Analysis Of The Particle "So" In The German Language

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Abstract

The particle "so" occurs frequently in the spoken language and has different functions and meanings. For this reason, learners of German often have difficulty understanding the context of sentences containing the particle "so". This study aims to describe the function as well as the meaning of the particle "so" found in the data source, namely the novel Räuberhände by Finn-Ole Heinrich. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach, this study applies the theories of Engel (2004), Nübling (2009), and Helbig/Buscha (2001). The results show that 1) the functions of the particle "so" are different in the German language, namely: als, subjunctives, conjunctives, adverbs, degree particles and comparison particles. 2) The meaning of the particle "so" cannot be separated from the function of the particle "so" itself. The particle "so" is used as a subjunctive to indicate cause(s) and consequence(s). As a conjunct, the particle "so" is used to compare something or someone, just like the particle "so" as a comparative particle. As a particle of degree, the particle "so" is used to increase or decrease the value of an adjective. In addition, the particle "so" is used as an adverb for an event that has not yet happened, as well as to indicate a path, to describe a person, to describe a time and to describe something that is not certain. From a grammatical point of view, adding words to the particle "so" - such as "so that" and "so as" - affects the meaning of the sentence context. In addition, the particle "so" itself sometimes has no semantic meaning, but only serves as an adverb about something.

***Keywords:** the particle "so", German*

1. INTRODUCTION

In German, the particle "so" is one of the words that have different meanings depending on the word type and function. It can occur as a subjunctive, conjunctive, intensifying particle, modal word or adverb. In order to understand the meaning of the particle "so" in a sentence, a good

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knowledge of grammar is required, as the particle "so" is used very frequently in everyday language. It is therefore not surprising that the particle "so" often appears in a literary work. In Finn-Ole Heinrich's novel *Räuberhände*, which tells the story of two friends named Janik and Samuel who try to take their fate into their own hands by traveling to Istanbul, there are many such particles. This makes the story created by this German author more 'alive' and the meaning of each sentence clearer. Here are some examples of sentences that use the particle 'so' in the novel *Räuberhände*:

1) "He's had his own bed in my room for a long time. My parents gave it to him.

Of course they asked me beforehand if that was okay with me, she would never decide something like that over my head." (*Räuberhände*, 2010, p. 5)

2) "But it's not that I have anything against it." (*Räuberhände*, 2010, p. 5)

In English, the particle "so" is similar to "like that". Samuel is like an adopted child because he even has his own bed in Janik's room. Janik's parents gave Samuel the bed as a present. The particle "so" in number 1) therefore means that Janik's parents first asked Janik before they bought the bed for Samuel. And the particle "so" in number 2) also means the same thing. This means that Janik is not jealous.

3) "What they don't want to say is that Samuel's mother, Irene is antisocial. She's a bum. Not really, because she doesn't really live on the street, but still has an apartment thanks to Samuel." (*Räuberhände*, 2010, p. 6).

The particle "so" is like an intensification here. This means that Samuel's mother Irene is not really a tramp because she does not really live on the street.

4) "I see." (*Räuberhände*, 2010, p. 9)

This particle "so" occurs most frequently in German conversation. You use the particle "so" when you understand something in a dialog.

5) "There's a gap between her incisors, the size you haven't really seen since orthodontists came along." (*Räuberhände*, 2010, p. 18)

The particle "so" here is used in comparisons. Another example is "I'm not as good at playing the guitar as my mother."

6) "I wonder how parents can have such unsuitable children." (*Räuberhände*, 2010, p. 18)

The particle "so" here is used like a pronoun. In English, this particle "so" is similar to "such". The example sentences above show that the meaning of the particle "so" can be very different depending on the word class in which the particle "so" is used. For this reason, this investigation is being carried out. It is hoped that this study of the particle "so" in German will help learners of German to understand a sentence.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A particle is a type of word that has no grammatical meaning or a word whose meaning can change depending on the context of a sentence. Particles are invariable words, as Engel (2004, p. 384) explains: ... Particles are invariable words. Exceptions are a few adverbs that can be compared. We also classify them as particles because of their otherwise identical behavior. Some nouns and adjectives (milk or pink etc.) are also invariable. However, as they have already been classified on the basis of other characteristics, they are not particles." Many writers use particles in novels and novellas, but in the oral language particles are used more often. In line with this

statement, Nübling (2009, p. 588) points out that; "Particles occur particularly frequently in spoken language and fulfill very different functions.

