

3. Constructions and Chunks

Learning a foreign language often seems to be an arduous endeavour. And it is also one that is not always successful, despite the learning and description of grammar rules. Teachers have surely wondered why learners/students are not able to express themselves fluently, despite intensive grammar lessons. As you know, it is not enough to simply learn a few words and rules in a foreign language; the main challenge in communication in a foreign language is to [combine](#) ~~join~~ words and rules correctly into meaningful sequences. This task proves to be a great challenge in face of the many different ways of conceptualization in the various languages, and requires the support of descriptive models in foreign language classes. Over the past years, cognitive linguistics has developed a myriad of models which all may be brought together under the term **construction grammar**. These grammar models are not necessarily intended for advancing the learning of a foreign language, but still offer interesting approaches for foreign language classes. The construction grammar approach is holistic. It assumes complex, meaningful word sequences or constructions and regards individual lexemes as linguistic units meant to fill certain gaps in constructions. Construction grammar models are able to explain the connection between specimens of a construction and its abstract form with the use of concrete examples. In addition, Construction grammar views the grammar as the inventory of constructions. This chapter highlights the principles of this grammar model.

3.1. Grammar as a Construction Inventory

As a foreign language teacher, you probably ask yourself how we can interest students in vocabulary and unfamiliar structures and how to teach efficiently. The structures taught should also be authentic and reflect the actual situation in the foreign country. Teachers are often left out in the cold when it comes to making decisions on which topics are even^{ly?} relevant, and where appealing examples might be found. New media such as the internet offer a wide range of resources, but are not organized systematically. Therefore, the search for relevant examples proves to be time-intensive and cumbersome. As a teacher, have you ever dreamed of possessing a list of all of the most important constructions in a foreign language? Fortunately, construction grammar offers the possibility of compiling such lists.

Study Goals

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- familiarize yourself with the construction grammar model;
- contemplate this new approach, i.e. the idea to structure foreign language classes around constructions rather than individual words;
- recognize which constructions are important and which are less so in learning the German language.

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3.1.1 Construction Grammar Models

There are two significant directions which constructionist models take: one, that of construction grammar and two, that of a more formal variety. George Lakoff is the major representative of cognitive construction grammar with his 1987 description of *there*-constructions alongside Adele Goldberg (1995). Goldberg was originally inspired by Lakoff's understanding of constructions as form-meaning pairings and applied the concept to the analysis of 'argument structure constructions'. Croft (2001) later developed construction grammar into radical construction grammar, a model that assumes a language-comparative approach. In radical construction grammar, syntactic relations such as subject and object and word type categories such as verbs and nouns are rejected as abstract constructions. Radical grammar construction instead views them as constituents of constructions.

Among the more formal models are contributions by Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor (1988) on the expression *let alone*, alongside 'fluid construction grammar' (Steels 2003) which focuses on computer-linguistic methods. 'Embodied construction grammar' (Bergen & Chang 2005) is also found

Kommentiert [1]:
formal models of construction grammar
SDK: better

amongst the aforementioned models. Embodied construction grammar is based on the assumption that constructions result from [embodied perceptory](#)-experiences. In this way, bottles, houses and cities are often viewed as containers. Language expresses [containment](#) ~~it~~ via the choice of the preposition *in*, as in the sentence *Peter pours water in-(to) the bottle* (German: *Peter gießt Wasser in die Flasche*) or *He lives in a large house in Cologne* (German: *Er wohnt in einem großen Haus in Köln*).

3.1.2 The Units of Construction Grammar

The individual models of construction grammar have one aspect in common, despite their differences: They all criticize generative transformation grammar by postulating a continuum between lexicon and grammar. Goldberg's model, which she presented in her monographs *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure* (1995) and *Construction at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language* (2006), has been greatly praised over the past few years. Her model often serves as a theoretical starting point for the description of the structures of a specific language. Constructions compose the basic units of a language, i.e. conventionalized form-meaning pairings: "[C]onstructions are the fundamental units of language acquisition and reflect the most direct embodiment of learners' communicative intentions" (Ellis & Cadierno 2009: 111). Goldberg views [non-compositionality](#) as a decisive feature in her first book (1995). The term expresses that the meaning of a construction cannot be derived from the individual constituents of constructions. The **caused-motion construction** for instance expresses the meaning "X causes Y to move Z". In the famous example *Pat sneezed the napkin off the table*, the sneeze causes the movement of the napkin off the table. The meaning of the construction is so dominant that the intransitive Verb *to sneeze* is used transitively in this construction. Consequently, construction grammar uses a different approach to the valency theory in which the verb forms the core of the sentence and rules a number of arguments. In construction grammar "the construction as a whole contributes non-reducible aspects of meaning to the meaning of a sentence" (translated from Ziem & Lasch 2013: 21).

In Goldberg's model (1995 & 2006), argument structure constructions form a special class because they form the constituting elements on the sentence level. One and the same verb can contribute to the formation of different sentence structures, such as the verb *to hit* in the following constructions:

- (1) *Peter hat seinen kleinen Bruder geschlagen.* (transitive) (Peter hit his little brother.)
- (1) *Peter schlug den Verbrecher bewusstlos.* (resultative) (Peter beat the criminal senseless.)
- (2) *Peter schlug sich den Kopf.* (reflexive) (Peter hit his head (in surprise)).

Goldberg (1995 & 2006) described several more constructions aside from these and the caused-motion construction mentioned above: ditransitive motion with two objects, as in *Peter gives Mariae a piece*

Kommentiert [PB2]: non-compositionality überall

of cake, intransitive motion as in *He sat down on the Sofa* and conative motion as in *The monkey reached toward the banana*. As you can see, constructions vary in their degree of complexity and abstractness. The passive construction for instance is much more abstract than a concrete realization of a construction as in *The chocolate was eaten by the children*.

