

## WEIL: 'S G'HÖRT SO—A MISMATCH BETWEEN USE AND TEXTBOOKS

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*The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between corpus-based linguistic research on language usage and the presentation of linguistic structures in textbooks. The paper concentrates on variation in German causal connectors. The use of causal connectors by Germans will be contrasted with their presentation in textbooks. Of special interest is "weil," which has reportedly been used with verb in second position. The analysis of several spoken, a written, and the researcher's own email corpus shows that "da" and "denn" are being replaced by "weil" in its two different uses. A qualitative analysis of the incidence of "weil" in the email corpus will be discussed to further understand the usage of the connector. It will be shown that the goals of the classroom and the practices in teaching causal connectors do not reflect the use of causal connectors in informal settings in Germany. It is recommended that corpus linguistics findings should be utilized by teachers and material developers for a communicative classroom.*

### INTRODUCTION

Most language students enter the language classroom hoping to learn how to communicate with the target community. In the basic language program many students are simply there because they have to pass a language requirement. However, even many of these students still want to communicate when they travel to the target country. In the case of my German students, many have friends and family in Germany. The communicative language classroom should therefore aim to provide the students with the skills necessary to engage in communication in the target language. The basic language textbooks should illustrate communicative language and its rules, especially in the informal conversational register.

Over the last few decades, corpus-based research has been conducted in English and has been used mainly for linguistic studies or large-scale monolingual dictionary and grammar projects. Recently, corpus linguistics has been utilized by materials developers in the English teaching context, especially in English for Specific Purposes. However, not much research has been done so far for foreign language teaching. This paper will argue for the importance of further corpus-based linguistic research for the communicative classroom.

The purpose of this paper is to encourage communication between corpus linguists, researchers analyzing large collections of language, and

materials developers in the foreign language context. This paper will compare the use of causal con- and subordinations by German native speakers in Germany based on several corpora with their presentation in American basic language textbooks of German. The analyses are intended to provide materials developers with helpful insights, so that textbooks can be better designed for the needs of basic language students and accurately represent the language use of the native speakers.

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

What is corpus linguistics? According to Conrad (2000), corpus linguistics is "the empirical study of language relying on computer-assisted techniques to analyze large, principled databases of naturally occurring language"(548). Corpus linguistics has shown that the variation in language use is highly systematic. Therefore, it can be analyzed and used for better presentation of language use in the second and foreign language classroom.

Corpus linguistics supports new teaching approaches in many different ways. Over the last few decades teaching has turned towards a skill-based approach that puts speaking in the foreground (Carter & McCarthy, 1995). The communicative approach focuses on communication and has introduced new strategies for the teaching of speaking. In the language classroom, language should be used for meaningful activities in an authentic fashion. Corpus linguistics can provide information about that authentic language. Corpus linguistics is important because it can focus on conditions of use and thereby offer explanations in what contexts a certain structure is used (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Reppen, 1998). The information provided to the students no longer has to be intuitive and anecdotal, but can be based on real data. The teacher now has empirical evidence for grammar explanations previously stated as "it just sounds right". In addition, results from corpus linguistics can be used for awareness-raising activities such as the presentation of authentic texts and an analysis with the students of the use of structure in text versus how they were taught (i.e., descriptive vs. prescriptive grammar). Conrad (2000) stresses the importance of corpus linguistics for language teaching in regards to differences between registers such as academic lectures versus conversations in an academic context, but also for teaching in general. Owen (1993) also encourages the use of corpus research for language teaching.

If corpus linguistics is so useful for language teaching, the question is, how has it been used for language teaching so far? Conrad (2000) claims that the majority of grammar textbooks have not yet been affected by corpus-based research. Carter and McCarthy (1995) on the other hand argue that it can be a big selling point for materials and entire programs to advertise that they teach "real" English. They do, however, also criticize the current grammars because most are based on written language and not on spoken discourse. This is problematic, since rules for the written language do not necessarily apply to the informal spoken language. In addition, Carter and McCarthy (1995) also

admit that teachers are resistant towards these innovative materials and grammars. Teachers consider these non-prescriptive forms of the language impure and wish to teach the students 'proper' forms of the language as described in prescriptive grammars. If teachers are not receptive to using the innovative textbooks, then the materials will not reach the students in the language classroom. It is clear that, even for the English as a second language and English as a foreign language contexts, more work needs to be done.

