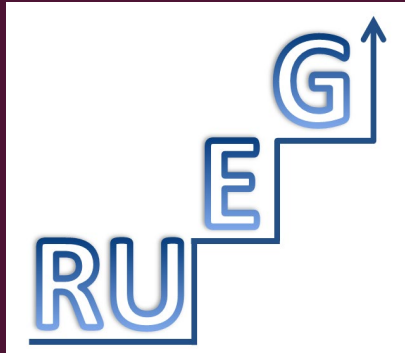# GERMAN 'ALSO' AS DISCOURSE MARKER ACROSS REGISTERS AND SPEAKER GROUPS

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SYNCHRONIC POLYFUNCTIONALITY

- developmental path towards DM through semantic bleaching and syntactic disintegration (e.g. Traugott 2012, Wiese/Bunk 2019)

- reinterpretation of the core-meaning results in:
  - → heterosemes in distinctive word classes
  - → polysemy in one word class
  - → contextually triggered pragmatic interpretation (Diewald 2006)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the loci for variation in the use of the different synchronic functions?

- RQI Does register have an influence on variation in the use of 'also'?

- RQ II Does the language background (bi- vs. monolingual, minority vs. majority language) have an influence on the distribution across registers?

REGISTERS AND SPEAKER GROUPS

- registers associated with functional purposes and situational settings:
  - systematic distribution of functions across registers expected, e.g. more DMs in spoken mode

- speaker groups:
  - societal status of a language ⬛➡ communicative situations

minority context
  - heritage speakers (HS): less formal settings

majority context
  - bilingual and monolingual speakers: communicative situations from formal to informal settings

4

formal

written witness report

voicemail to police – eye witness line

written

stimulus video

spoken

text message to a friend

informal

voice message to a friend

all methodological details (incl. stimuli and step-by-step) open-access at: **https://osf.io/qhupg/**
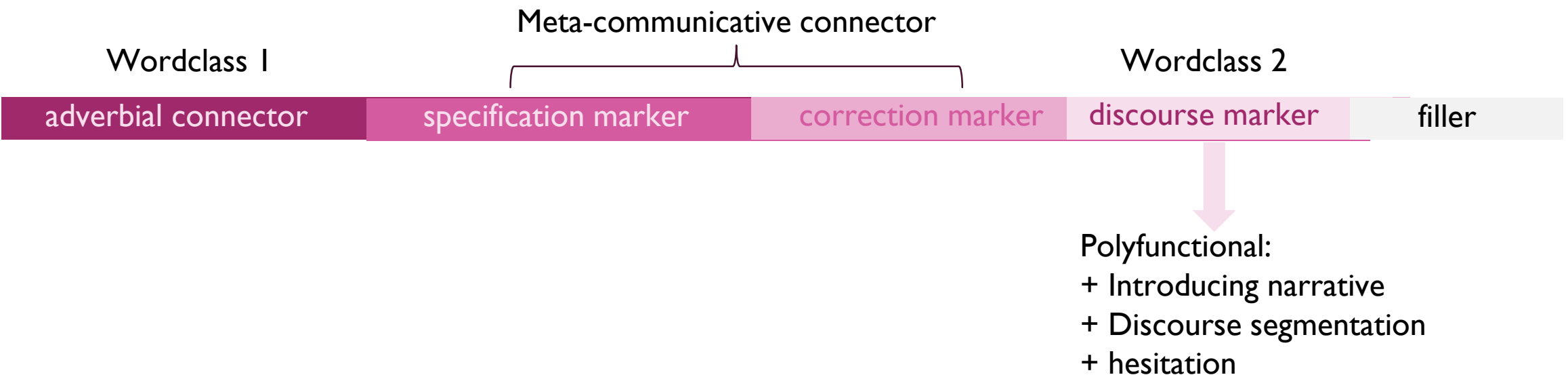
DATABASE - RUEG-DE_0.4 (WIESE ET AL. 2019)

German speakers	short	language status	number of speakers	tokens
bilinguals (Germany)	Debi_majD	majority	165	96,424
bilingual heritage speakers (US)	Usbi_minD	minority	30	12,319
monolingual speakers (Germany)	DEmo_majD	majority	64	39,207

Registers: informal-written, informal-spoken, formal-written and formal-spoken

link to the corpus: https://zenodo.org/record/3236069#.YMIlj6FCREY

CATEGORISATION OF GERMAN 'ALSO'

