtig> GLAUBw?ürdig-
 'otherwise it is not really credible'
- 10 RA: ja-
 'yes'
- 11 HA: also (--) **verSTEHT ihr** es MUSS diese;
 'PRT do you understand it must be this'
- 12 (--) ((schluckt)) ich ha hab <<all>KEine ahnung wie ihr das>
 MACHT-
 '((swallows)) I have no idea how you do it'

Before the professor manages to find a formulation of a criterion for a good story in line 07 (*schauwert* 'show value'), he produces cut-offs (line 04) and hesitation markers (*äh*, lines 04 and 07) and intra-turn pauses, and he projects with *verstehst ihr* (line 05) that an important point is to follow. Then he projects another reformulation, again using *verstehst ihr* (line 11), which is again aban-

done. Finally (line 12), he concedes that his attempt at finding a solution for the formulation problem has failed. *Versteht ihr* here projects the formulation of the relevant criterion, which is started twice by *es muss* (lines 06 and 11). The professor makes it clear that he assumes that the main point has not yet been understood, because he has not managed to find a proper formulation. *Verstehen sie* is a turn-holding device and projects a new attempt at formulating the relevant point. More specifically, it calls for enhanced efforts to understand on the part of the listeners, i.e. it indexes that the listener should cooperate in the constitution of a comprehensible message, which the speaker himself does not manage to produce alone. In the end, the speaker admits failure and the task is handed over to the listeners (*ich hab keine ahnung wie ihr das macht* 'I have no idea how you do it', line 12).

4.3.3 *Versteht du?* used for refocusing

When a speaker produces a thematic digression, *verstehst du?* can be used to announce a return to the prior focus of the interaction, i.e. that which was operative before the digression. It may be brought about by a self-referential comment or an explanation which the speaker produced in an immediately preceding account. *Versteht du?* is then used to reorient the listener to the main line of talk and to project its continuation; that is, it turns the comment into a parenthesis which deserves no further attention. An example is extract 5 from a talk show. The famous entertainer Karl Moik (KM) tells how he became an anchorman for folk music shows on TV.

5 Talkshow 4050.08C_00:16:00–00:16:21

- 01 KM: *und da sin ma mal FURCHbar BECHern gegangen,=*
 'and then we once PRT went carousing'
- 02 *=und <<t> da war ich> <<len> VOLL: beSOFFen=*
 'and I was totally drunk'
- 03 *=<<all> da hat er mich> angFÜLLT?*
 'he kept me refilling my glass'
- 04 *(--) und <<all>WÄHrend i so bSOFFen war muss ich irgendswas>*
 'and while I was drunk I must have'
- 05 *unterSCHRIEBen haben und;*
 'signed something and'
- 06 *(--) DES war eigentlich-*
 'that was actually'
- 07 *(-) <<p>der GRUNDstock dass ich;>*
 'the foundation that I'
- 08 WB: *mh;*
 PRT
- 09 KM: *präsenTator für volkstümliche SENdungen woar; (-)*
 'became a presenter for folk programmes'

- 10 WB: [mhm;]
PRT
- 11 KM: [<<all>jetz] wird er glei wieder sogn> sigst jetzt wo er
HERkimmt;
'now he will say immediately again do you see now where he
comes from'
- 12 WB: <<lachend>mh mh [.h MH,>]
PRT PRT PRT
- 13 KM: [<<f>ver↑STEHST?>]
'do you understand?'
- 14 WB: (--) [ja-]
'yes'
- 15 KM: [S:O] fing es an.
'that's how it started'
- 16 (-) [ja-]
'yes'
- 17 WB: [KANN] man sagen;
'one can say'
- 18 (-) dass sie inzwischen <<acc>sind sie ja> <<all>kann man sagen
'that you meanwhile you are PRT one can say'
- 19 <<dim>ein> volksmusikunter?NEHMer->
'an entrepreneur of folk music'

Having concluded his story (lines 06–07), Moik adds a derogatory comment which he attributes to his interlocutor, the interviewer Wilfried Backes (WB), pretending that this will be Backes' comment to Moik's story (line 11). This fictional quote is self-deprecation which adumbrates that Backes will interpret Moik's account of being drunk as typical of his personality. Backes' laughter (line 12) indicates that he recognizes and shares the jocular key. Moik, however, does not laugh. With a loud *verSTEHST?* (line 13), which is produced in overlap with Backes' laughter, he reorients to his story und with the coda-formula *SO: fing es an* ('that's how it started', line 15), and he underlines once again the conclusion and the point of his story. Like in extracts 1, 3, and 4, *verSTEHST?* is used to advert the recipient to the main point of an account, which here is not made explicit once again, but only referred to anaphorically in the following TCU (*SO: fing es an*, 'that's how it started', line 15). *VERSTEHST?* indexes that the jocular comment and the recipient's response are to be treated as an insertion, and the recipient is reoriented to the fact that it is the story, and not the comment, which the recipient should respond to and which will be the subject of the speaker's next action.

In such cases, *verstehst du?* is used as a resumption marker (cf. Mazeland and Huiskes 2001). It is used as a means to segment the speaker's own talk and to signal turn-internal coherence relations, i.e. a shift back to a prior focus or topic. The ambiguity of *verstehst du?*, which was already observed in extracts 2 and 3, between being a response-elicitor and being a projector of a

reformulation is evidenced here by the simultaneous actions of WB and KM. WB produces a confirming response token (line 14), thus treating *verstehst?* as a response-eliciting tag, while in overlap KM continues his turn, reformulating the main point of his story (line 15).