Some components of corpus linguistics are, however, already used or at least considered beneficial in some teaching contexts. According to Conrad (2000), concordancing—the use of computers to establish frequency and co-occurrence of lexical items—is now used in the ESL classroom. McCarthy and Carter (1995) agree with Conrad that corpus linguistics is beneficial for the foreign language classroom. They stress that even small corpora can be used for teaching contexts. However, “convincing corpora for major lexicographical work need to be vast, perhaps tens of millions of words” (p. 143) such as COBUILD (Collins, 1990). Even then many structures might still go unnoticed. In addition, enormous corpora might become hard to handle. McCarthy and Carter illustrate the need for better corpora and better ways of analyzing them while at the same time promoting the benefits of corpus studies for language teaching.

Conrad also has some words of caution. She argues that frequency data alone cannot dictate pedagogy. If a structure is rare, it does not mean that it can be ignored for all language teaching. Conrad states “... decisions about pedagogy should apply corpus linguistics by taking into account functional descriptions and frequency information as well as analyses of students' needs” (p. 557). A rare structure might be important for a certain sociolinguistic environment, hence it would need to be taught in spite of its infrequent use. This suggests that corpora need to be analyzed in a quantitative and a qualitative manner, and in respect to general language use and specific registers.

While corpus linguists for the English language are already working on ways to improve corpus studies and how to better utilize them for materials development, the foreign language corpus linguists are still struggling to get a voice in the pedagogy realm. In the foreign language context there is still a large discrepancy between the materials, textbooks, and reference grammars used in the classroom and the spoken language the communicative classrooms want to teach. Pica (1983) identified this problem for American English, O'Connor and de Vito (1991) for French, and Glisan and Drescher (1993) for Spanish. Even more recent work still identified discrepancies between textbooks and the real world, such as Fonseca-Greber and Waugh (2003) for both Parisian French and Swiss French and Masuda (presentation at SLAT Roundtable 2001) for Japanese. This clearly illustrates that more research is needed. Furthermore, Conrad (2000) and also Biber (in presentation at SLAT Roundtable in 2004) suggested that corpora need to be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively in order to provide the language learners with the most accurate information.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This paper furthers research on the connection between corpus-based research on German language use and the presentation of language use rules in German textbooks. Causal connectors in German are the focus of the investigation. Connectors are conjunctions and subordinations introducing a new clause. Conjunctions introduce an independent clause which follows regular word order with the conjugated verb in second place. Subordinations introduce a dependent clause in which the conjugated verb is moved to last place in the clause. Connectors are categorized further by the way they connect the clauses. Causal connectors connect two clauses in a cause-and-effect relationship, similar to *because* in English. In German the causal connectors are the conjunction *denn* and the subordinations *weil* and *da*. However, anecdotal evidence as well as research has shown occurrences of *weil*-clauses with independent clause word order. This deviation from the prescriptive rule is under investigation in this study.

This paper analyzes the use of causal connectors by native speakers in Rudolph's (1982) written corpus, the researcher's own email corpus, and several spoken corpora summarized by Wegener (1999). The frequency of the various causal connectors is compared across the different media of communication. Next, the explanation of causal connectors in American basic German language textbooks is analyzed. Finally, the use of the new, non-prescriptive use of *weil* in the email corpus is analyzed in order to give better recommendations for teaching causal connectors for spoken and electronic informal communication. The research is guided by the following research questions:

1. How are causal connectors used in authentic German discourse?
2. How are causal connectors introduced in American textbooks of German?
3. How is *weil* used in the email corpus and what does this suggest about the nature of email as a communicative tool?
4. How should causal connectors be introduced in American textbooks of German based on the findings to research question number 1?

## LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND ON *WEIL*

*Weil*, the equivalent of the English word *because*, can also be expressed with *da* and *denn*. In German, causal connectors can be coordinating or subordinating. *Denn* is used as a conjunction, hence with regular independent clause word order, i.e. verb in second position. Traditional *weil* and *da* are used as a subjunction, hence with verb in final position, since they introduce a dependent clause, as shown below.



corpora were analyzed for their use of *da*, *WVF*, *WVS*, and *denn*. The four causal connectors were contrasted. The data consists of three parts: written data, semi-written data, and spoken data. In this study the analyses of existing corpora were adopted from Wegener (1999) and supplemented by a new corpus of email communication data. Wegener adopted several spoken corpora and one written corpus from various researchers to contrast the four causal connectors. In this paper the added email corpus contains approximately 500 email messages. The corpus was collected between 1997 and 2001 from speakers from southern Germany between the ages of 10 and 50.

The medium of email for communication was chosen because it shares features of both a prototypical written and a prototypical oral medium of communication, since it is spontaneous as well as written. It should be considered, however, that email is used differently by the various users. Some users consider it a more formal medium, while others employ it as a spontaneous, conversational informal form of communication. In the small sample age did not seem to play a role.

The second part of the data analysis deals with the introduction of causal connectors in American textbooks of German used in the basic language program on the college level. Since recent teaching philosophies place a high value on culturally authentic materials, the textbooks should mirror the use of causal connectors in German. The discussion of causal connectors in textbooks was analyzed guided by the following questions: Which causal connectors are explained? What is the order of introduction of the causal connectors? Is the non-prescriptive use of *weil* mentioned? If so, how? Where possible, the authors were asked to explain their decisions to exclude/include *WVS*. The results from the textbook analysis were then contrasted with the results from the first data set.

## DATA ANALYSIS

This section of the paper will discuss the data sets individually, starting with the written data, then the email data, and finally the spoken data. The spoken data will be discussed as one set. In the discussion section of this part the three different media of communication will be compared in their use of the four causal connectors.

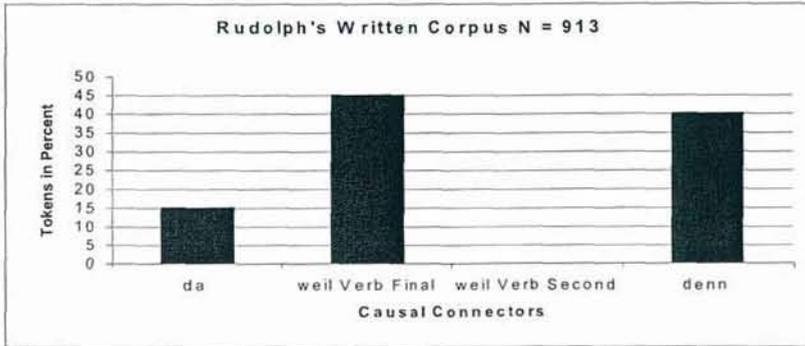
### *Rudolph's Written Corpus*

Rudolph's data are comprised of both fictional and non-fictional written texts. However, most of the data were from fictional texts. The difference in use of causal connectors between the fictional and the non-fictional texts was insignificant and will, therefore, be disregarded in this paper. The data include 913 accounts of causal connectors. The data were collected from 1960 to 1980, and are therefore older than most of the other corpora.

Since written texts are expected to follow the grammar rules in the *Duden* (the one and only reference grammar in German), there are no accounts

of WVS. With the kind of written data used in the corpus, this was to be expected. Had the data set included texts from gossip papers and/or informal letters, the data would have most likely included some counts of WVS. WVF was the most frequently used casual connector with 45%. However, *denn* is also reported 40% of the time. *Da* is only used 15% of the time. Hence, the preferred subjunction for writing is *weil*, and the preferred conjunction is *denn*.

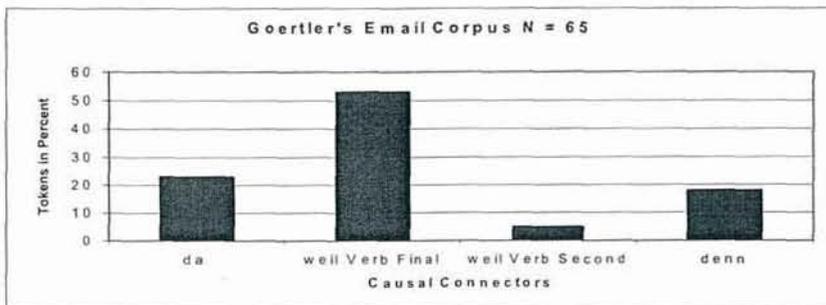
Figure 1: Written Data by Rudolph (1982)