What we should also ask is whether all of these constructions are available alongside each other, or if they are intertwined. The next section deals with this exact query.

3.1.3 Construction Inventory

How are all these constructions even^{ly} represented in our brain? Are they stored as general rules, or are concrete examples included? The constructionist-linguistic model postulates that the entirety of a language's constructions is organized in a structured inventory. Constructions arise from generalization and schematization processes and have their own meaning, even on an abstract level. We should not regard them as isolated; constructions are instantiations which surround abstract prototypes and are interconnected by 'inheritance links'. These inheritance links include polysemy, metaphoric extensions, part-of and instances-of-relations. We will illustrate these inheritance links with the use of several constructions with the German preposition *bis* (*until*). This particular preposition is often ignored in discussions on prepositions (Carstensen 2000; Cuyckens & Radden 2002; Griebhaber 2009; Lutzeier 1995; Rauh 1991; and Zelinsky-Wibbelt 1993) or only described with imprecise and murky statements. On the one hand, the preposition *bis* receives a problematic special status, on the other the diverse syntactic and semantic variation of structures with *bis* are widely overlooked. When taking a closer look at examples with *bis* one quickly notices that the preposition is used in very different prepositional groups and constructions, as the following examples illustrate:

- (4) *Der Weg bis an die Grenze ist gleich gefunden.* (DWDS Kernkorpus) (The path to the border is soon to be found.)
- (5) *Große Spieler sitzen spät bis in die Nacht.* (Cosmas II:loo/DEZ.75273) (Great players sit until late into the night.)
- (6) *Ich werde dich lieben bis in den Tod.* (DWDS Kernkorpus) (I will love you until death.)
- (7) *Der Prinz bewaffnete sich bis an die Zähne.* (DWDS Kernkorpus) (The prince armed himself to the teeth.)
- (8) *Die Wut steht ihm bis über den Kopf.* (DWDS Kernkorpus) (He is beyond himself with rage.)
- (9) *Wir kämpfen bis zum Sieg!* (Cosmas II: Koo/OKT.78 443) (We fight until victory!)
- (10) *[...] Schnee bis an den See hinunter.* (Cosmas II: Aoo/MAR.16 690) (... snow down to the lake)

This short list is sufficient for determining that most examples of constructions with *bis* appear together with a prepositional phrase [*bis* + PP]. In rare cases, the phrases appearing alongside the preposition *bis* are not prepositional phrases introduced by an additional preposition. In these cases,

Kommentiert [3]:

Diese Beispiele sind ursprünglich bestimmt in Englisch
SDK: Nein, diese Beispiele habe ich mir selbst ausgedacht

the core of the phrase is either a noun without a determiner or an adverb, such as in *Wir bleiben bis Morgen* (*We are staying until tomorrow*) or *Bis Bald!* (*See you soon!* Literally: *until soon*).

The choice of the second preposition (PREP2) depends on the meaning of the ensuing noun, which defines a kind of semantic grid. In contrast to other languages (cf. Hottenroth's (2002) description of the French *jusque*), a diverse range of prepositions ~~is are~~ possible for the introduction of the prepositional phrase after the word *bis* in German: *bis an die Grenze*, *bis in die Nacht*, *bis in den Tod*, *bis über den Kopf*, *bis unter das Dach*, *bis hinter den Horizont*, *bis zum Gartentor*, *bis ans Knie*, *bis vor Jahren* etc. Most prepositions that follow after *bis* express the manner of something. We are able to recognize a prototypical construction within this diversity that expresses a spatial meaning; either realized as a spatial path as in

(4) *Der Weg bis an die Grenze ist gleich gefunden.* (DWDS Kernkopu) (The path to the border is soon to be found.) or as a spatial goal as in (9) *Wir kämpfen bis zum Sieg!* (Cosmas II: Koo/OKT.78 443) (We fight until victory!). The meaning also motivates the accusative case after the PREP2, if it is a two-way preposition; if that is the case, the accusative is possible after the dative. A dynamic process is expressed with movement, and so the accusative is preferred after the PREP2.

A construction with the preposition *bis* often expresses a temporal meaning, as in (5) *Große Spieler sitzen spät bis in die Nacht.* (Cosmas II:loo/DEZ.75273) (Great players sit until late into the night.)

At the base of the temporal meaning lies a **conceptual metaphor** (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) of the type '*time is space*'. It justifies the metaphoric extensions of the construction from the prototype with spatial meaning as well as the accusative case after PREP2, if it is a two-way preposition. The following example not only expresses a point in time, but does so with intensity:

(6) *Ich werde dich lieben bis in den Tod.* (DWDS Kernkorpus) (literally: I will love you until into (the) death.)

Example (6) illustrates the non-compositional character of constructions (cf. Dirven & Ruiz de Mendona Ibanez 2010:25).

Furthermore, the construction with *bis* may also merely express intensity as in:

(7) *Der Prinz bewaffnete sich bis an die Zähne.* (DWDS Kernkorpus) (The prince armed himself to the teeth.)

(11) *Die Älteren sind eifrig und motiviert bis unter die Haarspitzen.* (Cosmas II: M02/FEB.10 642) (The older ones are eager and motivated to the hilt.)

These examples should also be considered non-compositional, and often contain the designations of body parts. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, this is not surprising. For that matter, processes such as **embodiment** (Lakoff 2008) often utilize concrete expressions (body parts or functions) for abstract domains of experiences. Here, too, the metaphoric extension is present.