The sequential pattern for the use of *verstehst du?* as a resumption marker is:

1. A: Focus 1 (main point)
2. Focus 2 (digression)
- (2a. B: Uptake of focus 2)
3. A: *Verstehst du?*
4. Focus 1 (reformulation of main point)
5. B: Uptake of focus 1

When *verstehst du?* is used as a resumption marker, its function is much more remote from the lexico-semantic origin of the lemma *verstehen* than the previous examples. The formula here is not an attempt at achieving intersubjectivity, but rather indexes what the addressee should treat as the main point of a turn. In this sense, s/he should understand (*verstehen*) what matters most concerning the speaker's turn.

To sum up: There are clear differences between the sequential uses of *verstehst du?*: It can index insistence and relevance (either as a tag calling for a response or as a projector of reformulation), index problems of formulation, or project refocusing. Projections emanating from *verstehst du?* regard the listener's (when used as a tag) or the speaker's next action and the topical development of the talk; no syntactic projection is at issue.¹¹ Clearly, the projection does not rely on *verstehst du?* alone, but it crucially depends on the turn-position of *verstehst du?* (post- vs. pre-positioned) and the prosodic properties of its realisation (integration vs. non-integration with prior and ensuing talk) and timing (pauses before/after). The commonality of all uses lies in their function to highlight the relevant point of an account which needs more profound interactional processing. As such, *verstehst du?* could be termed a "recycling construction": It indicates that some communicative project has not yet achieved intersubjective closure and needs to be dealt with again in its most important part. The different uses can be seen as context-sensitive specialisations of this basic function of dealing with a problem in the achievement of intersubjectivity.

¹¹ See Auer (2005) for a discussion of levels and objects of projection.

5 The negative construction (NP) *nicht verstehen (können)* (COMP)/*can/do not understand NP/COMP*

5.1 Formal and semantic properties

The negative construction has three syntactic variants:

- elliptical/unaccusative uses *ich versteh(e) nicht* ('I don't understand'; 11/84 = 13.1%),
- with a direct object NP *nicht verstehen (können)* ('can/do not understand NP', 56/84 = 66.7%),
- with a sentential complement *nicht verstehen (können) COMP* ('can/do not understand COMP', 17/84 = 19.9%), which is linked either by the subjunctive *dass*, a question pronoun such as *warum/wieso* ('why'), or a relative pronoun *was* ('what/which').

These different valence frames do not affect the meaning of the negative construction: All syntactic variants exhibit the same semantic and pragmatic potential regarding the use and interpretation of *verstehen*. The negative construction is the most frequent construction with *verstehen* in the data investigated. It was found in a total of n=84 out of N=300 instances of *verstehen*, which is 28%. It is overwhelmingly realized in the first person singular (75/84 = 89.4%). Three out of four constructs in the second person are interrogative; all other cases are declarative sentences. Two instances are realized with the negative impersonal pronoun *keiner* ('nobody').

In seven instances the negative construction co-occurs with the auxiliary verb *können* ('can'). 12 instances (14.3%) are in the perfect tense, the rest (85.7%) in the present. *Verstehen* can have four meanings in the negative construction:

- “to perceive auditorily”: The speaker expresses that s/he is not able to hear the partner's words sufficiently to be able to interpret them; in the data, there is only one such case from a telephone conversation;
- “to grasp the semantics”: The speaker expresses that s/he cannot identify referents or relevant contexts, the interlocutor's intention, or the interactional key (fiction, jocularity, seriousness, irony). Semantic problems concern 22 out of the 84 instances (26.2%).
- “to see/accept the reasons”: The speaker expresses that, although s/he understands the semantics of the interlocutor's turn, s/he does not see sufficient reasons for it. This is the most frequent use (47/84 = 56.0%). An important subcategory of insufficient justification is the use of the construction to refer to some contradiction in the partner's position (11/84; 13.1%).

- “to accept a position”: The speaker expresses that s/he does not accept the partner’s position without giving a justification or an explanation for this (7/84; 8.3%).

Sometimes the distinction between the second and the third meaning is hard to make, and the construction may address both kinds of troubles. Eight cases remained so ambiguous that they were not classified. In addition, the pragmatics of instances from the subsets “to see/accept the reasons” and “to accept a position” is often unclear: Are they questions which make a justification conditionally relevant, or are they refusals, which usually imply a reproach? In German, the negative construction (NP) *nicht verstehen (können)* (COMP) is a conventional format for producing a reproach. This pragmatic meaning is, however, defeasible, and it can only be identified because of properties of the sequential (or epistemic) context, but not by the construction itself. There is a striking bias in the distribution of the different meanings as to activity types: While the meaning “to grasp the semantics” is pervasive in psychotherapy, where it is mostly produced by the therapists, the meaning of reproach prevails in argumentative contexts, such as mediations and televised debates.

5.2 Conversation analytic findings

My account is restricted to the largest subset, in which *verstehen* has the meaning “to see/accept the reasons”. I will analyse how this meaning is constructed and how the participants display and negotiate if the turn is to be understood as a reproach. Extract 6 from a linguistic professor’s consultation shows how the meaning “to see/accept the reasons” is tied to the pragmatic issue of accepting a position. The student ST explains to the professor PR that he does not understand de Saussure’s notion of “symbol”.