Particles are words that have specific functions and are mainly used in spoken language. Depending on the type of particle, they can have different functions. On the basis of Engel's theory (2004, p. 384), particles become secondary functions. "Particles have secondary functions in the language. The main functions are performed by verbs and words in the nominal domain: verbs denote "events" in the broadest sense, nouns, determiners, adjectives and pronouns denote or characterize quantities. Particles provide more detailed definitions, connect words or word groups or do other things."

In addition, Heringer (1989, p. 354) explains the functions of particles in his book *Grammatik und Stil*; "Particles are conversational and partner-related. They appeal to the reference word partner and make strong use of their knowledge." Nübling (2009, p. 594) also describes the different functions of particles: ... Particles fulfill very different functions: As degree particles they provide information about the intensity of properties, as focus particles they emphasize certain parts of a sentence, as negation particles they negate a sentence or sub-sentence, as toning particles they provide information about the subjective attitude, the attitude of the speaker to the expressed facts, as conversational particles they control the flow of dialogues, as interjections they serve to express emotions, and as onomatopoeias they imitate sounds."

According to Engel (2004, p. 384), the following particle types can be subdivided: 1) preposition, 2) subjunctives, 3) conjunctives, 4) adverbs, 5) copular particles, 6) modal particles, 7) shunting particles, 8) degree particles, 9) comparison particles and 10) toning particles. Nübling (2009, p. 594) classifies particles into 7 groups according to their function, namely 1) degree particles (intensifying particles, intensity particles), 2) focus particles, 3) negation particles, 4) modal particles, 5) conversational particles (structuring particles, receptive particles, responsive particles), 6) interjections (expressive particles) and 7) onomatopoeia. Furthermore, according to Helbig/Buscha (2001), the types of particles are: 1) toning particles, 2) degree particles, 3) intensifying particles, 4) apparent particles. From this, it can be concluded that the commonalities in the particle classification of the three experts are rank particles, degree particles, comparison particles, and shading particles. Apart from the differences in particle classification, the subject of this study is that words containing particles "so" are therefore subjunctives, conjunctives, adverbs, degree particles and comparative particles. In the theoretical explanation in this study, the terms according to Engel (2004) are used.

   a. Subjunctives

Subjunctives are a particle and can be described as subordinating conjunctives. They are placed at the beginning of a subordinate clause and connect it to the main clause or a superordinate clause. The term subjunctive is defined according to Engel (2004, p. 397): ... Subjunctives are particles that can subordinate subordinate clauses or infinitive constructions to a word." According to Engel (2004, p. 713): Subjunctives have 4 functions, namely: 1) temporal, 2) causal, 3) comparative, and 4) hypothetical-comparative function. The causal subjunctives describe a sequence of something. In addition, the subjunctive is used as a hypothetical comparative: i.e. in subordinate clauses in which the finite verb does not end but immediately follows the subjunctive, comparative events are mentioned whose occurrence is uncertain. e.g. She only pretends to know. This is certainly not the case. In the subordinate clause itself, the question is basically left open.

To express this openness, the finite verb is put in the subjunctive. In most cases, the subjunctive II is used, but in some cases the subjunctive I is also used.

b. Conjunctives

Conjunctions also belong to the non-inflectional word types and are also known as "connective words". They connect words, groups of words or even main clauses, subordinate clauses and individual sentence elements with each other. The definition of conjunctions according to Engel (2004, p. 426) is: "Conjunctions are invariable words that connect elements of equal rank and function." Semantically, conjunctions can be divided into several groups. According to Nübling (2009, p. 633), only the most important units and their use and relation to the topic of this study can be mentioned below: 1) Additive conjunctions, 2) Comparative conjunctions. *Wie* and *als* are often treated as prepositions. However, they do not set the case itself, but the case of the comparative candidate is congruent with the reference case. Therefore, *wie* and *als* continue an already existing case. It is therefore more appropriate to classify them as sentence conjuncts. Comparative conjuncts only connect parts of a sentence and express a comparison.