A complete description of the inventory of instantiations of constructions with *bis*, needs to encompass the combinations of the preposition *bis* with the second preposition *auf*. A construction with *bis* and *auf* is then able to express an exclusion or a limitation or a complete enclosure:

(12) *Bis auf einen haben alle Bewährungsstrafen erhalten.* (Cosmas II: RHZoo/JAN. 07 520) (Except for one, all received probation.)

(13) *Er war nackt bis auf einen langen breiten Lendenschurz und die Mokassins.* (Cosmas II: GR1/TL1. 04547) (He was naked except for a long and wide loincloth and moccasins.)

These two examples illustrate the two prepositions read as “all except for”. The preposition *auf* is followed by a number adjective, such as *ein* (*a*, implies ‘one’). The numeral should not be confused with the indefinite article, which comes in the same shape. The following examples, in contrast, express completion and complete enclosure:

(14) *... ist der Saal bis auf den letzten Platz gefüllt.* (Cosmas II: Aoo/JAN. 03 295) (...the hall is filled to the last seat.)

(15) *Wir haben den Fleck bis auf die letzte Spur entfernt* (Cosmas II: Aoo/JAN.00 484) (We removed the stain to the last trace.)

The disambiguation between the two interpretations is due to the larger context. In example (12) the linguistic sign *alle* is found to designate a larger group or mass and is limited by [*bis* + PP *auf*]. According to Radden & Dirven (2007:121) these collocations correspond to a ‘full-set quantifier’. The linguistic sign *naked* (German: *nackt*) in example (13) metonymically expresses the notion of complete exposure: When somebody is naked it presupposes that all items of clothing were shed. In the examples (14) and (15) on the other hand, a definite article appears in front of the noun in the prepositional group, meaning that it expresses no quantification.

Kommentiert [PB4]: Überall

3.1.4 Summary

Constructions including the preposition *bis* are an interesting object of investigation for various reasons:

- They illustrate the great variation in how motion is expressed, a feature typical to the German language. This type of diversity does not exist in many other languages.
- Construction grammar assumes a close interconnection between language and cognition and views grammar as a cognitive construct. Construction grammar expresses the basic notion conceptualization.
- Another advantage of the constructionist model is that the meanings of the individual words are defined in relation to the larger sequences they appear in. Consequently, constructions are not regarded as isolated. They are a part of a structured construction inventory. This section showed how such an inventory is best suited to describing the potential uses of the preposition *bis*.

3.1.5 Input Processing Task

1. Which linguistic units do construction grammar models deal with?
2. How are these units defined?
3. What are the advantages of construction grammar for foreign language teaching?
4. Compare the semantic possibilities of the preposition *bis* with its equivalents in English or another language.
5. Explain how the individual components are joined with *bis*.

3.2 The Role of Construction in Foreign Language Learning

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Before we continue to discuss constructions, we want to review briefly the historic background and also present where this interest for larger sequences in foreign language classes stems from. We also want to show to what extent the construction grammar model differs from earlier insights alongside the benefits of the new model. There are many ways of implementing the findings of construction grammar in foreign language classes. From a constructionist-linguistic perspective, learning a foreign language means that the learner must acquire a series of conventionalized form-meaning pairings in order to construct certain events or situations (Ellis & Cadierno 2009: 125). The advantages of describing structures within the bounds of the constructionist models may be illustrated with the use of the German positioning verbs **stellen**, **legen** and **setzen**. You have already seen in the previous chapter how different constructions form a structure inventory. It will become clear in the following chapter how learners may be encouraged to work with structures and how these practices may be incorporated into foreign language teaching.

Study Goals

By the end of this chapter, you will:

- be familiar with earlier studies on the topic of language sequences, blueprints etc;
- understand why it is important to deal with larger language units in foreign language classes;
- recognize that constructions cannot be regarded as isolated units, but as interconnected with other constructions;
- work more intimately with positioning verbs and their role in larger constructions.

3.2.1 The Audiolingual Method

About 70 years ago, a new approach to foreign language classes emerged from within structuralism and behaviorism as a countermovement to the grammar-translation-method: the **audiolingual method**. Lado (1943) pioneered the methods when he devised applications for British soldiers who needed to quickly learn a foreign language before their deployment in WWII. For this purpose, Lado developed lists with relevant structures (also called 'patterns') in the respective foreign languages. By 1961, this had resulted in 'pattern practice'. The method of 'pattern practice' which was implemented in language labs, is based on the automatic repetition (and drill) of language patterns or language blueprints (Lado & Fries 1967). Lado and his colleague identified these language patterns as "the

Kommentiert [5]:

templates?

PB

SDK: yes, please use the word 'templates'

significant framework[s] of the sentence” (Lado & Fries 1967: XV). They regard lexical elements as slot-fillers for certain positions within the same word class within the language pattern. An example of such frameworks are questions involving the auxiliary verb *do* in the English language. The learners first practice this template by hearing the structure *Do you see the train?* They then receive other lexemes such as *ship*, *truck* or *car* which they are supposed to ~~replace~~ *train* substitute. The learners practice the ~~template~~ *pattern* again and again in repetition. When learning a foreign language with *pattern practice*, the meaning and even the communicative function of the template are disregarded. The objective is the pure repetition of language structures in which lexical elements can replace each other in the same paradigm. The fundamental principle of this method is based on the assumption that the main structures of a foreign language are practiced without the learner knowing what exactly he or she is saying (Politzer 1961: 19). As a consequence, foreign language teaching was reduced to a mechanistic process of habit formation (Ellis 1990:27) in accordance with behavioristic models of learning. Error analysis (Corder 1967) and contrastive analysis (Wardhaugh 1970 among others) later emerged from within these audiolingual methods. These methods focused on language structures which appeared most difficult for learners (cf. the introduction of this volume for a detailed description of the history of language teaching).