6 Beratung 1400.06_00.16.05–00.16.49 (Saussure Referat)

- 01 ST: <<all>jetzt hab ich nur noch> Eine,
 ‘now I have only one more’
- 02 PR: hm,
 ‘PRT’
- 03 ST: (-) äh- (-) kleine FRage,
 ‘PRT little question’
- 04 (--) äh <<all>über den> symBOLbeg’- (-) beGRIFF jetzt bei äh-
 ‘PRT concerning the notion of symbol now with PRT’
- 05 (-) sausSURE;
 ‘Saussure’
- 06 PR: (---) mhmm,
 ‘PRT’

- 07 ST: (--) *äh da verSTEH ich nicht*
 'PRT there I don't understand'
- 08 <<all>oder beziehungsweise halt ich des eben>-
 'or rather I PRT consider this'
- 09 (---) *äh in <<all>geWISser weis> für FA:LSCH,*
 'PRT in a certain way to be wrong'
- 10 (--) *einfach-*
 'simply'
- 11 (1.8)
- 12 *weil saussure SAGT-*
 'because Saussure says'
- 13 (---) *dass ein <<all>praktisch einen> Unterscheid gibt*
zwischen
 'that there is practically a difference between'
- 14 *symbol und SEInem SPRACHlichen ZEichen;*
 'symbol and its linguistic sign'
- 15 PR: *ja;*
 'yes'
- 16 (--) *das sagt er explizIT;*
 'he says this explicitly'
- 17 ST: (-) *und des is <<all>meiner meinung nach> stimmt das eben*
 ↑NI:CHT,
 'and this is in my view this is not right'
- 18 (1.5)
- 19 *äh-*
 'PRT'
- ((continues his argument))

The meaning of *da verSTEH ich nicht* ('there I don't understand', line 07) at first seems to be "not to grasp the semantics", because the student prefaces his account with the announcement of a question (line 01–05). The student, however, self-repairs *da verSTEH ich nicht*, replacing it by *halt ich des eben>-* (---) *äh in <<all>geWISser weis> für FA:LSCH*, ('I PRT consider this PRT in a certain way to be wrong'; lines 08–9). Now, its revised semantics – "not to accept a position" – is displayed by the self-repair. The student goes on not only to formulate the position he does not accept. In addition, he gives an account why he does not accept Saussure's notion of the "symbol" (lines 10–14). *Da verSTEH ich nicht* thus refers to something which can be grasped semantically, but which is argumentatively flawed from the student's point of view. In the next TCUs of his multiunit turn, however, the student makes clear that his argument is designed to clarify with the professor's help whether there are reasons in favour of Saussure's position. The pragmatics of *da verSTEH ich nicht*, thus, is not a plain rejection, but a conditional one, which is presented as being negotiable in the light of additional justification for the disputed view. *Da verSTEH ich nicht* projects the search for such a justification. The meaning "to see/accept the reasons" carries an argumentative

8 Schlichtung 3001.20_00.04.16–00.04.32 (Hitler)

- 01 C: *wem mer in dem ALder is,=*
 'when one is this age'
- 02 =also **das verSTEH isch nit wie-**
 'PRT I don't understand how'
- 03 (.) **wie mer sich da gegenseidisch des LE:<<t>we schwer macht;>**
 'how one give each other a hard time'
- 04 A1: *ja, (-) SO [is es.]*
 'yes that's right'
- 05 B: [(...)] *[WER hat] die (schuld)*
 'who is to blame?'
- 06 C: [also;;]
 'PRT'
- 07 A1: *ja [das KOMMT doch von] UNne RUFF,*
 'PRT that comes PRT up from below'¹⁴
- 08 C: [JA: isch mein des;]
 'PRT that's what I mean'
- 09 B: [moMENT-]
 'wait a moment'
- 10 C: [des WIRD,]
 'this will'
- 11 *des WIRD [hier noch;]*
 'this will be here'
- 12 B: [er HAT,]
 'he lived'
- 13 B: [mir gegenÜwwer gewOHNT,]
 'on the other side of the street'
- 14 C: [wird ja wohl uff] *BEIde*
 'will PRT PRT on both'
- 15 B: [und da hat er ETlische male] [die;;]
 'and several times he got'
- 16 C: [SEIde wird ja des nit ganz] *oKAY: [sein;]*
 'sides this doesn't PRT seem to be thoroughly okay'
- 17 B: <<dim>*SCHNAUze verhausen kriegt*
 'beaten up'
- 18 *auf DEUTSCH gsacht weil er sich beNOMme hat;>*
 'to put it plainly because he behaved in a way'

In this extract, the meaning of the matrix sentence *versteh isch nit* ('I don't understand', line 02) is clarified as "I cannot see/accept the reasons" by the negative assessment in the dependent sentence (*wie mer sich da gegenseidisch des LE:we schwer macht*, 'how one gives each other a hard time', line 03). Here, the lexical instantiation of the complement sentence provides the local meaning of the negative construction. But what kind of action does it perform? By his rhetorical question *WER hat die schuld?* ('who is to blame?', line 05), which B

¹⁴ The opponent lived in an apartment which was on the other side of the street, one floor below the speaker's.

directs towards A1, B displays that he understands C's turn as a reproach. A1 rejects this and blames B instead (*das KOMMT doch von UNNe RUF'T*, 'that comes PRT up from below', line 07). A sequence of reciprocal reproaches emerges. C's initial turn could also have been understood as a rejection of the behaviour in question (pressing charges), without reproaching anyone. Indeed, mediators use such negative assessments in order to appeal to the opponents' common sense, persuading them to act according to higher-order values and bring the conflict to a closure. However, this pragmatic meaning is taken up neither by the opponents, who instead treat the mediator's turn as an opening of a blame-negotiation, nor by the mediator, who does not manage to calm down both sides.

As already mentioned in Section 5.1, in eleven instances, the negative construction is used to introduce an objection which refers to a contradiction and thereby makes the opponent's argument look flawed. The contradiction is formulated in an adversative turn-format. In another mediation session, A1 protests against her being fired because of being absent from work without a valid excuse. As evidence, her employer (B1) describes how she went to a coffee shop while allegedly missing work for a doctor's visit.