→ Semantic bleaching + syntactic disintegration →

Meta-communicative connector

Wordclass 1			Wordclass 2	
adverbial connector	specification marker	correction marker	discourse marker	filler

Polyfunctional:
+ Introducing narrative
+ Discourse segmentation
+ hesitation

CATEGORISATION OF GERMAN 'ALSO'

Meta-communicative connector

Wordclass 1   Wordclass 2

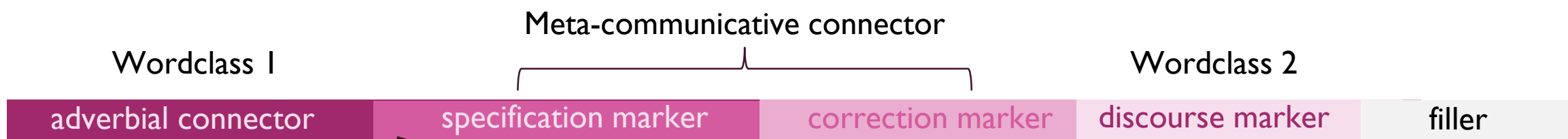| adverbial connector | specification marker | correction marker | discourse marker | filler |
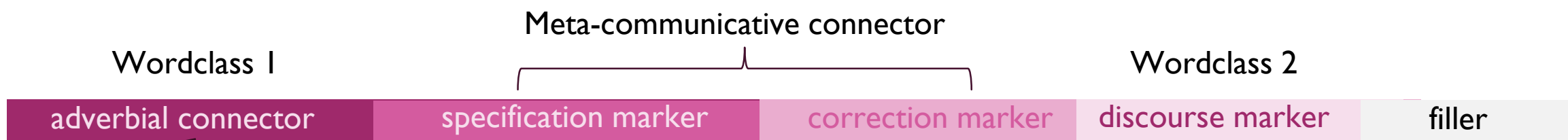
syntactically integrated
Function: signalling a consequence, modus ponens (p →q)

Ich war nicht mehr benötigt **<u>also</u>** bin ich dann gegangen. (USbi04FD_fwD)
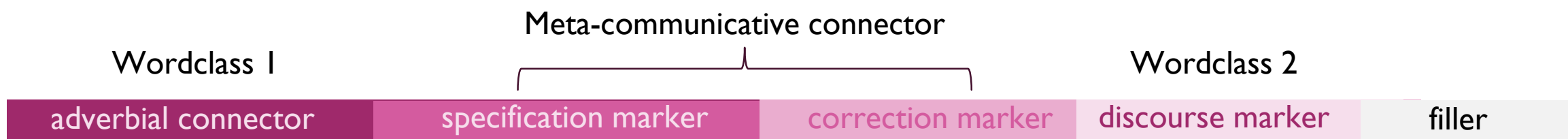'I was no longer needed so I left.'

CATEGORISATION OF GERMAN 'ALSO'

Meta-communicative connector

Wordclass 1			Wordclass 2	
adverbial connector	specification marker	correction marker	discourse marker	filler

syntactically integrated
Function: signals a specification or elaboration

ich glaube es war schon der Ball den der Mann **<u>also</u>** dieser junge Mann hingeworfen hat (DEbi01MR_fsD)
    'I think it was *schon* the ball that the man, *also* this young man, threw down'

CATEGORISATION OF GERMAN 'ALSO'

Meta-communicative connector

Wordclass 1

Wordclass 2

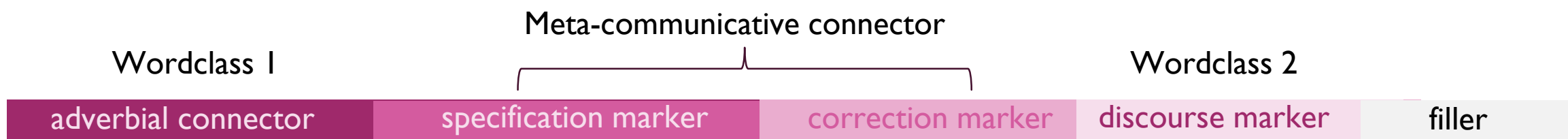| adverbial connector | specification marker | correction marker | discourse marker | filler |

partly syntactically integrated
Function: signals a correction or repair, signals the renewal of a morphological or syntactical structure and/or a correction on content level

und die mit dem Hund die haben direkt nur diese **also** die haben irgendwelche Sachen fallen gelassen
   'and the ones with the dog they only have these directly, *also* they have dropped things.'