It is not surprising that the method of *mechanistic* habit formation (Ellis 1990: 27) and its foundation in near-automatic learning of language structures were promptly criticised (Chomsky (1959) and Lenneberg (1967) among others). The non-authentic character of the language structures presented to the learner in particular prevents him or her from understanding, ~~save or even more~~ producing, new sentences. The communicative situations were often very abstract and non-authentic and did not intersect with the learner’s everyday life. Despite that, the audiolingual methods ultimately inspired subsequent foreign language teaching by focusing on longer sequences. This happens to be exactly the type of language teaching we wish to discuss in greater detail in the next section.

3.2.2 Focus on Meaningful Word Sequences

Over the last few years foreign language pedagogy has acknowledged the necessity of longer sequences for the learning of a foreign language. These sequences should, however, be meaningful and meet the needs of communicative situations and goals (Nunan 1991; Widdowson 1992; Savignon 2000). It is an insight that stems from the realization that

fluent and idiomatic control of a language rests to a considerable extent on knowledge of a body of ›sentence stems‹ which are ›institutionalized‹ or ›lexicalized‹. A lexicalized sentence stem is a unit of clause length or longer whose grammatical form and lexical content is wholly or largely fixed. [...] In the store of familiar collocations there are expressions for a wide range of familiar concepts and speech acts, and the speaker is able to retrieve these as wholes or as automatic chains from the long term memory. (Pawley & Syder 1983: 191f)

Kommentiert [6]:
to substitute into the framework.
To replace *train* with them? PB

Kommentiert [7]:
practice with
pattern statt template? PB

Kommentiert [8]:
mechanistic?

Kommentiert [9]:
necessity of incorporating longer sequences into foreign language learning.
SDK: YES, please add this

Even studying vocabulary is often regarded as learning collocations (Hausmann 1984). Wray (2002: 192) asserts that the success in learning a foreign language strongly depends on the ability to learn sequences. For the same reason, Gonzalez Rey (2013: 7) emphasizes that “Learners need to be provided with a stock of prefabricated units in order to improve their communication skills”.

Depending on the approach, larger word sequences have been researched as prefabricated patterns (Wong-Fillmore 1976), collocations (Hausmann 1984), lexical phrases (Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992), formula-like language (Wray 2002), chunks (Handwerker 2008; Handwerker & Madlener 2006) or as constructions (Ellis & Cadierno 2009; Ellis & Ferreira-Junior 2009a, 2009b; Robinson & Ellis 2008). (The preceding list makes no claims in terms of completeness. The individual references serve only as examples). Wong-Fillmore (1976) is one of the first complete studies on prefabricated language patterns in [infantchildren](#) language acquisition. She examined data of Spanish-speaking children learning English and came to the conclusion that prefabricated structures play a central role in language acquisition. Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992: 114) see various advantages in learning a foreign language using lexical phrases. The phrases are stored as a whole and are easily accessible. Lexical phrases are imbedded in communicative situations and are, therefore, easier to retain. They offer efficient ways of communicating with other students. When the learners have advanced in their studies, the phrases can be segmented into smaller meaningful units. Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992: 117) describe the next step as follows: “to introduce the students to controlled variation in these basic phrases with the help of simple substitution drills, which would demonstrate that the chunks learnt previously were not invariable routines, but were instead patterns with open slots”.

3.2.3 Abstract Constructions and Instantiations

Goldberg’s constructionist linguistic model (1995 & 2006) also supposes language patterns with open slots. However, it is the first model which postulates abstract constructions with [an their](#) own meaning. The advantage of Gold**bergstein**’s model is that the learners can directly recognize the meaning based on their knowledge of the construction. The overall meaning is even more ostensible than the meaning of its constituting elements. As we have shown in the description of constructions involving the preposition *bis*, constructions are not isolated but rather perceived within the bounds of an interconnected inventory. Within this inventory, some constructions are prototypical, while others are connected to prototypes by [inheritance links](#). Prototypical constructions are often more concrete. [Concrete and more abstract](#) ~~Expanded~~ constructions [are linked to each other](#) ~~’can be joined~~ by polysemic, metaphoric, instantiations of, and by part-of relations to the prototype. [In a pedagogical perspective, In regards to teaching,](#) it is advisable to teach prototypes as stable examples first, before delving into metaphoric extensions. By organizing constructions around a prototype, we can greatly reduce the number of examples [when](#) explaining the systematics of language structures. But even when learners acquire a series of **constructional patterns**, this does not automatically mean that they

Kommentiert [10]:

their very own
a very/an statt their PB

Kommentiert [PB11]: fett?

Kommentiert [12]:

While
SDK yes, use ‘while’

are able to actively and creatively produce constructions and instantiations of constructions. The decisive question in foreign language teaching and learning is how **the practice** of constructions can be **practiced** and can take place within a communicative frame. Difficulties in learning a foreign language typically result from linguistic and conceptual differences between the first language and the foreign language: “[...] the categorization systems that we build up due to our L1 cause us to form habits that are hard to break when we encounter a different language with different categorization systems” (Littlemore 2009: 29). This means that learners need to reorient their attention and be conscious of the conceptual and linguistic aspects relevant to the foreign language. The students first need to become aware of the conceptual differences between their L1 and the foreign language. Roberson (2005: 66) states that “a critical component on any category learning is selective attentional weighting of salient dimensions”. This is reminiscent of Schmidt’s (1990; 2001) *noticing hypothesis*, which states that learners can only acquire foreign structures when they have apperceived them. We will illustrate how this is achieved in the following examples involving German constructions with **placementpositioning** verbs (Gullberg 2009).