9 Schlichtung 3003.119.3_00.12.46-00.13.2101 (kaffee)

- B1: *ich versteh auch andereseits* †NI:CHT? wenn die-
 'on the other hand I don't understand when the'
 02 (-) *klägerin zum arzt nach BRUCHtal (.) MUSS JA:?*
 'plaintiff (=A1) needs to go to the doctor in Bruchtal'
 03 (--) *dass sie dann (-) in de innenSTADT im maxim-*
 'that she then goes to Maxim's in the city'
 04 (-) *KAFfee trinkt;*
 'to have a cup of coffee'
 05 (1.8)
 06 A1: ((sniffs)) <<p>wieso is des verBote?>
 '((sniffs)) why is that forbidden?'
 07 B1: (---)<<all>ich hab noch net gesacht dass es verBoten is
 ich hab jetz
 'I didn't say that it is forbidden I now'
 08 (-) *nur gsagt ich verSTEH s net.>*
 'only said that I don't understand it'
 09 (1.7)
 10 A1: *isch hatt daheim keine ZEIT mehr d kaffee zu trinke,=*
 'I didn't have time to have my coffee at home'
 11 *=weil isch konnt mir auch keiner mache weil mir der*
STROM abgestellt
 'because I couldn't prepare any either because the
 electricity was'
 12 *worre is=*
 'turned off'

- 13 *AUCH* durch den die firma säuberle;
 'also by the Säuberle company'
- 14 (--) *weil isch s net ZAHle konnt?*
 'because I couldn't pay for it'
- 15 (--) also irgendwo !MUSS! isch jo mol a tass warme kaffee
 trinke od,
 'well I need to have PRT a cup of hot coffee somewhere
 don't I'
- 16 (2.4)
- 17 ?: [ja-]
 'yes'
- 18 A1: [des-] (-) *des kann mir KÄNner verBIEte;*
 'nobody can forbid me to do that'

By contrasting the necessity of going to the doctor with going to a coffee shop (lines 01–04), B1 makes clear that *ich verstehe* ((...)) *NICHT* (line 01) locally means “I cannot see/accept the reasons” for A1’s action. A1 treats this as a reproach: *wieso is das verBOte?* (‘why is that forbidden?’, line 06). This response presupposes that B1 meant that going to a coffee shop is forbidden when one has to go to the doctor’s. B1, however, rejects this interpretation of his prior turn: *ich hab jetz (-) nur gsagt ich verSTIEH s net* (‘I now only said that I don’t understand it’, lines 07–08). B1 insists on a “literal” interpretation. Instead of categorizing his first-positioned turn as a reproach, he (re)categorizes it as a repair-initiation, referring to a problem of understanding. The negative construction is thus framed as a request for justification. A1 delivers this justification in her next turn (lines 10–15), and when she does not receive an uptake (cf. the 2.4 second pause in line 16), she explicitly rejects the reproach (*des kann mir KÄNner verBIEte;* ‘nobody can forbid me to do that’, line 18).

Extract 9 shows the systematic ambiguity of the negative construction. It can be understood as a conventional way of producing a reproach, but this interpretation is always defeasible by reference to the lexical semantics of *verstehen*. Participants themselves can thus operate either with an idiomatic, non-compositional meaning of the negative construction as such, or with a compositional, lexically-based meaning of *verstehen*, and participants can argue about which meaning was intended. Similar to *why*-questions (see Günthner 2000), the negative construction is a rhetorical resource which can be used for conventionally conveying a reproach without needing to defend this interpretation, because the speaker can always (re)interpret his/her turn as a next-turn repair-initiator displaying a lack of understanding and calling for some justification. In the interactional sequence, turns with the negative construction therefore often remain ambiguous. This also the case in extract 9. The justification provided by A1 can either be interpreted as an answer to

a request for justification, or a defending statement against a reproach. In turn, the producer of the negative construction often displays his/her negative moral assessment by other actions (here: B1 fired A because of her absenteeism), thus preserving the interactional relevance of the interpretation as a reproach even if the speaker denies it, as in extract 9, line 08. Sequential placement and the prosody of reproaches and disagreements with the negative construction suggest that this construction is stylistically marked. It appears in the context of arguments which are framed as rational disputes, and it is never realized with a high-involvement prosody contextualizing excitement and indignation. This is in contrast to other formats for constructing reproaches (cf. Günthner 2000). The negative construction thus belongs to the register of stylizing a dispute as a rational argument.

6 Conclusions

This section discusses the results of the analyses of the two *verstehen*-constructions with respect to the question of the lexical vs. constructional basis of meaning. I then point out some questions regarding the notion of “construction”.

6.1 Lexical items vs. phrasal constructions as bases of meaning

In the data analysed, *verstehen* can have five meanings:

- to be able to perceive speech
- to identify a referent
- to grasp some dimension of meaning (intension, intention, inferences, allusions)
- to see reasons and motives for a position
- to accept a position

These meanings are related to each other by psychological and pragmatic motivation. The semantic spectrum is characterized by family-resemblances (cf. Wittgenstein 1953). The same applies to the pragmatic functions and the interactive uses of the various constructions with *verstehen*. For example, grasping meaning is often the prerequisite for recovering motives and reasons, and behaviours are interpreted as actions by imputing reasons and intentions. Understanding the meaning and the motives of a turn may be the prerequisite for its acceptance.¹⁵

¹⁵ See Clark (1996: 221–252), who describes this conditional relation as “upward completion” of joint actions.

In both the *verstehst du?*-constructions and the negative *verstehen*-constructions, the meanings “to grasp the meaning”, “to see/accept reasons and motives”, and “to accept a position” were found. Although the *verstehst du?*-construction is fairly grammaticalized, its lexical basis is still present in most of its occurrences. There is only one subtype of each construction which has a semantics that seems to be unique and which is also distinct from other uses of the same formal pattern. The first is the semantically light use of *verstehst du?* as a marker of refocusing (see 4.3.3); the second is the use of the negative construction as a reproach (see 5.2.2), which is a moralizing and personalizing extension of the meaning “(not) to accept a position”. This interpretation, however, is hard to pinpoint; the negative construction is often vague and ambiguous, and its interpretation is defeasible, which makes it useful as a rhetorical resource.