(DEmo77MD_isD)

CATEGORISATION OF GERMAN 'ALSO'

Meta-communicative connector

Wordclass 1   Wordclass 2

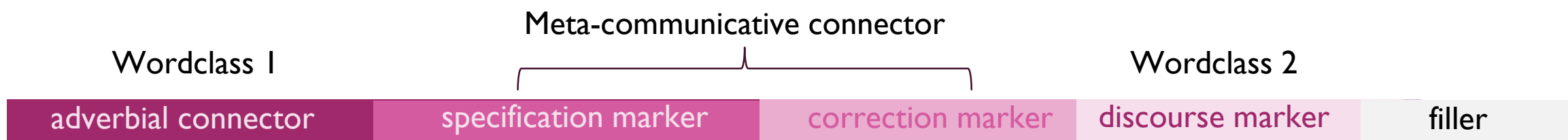| adverbial connector | specification marker | correction marker | discourse marker | filler |

syntactically not integrated
Functions: signalling the start of a narrative, segmentation marker (e.g. before an evaluation), attention-getter, filler

also ich bin gerade so einen Parkplatz entlanggelaufen (DEbi11MR_isD)
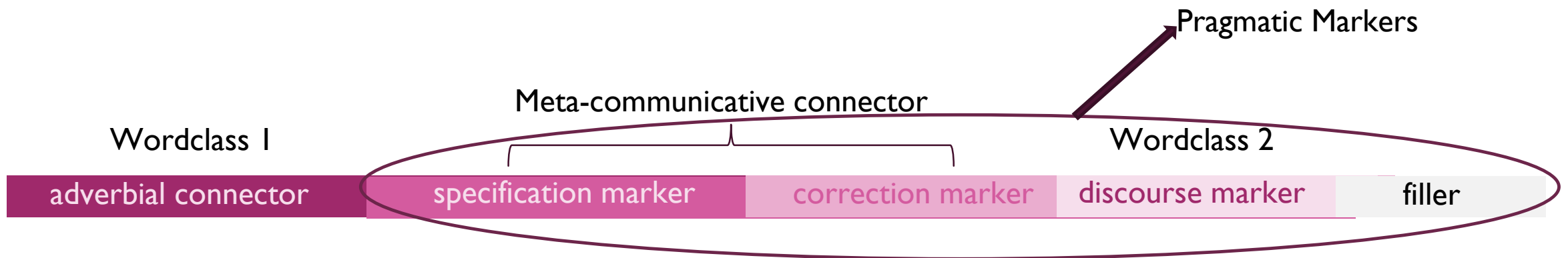 ‚*also* I was walking along the parking lot'

CATEGORISATION OF GERMAN 'ALSO'

Meta-communicative connector

Wordclass 1			Wordclass 2	
adverbial connector	specification marker	correction marker	discourse marker	filler

syntactically not integrated
Function: gain time during speech production

es wird nicht **also** teuer (DEbi70FT_iwD)
‚it will not be *also* expensive'

CATEGORISATION OF GERMAN 'ALSO'

