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The Role of Finiteness in Narratives

The article discusses the role of finiteness in sentence structure and its implications for their interpretation of narratives. Finite, infinite, and semi-finite sentence structures are analysed with regard to their ability to speak 'about' something. Only finite constructions allow this. The inflectional morphological markers of finiteness and their interpretation are examined in detail. For German, the inflectional morphemes -t for tense and -e for mood are identified. Their properties are summarised as abstract features for tense [±t] and mood [±e]. These two features constitute the central properties of the grammatical category 'finiteness': they allow the separation of the speech situation and the event situation to be expressed. If finiteness is fronted (via verb movement), it anchors the expressed proposition in a possible world at some time without dependence on matrix structures. These properties are used to derive central aspects of narratives with the help of regular grammatical devices. In a first step, these are applied to narratives in the preterite, so that – analogous to indirect speech – a narrator can be established for fictional narratives. For the morphologically unmarked present tense, an interpretation of the grammatical properties is proposed with reference to the available contexts, systematically relating central aspects of present tense narratives to the properties of finiteness.

1. Introduction[*]

The German grammar system has the category 'finiteness,' which can occur together with a verb in a sentence. This category is made up of various subcategories: 'person,' 'number,' 'tense,' and 'mood,' which control the interpretation of sentences in specific ways (see, e.g., Eisenberg 2013 [1998]a, 178). Tense and mood are related to each other in such a way that the forms of the Konjunktiv 1 are formed with the present tense forms and the forms of the Konjunktiv 2 with the past forms, meaning that the categories of 'tense' and 'mood' are closely interwoven. In contrast to Latin, the tense category only has two inflectional forms in German: *present tense* and *past tense* (preterite). All other tense forms are built periphrastically, i.e., with the help of other infinite verbs.

The specific assignment of present vs. past tense has been used in narrative theory to mark the difference between narrative and report (Weinrich 1964). Hamburger (1977 [1957], 61) coined the term *epic preterite* for narratives in order to recognise that the past tense creates a temporal distance in reports, but not in fictional texts: "The change in meaning, however, consists in the fact that the preterite loses its grammatical function of denoting the past" (61).

The aim of this article is to specify the grammatical category 'finiteness' more precisely, to determine its parts of meaning and thus to indicate various properties observed in narratives written in the past and present tense with the help of regular grammatical means and their interpretation.

The contribution is structured as follows. In the next section, I discuss some notions that are important for the connection between finiteness, fiction, and narrative. Following this, I discuss in section 3.1, "Infiniteness and Semi-Finiteness," properties of root infinitives in German in order to show that infinite sentences lack a fundamental property that is constitutive for narratives: they do not contain a topic component that could be spoken about, which means that the 'spoken about'-relation cannot be expressed (see Platzack / Rosengren 1998, 2017; Reis 2003). Root infinitives thus represent the indirect evidence to show that finiteness is a necessarily occurring category without which it is not possible to talk about anything.

Moving on, I examine the question of which subcategories of finiteness are obligatory for narration. It turns out that the categories 'person' and 'number' are not responsible for the fact that events can be reported or narrated, although there exists the grammatical relation of person-number congruence between the grammatical subject and the finite verb. Although this grammatical relation could be a candidate which is responsible for the 'spoken about'-relation, a closer look at imperative clauses reveals that these categories cannot express this relation, either. As a consequence, the remaining categories for the expression of the 'spoken about'-relation are 'tense' and 'mood.'

This insight lays the foundation for section 3.2.1, "Finite Forms," which undertakes a linguistic analysis of these two categories and compositionally combines their entanglement and their respective parts of meaning. The supposed categories of 'tense' and 'mood' will be characterised in their joint occurrence, but each with its own characteristics. This is the first step in anchoring the propositional content of a sentence in the real or a fictional possible world.

For the *anchoring* of a proposition, the context of speech on the one hand and the situation expressed by the proposition on the other play a central role. As shown in the previous section, infinite and semi-finite sentences can only be interpreted in such a way that a participant of the speech situation (speaker or hearer) must be identical to the referent of the external argument of the verb, which in turn describes the event situation. For this reason, the expressed event situations do not have a complete and autonomous status. They are always (personally) coupled with the speech context. Only when finiteness is added can the event situation be freely positioned in time and in the space of possible worlds/situations.