In sum, for both constructions, there is a considerable intra-constructional variance of possible meanings, while the spectra of meaning shared by both constructions overlap considerably. Moreover, this intra-constructional variance of meaning is organized in a similar way:

- The different meanings are often hard to tell apart; the constructs are often vague and ambiguous, but in most cases, this does not become an interactional issue (however, see extract 9).
- The meaning of the construct is specified in the interaction sequence and not determined by the construction itself. For the negative construction, the lexical instantiation of the object-NP or the COMP-sentence constrains the semantics of *nicht verstehen* (cf. extract 8, line 03: *wie mer sich da gegenseidisch des LE:we schwer macht*, “how one gives each other a hard time”). Apart from such specifications by instantiation, there are other practices external to the construction which are used for clarifying its local meaning. These are e.g. reformulation (see extract 6, lines 08–09: *halt ich ((...)) für falsch*, “I consider this to be wrong”) and argumentative practices, such as objection (see extract 7) and pointing out contradictions (see extract 8). The meaning of a single construct can often only be constrained within the wider sequential context or even with reference to cultural norms and knowledge about the participants’ attitudes.

While the semantic spectra of both constructions overlap considerably, their syntax is completely different. Consequently, syntactic motivations for similarities in meaning can be ruled out. What is more, the same spectrum of meaning for *verstehen* is also present in other constructions. These findings corroborate the view that the semantic similarities of both constructions rely on a shared lexicosemantic meaning potential (see Norén and Linell 2007; Linell 2009: Ch.15) of *verstehen*, which seems to operate more or less indepen-

dently of the specific construction. This context-free potential is specified locally in the interactional sequence, but most often independently of the construction. Local meanings are not simply compositional: *Verstehen* as such is polysemous, and its meaning is sometimes locally disambiguated, while in other cases it remains vague and ambiguous.

Regarding pragmatic and interactional properties, there are also similarities between both constructions. They both occur in the context of argumentations and assessments (cf. Imo 2007b: 291–292). However, their sequential, projective, and action-related properties are different: While *verstehst du?* projects a reformulation of the speaker's position which received insufficient uptake and is mainly tied to instructional contexts, the negative construction projects (and, indeed, is part of) the constitution of a pre-disagreement or a reproach and is used in argument sequences which are performed as being “rational debates”. While these interactional properties are clearly different, both constructions converge in that they are used to achieve intersubjectivity and mutual alignment, and they index that the partner's turn is judged to be linguistically, semantically, or pragmatically flawed.

What conclusions can we draw from these findings for a model of the local constitution of meaning? Four systematic sources of meaning could be shown to be relevant for the local interpretation of *verstehen*:

- a) the lexical meaning potential
- b) the meaning of the construction
- c) interactive practices and specification of meaning in the sequential context
- d) background knowledge

a) Lexical meaning potential

In most cases, the lemma *verstehen* constrains the semantics of the constructs independently of the phrasal constructions in which it occurs. The semantics of *verstehen* itself, however, is polysemous or underspecified. When talking about “ambiguity” and “polysemy”, we must be clear whether we are referring to the representation of lexical items in the (mental) lexicon or to their situated uses (see Deppermann 2000). If “underspecification” and “polysemy” refer to different representations of context-free items in the mental lexicon, a conversation analytic study cannot answer this question, because the difference cannot be linked directly to observable verbal action in talk-in-interaction. Conversation analysis can only deal with the local semantics of instances of use as it is displayed by participants' uses of constructions and their reactions. Turning to this, we see that participants make rhetorical use of the systematic ambiguity of the negative construction between the

two meanings “to see reasons and motives for a position” and “to accept a position” (cf. extract 9): While the latter meaning is used for producing a reproach, the former can be appealed to if the reproach is countered by the recipient. Thus, ambiguity is never formulated by a participant as being a problem, but it is used as a resource for rhetorical concerns of local (re)interpretation. Underspecification might be relevant insofar as the most general, underspecified meaning of *verstehen* can be paraphrased as “successful cognitive processing of some symbolic object”. This meaning is encompassed in all the polysemous meanings. The precise nature of the criteria for success (e.g. identifying referents, uncovering reasons) and the objects (e.g. sound patterns, intentions, actions) then define how the meaning of *verstehen* is specified.

b) Meaning of the construction

Only for the subtypes “refocusing” and “reproach” is the meaning specific to the construction. This statement, however, is partially misleading, because although these meanings are conventional and construction-specific, they are not context-free. The construction itself can acquire different meanings depending on its instantiation and the local context. Thus, the construction does not have a determinate meaning, but meaning-potentials (see Norén and Linell 2007; Linell 2009: Ch. 15), which are realized only with respect to types of context and clarifying pre- or post-positioned sequential activities.

c) Interactive practices and specification of meaning in the sequential context

The specification of the meaning of *verstehen* in the constructs is mainly based on its local sequential context. The meaning of *verstehst du?* seems to be determined mainly by the preceding context (i.e. the position taken by the speaker and the minimal uptake of this position), its timing, and its prosodic integration with prior and following TCUs. For the negative construction, the progression of the interaction seems more important: Self-repairs and reformulations, argumentation, and recipients’ reactions determine its meaning in cooperation with more general preferences for the interpretation provided for by the activity type in operation (e.g. dispute). For the negative construction, the instantiation of the complement plays a major role in determining the meaning of *verstehen*, as it provides coercion phenomena (cf. Michaelis 2005).

d) Background knowledge

The formulation of the constructs as well as preceding and following TCUs contextualize frames of background knowledge which contribute to the local interpretation of *verstehen*. For example, the idiomatic formula *sich gegen-*

seitig das Leben schwer machen ('to give each other a hard time', cf. extract 8), indexes a scenario which does not comply with criteria of a good interpersonal relationship. Arguing with contradictions (like in extract 9) relies on background knowledge, which is often needed not only to understand the precise nature of the contradiction, but also to discover the contradiction in the first place, because the contradiction often is not marked by connectives or other lexical devices.