Pragmatic Markers

Meta-communicative connector

Wordclass 1

Wordclass 2

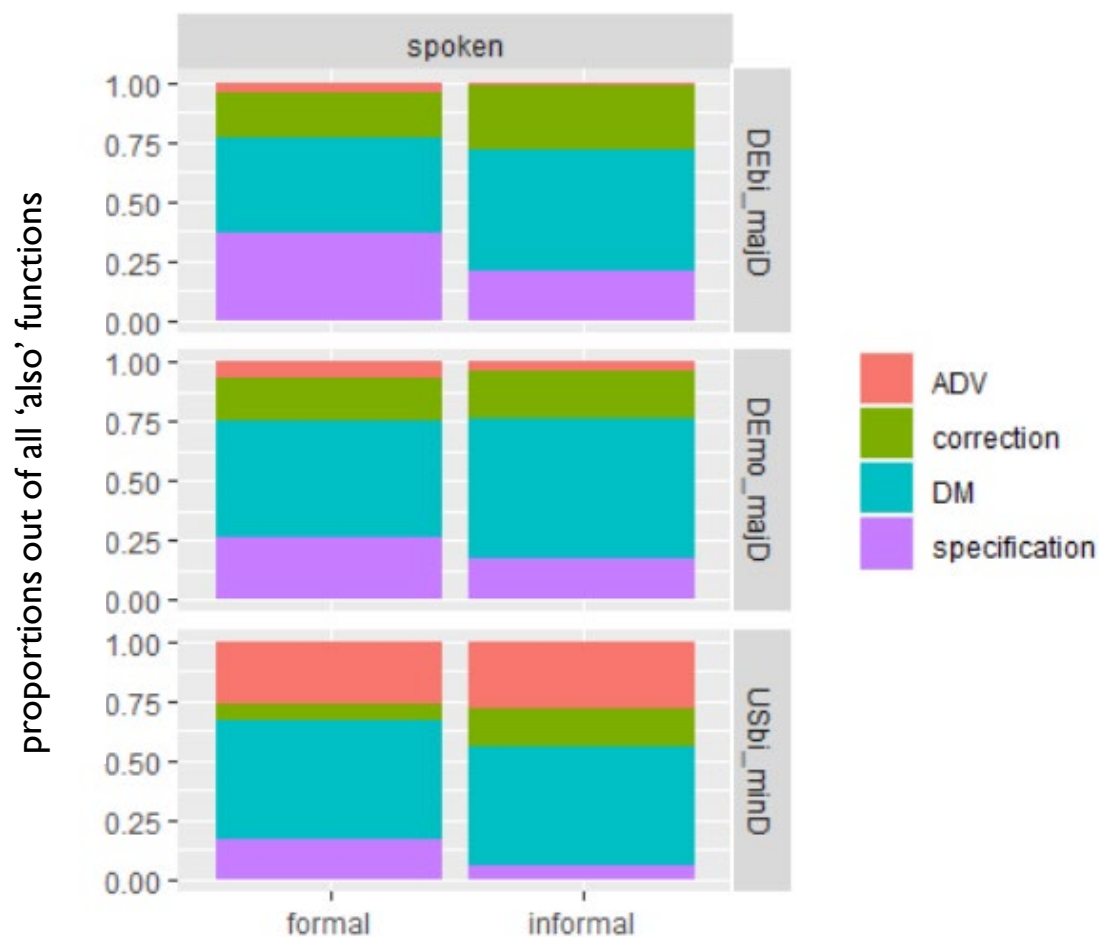| adverbial connector | specification marker | correction marker | discourse marker | filler |

→ Semantic bleaching + syntactic disintegration →

CRITERIA FOR DISCOURSE MARKERS (DM)

- no referential content
- do not contribute to the propositional meaning and truth value of an utterance
- operate on the level of discourse, oriented towards discourse contents or discourse participants
- not fully syntactically integrated
- polyfunctional
- subcategory of pragmatic markers

RUEG, Wiese et al. 2019, cf. also Blakemore 2004, Blühdorn et al. 2017, Diewald 2006, Fraser 2006