### *Görtler's Email Corpus*

This set of data consists of approximately 500 email messages written between 1997 and 2001 by speakers from Baden-Württemberg, a Southwestern state in Germany. Most of the speakers were in their late twenties, though some are in their teens, forties and fifties. Almost all were college educated. The group consisted of male and female email writers; however, the female writers tended to produce longer email messages, hence the likelihood of using any of the four connectors increased. Many of the email writers have heightened linguistic awareness due to the fact that they are involved either in literary studies or in German linguistics.

Figure 2: Email Data



The data set consisted of 152 causal connectors. The most frequently used connector was WVF (62.5%). *Denn* and *da* were similar in frequency, *denn* was used 18.42% of the time, and *da* 14.47%. WVS was only used 4.61% of the time. Email was expected to have a higher frequency of WVS. However, only seven instances of WVS were found.

### Summary of Spoken Data

The spoken data are presented in comparison in order to illustrate the development of causal connectors over time. The use of WVF dominates in all spoken corpora. The use of WVS is similar over time except for Schlobinski's (1992) northern corpus. The fewer tokens of WVS can be explained through regional differences. WVS is believed to have been a southern phenomenon first. When I presented these data at a conference the northern speakers in the audience reported never having heard WVS before. Hence, a regional difference might still be present. *Da* exhibits a low frequency in the corpora.

Table 1: Comparison of Spoken Corpora

| Corpus                    | Data Collected   | N                  | da                | WVF                 | WVS              | denn             |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Eisenmann (1973): South   | 1955-1959        | 396 (100%)         | 0 (0%)            | 253 (63.89%)        | 114 (28.79%)     | 29 (7.32%)       |
| Freiburg Korpus: North    | 1960-1970        | 300 (100%)         | 18 (6%)           | 126 (42%)           | 5 (1.66%)        | 151 (50.33%)     |
| Schlobinski (1992): South | 1980-1990        | 51 (100%)          | 0 (0%)            | 35 (68.63%)         | 16 (31.37%)      | 0 (0%)           |
| Schlobinski (1992): North | 1980-1990        | 47 (100%)          | 1 (2.12%)         | 39 (82.9%)          | 6 (12.76%)       | 1 (2.12%)        |
| Uhmann (1996): South      | 1980-1990        | 13 (100%)          | 1 (7.69%)         | 5 (38.46%)          | 4 (30.7%)        | 3 (23%)          |
| Uhmann (1996): Standard   | 1980-1990        | 36 (100%)          | 0 (0%)            | 20 (55.5%)          | 14 (38.88%)      | 2 (5.55%)        |
| Seiffert (1995): Berlin   | 1990-1994        | 252 (100%)         | 11 (4.36%)        | 137 (54.36%)        | 60 (23.8%)       | 44 (17.46%)      |
| <b>Total Spoken</b>       | <b>1955-1994</b> | <b>1095 (100%)</b> | <b>31 (2.83%)</b> | <b>615 (56.16%)</b> | <b>219 (20%)</b> | <b>230 (21%)</b> |

N = Number of occurrences

*Denn* seems to be a matter of formality and/or personal choice, since no consistent pattern was found. The large number of tokens of *denn* in the Freiburg Korpus can be attributed to the fact that the data stem from radio debates, a formal register in spoken discourse. The latest corpora were so small that the word choice of one speaker could have had a big impact on the percentage of tokens. The data suggest that WVS is a lexical change not a syntactical change, for *weil* is replacing *denn* rather than *weil* adopting a new word order. Therefore, the teaching of *da* and *denn* becomes less necessary in language classrooms aiming at oral proficiency based on authentic materials,

since *da* and *denn* are disappearing.

In order to better compare the different media of communication, the spoken corpora were combined into one big corpus. This new corpus then includes speakers from the north, south, east and west Germany. The spoken data span from 1955 to the early 1990s. The corpus includes 1095 accounts of causal connectors, which is comparable in size to the written corpus (see Table 1).