These four sources of interpretation overlap with those proposed by Fischer (2006) for the functional interpretation of discourse particles ("invariant meaning aspects", "constructions", and "communicative background frames"). Her model needs to be expanded to include the specification of meaning by the sequential context and the practices the interactants use, because these contribute to and constrain substantial aspects of meaning, which are not provided by the other three sources. For instance, while *verstehst du?* as projecting a reformulation or marking relevance can still be regarded as a sequentially-based elaboration of the basic lexical meaning of *verstehen*, the use of *verstehst du?* for refocusing seems to be based on sequential grounds only, since it is very remote from the lexical semantics of *verstehen*. The sequential practices embody the local pragmatic works of the participants to specify and negotiate meaning according to their practical situated interactional business (cf. Deppermann 2005a, 2007; Schegloff 1984). Moreover, the sequential context is needed to access relevant background knowledge which is not directly contextualized by the lexical item *verstehen* and the phrasal constructions.

This study has shown that the meaning of constructs in context derives neither from context-free constructional meanings nor from context-free lexical meanings. Although both of these sources of meaning can be seen to offer a scope of routine ways of interpretation, the precise local meaning emerges from a complex interplay between the conversational history, the vocal and linguistic adaptation of constructions to the contextual moment of their production, interactional negotiation, and relevant background knowledge. In this way, not only the formal side of grammatical constructions is emergent (see Hopper 1998, 2004) – the same also applies to their meanings in situated interaction.

6.2 Problems with the notion of a "construction"

From the above argumentation, several questions concerning the status of *verstehst du?* and the negative constructions as constructions arise. If the semantics of the constructs is not determined by the construction itself, and

if it is not even specific to several of its many uses, then we may wonder whether they are constructions at all. If we stick to the definition of constructions as being form-meaning pairings (cf. Goldberg 1995; Croft 2001), then only the subtypes “marker of refocusing” of the *verstehst du?*-construction and the “reproach” meaning of the negative cases are real constructions. Only these two have a definite non-compositional function which hinges on the construction itself.

If we view constructions from a usage-based approach (see Langacker 2000; Goldberg 2006; Bybee 2006), the picture is different. From this point of view, criteria for constructions are psycholinguistic entrenchment as a linguistic unit and the property of being a normatively expectable or even required way of encoding some conceptualization or some communicative function (cf. Feilke 1996). These usage-based conditions are fulfilled for the two constructions studied. Both of them are “encoding idioms” (cf. Fillmore, Kay and O’Connor 1988). *Verstehst du?* is idiomatic, while *begreifst du?* or *erkennst du?* would be comprehensible, but unidiomatic and pragmatically anomalous. The same applies to the negative construction, which cannot be replaced by semantically equivalent but unidiomatic expressions, such as *keine Einsicht gewinnen* or *nicht erkennen*, although *nicht nachvollziehen können* would work. In addition, the *verstehst du?*-construction definitely has a unit-status because of its formal (phonetic and syntactic) reduction and its grammaticalization (cf. Bybee 2006).

The requirement of a one-to-one mapping of form and function cannot be satisfied in the data. There are several potential meanings that are locally selected according to contextual parameters. It would be misleading to project facets of meaning and function which are solely provided by the context of different constructions, just as if these were self-contained entities. It seems that it is not necessary for a construction to have a determinate meaning or function by itself. Rather, we can view constructions as tools for the situated construction of context-sensitive turns: schemata which can be flexibly adapted to interactional contingencies (cf. Pekarek Doehler and Müller 2006). “The grammar of context” (Kay 1997) is just one aspect of the contextual determination of meaning. It contributes only one, sometimes small part to the local constitution of meaning.

Transcription conventions GAT (Selting, Auer, Barden, Bergmann, Couper-Kuhlen, Günthner, Meier, Quasthoff, Schlobinski and Uhmann 1998)

Sequential structure

| | |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| [] | overlap and simultaneous talk |
| [] | |
| = | latching |

Pauses

| | |
|------------------|---|
| (.) | micropause (shorter than 0.2 sec) |
| (-), (--), (---) | brief, mid, longer pauses of 0.2–0.5, 0.5–0.7, 0.7–1.0 sec. |
| (2.85) | measured pause (more than one second) |

Other segmental conventions

| | |
|--------------|---|
| und=äh | assimilations within units |
| :, ::, ::: | segmental lengthening, according to duration |
| äh, öh, etc. | hesitation signals, so-called 'filled pauses' |
| ' | cut-off with glottal closure |

Laughter

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| so(h)o | laugh particles within talk |
| haha hehe hihi | laugh syllables |
| ((lacht)) | description of laughter |

Accentuation

| | |
|----------|--------------------------|
| akZENT | strong, primary stress |
| ak!ZENT! | extra strong stress |
| akzEnt | weaker, secondary stress |

Pitch at the end of units

| | |
|---|----------------|
| ? | rising to high |
| , | rising to mid |
| - | level |
| ; | falling to mid |
| . | falling to low |

Conspicuous pitch jumps

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| ↑ | to higher pitch |
| ↓ | to lower pitch |

Changed register

| | | |
|------|---|---------------|
| <<l> | > | low register |
| <<h> | > | high register |

Changes in loudness and speech rate

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <<f> | > | =forte, loud |
| <<ff> | > | =fortissimo, very loud |
| <<p> | > | =piano, soft |
| <<pp> | > | =pianissimo, very soft |
| <<all> | > | =allegro, fast |
| <<len> | > | =lento, slow |
| <<cresc> | > | =crescendo, continuously louder |
| <<dim> | > | =diminuendo, continuously softer |
| <<acc> | > | =accelerando, continuously faster |
| <<rall> | > | =rallentando, continuously slower |