3.2.4 German Constructions with **Positioning Verbs**

While the French language uses general verbs to express the localization of objects and persons (such as *mettre* (put) or *placer* (place)), the German language possesses a set of specific **positioningplacement** verbs (see De Knop 2016; De Knop & Gallez 2013; Fagan 1991) such as *legen* for a lying position, *stellen* for a vertical orientation and *setzen* for a sitting position (cf. Serra **BV**orneto 1996: 377). Further localizations are expressed with verbs such as *hängen*, *stecken* (*hang*, *stick*) etc. French also **has possesses** a series of verbs which express orientations (such as (*se*) *coucher* (*to lie down*), (*se*) *lever/mettre debout* (*to put uprightstand*), (*s’*) *asseoir* (*to sit down*), *pendre/accrocher* (*to hang*), *fourrer* (*to stick*) etc.), ~~though they are used seldomly~~. In contrast to German, French **placementpositioning** verbs are not obligatory for expressing the **putting eventmanner-of-the-movement** (also see Ameka & Levinson 2007; Gullberg 2009). **You can find several contrastive examples below:**

- (1) a. **Papa met le journal sur la table.** (Papa puts the newspaper on the table)
 b. Vati legt die Zeitung auf den Tisch. (Papa lays the newspaper on the table)
- (2) a. Papa met le vase sur la table. (Papa places the vase on the table)
 b. Vati stellt die Vase auf den Tisch. (Papa places the vase on the table)
- (3) a. Papa met le bébé dans la chaise. (Papa puts the baby in the highchair)
 b. Vati setzt das Baby in den Kinderstuhl. (Papa seats the baby in the highchair)
- (4) a. Papa met le cadre au mur. (Papa puts the picture on the wall)
 b. Vati hängt das Bild an die Wand. (Papa hangs the picture on the wall)

Kommentiert [PB13]: Use?
 SDK: yes, much better

Kommentiert [14]:
 actively implemented? Um 2x practice zu vermeiden

Kommentiert [PB15]: ?
 SDK: replace by the official term ‘placement verbs’

Kommentiert [AU16]: Sometimes there is a ‘to’ in front of the infinitive, sometimes not. Please adopt a consistent way of translating the infinitives into English in the whole paper

hat formatiert: Schriftart: Nicht Kursiv

Kommentiert [17]:
 In this regard, please consider the contrastive examples listed below:
 SDK: yes please replace by this better sentence

Kommentiert [AU18]: Die meisten Beispiele sind kursiv geschrieben. Bitte konsistent durchziehen im ganzen Text. Auch die Übersetzung ins Englische ist manchmal in Standardschrift, manchmal kursiv. Bitte einheitlich

Learners encounter difficulties of quite different natures here. First, French-speaking learners must realize that in comparison to the single concept in their L1, a variety of different concepts are available in German. Littlemore (2009: 29) notes that “[t]hings become even more difficult for language learners when a concept that is divided into two broad categories in their own language is divided into, say, three categories in the target language”. An asymmetry exists in how a placement is coded between the two languages (Narasimhan, Kopecka, Bowerman, Gullberg & Majid 2012: 3). The language learner often reacts by simplifying, meaning that he or she does not use the various **placementositioning** verbs (Gullberg 2009: 8).

An additional hurdle for the learner is being able to differentiate between the localization of objects and living creatures. This is especially the case for abstract uses of these verbs. What, for instance, justifies the use of the **placementositioning** verb *setzen* –(to seat/place) in the following sentence?

(5) *Im Deutschen muss man ein Komma zwischen 2 Sätze setzen.* (literally: *In German, one needs to *seat/place a comma between two sentences.*)

Even more difficult is the use of **placementositioning** verbs in collocations or ‘light verb constructions’ (cf. Eisenberg 2013) such as

(6) *in Verbindung setzen; (to get in touch)*

(7) *in den Vordergrund stellen; (to put sth in the foreground)*

Serra Borneto (1995) defined the problem in his description of the related **placementositioning** verbs *stehen* (to stand) and *liegen* (to lie) as follows:

[...] locative verbs like *stehen* and *liegen* are simply devices the speaker uses to convey information about the orientation of the object(s) he is referring to in discourse. Thus, in order to decide how to characterize the position of an object, the speaker first has to set his attention on the most relevant dimension of the object and then must match it with one of the abstract spatial axes. These cognitive operations of course imply a certain amount of »schematization,« which is »a process that involves the systematic selection of certain aspects of the referent scene to represent the whole, while disregarding the remaining aspects.« (Talmy 1983: 225), because one particular feature of the overall shape of the object is isolated in order to determine its orientation. (Borneto 1995: 462)

Accordingly, learning a foreign language means that a learner must reorient his or her attention and focus on various aspects of the visual scenery. Athanasopoulos (2009: 92) speaks of a “**kognitive Restrukturierung im Geist von Zweisprachigen**” (“cognitive restructuring in the minds of bilinguals”). Robinson and Ellis (2008) endorse a **rethinking for speaking**.

The main challenge, however, lies with the teacher; it is he or she who must direct the attention of the learners towards the differences. Comparative examples of French and German, as seen above, are a suitable entry point into the material. ~~It appears best if Teachers should introduce their students to readings of the verbs which deal with the~~ concrete **placement meanings of the verbs first,ositions**, as illustrated in the examples above. Once the students are familiar with **those concrete**

Kommentiert [AU19]: Oben ist ein Zitat in einer kleineren Schrift. Bitte den ganzen Text daraufhin harmonisieren.

