

Sentence Anaphora in English and German

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0. Introduction

In addition to DP/NP anaphora (personal pronouns, etc.), verb-phrase anaphora (*do so*) and adjectival anaphora (*it, so*), languages typically also have expressions relating to sentential antecedents. In English the neuter pronoun (*it*) and an expression originally denoting manner deixis (*so*) are used in this function and may correspond to either *es/das* or *ja* in German. Our paper will discuss the distribution, meaning and use of these sentential anaphors with a focus on (a) the choice between these two anaphors in each language and (b) the contrasts between the two languages.

(1) English

She said it. vs. She said so.

(2) German

Ich glaube das / es. vs. Ich glaube, ja / schon.

1. Problems

The following questions will be discussed in our paper:

- What is the distribution of these two sentential anaphors in English?
 - (a) With which verbs do they combine?
 - (b) What are possible antecedents?
- How do the two anaphoric expressions contrast in meaning in those cases where both are possible (cf. [1])?
- How did an expression for manner deixis (*so*) develop into a sentential anaphora?
- How do the relevant anaphoric expressions contrast in English and German?
 - (a) in their distribution
 - (b) in their prosodic properties
 - (c) in their basic meaning
 - (d) in their degree of grammaticalization
- Not all uses of *so* will be considered (among the 850 most frequent English words; 40 uses distinguished in the *OED*).
- Focus on use of *so* that is described in the *OED* as “With verbs do, say, think, etc. latterly assuming the function of an object and passing into the sense of ‘that’ *OED*, s.v. *so* 2.a).
- From a syntactic point of view at least four uses of anaphoric *so* can be distinguished:
 - a) CP-anaphor: *I think {so / (that) he will retire soon}*.
 - b) IP-anaphor: *If {so / this is correct}, ... (also apparently / obviously / unfortunately... so)*
 - c) VP-anaphor: *He did {so / win the debate} (also so will / have / can... I)*
 - d) AP-Anaphor: *(She was tired.) So was he (also He became / remained so.)*

2. Distribution of anaphoric sentential *so*

(cf. also Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 1535 ff., Quirk et al. 1985: 879 ff.)

2.1. Syntactic contexts

- postverbal object position
(3) *I suppose / guess / imagine... so.*
- preverbal object position: verbs of desire, non-finite verbs
(4) a. *If you so wish / desire / choose, you can do it tomorrow.*
b. *So saying, he gave deadly poison to the herdsman and sent him off.*
- conditional clauses
(5) *If so, we will have to change our plans.*
- adverbs
(6) *apparently so; quite so; unfortunately so*
- preposed
(7) *Five of us, so I believe, had fiction published in magazines.*
(Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 1537)

2.2. Possible antecedents

- *so*: declarative, interrogative
- *it*: only declarative (?)
(8) a. *Will George help us?* – *I think so.*
b. *George will help us.* – *I hope so.*
c. *John failed his exam.* – *I regret that / it. I knew it. I expected it.*
d. *Will John pass his exam?* – *?I regret / believe / know / imagine it.*

2.3 Semantic contexts

- **Postverbal object position:** Verbs of propositional attitudes (*suppose, think, believe, imagine, hope, trust, guess, suspect, be afraid, etc.*).
- **Preverbal position:** volitional verbs (*wish, desire, etc.*).
- **Different frequencies** (BNC: very frequent: *think, say, suppose, hope, believe, imagine, guess, expect*; very rare: *know, suggest, consider, choose, suspect, feel, tell, etc.*).

3. Semantic contrasts

- (9) *She said so.* – *She said it.* (quoting content vs. quoting verbatim)
 (10) *I believe so.* – *I believe it.* (weak assertion – acceptance)
 (11) *I regret so.* – *I regret it.* (propositional attitude – factive)
 (12) *I know so.* – *I knew it.* (strong assertion – knowledge)
 (13) *He did so too.* – *He did it in a minute.* (auxiliary – main verb)

(*imagine, expect, tell, think, suppose, hope, *guess,*)

- **General contrast:**
 - *so*: mitigated, typically weak assertion, judgement about the truth of a proposition; event type.
 - *it*: not a judgement about the truth of a proposition, event token; stricter condition on co-reference.
- **Syntactic contrast:** tense (preference for present), subject (preference for 1st person).

