

**On the link between progressivity and dispositional modality.
Evidence from (the history of) German *stehen* 'stand' + (*zu*-)infinitive**

Introduction In this talk, we examine the distributional properties of a dispositional modality pattern in German consisting of the verb *stehen* 'stand', the infinitive marker *zu* 'to', and an infinitive as well as its emergence conditions. Synchronically, we argue that *stehen* is a lexical verbal head throughout and that it is able to express dispositional modality only in connection with infinitival VPs. Diachronically, we discuss evidence showing that *stehen* could already occur with infinitives in Old High German (750-1050) expressing aspectual meaning restricted by a PROG operator in the sense claimed by Ferreira (2016), and that this operator was replaced by DISP, a stativizing dispositional operator (cf. Boneh 2019) in Early New High German (1350-1650) resulting in selectional restrictions of different verb classes.

Phenomenon In Present-day German *stehen* usually selects either for a PP (1) or for a VP (2):

- (1) *Die Waschmaschine steht* [PP *in der Küche*].
the washer stand.3SG in the kitchen
'The washer is in the kitchen.'
- (2) *Aus unserer fachlichen Sicht steht* [VP *zu befürchten*],
from our specialized view stand.3SG to fear.INF
dass die Bundeswehr erneut vor einem Finanzdebakel steht.
that the German:Armed:Forces again before a.DAT finance:debacle stand.3SG
'According to our professional view, it is to be feared that the German Armed Forces will have to face a finance debacle again.' (*Welt*, 23/7/2019)

Whereas in (1) *stehen* takes a locative PP and specifies where the washer is, in (2) it embeds a *zu*-infinitive giving rise to dispositional modality. Although patterns of covert modality have been discussed at length (cf. Bhatt 2006 for English, Holl 2010 for German, and Šimík 2011 or Abraham & Leiss 2012 for a cross-linguistic discussion), not much attention has been paid to *stehen* + *zu*-infinitive.

Synchronic analysis Based on data from a recent questionnaire we provide evidence showing that although *stehen* is taken to be a lexical (= non-bleached) verbal head, it is restricted in its use due to the combination with a *zu*-infinitive. Main arguments underpinning this view come from: i) embeddability of (non-)factive predicates (**bedauern* 'regret' vs. ^{OK}*befürchten* 'fear'), ii) person subject constraints (**1st/*2nd* person vs. ^{OK}3rd person), iii) impersonal constructions, iv) (in-)definiteness effects of the matrix subject, v) imperative mood, and vi) modal flavors. Concretely, we argue that *stehen* and its *zu*-infinitive complement express dispositional modality underlying the operator DISP:

- (3) DISP $e'_{c,e,w}[\dots P(e_{PL}, w') \& e'_c \subseteq e_{PL} \dots]$ (based on Boneh 2019: 3; ex. 2b)

Different predictions follow from the presence of DISP: i) it applies at the vP-level specifying the nature of an external argument, excluding the 1st and 2nd persons and involving impersonal constructions describing properties, ii) it contextually presupposes a disposition to P, iii) it triggers a lexical event plurality, and iv) importantly, it does not involve event realization in the actual world. i)-iv) are met with respect to (2) as follows: an impersonal pattern is used, a disposition of a finance debacle to occur is presupposed, based on previous and prospective events the speaker creates possible worlds of fearing on every single occasion related to the finance debacle, and, finally, it is not the case that it is feared in the actual world.

Diachronic analysis To our knowledge, studies dealing with the pattern *stehen* + *zu*-infinitive are missing. On the one hand, this is not surprising if we assume *stehen* not to have changed semantically. However, what needs to be accounted for, on the other hand, is the occurrence of infinitival VPs and the emergence of emotive predicates after *stehen* expressing speaker's attitude towards what is embedded, cf. (2) for *befürchten* 'fear'. We discuss them in turn.

Infinitival VPs after *stehen* occur already in Old High German (750-1050) marking progressive aspect:

- (4) *sô diu súnna stât skînen*¹
 as the sun stand.3SG.PST shine.INF
 'as the sun was shining' (DDD-AD-Z-Notker-Martianus_Capella_1.1 > N_Mart_Cap.I.60-63)

In (4), the verb *stân* 'stand' is inflected for the past tense and takes the bare infinitive *skînen* 'shine'. The matrix verb encodes an aspectual imperfective/progressive meaning, i.e. simultaneity: the sun is up and it is shining at the same time. In this case, as we claim, DISP does not apply; *stân* is rather used as a locative verb restricted by the PROG operator expressing the existence of a "singular" P-event:

- (5) ... $\exists e$: ... sg(P)(e) ...

This contrasts with the Dutch verb *staan* being analyzed as a grammaticalized aspectual head (= Asp⁰) occupying a functional aspectual projection above VP (cf. ter Beek 2008: 37, 103):

- (6) *Een man staat te vissen aan de waterkant.*
 a man stand.3SG to fish.INF at the waterfront
 'A man is fishing at the waterfront.' (Behrens et al. 2013 :102, ex. 2d)
 German: **Ein Mann steht am Ufer zu fischen.*

Our questionnaire data show that *stehen* in combination with DISP tends not to tolerate definite DPs in the 3rd person, contrary to the unique DP *diu súnna* 'the sun' as given in (4).

- (7) **Das Gebäude steht einzustürzen.*
 the building stand.3SG collapse.INF
 Intended: 'The building is about to collapse.'

Although the conditions ii) and iii) are met, it cannot be questioned that (4) requires event realization in the actual world. The result of applying (5) to (4) is the singular event of sun shining opening up the possibility for *stân* to evolve into a progressive marker, as happened in Dutch, cf. (6). This development did not happen in German though. Instead, due to overlapping ingredients of PROG and DISP, *stehen* restricted its quantification domain by embedding infinitival VPs, according to which an event realization in the actual world can be dispensed with altogether. *lesen* 'read' is one such case:

- (8) *Wenn im Bericht zu lesen steht, dass ...*
 if in:the report to read.INF stand.3SG that
 'If one can read in the report that ...'
 (DeReKo, *Kleine Zeitung*, 18/9/1997)

In (8) *stehen* is restricted by DISP, not by PROG. It is an inherent property of a report that some information can be found in it, though (8) – contrary to (4) – does not express a progressive meaning. Additionally, it does not require the reading event be realized in the actual world. We take such examples like in (8) to trigger the operator change from PROG to DISP which, as our diachronic data show, happened in Early New High German (1350-1750). This change further enabled *stehen* to embed emotive predicates from the 18th century onwards, cf. (2). The operator replacement described here led to a change of selectional restrictions of embedded infinitival VPs, as *stehen* cannot embed *scheinen* 'shine' in Present-day German (cf. also the German paraphrase of 6):

- (9) **Die Sonne steht zu scheinen.*
 the sun stand.3SG to shine.INF
 Intended: 'The sun is shining.'

¹ The rationale/purpose interpretation *The sun was getting up to shine* is not available in the Old High German text.