Kommentiert [20]:
endorse the term rethinking...
SDK: yes, much better

Kommentiert [PB21]: in einfachen Anführungsstrichen?

Kommentiert [22]:
concrete, spatial
Satz generell seltsam PB

~~meanings~~ ~~a particular reading~~, the teacher can ~~deal with~~ ~~introduce the more abstract meanings~~ ~~them to~~ ~~specific localizations and non-concrete positions~~ such as

(8) *Die Fliege setzt sich auf den Kuchen. (The fly lands ("s~~i~~~~a~~~~t~~s down"-) on the cake.)*

It should be noted in regard to this example that ~~the position of~~ insects and birds ~~are~~~~i~~~~s~~ perceived as sitting in the German language, even if they are standing on their legs. An additional example concerns the use of *setzen* (*sit/set*) with respect to elements in body parts regarded as containers, such as

(9) *Der Chirurg setzte eine Prothese in die Hüfte. (The surgeon placed (set) a prosthesis into the hip.)*

Kommentiert [AU23]: Siehe Anmerkung oben; sollte die Übersetzung in Standardschrift oder kursiv?

Or a type of contact is exemplified:

(10) *Er setzte seine Brille schief auf die Nase (He put on ('seated') his glasses crookedly.)*

(11) *Der Räuber setzte das Messer an ihre Kehle (The robber placed ('sat') a knife to her throat.)*

Language users utilize the ~~placement~~~~ositioning~~ verb *setzen* in even more abstract ways when they use it metaphorically:

(12) *Er hat volles Vertrauen in seine Schwester gesetzt. (He placed his full trust in his sister.)*

(13) *Der Lehrer setzt ein Komma zwischen diese beiden Wörter. (The teacher places ('seated') a comma in between these two words.)*

(14) *Hast du nicht vergessen, diesen Diskussionspunkt auf die Tagesordnung zu setzen? (Have you perhaps forgotten to add this discussion point to the agenda?)*

In an attempt to systematize the various occurrences of the verbs extended lists of characteristics, as suggested by Gerling and Orthen (1979), might be less helpful: "einen inneren Aufenthaltsort, einen äußeren Aufenthaltsort, eine haltungsbezogene Position, eine richtungsbezogene Position, eine Position mit festem Kontakt, eine Position mit lockerem Kontakt" (an inner abode, an external abode, an attitude-related position, a direction-related position, a position with fixed contact, a position with loose contact) (1979: 64). These features are very specific and difficult to distinguish. They are also not very helpful to the learners. When searching for examples, the teacher should refer to the following semantic categories shown in the table below regarding the usage of the positioning verb *setzen* (the following tables are inspired by the descriptions of German and Dutch ~~postur~~~~itioning~~ verbs in De Knop & Perrez 2014):

USAGE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
-------	-------------	----------

Position	To affect a sitting position	<i>Das Ehepaar setzte sich an den Tisch. (The married couple sat down at the table)</i> <i>Die Mutter setzte das Baby auf die Kommode. (The mother seated the baby on the dresser.)</i>
Localization	Localization of small animals (+insects)	<i>Das Rotkehlchen setzt sich in den Baum. (The robin sat in the tree.)</i> <i>Die Fliege setzt sich auf den Kuchen (The fly sat on the cake.)</i>
	Container	<i>Die Polizei setzte den Kriminellen ins Gefängnis. (The police put the criminal in jail.)</i> <i>Der Chirurg setzt eine Prothese in die Hüfte. (The surgeon inserted-inserts a prosthesis in to the hip.)</i>
	Contact	<i>Er setzt die Brille auf die Nase. (He puts on the glasses.)</i> <i>Der Bandit setzte ein Messer an ihre Kehle. (The bandit put a knife to her throat.)</i>
Metaphorical	Container	<i>Er hat sein Vertrauen in seine Schwester gesetzt. (He put his trust in his sister.)</i>
	Written text	<i>Der Lehrer setzte ein Komma zwischen die Wörter. (The teacher placed a comma between the words.)</i> <i>Einen Diskussionspunkt auf die Tagesordnung setzen. (To put a discussion point on the agenda.)</i>

Kommentiert [24]:
 Literally: sat itself (in both instances)
 Literally sit down? PB
 SDK: yes rather 'sat down'

Table 3.1: Usages of *setzen*

A systematic table which refers to the semantics and usages of a verb can also be drawn up for other [placementositioning](#) verbs, such as *stellen* und *legen*:

USAGE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Position	To place on a base	<i>Stell bitte die Teller auf den Tisch (Please put the plates on the table.)</i>
Localization	Positioning something vertically when there is no base.	<i>Stell bitte die Teller in die Spülmaschine (Please put the plates into the dishwasher.)</i>
Metaphorical	To place in a canonical position	<i>Vor eine Entscheidung stellen (To face a decision)</i> <i>Vor Gericht stellen (to try someone in court)</i>

Kommentiert [PB25]: Literally also?
 SDK: yes please -> to put in front of a decision; also vor Gericht stellen -> to put before (a) court

Table 3.2 Usages of *stellen*

The teacher may point out the particularity of the uses of the verb *stellen*, as verticality does not play a primary role. What is more important in the use of the verb *stellen* is the conceptualization of a base with the element meant to be placed. It explains why a non-vertical object such as a bed is *hingestellt* (placed on its basis) and not *hingelegt* (laid).