4. Analogous contrasts in other languages

- Between pronominal anaphora and affirmative particle ('yes', 'like this'; cf. Pol. *tak*):

Italian:	<i>(io) lo so</i>	–	<i>penso di sì</i>
Spanish:	<i>lo sé / creo</i>	–	<i>creo que sí</i>
French:	<i>je le crois</i>	–	<i>je crois que oui</i>
German:	<i>ich glaube es</i>	–	<i>ich glaube ja</i>

Properties of **German** postverbal **ja**:

- stressed, no positional mobility, contrasts with negation particle *nein / nicht*, more restricted in its combinatorial potential;
- not grammaticalized to sentential anaphor; still a “sentence equivalent”.

5. From manner deixis to sentential anaphora (explanation of contrasts)

- Like its German cognate form *so*, English *so* (< *swa*) originally denoted (*inter alia*) **manner and degree deixis** (three term differentiations in Japanese and Finnish):

- (14) a. *The fish was so big (gesture)!*
 b. *Just fold this piece of paper back, so, and make a crease here.*
 (Cambridge International Dictionary of English, s.v. *so*)
 c. *Why don't you do it like so?*

- The use for manner **deixis** has almost disappeared (*like this, like that, that's the way to do it*); English *so* is also losing its ‘**manner**’ feature.
- Like all deictic expressions *so* also developed an **anaphoric** (and **cataphoric**) use; these uses may also imply degree or manner; relevant dimensions in the semantic analysis of **so**.

- (15) a. *If you so wish, you can have our equipment.* (purely **cataphoric**)
 b. *Was this woman a representative payee? If so, she didn't have to sign anybody's name but her own.* (purely **anaphoric**)
 c. *She was so ill that she could not come to work.* (cataphoric, **degree**)
 d. “I'll be jiggered and no mistake.” And **so saying** he went into...
 (anaphoric, **manner**)

- Anaphoric *so* as pro-clause complement is the result of reanalysing a manner adjunct in post-verbal position.

- **Bridging contexts:**

- (16) Green: *I hope the king is not yet shipped to Ireland.*
 Queen: *Why hopest thou so? 'tis better hope he is.*
For his designs crave haste... (Sh. Richard II, 2.2.II 41–45)

- (17) *But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so.* (Sh. MN. 1.1.ii. 228)

- (18) a. *Andswarast ðu swa?* (Ags, Gosp. John xviii. 22)
 b. *When the princess asked him who taught him so? He said...* (OED, s.v. *so*, 2a.)

- Change occurs primarily **in post-verbal position**; in preverbal position there still is a manner ingredient even in ModE; the preverbal position is a possible position for manner adjuncts:

- (19) a. *Five of us, so I believe, have had fiction published in magazines...*
 (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 1537)
 b. *So wrote a ten-year-old student in a letter to his parents...*
 (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 1537)
 c. *R. became a lunatic, and was so found by inquisition.*
 (1996; OED, s.v. *so*, [4b])

- Reanalysis only occurred in the **context of (di-)transitive verbs**:
 - (20) a. *I could not bear that she suffered so.* (BNC)
 - b. *You shouldn't worry so.*
 - c. *These Army people do talk so.*
- **Concomitant changes**:
 - (a) shift to post-verbal position**
 - (21) a. *You can, if you so choose, stay here for a while.*
 - b. *The amendments are in force, because the founding fathers chose so.*
 - (b) de-focusing/destressing**
So he said vs. He said so.
 - (c) loss of manner feature**
 - (22) Brutus: *Caesar, thou canst not die by traitos' hands,
Unless thou bring'st them with thee.*
 - Octavius: *So I hope.
I was not born to die on Brutus' sword.*
- The **relevant** change bears all the hallmarks of a **grammaticalization process**.
(Several changes occur in tandem on various levels of analysis; restriction to typical contexts; traces of the old meaning are still found.)

6. Summary and conclusion

- **translational equivalence**

	English	German
CP-anaphor (complete sentence)	<i>I think so. She said it.</i>	<i>Ich glaube schon / ja. Ich glaube es (ihm). Das glaube ich schon / *ja.</i>
IP-anaphor (proposition)	<i>If so... apparently so</i>	<i>Falls / wenn ja / *schon / *es / *das,... Wahrscheinlich ja / schon / *es / *das...</i>
VP-anaphor	<i>So do / have... I</i>	<i>Das / *ja / *schon habe ich auch</i>
AP-anaphor	<i>So was I.</i>	<i>Das / *ja / *schon war ich auch. Ich war es auch.</i>

- Different developments of Engl. *so* and German *so* (no loss of deictic and manner features).
- Grammaticalization of Engl. *so* to a sentential anaphor; German *ja* does not manifest a analogous development.

References

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