Consequently, section 3.2.2, "The Interpretation of Tense and Mood," turns to the decoupling of the *context of speech* and the *situation of event*. The grammatical category 'finiteness' allows to express the separation of these components grammatically. In finite constructions, the connection between the context of speech and the situation of event is only made by tense and mood. This makes it possible to express event structures in which all participants of the event can be freely chosen and the event itself can be positioned anywhere in time and in the space of possible worlds/situations.

On the basis of this explication, section 4.1, "Preterite Tense," turns to the tense *preterite* and its interpretation as "epic preterite" in the sense of Hamburger (1957/19773) and derives its epic function from the regular use of the properties of the finite forms. I then discuss a further decoupling process that has already been proposed by Ann Banfield (1982) and Edit Doron (1991), and further elucidated by Philippe Schlenker (2004). This type of decoupling refers to the context of speech or writing, which should be broken down into two contexts for more precise analysis: the *context of thought (CT)* and the *context of utterance (CU)*.[1] As Schlenker (2004: 279–281) explains, these two contexts coincide in everyday speech, but they can occur separately in narratives. In free indirect discourse (FID), for example, two contexts are required: CU, the context of the narrator, and CT, the context of the character.[2]

An essential characteristic of tense and mood lies in their internal structure. Both categories contain deictic components that can only be specified as a function of the time of speech and the situation of speech. Since deictic (or indexical) expressions can only be interpreted in relation to a context (see Peirce 1897, 107–109), section 4.2, "Contexts," turns to the notion of *context* and gives an explication of this concept as it is required for the interpretation of linguistic expressions. Different types of contexts are introduced, as already laid out in the work of Banfield (1982).

Finally, various functions of narratives in the present tense, identified by Carolin Gebauer (2021), are derived from the grammatical properties of finiteness in section 4.3 "Present Tense."

2. Finiteness, Fictionality and Narratives: Linguistic Perspectives

In the Indo-European tradition, narratives require finite verbs to express temporal and causal relationships. While this holds for both non-fictional and fictional narratives, the latter enjoy a considerable degree of flexibility, expanding grammatical possibilities in creative ways. The most obvious example is free indirect discourse (Banfield 1982). Hamburger's (1977 [1957]) famous example, "Morgen war Weihnachten," appears as a contradiction in the temporal interpretation. Reconstructing *"erlebte Rede"* or free indirect discourse (FID) with two orientation centres in the sense of Karl Bühler (1934), however, Gisa Rauh (1985) demonstrates how the past tense and the future-oriented adverb can appear in the same sentence without contradiction: The sentence "Morgen war Weihnachten" expresses the narrator's perspective by means of tense, and the character's perspective through the use of adverbs. This view can also be found with slight modifications and differentiations in the concepts of Edit Doron (1991), Regine Eckardt (2015), Monika Fludernik (1993), and Philippe Schlenker (2004). Rauh thus shows that the function of the preterite to indicate the past is

not lost in free indirect speech, but can be combined with future adverbs without contradiction by using regular grammatical means.

Ursula Bredel and Cäcilia Töpler (2007) interpret the *-t* occurring in the verbal weak inflection in German in contrast to its non-occurrence on the basis of the distinction between the *demonstratio ad oculos* vs. the *deixis on the phantasm* (Bühler 1934; see also Rauh 1985). Accordingly, the absence of *-t* ([−t] marker) indicates that the expressed proposition is to be made available to the perceptual system, while the occurrence of *-t* ([+t] marker) assigns the proposition to the epistemic system. "With the use of the present tense," Bredel and Töpler argue, "the perceptual space of the speaker/listener is utilised as a reference space; the events are potentially directly deictically accessible for speaker and listener; the pointing words experience their meaning fulfilment ad oculos" (2007, 839). For Elvira Topalović and Benjamin Uhl (2014), the different tempora activate different states of consciousness, each of which produces specific forms of a narrative.

Linguistic discussions of temporality in narrative have also taken into account the specific qualities of narrative fiction. Sebastian Bücking (2022) restricts the view of the atemporality of the epic preterite and, on the basis of the *Attitude Description Theory* introduced by Emar Maier (2017), proposes that an existential binding can be established between the narrative instance and the narrated situation, so that a narrative instance can be imagined or not. According to Maier's conception, this process takes place in the imagination component of human cognition. Like Maier, Bücking refers to the fictionality theory of Kendall L. Walton (1990). Accordingly, he understands the past tense as an instruction to imagine the expressed event from a distanced perspective.