Kommentiert [26]:
 Alongside
 Nein pb
 SDK: 'with the element' is better

USAGE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Position	To place on the side/not on the base (+possible eventual horizontal orientation)	<i>Wo hast du meine Schuhe hingelegt? (Where did you put my shoes?)</i> <i>Die Mutter legte das Baby ins Bett. (The mother put the baby to bed.)</i> <i>Die Henne legt ein Ei (The hen lays an egg.)</i>
Localization	Localization of entities without dimensions	<i>Er hat den Ball in den Sand gelegt. (He placed the ball in the sand.)</i>
	Geotopographical localization	<i>Der Nebel legt sich über die Stadt. (The fog lies down over enveloped the city.)</i> <i>Der Wind/der Sturm legt sich. (The wind/storm lies/dies down.)</i>

Metaphorical	Abstract entities	Der Streit/Die Aufregung legt sich. (The fight/excitement <i>lies/dies</i> down). Etwas zu den Akten legen. (to put something to the files/records)
	Scale	Den Fokus/den Akzent/den Schwerpunkt auf etwas legen. (To focus/accenuate something.)

hat formatiert: Schriftart: Kursiv, Französisch (Belgien)

hat formatiert: Französisch (Belgien)

hat formatiert: Schriftart: (Standard) Calibri, Kursiv, Französisch (Belgien)

hat formatiert: Französisch (Belgien)

Kommentiert [AU27]: Die Übersetzungen sind kursiv in der Tabelle. Auch hier?

Table 3.3 Usages of *legen*

It is **evident-obvious** from these examples that the context of the **placementositioning** verbs plays an important role. The examples also showed how useful it is to describe and learn these verbs within their respective constructions.

3.2.5 Summary

This chapter **focuseddelved** **on** **into** the following topics:

- Initially introducing the learner to **longer** language sequences when learning a foreign language is not new, but originated from **pattern practice** used in language labs decades ago.
- The construction grammar model, assuming that certain features of prototypical constructions are passed on to other constructions, offers new possibilities for describing constructions as a network.
- This was illustrated with the most popular and **versatile** German **placementositioning** verbs *setzen*, *stellen* and *legen*.
- Some of the usages of **placementositioning** verbs are purely metaphorical. When using a **placementositioning** verb such as *setzen* in connection with body parts, the contact-metaphor is crucial, such as in *Er setzt die Brille auf die Nase* (He put the glasses on his nose.).
- Teachers can introduce advanced learners to light verb constructions (Eisenberg 2013) via the choice of **placementositioning** verbs. A description of semantic networks could be helpful here as well.

Kommentiert [28]:
But originated from the pattern practice method used in
SDK: yes, please replace by this new sentence.
Exercised? PB

Kommentiert [29]:
These additional possibilities were illustrated using the most
SDK: yes please replace by this new sentence

Kommentiert [PB30]: Common?
SDK : yes please

Kommentiert [31]:
versatile of German positioning verbs,
SDK: no, use 'common German placement verbs'

3.2.6 Input Processing Task

- Where did the idea to use larger language sequences in foreign language classes originate?
- Present a selection of scientific terms used to denote such sequences.
- Describe the semantic usages of the most popular German **placementlocalization** verbs.

4. What are the advantages of construction grammar for the description of unknown constructions?

3.3 Chunking and Dechunking

Sabine De Knop

Kommentiert [32]:

That
SDK: ? Fehlt hier etwas?

In the previous discussion on the uses of [placementpositioning](#) verbs we have seen that difficulties in the learning process of a foreign language often arise from the conceptual differences between the L1 and the foreign language. Additionally, learners are confronted with difficulties of a constructional nature. In regard to positioning verbs, it is not enough to master the various semantic readings of a verb. The students also need to learn which structures appear together with what morpho-syntactic features of these verbs. As a teacher, you have surely asked yourself how best to create tasks to promote the acquisition of certain language elements. You are also faced with the challenge of acquiring appropriate material (i.e. concrete exercises, simple rules etc.). The tables above might be a starting point, but the individual example lists are too limited and should be supplemented with additional examples. Despite providing numerous linguistic resources, foreign language textbooks often only offer lexical descriptions with simplified and unstructured sets of examples, as we will see in the following.

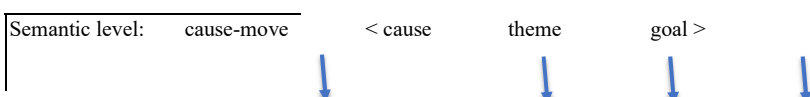
Study Goals

By the end of this chapter, you will:

- understand why it is worthwhile to teach constructions;
- gain ideas on how certain verbs in constructions could be taught;
- realize that a teaching method based on constructions is an integrative method which makes it possible to describe several topics simultaneously.

3.3.1 [Placementpositioning](#) Verbs in Caused-Motion Constructions

When we look at examples of [placementpositioning](#) verbs in the above mentioned tables, we see that most [of them](#) appear in [so-called](#) ‘caused-motion constructions’ (also see Berthele 2012; Hijazo-Gascón, Cadierno & Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2016; Lemmens 2006). Goldberg (1995) represents the two levels of caused motion constructions as seen here:



Kommentiert [33]:

Ursprüngliches 3.1 gelöscht ☐ überprüfen, ob noch stimmig,
Zusammenfassung prüfen

One type of exercise presumes a series of images of a motion ~~sequence~~event, such as the short movie sequences found in Bowerman, Gullberg, Majid & Narasimhan (2004). After the learner views the motion sequence, he or she is asked to express the presented situations in *caused-motion* constructions (also see Handwerker & Madlener (2006); Handwerker (2008)).