In the spoken corpora WVS was used 20% of the time, which is almost even with *denn* (21%). Therefore, the replacement of *denn* by WVS has not happened, but is certainly in progress. In the dependent clause structure the dominance of *weil* is more apparent. WVF is used almost twenty times more frequently than *da* (WVF 56.16% and *da* 2.83%). Combined *weil* makes up 86.16% instances of causal connectors, which strongly suggests that the other causal connectors become less frequent in informal conversational spoken language use.

## DISCUSSION

### Comparison of Different Media

The most frequently used connector in all three media was WVF (51%). It was the most frequent in the email corpus with 53%. In spoken language it was still over half of the causal connectors (56%), and in the written data it was a little under half of the occurrences (45%). This suggests that knowledge of old *weil* alone will help students understand at least half of all causal connector occurrences in all three media. It is possible that once students understand WVF, they can easily understand the meaning of WVS, since it is merely a change in word order. This means that learners would then be able to understand 69.01% of the email causal connectors, 76.16% of the spoken causal connectors, 55.46% of the written causal connectors, and 62% of all the corpora. This suggests that teaching *weil* could be sufficient in the teaching of causal connectors.

Table 2: Comparison of Media

| Corpus                 | Time             | N                  | da              | WVF               | WVS              | denn            |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Rudolph (1982):Written | 1960-1980        | 913 (100%)         | 137 (15%)       | 411 (45%)         | 0 (0%)           | 365 (40%)       |
| Goertler (2002) Email  | 1997-2001        | 65 (100%)          | 15 (23%)        | 35 (53%)          | 3 (5%)           | 12 (18%)        |
| Various Spoken         | 1955-1994        | 1095 (100%)        | 33 (3%)         | 613 (56%)         | 219 (20%)        | 230 (21%)       |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>1955-2001</b> | <b>2073 (100%)</b> | <b>185 (9%)</b> | <b>1059 (51%)</b> | <b>222 (11%)</b> | <b>607(29%)</b> |

In a closer look at WVS, it is clear that it is not as frequent as feared by language purists. WVS was not used at all in the written corpus; however, it was used 4.61% of the time by the email writers, and 20% by the speakers. Over all, WVS was used 11% of the time. This frequency would be larger had

the email corpus been more comparable in size to the two other media. WVS showed an increase in frequency from the formal to the less formal communicative settings, suggesting that WVS is part of the informal varieties of German rather than formal varieties. If we see email as a bridge to the written medium in general, the appearance of WVS can be expected to occur in all kinds of written discourse in the future. Over all the frequency of WVS is still relatively low. In all three media *denn* is still preferred over WVS. While *denn* is still dominant, WVS is catching up. In the case of subordinations, *weil* is stronger than *da*. *Da* is almost insignificant in the data. The frequency of *da* is decreasing with the informality of the texts. In addition, it seems valid that *da* and *denn* are being replaced by the two *weils*.

In the beginning and at the end of the semester, I have been administering a formal or informal survey with my students about their connections with German speakers. Based on the 202 classes I have taught so far, only a small number of students continue with their study of German past the requirement. Most—usually around two thirds—of the class, do not express a desire to continue German or study in Germany, though about half of them express their desire to travel in Germany. Since most learners will only be involved in informal communicative settings, a learner-centered classroom that focuses on the learners' needs, has to reflect the actual use of causal connectors in these settings. For a classroom based on authentic materials that means that WVF as well as WVS need to be taught, and the differences need to be illustrated. The teaching of these two *weils* could even replace the explicit instruction of *da* and *denn*, for their use is declining. However, introducing the double use of *weil* might be confusing for the students. A solution could be to teach *weil* in its old form and accept "errors", i.e., the use of *weil* with verb in second position.

### ***Causal Connectors in the Textbook***

If the goal of the classroom is to teach and use authentic language and focus on spoken language, the students (a) will encounter WVS and (b) should be informed of its use. The teaching of WVS needs to include an explanation of the appropriateness of its use: in informal spoken environments and potentially in email exchanges.

In surveying textbooks the following questions were asked:

1. Which causal connectors are introduced?
2. In what order are the causal connectors presented?
3. Why do authors not include WVS?