RESULTS

proportions of functions of 'also' in a specific group and register

total number of 'also': n=571

spoken mode: n=547
written mode: n=32

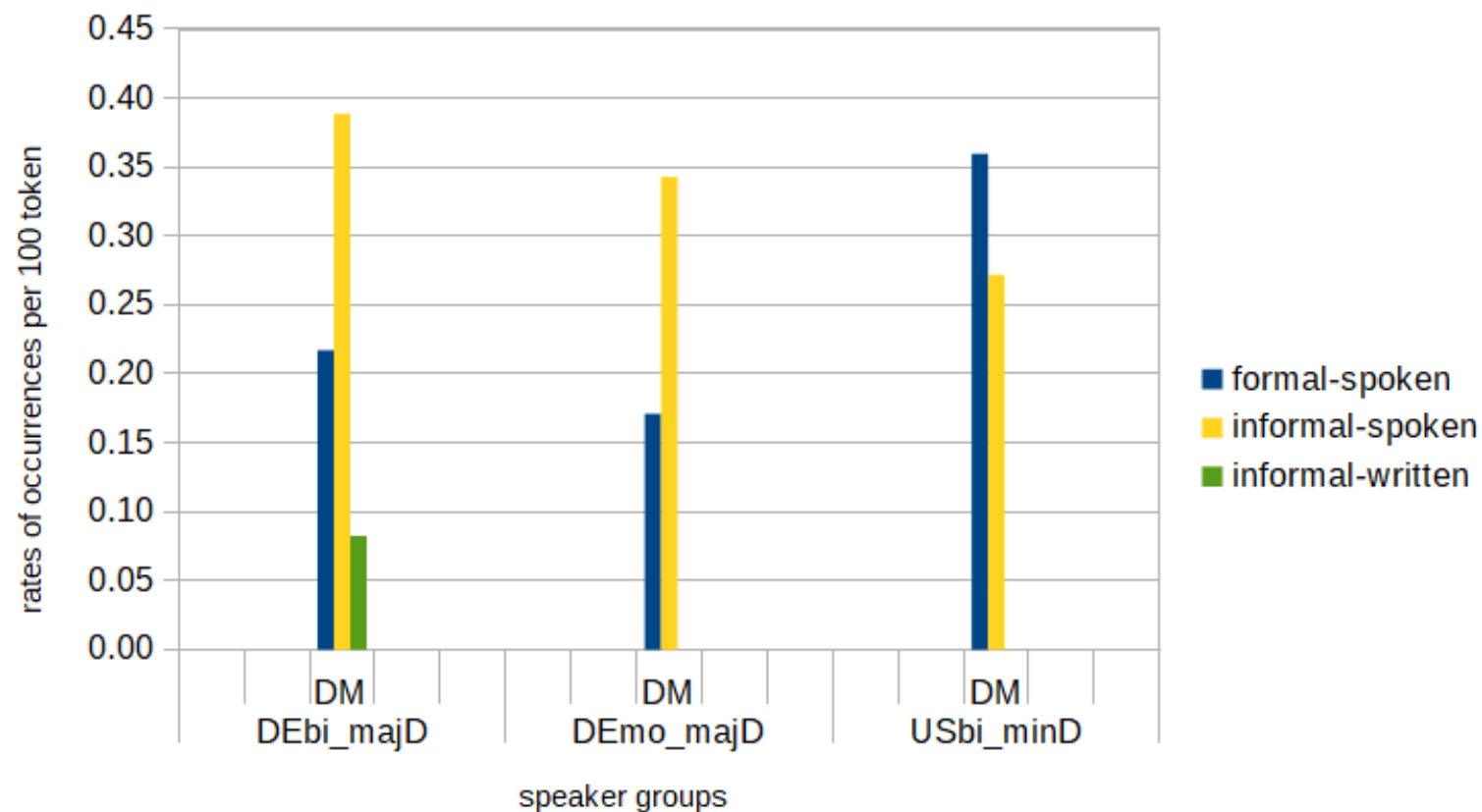| category	N*
ADV	38
specification	142
correction	115
DM	283
filler	38

*absolute numbers

DM – RELATIVE FREQUENCIES PER SUBCORPUS

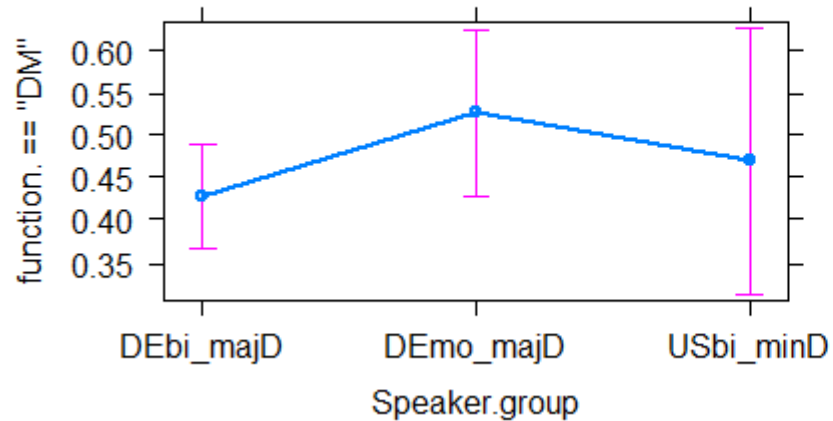USbi_minD:
formal-spoken >/= informal-spoken