A second type of exercise revolves around the interactive practice of the *caused-motion* construction. As in guessing games such as “Taboo” (Hersch 2013), the ~~learnerteachers~~ are asked to represent a *caused-motion* situation or a “~~sc~~Szenario” (Di Pietro 1987). The teacher could bring along a number of mobile objects or, alternatively, a series of images that depict such scenes and scenarios. The students are then asked to ~~perform play-out~~ certain scenes without words. Other students are then asked to guess. Representing a certain scenario helps students to practise their skills in “life-like situations” (Di Pietro 1987: 3). As we have shown several times already, these types of situations are not a given for foreign language students as they do ~~not~~ live in the country where the foreign language is spoken. ~~Therefore, Furthermore,~~ the students ~~have-get~~ the opportunity to ~~become~~ “full participants in human discourse” (Di Pietro 1987: 3) ~~with such performing exercises~~. The play-acting also encourages the retainment of new structures. A third type of exercise can feature Playmobil® figures. A student can use the figures to play out a *caused-motion* situation. The other students are then asked to guess again. The correct choice of the positioning verb and the appropriate case both play an important role.

On the basis of these suggestions, more exercises for other types of constructions may be developed. These exercises or tasks help the learners repeat structures and practise them with a certain frequency to better retain them. According to Ellis & Cadierno (2009: 118) “frequency of exposure promotes learning”. In their view, the more learners hear instantiations of constructions, the better they retain the constructions. However, Madlener (2015: 44) says in a more nuanced statement that a high frequency of repeating a construction is no ~~guarantee~~ for effective learning. After all, the classroom situation at a school is relatively limited and the working memory of the learner is already occupied with his or her L1. In the case of adults, Madlener ~~assumes~~ ~~says~~ that it can be observed that the foreign language is filtered through the knowledge of the L1 and that adults, therefore, find it more difficult to learn a language via chunks.

3.3.2 Dechunking Exercises

When the new constructions or chunks have been practised and learned, the teacher can offer dechunking exercises. Dechunking is the parsing of chunks and constructions. The teacher could ask, for instance, if substituting the ~~placement~~positioning verb with another is possible.

Dechunking exercises can also be applied to ~~the semantically related posture~~positioning verbs such as ~~stehen (to stand), liegen (to lie), sitzen (to sit), stecken (to be stuck)~~ etc. (see Berthele 2004; De Knop 2014; De Knop & Perrez 2014) and their respective intransitive constructions, such as:

Kommentiert [PB41]: Überall so
SDK: ja bitte einheitlich

Kommentiert [42]:
do not generally
SDK: yes please

Kommentiert [43]:
Quelle? Sagt die das wirklich? Schwer zu glauben ...wenn keine
quelle auffindbar, weglassen.
Quelle hinzugefügt PB
SDK: Buch „Frequency effects in instructed second language
acquisition » (2015) bei de Gruyter

hat formatiert: Hervorheben

Kommentiert [44]:
in a school
SDK: simply replace by „at school »

Kommentiert [PB45]: doppelt → assumes?

Kommentiert [46]:
Engl. Beispiele put place lay

hat formatiert: Hervorheben

- (1) *Der Ball liegt im Sand. (The ball lies in the sand.)*
- (2) *Der Schmerz sitzt im Bauch. (The pain resides in the stomach.)*
- (3) *Der Wagen steckt im Schlamm. (The waggon is stuck in the mud.)*

Posturepositioning verbs ~~are used in intransitive-motion constructions which~~ are etymologically and semantically connected with the respective placementpositioning verbs (see Kluge 1883/2011), ~~they are~~ are used in intransitive-motion constructions. Goldberg (1995) represents *intransitive-motion* constructions as follows:

Semantic level:	MOVE	<	theme	goal >
	↓		↓	↓
Syntactic level:	Verb		Subject	Oblique
Example:	<i>liegt</i>		<i>das Kind</i>	<i>im Bett</i>

Figure 3.2: *Intransitive-motion* construction according to Goldberg (1995)

Through dechunking, the teacher can point out the posturepositioning and placement verbs in the respective constructions and note their semantic and morphological relations. The advantage for foreign language teaching is that both constructions may be taught and learned simultaneously. It is a time-saving and efficient teaching method.

3.3.3 Summary

This teaching unit has shown, in an exemplary way, that it is worthwhile to teach placementpositioning verbs within the larger frame of *caused motion* constructions for the following reasons:

- By embedding the placementpositioning verbs in constructions, teachers and students are able to discuss several issuessubjects, such as the choice of a specific placementpositioning verb or the appropriate preposition and the adequate case.
- The related *intransitive-motion* construction can be taught simultaneously. It also utilizes posturepositioning verbs.
- Teachers can expand the themes and adjust them in accordance with learning levels. They can introduce advanced learners to light verb constructions with posturepositioning and placementlocalization verbs.

Kommentiert [47]:

Bitte nochmal terminologie checken. Unterschied zwischen localis- und psotioning verb?

Kommentiert [48]:

Grafik verschiebt sich
Übersetzung fehlt ☐ Im Original nachsehen

Kommentiert [49]:

chapter on teaching
SDK: OK

As we have found, the description of the variation in larger sequences and the communicative situations are a promising path. It is also useful and of the greatest necessity to list the most important constructions in a foreign language in the form of an inventory with prototypical constructions and their instantiations (for more details, see De Knop & Gilquin 2016). We are still far removed from a complete realization of such an inventory, but we hope to have provided some ideas in that direction. Chapter 8 will show how the process presented above can be integrated with a consequent task-based approach.

3.3.4 Input Processing Task

1. How is the subject of placementositioning verbs portrayed in learning materials?
2. Which constructions use placementositioning verbs?
3. In what respect is the description of positioningplacement verbs in constructions an integrative approach?
4. What is dechunking? When is the best time to use this strategy?

Kommentiert [PB50]: information?

Kommentiert [51]:
verbs typically portrayed
SDK: yes ok