Breathing

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| .h, .hh, .hhh | inbreath, according to duration |
| h, hh, hhh | outbreath, according to duration |

Other conventions

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| ((coughs)) | para- und extralinguistic activities and events |
| <<creaky voice> | > commentaries regarding voice qualities with scope |
| () | unintelligible according to duration |
| (solche) | uncertain transcription |
| al(s)o | uncertain sounds or syllables |
| (solche/welche) | possible alternatives |
| ((...)) | omissions in the transcript |

References

- Auer, P.
 2005 Projection in interaction and projection in grammar. *Text* 25, 1, 7–36.
 2006 Construction grammar meets conversation: Einige Überlegungen am Beispiel von “so”-Konstruktionen. In: S. Günthner & W. Imo (eds.), *Konstruktionen in der Interaktion*, Berlin, 291–314.
 2007 Syntax als Prozess. In: H. Hausendorf (ed.), *Gespräch als Prozess. Linguistische Aspekte der Zeitlichkeit verbaler Interaktion*, Tübingen, 95–142.
- Auer, P. & S. Günthner
 2005 Die Entstehung von Diskursmarkern im Deutschen – ein Fall von Grammatikalisierung? In: T. Leuschner, T. Mortelmans & S. de Groot (eds.), *Grammatikalisierung im Deutschen*, Berlin, 335–362.
- Barth-Weingarten, D.
 2006 *Fuzzy boundaries* – Überlegungen zu einer Grammatik der gesprochenen Sprache nach konversationsanalytischen Kriterien. In: A. Deppermann, R. Fiehler & T. Spranz-Fogasy (eds.), *Grammatik und Interaktion*, Radolfzell, 69–94. www.verlag-gesprachsforschung.de/2006/deppermann.htm (25 February, 2009).

- Blakemore, D.
2002 *Relevance and Linguistic Meaning: The Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse Marker*, Cambridge.
- Blutner, R.
2004 Pragmatics and the lexicon. In: Horn, L. & G. Ward, (eds.), *Handbook of Pragmatics*, Oxford, 488–514.
- Brandom, R.
1994 *Making it Explicit*, Cambridge.
- Bublitz, W.
1988 *Supportive Fellow Speakers and Cooperative Conversations*, Amsterdam.
- Bybee, J.
2006 From usage to grammar: The mind's response to repetition. *Language* 82, 4, 711–733.
- Carston, R.
2002 *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication*, Oxford.
- Clark, H.
1996 *Using Language*, Cambridge.
- Croft, W.
2001 *Radical Construction Grammar*, Oxford.
- Croft, W. & D. A. Cruse
2004 *Cognitive Linguistic*, Cambridge.
- Deppermann, A.
1999 *Gespräche analysieren*, Opladen.
2000 Semantic shifts in argumentative processes: A step beyond the fallacy of equivocation. *Argumentation* 14, 17–30.
2005a Conversational interpretation of lexical items and conversational contrasting. In: Hakulinen, A. & M. Selting (eds.), *Syntax and Lexis in Conversation*, Amsterdam, 289–317.
2005b *Glaubwürdigkeit im Konflikt. Rhetorische Techniken in Streitgesprächen*, Radolfzell. <http://www.verlag-gespraechsforschung.de/2005/deppermann.htm> (24 February, 2009).
2007 *Grammatik und Semantik aus gesprächsanalytischer Sicht*, Berlin/New York.
- Fauconnier, G.
2004 Pragmatics and cognitive linguistics. In: Horn, L. & G. Ward (eds.), *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, Oxford, 657–674.
- Feilke, H.
1996 *Sprache als soziale Gestalt*, Frankfurt am Main.
- Fillmore, C., P. Kay & M. K. O'Connor
1988 Regularity and idiomaticity in grammatical constructions: The case of let alone. *Language* 64, 3, 501–538.
- Fischer, K.
2006 Frames, constructions, and invariant meanings: The functional polysemy of discourse particles. In: Fischer, K. (ed.), *Approaches to Discourse Particles*, Amsterdam, 427–447.
- Ford, C., B. Fox & S. Thompson
2002 Social interaction and grammar. In: M. Tomasello (ed.), *The New Psychology of Language*, 2, Mahwah, NJ, 119–143.