DEbi_majD + DEmo_majD:
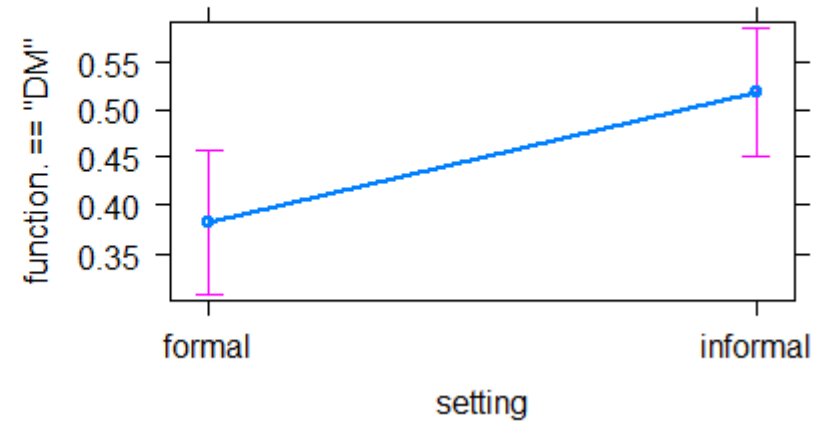informal-spoken > formal-spoken

DEbi_majD: informal-written

DM – GENERALISED MIXED MODEL

effect plot: speaker-group
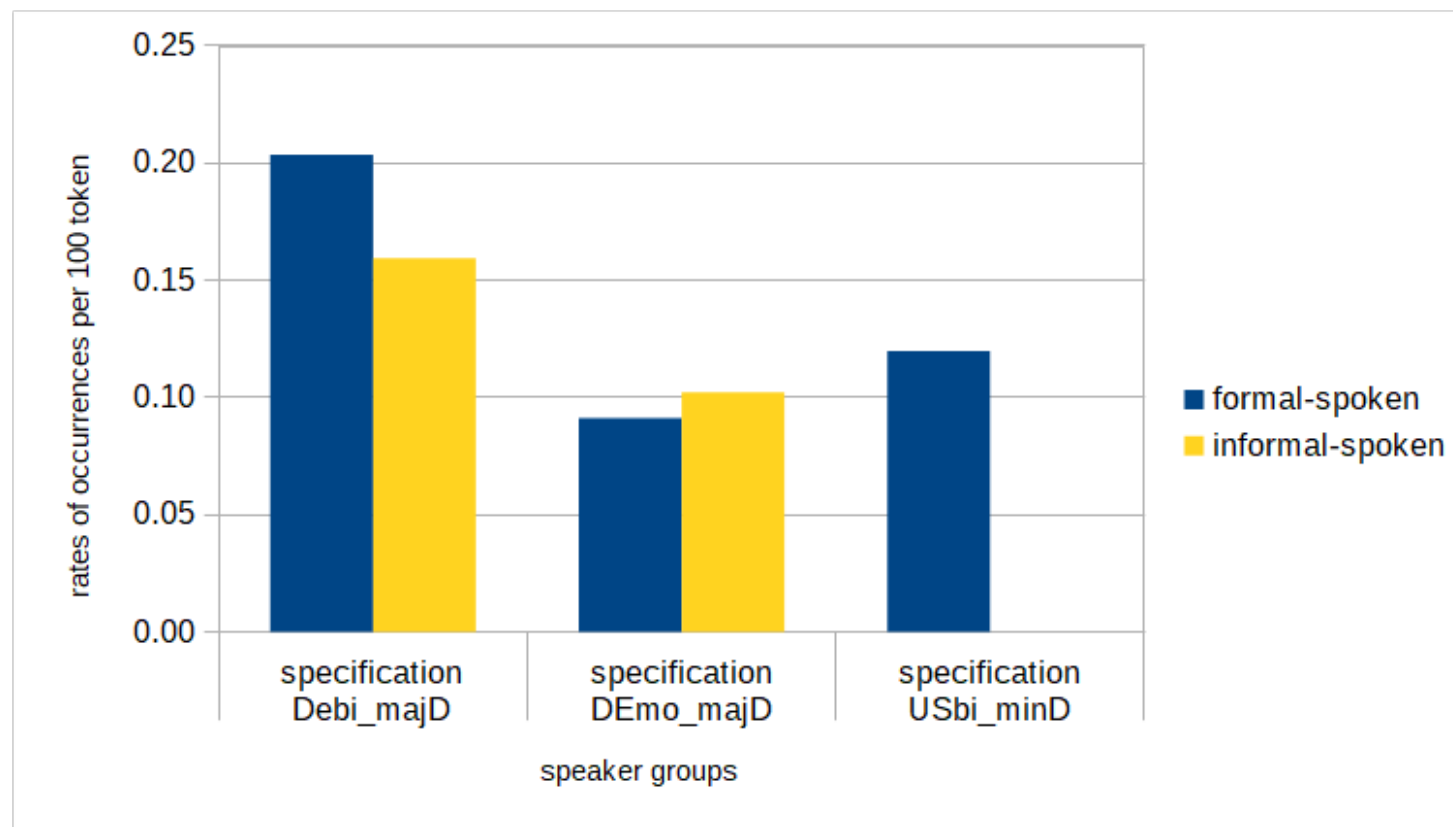
effect plot: setting