Walton himself assumes that a cognitive component of imagination exists. According to his conception, *fictionality* and *imagination* are in a parallel relationship to *knowledge* (truth) and *belief* (faith):

> Fictionality has turned out to be analogous to truth in some ways; the relation between fictionality and imagining parallels that between truth and belief. Imagining aims at the fictional as belief aims at the true. What is true is to be believed; what is fictional is to be imagined. (41)

Walton's theory refers to various media that give rise to imagination and fiction. In relation to linguistic (propositional) content, he states that, "[i]n general, a proposition is fictional if there is a prescription to the effect that it is to be imagined. And which world a proposition is fictional in is a matter of who is subject to the prescription, what role it applies to" (61).

In fact, every act of linguistic (propositional) understanding requires that the situation a sentence expresses must be imagined in some way, so that this criterion for linguistic expressions has, in my view, hardly any selectivity. A sentence like (1) is certainly not fictional in an ordinary sense:

(1)   There sits a blackbird on the roof.

The semantic representation of the sentence is translated into a visual representation (see Jackendoff [1987] with reference to Marr's [1982] theory of visual perception) that can be understood as an imagination of the linguistic input.

Walton's approach, it seems to me, is not sufficiently differentiated to adequately describe such phenomena. I do not want to enter into the philosophical debate on the phenomenon of *fictionality* here,[3] but want to address shortly the distinction between texts that are fictional and those that are factual, according to Matías Martínez and Michael Scheffel (2019 [1999], 19f.). The main distinguishing criterion is the responsibility for the truth of the expressed (declarative) sentences, which lies with the author in the case of factual texts and with a narrator in the case of fictional texts. Fictional texts can therefore be understood analogously to indirect speech, in which the words or thoughts of an individual are reproduced by another individual, which Martínez and Scheffel (2019 [1999], 19) refer to as a "second imaginary communication situation." I will discuss this central characteristic of fictional texts in section 3.2, "Finite Structures," in more detail and relate it to the grammatical properties of the finiteness markers.

The *truth of a proposition p* can be determined in a theory of possible worlds/situations in such a way that the situation which is spoken about occurs in the denotation of p. In this framework, factual propositions can be characterised as true with respect to the actual world and fictional sentences hold true with respect to a fictional world, as developed by David K. Lewis (1978) on the basis of his theory of counterfactual conditionals. In contrast to Tobias Klauk (2014), I consider a theory of possible worlds together with the adaptation of situation semantics (Barwise / Perry 1981) by Angelika Kratzer (2017) as a very fruitful branch of research. Under this conception, a situation is a minimal truth domain for a proposition. A possible world is a maximal situation consisting of partial situations, which can contain further partial situations. This creates an algebraic structure of situations (Bach 1986). A world can therefore be understood as a set of situations made up of partial situations. This concept not only allows us to adequately grasp the semantics of natural language sentences, but also seems suitable for making various aspects of longer texts – especially narratives – explicable in that the sequences of situations represented by a narrative are represented by the sequence of sentences it contains.

In order to assess the truth claims made by factual or fictional narratives, the category 'finiteness' is obligatory. With infinite and semi-finite (main) clauses, it is not possible to speak *about* (fictional) objects, properties, or situations. These clauses can only express the *spoken to* and *spoken from* relations,[4] which are not sufficient for the expression of truth. In terms of information structure, the *spoken about* relation describes the relationship between a *topic* and a *comment*. In classical school grammar, this distinction corresponds to the subject of the sentence and the statement about it, which is often identified with the subject-predicate structure. However, thetic (as opposed to categorical) sentences are organised differently in terms of information structure, in that they have (supposedly) an empty topical component:

(2)   a. The phone is ringing.

        b. The police arrived.

The sentences in (2) do not make a statement about the respective grammatical subjects *the phone* or *the police*, but characterise the entire situation.[5] In this context, Wolfgang Klein (1994, 2006, 2008) proposes that finiteness introduces a topic component that is spoken about in a sentence.[6]According to Klein, in addition to temporal and modal properties, finiteness also includes the component of *assertion*, which specifies that the proposition holds for the so-called *topic time (TT)*. TT, an elementary parameter of Klein's (1994) theory of *Time in Language*, is a problematic notion. I return to the assumptions of this approach in more detail in section 3.2.2, "The Interpretation of Tense and Mood." In any case, a narrative or reporting sentence requires a finite verb so that something (a person, thing, situation, time, place, ...) can be spoken about. Without the category 'finiteness,' this is not possible, as can easily be shown with infinite (root infinitives) and semi-finite (imperatives) sentences.[7] Section 3, "Infinite, Semi-Finite and Finite Clauses" discusses these aspects in more detail, using the relevant examples.