The following textbooks were reviewed: *A practical review grammar* (Dippman & Watzinger, 2000), *Assoziationen* (Walker, Tschirner, Nikolai & Strasser, 1991), *Concise German review grammar* (Moeller & Liedloff, 1995), *Impulse* (Crown & Lill, 1999), *Kaleidoskop* (Moeller, Liedloff, Adolph & Mabee, 1997), *Kontakte* (Terell, Tschirner, & Nikolai, 2000), and *Neue Horizonte* (Dollenmayer & Hansen, 1999). Most textbooks introduce *da*, *denn* and the regular *weil*. *Assoziationen* and *Kontakte* did not introduce *da*. Most textbooks present these causal connectors approximately at the same time. If

the authors introduce the connectors at different times, they usually introduce coordinating conjunctions first. In the case of causal connectors, that means that textbook authors first present a connector that is actually not the dominant connector with that meaning but it is perceived as the simpler one because it follows regular word order.

Even though *Deutsch zusammen* is one of the textbooks that presents *denn* first, it is also the only textbook teaching both forms of *weil*. It lists *weil* as a subjunction, but as a lexical item it introduces both forms. In the example sentences WVS is used in combination of two clauses and WVF in a single sentence. The book does not offer much explanation. The corpus data do not indicate a difference of position in the discourse between WVS and WVF. Therefore, even though both forms are introduced in *Deutsch zusammen*, they might still not resemble the actual use of WVS and WVF in a German context.

*Neue Horizonte* acknowledges the use of WVS in the teacher's notes. Dollenmayer and Hansen (1999) mention an increasing tendency to use *weil* as a coordinating conjunction in colloquial spoken German. The note is, however, only in the teachers' edition. The description of the variation is accurate and reflects the results of the corpus data.

In contrast to reference grammars for non-native speakers and most of the textbooks—except for *Neue Horizonte* and *Deutsch zusammen*—native-speaker reference grammars do acknowledge the use of WVS. Both the Duden (1995) and the Eisenberg (1994) grammar mention the increasing use of WVS in spoken discourse. It is not a prescriptive variation of German, but it is acknowledged as a variation in the descriptive portion of the grammars. This is similar to the way in which *Neue Horizonte* dealt with the emergence of WVS, and given the relative infrequency of its use, an appropriate way of dealing with it.

Knowing that authentic materials are important in textbook design, I interviewed a few of the textbook authors about their decision to exclude WVS. Erwin Tschimer, the co-author of *Kontakte* and *Assoziationen*, argued that the inclusion of WVS would confuse the students more than it would help them (personal communication). He believes in simplicity, which also explains why his books do not introduce *da*. Richardson, co-author of *Wie bitte?* (personal email correspondence), on the other hand, reported that his author team looked for authentic material including the WVS, and were unsuccessful during the 1980s, hence excluded it from their textbook. Their authentic materials are advertisements and radio broadcasting, which probably at that time actually did have a low frequency of WVS. William Fischer (personal communication), co-author of *Wie bitte?*, also mentioned that the publisher was not receptive of including non-prescriptive varieties of German. All authors presented good reasons for the exclusion of WVS.

While the native-speaker grammar references such as Eisenberg (1994) and the Duden (1995) present the use of WVS, only two of the textbooks for American students mentioned WVS. Most of the textbook authors, however, claim to promote communication and authentic spoken language use as explained in the foreword. The analysis of the corpora in this

paper shows that WVS plays a role in authentic spoken discourse but not in the grammar instruction or the so-called authentic materials in the textbooks. However, it has to also be acknowledged that textbook authors have to make many decisions and try to accommodate all stakeholders, including teachers, which can come at the cost of using less authentic language in textbooks, as it seems that many teachers resist the new variation of *weil*. This is also true in Germany, where, as mentioned in Wegener (1999), a high school teacher charged students money for using *weil* in its non-prescriptive form in classroom discussions.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHING

The purpose of this paper is to provide recommendations for teaching based on corpus research. Conrad (2000) cautions that in providing recommendations for teaching based on corpus research, goals and circumstances need to be taken into account. In the case of WVS different teaching circumstances may result in different recommendations. While I cannot give a recommendation for every teaching environment, I want to focus on two basic language programs: the oral proficiency classroom and the four skills classroom. In an oral proficiency classroom the teaching of *denn* and *da* seem irrelevant, since WVF and WVS represented more than 75% of the occurrences of causal connectors. The teaching of word order should not play a role, since both are acceptable in spoken language. In a four skills classroom the recommendation differs. Awareness raising activities comparing the usage of WVS and WVF in authentic texts is a useful activity for teaching causal connectors in spoken versus written discourse, but can also serve as a discussion point of descriptive versus prescriptive grammar. For the writing portion of the class *denn* should also be included and a teacher may want to alert the student to a non-prescriptive usage of *weil* in cases of WVS. Overall, it can be argued against the correction of WVS usage in students. Usually, students struggle with the dependent clause word order, and since both varieties exist in the case of *weil*, a teacher may not want to correct WVS use by students.

But even if these recommendations are taken into account by the textbook authors, the teachers still have to implement them. Some teachers may not believe that WVS should be taught for it is not “proper” German. Others could argue that WVS implies a certain level of familiarity and may be perceived as an insult when uttered by non-native speakers, for they are not native speakers of a WVS using dialect. Furthermore, non-native speakers may encounter that native speakers though accepting of WVS from their peers consider WVS use by a non-native speaker as an error. Further research needs to be conducted on the reaction of WVS using native speakers to non-native speakers’ WVS use.

## CONCLUSION

Language and language teaching cannot be separated. Language does change over time, which means that language teaching has to change over time as well. Even though the German causal clause is not undergoing a dramatic syntactical change, there is an apparent lexical change. This change indicates the disappearance of causal connectors other than *weil* and the double use of *weil* as a sub- and conjunction. These changes are especially apparent in spoken but also in informal writing contexts such as email communication. Since most lower level German speakers will only need informal communication skills, the teaching of *da* and *denn* becomes less urgent, and the inclusion of WVS in the teaching of causal connectors becomes crucial for spoken language.

Changes in the language need to be considered in the language classroom. In a foreign language setting it is difficult to keep up with current changes due to the distance to native-speakers in their current language use. It cannot be expected from individual foreign language teachers that they keep up-to-date with these changes. Therefore, the responsibility lies with the textbook writers. In the survey of commonly used German language textbooks in the United States, it was apparent that the authors did not acknowledge the language change of *weil*. This needs to change.

The paper started out asking for better communication between materials developers and corpus linguistics, and for further corpus research. There has been corpus research done on German as is apparent in Wegener's (1999) article. However, the corpus linguistic research has not yet been utilized for American textbooks of German. Nonetheless, I have received word of a vocabulary materials developing project based on written corpora being worked on at the Herder Institute in Leipzig. Other corpora for German, such as the Mannheim Korpus, are available online. However, most of these corpora are written corpora. The corpora of interest for communicative teaching though are spoken corpora. These corpora can be used to develop more authentic communicative material, so that our students going to Germany do not sound like books.

While it is important to base authentic materials on corpora, there is also a place for caution. An ideal large spoken corpus takes a lot of effort and hard work. Recording, transcribing and coding take a long time. The pay off of these materials has to be big before publishers will be willing to undergo such big endeavors. Furthermore, the corpus runs into the danger of being outdated before it can really be used for materials development. Even if a good spoken corpus gets compiled and used for materials development, publishers and teachers have to still accept the materials. Based on my experience, foreign language teachers are often resistant to including new variations in spoken language in their teaching. Even if teachers could be convinced by making them aware of the fact that they too use these structures, then the students who

learned these features of spoken language have to go to the target community and get accepted. A spoken language feature that is perfectly acceptable when uttered by a native speaker might be perceived as inappropriate or wrong when uttered by a non-native speaker. Nonetheless, it would be beneficial to our students to receive instruction in more authentic spoken German.

In a brief survey of textbooks it was also observed that other variations in the German language today were also usually overlooked; however, not as much as WVS. Other current changes in spoken discourse are the disappearing of subjunctive one, the replacing of genitive by dative, the disappearing of simple past tense, and the replacing of the simple subjunctive two form by the compound form. The fact that important changes are not acknowledged in the textbooks suggests that there needs to be more cooperation between linguists, especially corpus linguists, and material developers. This paper attempts to encourage such dialogue.

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