Fixed effects:

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(>|z|)	
(Intercept)	-0.6093	0.1761	-3.460	0.00054	***
Speaker.groupDEmo_majD	0.3973	0.2422	1.640	0.10097	
Speaker.groupUSbi_minD	0.1651	0.3489	0.473	0.63618	
settinginformal	0.5466	0.2113	2.587	0.00968	**
modewritten	0.3883	0.4361	0.890	0.37320	

SPECIFICATION - RELATIVE FREQUENCIES PER SUBCORPUS

DEbi_majD + DEmo_majD:
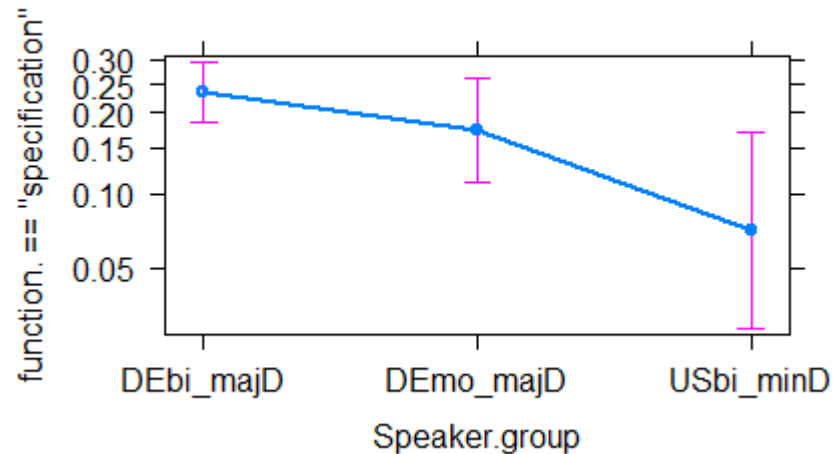formal-spoken and informal-spoken

DEbi_majD:
most frequent use
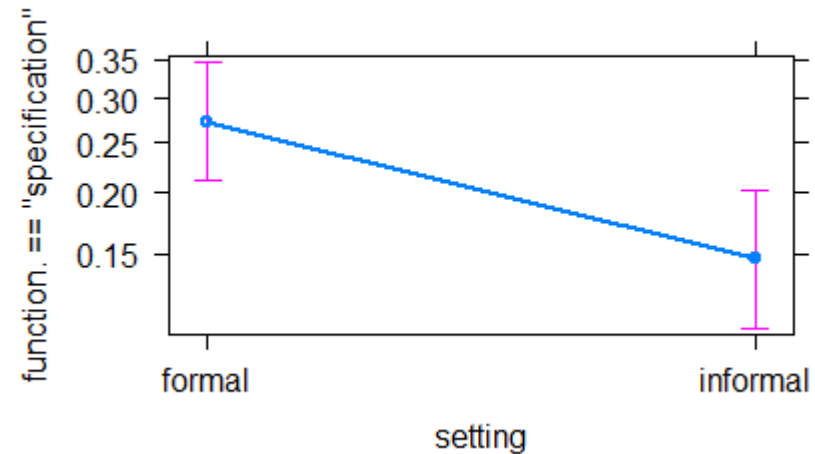
USbi_minD:
only formal-spoken

SPECIFICATION - GENERALISED MIXED MODEL

effect plot: speaker-group

effect plot: setting

Fixed effects:

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(>|z|)	
(Intercept)	-0.7428	0.1836	-4.045	5.23e-05	***
Speaker.groupDEmo_majD	-0.3737	0.2773	-1.348	0.177779	
Speaker.groupUSbi_minD	-1.3713	0.5009	-2.737	0.006193	**
settinginformal	-0.7864	0.2357	-3.337	0.000847	***
modewritten	-0.2673	0.5531	-0.483	0.628847	