c. Adverbs

Engel (2004, p. 411) gives the definition of adverbs: „Adverbs are particles that can always precede a constative clause and can either serve as answers to W-questions or are interrogatives themselves." According to Engel (2004, p. 749), adverbs in the German language are divided into several types: Local adverbs, temporal adverbs, modal adverbs, causal adverbs and relative adverbs. Modal adverbs are also called adverbs of manner. They describe the manner of a certain event and form a heterogeneous group, indicating both quality and quantity. As a rule, they can be asked with *wie*? The functions of modal adverbs are: (1) to denote manner, differentiated according to the way they are formed into pure adverbs (e.g. *anders*, *gern*, *so*, *wie*), adjectival adverbs (e.g. *fleißig*, *gut*, *langsam*, *schlecht*, *schnell*, *tüchtig*), words ending in -lings (e.g. *blindlings*, *jährlings*, *rittlings*), words with the endings -s and -los (e.g. *eilends*, *unversehens*, *bedenkenlos*, *fehlerlos*), compounds (e.g. *derart*, *ebenfalls*, *ebenso*, *genauso*, *irgendwie*). (2) to denote degree and measure: to some extent, for the most part, halfway, partially. Causal adverbs, also called adverbs of reason, specify the reasons for an event. In other words, they give the reason for a fact or action. They provide information on questions such as: why? wherefore? what for? under what condition? The functions of causal adverbs are: (1) to indicate the reason: also, *anstandshalber*, *daher*, *darum*, *demnach*, *deshalb*, *deswegen*, *folglich*, *infolgedessen*, *meinethalben*, *mithin*, *nämlich*, so, *somit*; *warum*, *weshalb*, *weswegen*. (2) to denote the condition: then, otherwise; otherwise, if need be, if necessary, at worst. (3) to denote the non-sufficient reason: nevertheless, nonetheless. (4) to denote the consequence (of the consecutive relations): so. (5) to denote the purpose: to this end, therefore, hence, on account of this, for this; why, wherefore.

d. degree particles

Degree particles, intensifier particles or intensity particles have the function of increasing or decreasing the intensity of the content represented by the reference word. The definition of degree particles according to Engel (2004, p. 437) is as follows: "... degree particles are invariable words that can stand between the conjunctive and antecedent element in the constative clause, but cannot be used on their own as antecedent elements."

e. Comparison particles

The definition of comparative particles according to Engel (2004, p. 441) is as follows: "Comparative particles are invariable words that combine denotations of quantities or properties

(rarely events) in a comparative way. How it applies to equality, for example: She does like her mother. Hans is as tall as Manfred." Engel (2004, p. 442) also claims that such derivations explain why comparative particles may not be counted as conjunctive: In this case, they connect elements that are not on the same level and do not have the same function.

3. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive qualitative methods are used in this study. The object of this study is sentences that contain the particle "so" and are found in the data source. It is a descriptive method with a literature review as the research method, so the analysis is not dependent on a specific location. In addition, the data source for the analysis is the novel *Räuberhände* (2010) by Finn-Ole Heinrich. The romance novel was first published in 2007 and comprises 207 p.s. The novel *Räuberhände* by Finn-Ole Heinrich tells the story of the two friends Janik and Samuel. The author chose this novel as a data source because it uses many particles "so", which are the focus of this study.

The research techniques used in this analysis are literature studies and documentary techniques. Literature searches were conducted to find reference sources such as books, journals, websites and other qualitative information on the theories of experts focused on solving each problem. The research techniques used in the study are described in more detail below:

1. Literature research

First, the author will look in depth at the theories relevant to the use of the particle "so" in the German language so that the author is knowledgeable and prepared to process the data under investigation. Then, the author will read the novel *Räuberhände* carefully.

2. Data collection

After a thorough reading of the novel *Räuberhände*, the author will collect sentences containing the particle "so" in the novel for the study.

3. Data processing

In this phase, the author will analyze the ways of using the particle "so", including the function and meaning of the particle "so".

4. Conclusion

In this final phase, the author will draw major conclusions from the results of phases a to c, after which the author will describe these results in the order in which the problem was formulated.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Engel's theory (2004) was used to analyze the particle "so". The author analyzes sentences in which the particle "so" is used, which has a secondary function in the language. The particles provide more precise definitions, connect words or fulfill other functions. The result shows that the particle "so" is actually used as a secondary function in the data sources and has no grammatical meaning but as subjunctives, conjunctives, adverbs, degree particles and comparative particles. In the data found in the novel *Räuberhände*, the particle "so" has 2 functions, namely as causal subjunctives and as hypothetical comparative subjunctives. It connects two sentences or two events. Meanwhile, the particle "so" is mostly used as a hypothetical comparative subjunctive with the addition '*als*' and subjunctive II. In addition, the particle "so" has the same function as the

comparative particle as a conjunctive, as it is both accompanied by the word "*wie*". For this reason, the author summarizes the data results in a table during the classification phase.