- Fraser, B.
2006 Towards a theory of discourse markers. In: K. Fischer (ed.), *Discourse Particles*, Amsterdam, 189–204.
- Goldberg, A.
1995 *Constructions. A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*, Chicago.
2006 *Constructions at Work*, Oxford.
- Günthner, S.
2000 *Vorwurfsaktivitäten in der Alltagsinteraktion*, Tübingen.
- Habermas, J.
1992 Toward a critique of the theory of meaning. In: Habermas, J. (ed.), *Post-meta-physical Thinking*, Cambridge MA, 57–86.
- Hopper, P. J.
1998 Emergent grammar. In: M. Tomasello (ed.), *The New Psychology of Language*, Mahwah, NJ, 155–175.
2004 The openness of grammatical constructions. *Chicago Linguistic Society* 40, 153–175.
- Houtkoop, H. & H. Mazeland
1985 Turns and discourse units in everyday conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics* 9, 595–619.
- Imo, W.
2007a Probleme der Anwendung der Construction Grammar bei der Analyse gesprochenener Sprache. *Gesprächsforschung*, 8, 24–47. <http://www.gespraechsforschung-ozs.de/heft2007/ga-imo.pdf> (24 February, 2009).
2007b *Construction Grammar und Gesprochene-Sprache-Forschung*, Tübingen.
- Jackendoff, R.
1997 *The Architecture of the Language Faculty*, Cambridge, MA.
2002 *Foundations of Language (Brain, Meaning, Grammar, Evolution)*, Oxford/New York.
- Jacobs, S. & S. Jackson
1989 Building a model of conversational argument. In: B. Dervin, L. Grossberg, B. O'Keefe & E. Wartella (eds.), *Rethinking Communication*, 2, Newbury Park, CA, 153–171.
- Jefferson, G.
1981 The abominable *ne?* An exploration of post-response pursuit of response. In: P. Schröder & H. Steger (eds.), *Dialogforschung*, Düsseldorf, 53–88.
- Kallmeyer, W.
1978 Fokuswechsel und Fokussierungen als Aktivitäten der Gesprächskonstitution. In: R. Meyer-Hermann (ed.), *Sprechen – Handeln – Interaktion*, Tübingen, 179–250.
- Kay, P.
1997 *Words and the Grammar of Context*, Stanford.
2004 Pragmatic aspects of grammatical constructions. In: Horn, L. & G. Ward, (eds.), *Handbook of Pragmatics*, Oxford, 675–700.
- Langacker, R.
2000 A dynamic usage-based model. In: Barlow, M. & S. Kemmer (eds.), *Usage-based Models of Language*, Stanford, 1–60.
2001 Discourse in cognitive grammar. *Cognitive Linguistics* 12, 2, 143–188.
- Levinson, S. C.
2000 *Presumptive Meanings. The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature*, Cambridge, MA.

- Linell, P.
2009 *Rethinking Language, Mind, and World Dialogically*, Charlotte, NC.
- Lyons, J.
1995 *Linguistic Semantics*, Cambridge, MA.
- Mazeland, H. & M. Huiskes
2001 Dutch 'but' as a sequential conjunction. Its use as a resumption marker. In: Selting, M. & F. Couper-Kuhlen (eds.), *Studies in Interactional Linguistics*, Amsterdam, 141–169.
- Michaelis, L. A.
2005 Entity and event coercion in a symbolic theory of syntax. In: Oestman, J.-O. & M. Fried, (eds.), *Construction Grammar(s): Cognitive Grounding and Theoretical Extensions*, Amsterdam, 45–87.
- Norén, K. & P. Linell
2007. Meaning potentials and the interaction between lexis and contexts: some empirical observations. *Pragmatics* 17, 387–416.
- Pekarek Doehler, S. & G. Müller
2006 Linksherausstellungen im Handlungsvollzug der Auflistung: Probleme formaler und funktionaler Abgrenzung im Französischen. In: A. Deppermann, R. Fichler & T. Spranz-Fogasy, (eds.), *Grammatik und Interaktion*, 245–278. Radolfzell. <http://www.verlag-gesprachsforschung.de/2006/deppermann.htm> (24 February, 2009).
- Pustejovsky, J.
1995 *The Generative Lexicon*, Cambridge/London.
- Schegloff, E. A.
1984 On some questions and ambiguities in conversation. In: Atkinson, J. M. & J. Heritage (eds.), *Structures of Social Action*, Cambridge, 28–50.
- Schiffrin, D.
1988 *Discourse Markers*, Cambridge.
2007 *Gesprochenes Deutsch*, Berlin.
- Selting, M., Auer, P., Barden, B., Bergmann, J. Couper-Kuhlen, E., Günthner, S., Meier, C., Quasthoff, U., Schlobinski, P. & Uhmann, S.
1998 Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem (GAT). *Linguistische Berichte* 173, 91–122.
- Stefanowitsch, A. & S. Th. Gries
2003 Collostructions: investigating the interaction of words and constructions. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 8, 2, 209–243.
- Stein, S.
2003 *Textgliederung*, Berlin.
- ten Have, P.
2007 *Doing Conversation Analysis*, London.
- Thompson, S. A.
2002 'Object complements' and conversation: towards a realistic account. *Studies in Language* 26, 1, 125–164.
- Wittgenstein, L.
1953 *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford.
- Zifonun, G., L. Hoffmann & B. Strecker
1997 *Grammatik der deutschen Sprache*, 3, Berlin/New York.

Online changes in syntactic gestalts in spoken German

Or: do garden path sentences exist in everyday conversation?*

1 Garden path structures and spoken language

So-called garden path sentences have long been a favourite phenomenon of generative, experimental and cognitive linguistics. Most of the work on garden path structures has been done on the English language, which – due to its more or less rigid verb-second structure and lack of morphosyntactic markings – offers significantly fewer opportunities to project a syntactic gestalt and a concurrent semantic and pragmatic structure than, for example, German. As garden path sentences have usually been used as analytical tools (they are a “testing instrument in psycholinguistic research in the process of understanding of texts”; (Glück 2000: 229; my translation)) and have not been analysed as actual phenomena of spoken or written language, definitions of these structures vary considerably, depending on the aims the researchers have when they use garden path sentences as demonstration tools for syntactic or psycholinguistic theories.

Pritchett (1988), for example, uses garden path sentences to determine which explanations in the context of a generative approach – namely, the application of theta criteria and rules – can best explain how these structures could be parsed by language users and why they cause problems; for this purpose, he only accepts a restricted set of locally ambiguous sentences as candidates. While he includes sentences such as “The boat floated down the river sank”, he excludes “I knew the man hated me passionately” on the grounds that the processing difficulties for the latter sentence are not as grave as for the first sentence. His explanation for the processing differences is the “Theta-Reanalysis-Constraint: Syntactic reanalysis which reinterprets a theta-marked constituent as outside of its current theta-domain is costly” (Pritchett 1988: 545). The garden path sentences in Pritchett’s analysis are used to illustrate the workings of

* I wish to thank Peter Auer for his helpful comments on this paper and Elin Arbin for her corrections. All remaining errors are mine.