ADV - RELATIVE FREQUENCIES PER SUBCORPUS

DEbi_majD + DEmo_majD:
almost no ADV use

USbi_minD:
more ADV overall; formal-written
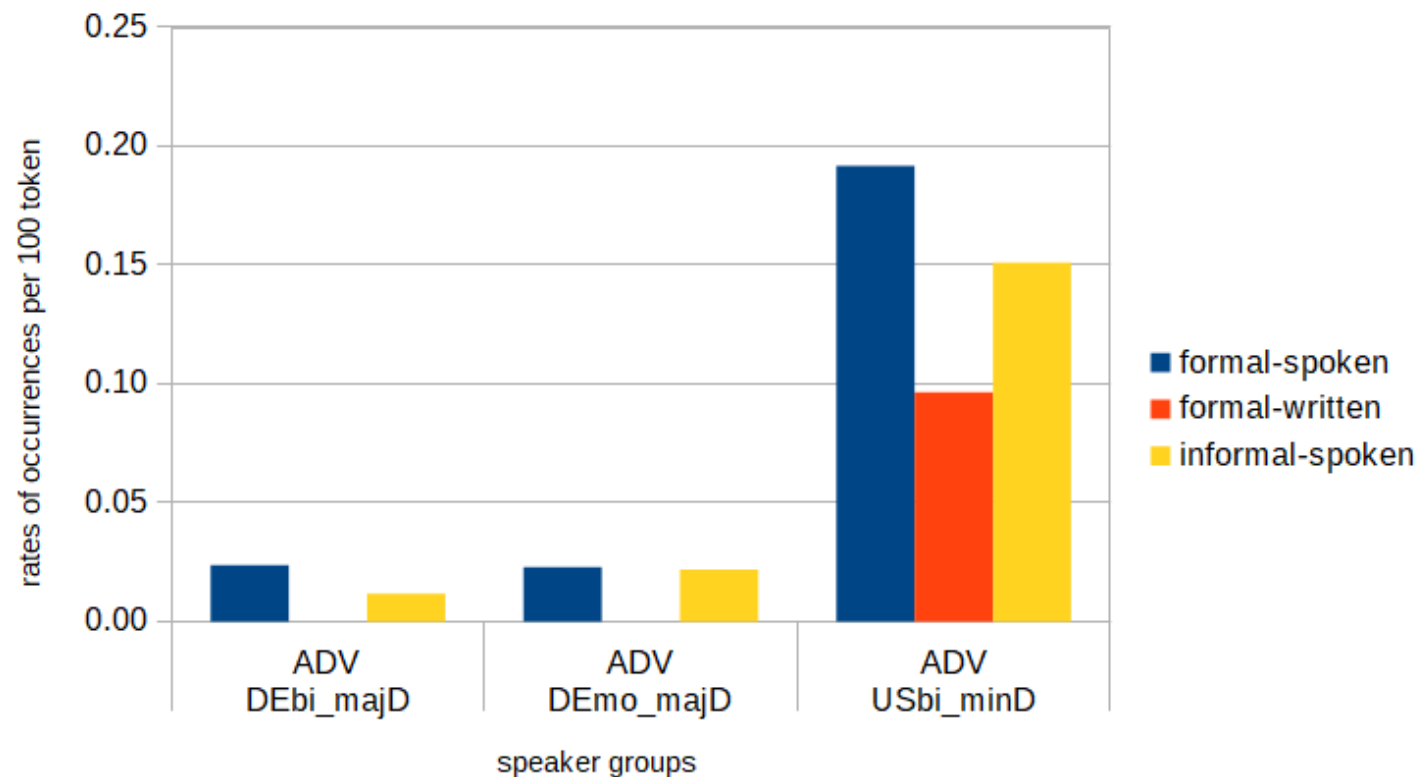
MAIN FINDINGS

What are the loci for variation in the use of different synchronic functions?

RQ1 Does register have an influence on variation in the use of 'also'?
- primarily in spoken mode
- informal situations associated with significantly stronger DM use
- formal situations associated with significantly stronger use as specification marker

RQ II Does the language background (bi- vs. monolingual, minority vs. majority language) influence distributions across registers?
- influence of majority vs. minority context

DISCUSSION

association of functions and registers

- 'also' as DM more frequent in informal setting

→ bilinguals with German as majority language extend the use to informal-written

- 'also' as specification marker more frequent in formal settings

HS differ from bi- and monolinguals

- **different discursive strategies:**

    → use DMs in the formal-spoken register to deal with the cognitive load the formal situation might trigger

    → mark specification differently (?)

- **correlation between pragmaticalisation process / synchronic polyfunctionality and majority vs. minority status of a language**

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