To analyze the particle "so" as an adverb, the author uses the theory of Helbig/Buscha (2001). According to Helbig/Buscha (2001), adverbs in the German language are divided into four types: local, temporal, modal and causal adverbs. However, the particle "so" is only included in the word classes of modal and causal adverbs. In the novel *Räuberhände* by Finn-Ole Heinrich, the particle "so" is frequently used as an adverb to denote the manner, effect or consequence of something. The author assumes that this is due to the many causal conflicts that occur in the novel *Räuberhände*, so that the particle "so" is widely used as an adverb to avoid repetitive sentences. In addition, the particle "so" can also function as an adverbial phrase, namely as a comparative adverbial phrase, for example: as often as possible.

From the results of the data analysis, 100 sentences were also found to contain the particle "so", which functions as a degree particle or intensifier particle. The particle "so" is located directly before the adjective in the sentences found in the source data. In addition, the particle "so" can be used to increase the value or intensity of the adjective.

In the data sources found, the particle "so" also has different meanings. This is because, as already explained, the particle "so" belongs to different word classes. In the 254 sentences that have the particle "so", there are 25 sentences that have the meaning of showing cause and effect. The causal subjunctive is used to express that the event expressed in the subordinate clause is a consequence of the event expressed in the main clause. In addition, the hypothetical comparative subjunctive means a supposition about something that has not yet happened.

It is also possible to use the particle "so" as a conjunctive and comparative particle to introduce a type of comparison. The particle "so" as a conjunction and comparative particle can be used to compare something, people, or abilities. The particle "so" is usually used before an adjective or adverb.

The particle "so" can also function as an adverb to indicate the manner of an event. The particle "so" can be inserted into a subordinate or superordinate clause to explain something without repeating the required clause. In addition, the particle "so" is also often used to explain content, e.g. "so" in a subordinate or superordinate clause, followed by a more detailed explanation. Furthermore, the particle "so" is also used as an adverb for an event that has not yet happened. To express a logical sequence, to denote people, things or time that cannot be named or described precisely.

Furthermore, the particle "so" can also be used as a degree particle / intensifying particle to express the intensity of a quality or state. It is usually placed before adjectives and adverbs, e.g. so loud, so good.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the particle "so" in the German language in this section is carried out in line with the purpose of the present analysis. Based on the results and discussion with the data source in the form of the novel *Räuberhände* by Finn-Ole Heinrich, the following conclusions are drawn: (1) The German particle "so" in the source data can function as causative subjunctives, hypothetical comparative subjunctive, conjunctive or comparative particle, modal adverbs, causative adverbs, comparative adverbial phrase, and degree particle or intensifier particle. (2) The meaning of the particle "so" cannot be separated from the type and function of the particle "so"

itself. From a grammatical point of view, the addition of words to the particle "so", such as so that and so how, influences the meaning. In addition, the particle "so" itself sometimes has no semantic meaning, but is an adverbial reference to something described in the preceding or following sentence.

The result of this study on the particle "so" can be useful for learners of German to expand their understanding of the particle "so", especially in everyday conversations. In the reality of conversation with native speakers, there are many uses of the particle that sometimes change the meaning of a sentence. Particles in German itself are difficult for foreign learners of German to understand and use. For this reason, it would be better if this research is used as a reference by teachers by using appropriate media, e.g. by showing authentic videos of German speakers using particles in daily conversations. Also, this research can serve as a reference for other researchers with similar interests to conduct a much more comprehensive research.

Based on the results of this study, the following suggestions are formulated: (1) In order to understand the meaning of the particle "so" in a sentence, it is important for learners to know the function of the particle "so" itself so that the information in the sentence can be conveyed and understood correctly. (2) The information about the use of the particle "so" can be used as additional knowledge when learning in class or in self-study, as the particle is used very frequently in everyday language, especially in conversation with native German speakers. In addition, the author recommends that learners use particles in everyday conversations so that misunderstandings can be recognized immediately and corrected by oneself or the interlocutor, because mistakes are also a form of the learning process. (3) Further research on the particle "so" in German can be developed through in-depth analysis with different data sources and also on the basis of different theories of the experts.

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