Stories can be *narrated* in many different ways, from different perspectives, looking backwards or forwards, formally or colloquially, and so on. If we consider the lexis and the possible syntactic structures of the sentences that appear in a narrative, the essentially infinite number of possible sentences results in an unlimited range of possible narratives or reportive texts (cf. Martínez / Scheffel 2019 [1999], 30–31). David Herman (2009) describes narratives as follows:

> I characterise narrative as (i) a mode of representation that is situated in – must be interpreted in light of – a specific discourse context or occasion for telling. This mode of representation (ii) focuses on a structured time-course of particularized events. In addition, the events represented are (iii) such that they introduce some sort of disruption or disequilibrium into a storyworld, whether that world is presented as actual or fictional, realistic or fantastic, remembered or dreamed, etc. The representation also (iv) conveys what it is like to live through this story-world-in-flux, highlighting the pressure of events on real or imagined consciousnesses undergoing the disruptive experience at issue. (9)

However, this wealth of variants is also based on specific invariants that must be fulfilled in every narrative. From a grammatical perspective, whose central object of investigation is the category *sentence*, these invariants concern the inflectional, syntactic, and semantic properties of sentences, including the general grammatical conditions that determine the well-formedness of (simple and complex) possible expressions. It seems that the information provided by finiteness features can be constantly repeated in the same way without any noticeable redundancy effects. One might even say that this category cannot be omitted at all, despite redundancy, without rendering narration incomprehensible or even impossible. An example of the abundance of finite verbs, which illustrates this argument, is the beginning of Franz Kafka's narrative "Das Schloss":

> Es <u>war</u> spätabends, als K. <u>ankam</u>. Das Dorf <u>lag</u> in tiefem Schnee. Vom Schloßberg <u>war</u> nichts zu sehen, Nebel und Finsternis <u>umgaben</u> ihn, auch nicht der schwächste Lichtschein <u>deutete</u> das große Schloß <u>an</u>. Lange <u>stand</u> K. auf der Holzbrücke, die von der Landstraße zum Dorf <u>führte</u>, und <u>blickte</u> in die scheinbare Leere empor.

> Dann <u>ging</u> er, ein Nachtlager suchen; im Wirtshaus <u>war</u> man noch wach, der Wirt <u>hatte</u> zwar kein Zimmer zu vermieten, aber er <u>wollte</u>, von dem späten Gast äußerst überrascht und verwirrt, K. in der Wirtsstube auf einem Strohsack schlafen lassen. K. <u>war</u> damit einverstanden. Einige Bauern <u>waren</u> noch beim Bier, aber er <u>wollte</u> sich mit niemandem unterhalten, <u>holte</u> selbst den Strohsack vom Dachboden und <u>legte</u> sich in der Nähe des Ofens <u>hin</u>. Warm <u>war</u> es, die Bauern <u>waren</u> still, ein wenig prüfte er sie noch mit den müden Augen, dann <u>schlief</u> er ein. (Kafka1968, 7)[8]

In the twenty-two (main and subordinate) sentences of this section of text, the information associated with finiteness appears twenty-two times in the same way, and yet this high degree of redundancy doesn't feel disruptive in any way. It probably does not even reach the conscious perception of most readers.[9] In nearly all cases, the information is given with the following feature complex:

(3)

$$
\text{Finiteness:} \quad
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{Agr:} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{Pers: 3.} \\ \text{Num: \{sg, pl\}} \end{bmatrix} \\
\text{Tense:} & [\text{+pret}] \\
\text{Mood:} & [\text{−conj}]
\end{bmatrix}
$$

Agr(eement) refers to the grammatical relation of congruence in person and number that must exist between the finite verb and the subject in German sentences. In the following, I use the term *finiteness* as defined in (3), i.e., as a feature complex consisting of Agr, Tense, and Mood with the respective possible values. Grammatical and semantic properties of sentences such as V1, V2, and verb final position, subject and expletive licensing can be derived as consequences of these markings and their interpretation (see, e.g., Klein 2006; Lohnstein 2019, 2020).

In the above passage, the third person is used in all cases. In cases where *the landlord* or *K.* form the grammatical subject, the number is *singular*. If the grammatical subject is the phrase "the peasants," the number feature has the value *plural*. The tense is consistently *preterite [+pret]* and the mood is *indicative [−conj]*. It is one of the standard linguistic analyses and this example demonstrates that finiteness is a sentence grammatical category whose occurrence is regulated independently of the textual environment.[10]

Without the category of finiteness, the syntactic structures of the sentences that appear in the narrative are not only less well-formed, but fail to narrate anything at all. The fact that finiteness occurs largely unnoticed seems to be due to its nature as a functional category of sentence grammar. In natural languages, on the one hand, there is no "text operator," which could express the relevant information once for a longer text passage consisting of several sentences. On the other hand, although the formal-structural properties of the sentence structure appear to be necessary for the comprehension process, they generally do not reach the level of central cognitive processes (Fodor 1983, Robbins 2017).[11]

If we look at the tenses in German, two characteristics can be observed. Firstly, only the *present* and *past tense* forms are covered by inflectional mor-

phology. All other so-called tense forms, which have found their way into German grammar due to the orientation towards Latin, are formed periphrastically.[12] Secondly, the forms of the verbal mood in German are directly dependent on the tense forms (see Fabricius-Hansen 1999, Fabricius-Hansen et al. 2018). The Konjunktiv 1 is formed from the present tense forms, the Konjunktiv 2 from the preterite forms. While the Konjunktiv – as the term *verbal mood* itself expresses – introduces a modal component of meaning, which modern semantics research attempts to explicate with the help of the concept of possible worlds or situations,[13] the tenses – according to widespread opinion – express temporal relations that can exist between the speaking time and the expressed event time in relation to a reference time.[14] If the grammatical categories of tense and mood are intertwined in the way shown in (4), the question naturally arises as to how these two concepts relate to each other. I will come back to this point in section 3.2.2, "The Interpretation of Tense and Mood."

The examples in (4) show that these forms can also be clearly discriminated on the meaning side by speakers of German:

(4) a. Karl   hat das Buch gelesen.   (Indicative 1 [present tense])
         Charles has the book read
         "Charles has read the book."

     b. Karl   <u>hatte</u> das Buch gelesen.   (Indicative 2 [past tense])
         Charles had   the book read
         "Charles had read the book."

     c. Karl   <u>habe</u>   das Buch gelesen. (Konjunktiv 1 ([present tense])
         Charles has-Konj1 the book read
         "Charles has read the book."

     d. Karl   <u>hätte</u>   das Buch gelesen.   (Konjunktiv 2 [past tense])
         Charles has-Konj2 the book read
         "Charles would have read the book."

We don't have to account for the exact differences and their semantic interpretation here.[15] What is certain is that they exist. How these differences in meaning are to be derived, however, is a largely open question in linguistic research. Whether and to what extent modality and temporality can be related to each other and in what way the grammatical system of German characterises these relationships with specific markers, and in what way these markers lead to the temporal and modal interpretation, is the subject of ongoing linguistic debate.[16]

Conceptually existing sequences of events are structurally organised by the concept of time and can be expressed with the help of the grammatical category tense, among others. Possible situations (or possible worlds)[17] are expressed with the help of modal categories.[18] In particular, the verbal inflectional category *Konjunktiv* specifies the relationship between reality and possibility in the case of the Konjunktiv 2 as a possible value of the mood feature in the finiteness complex:

(5) a. Fritz ist   gekommen   (Indicative)
         Fritz is-Ind come
         "Fritz has come."

     b. Fritz wäre   gekommen.   (Konjuktiv 2)
         Fritz is-Konj2 come
         "Fritz would have come."

While (5.a) can be used to claim that the current world is such that Fritz came, (5.b) can be used to say that the current world is not such that Fritz came, but only that there is an alternative (possible or fictional) world in which Fritz came. The world in which (5.a) is spoken about is the same world in which Fritz came. This is different in (5.b): in the real world, people speak and in the fictional alternative world Fritz has come. The proposition *come(Fritz)* is the same in both sentences, but (5.a) is reality-related (factual), while (5.b) (counterfactual) is possibility-related (fictional). These differences do not lie in the thought (the proposition) that the sentence expresses, but in the specification of a subcategory of finiteness.

On the other hand, there is a contrast between the indicative and the Konjunktiv 1, which is subject to completely different conditions than the contrast with the (counterfactual) Konjunktiv 2 in (6):

(6) a. Fritz ist gekommen   (Indicative)
         Fritz is come
         "Fritz has come"

     b. Fritz sei   gekommen   (Konjunktiv 1)
         Fritz is-Konj1 come
         "Fritz has come"

In (6.b), the expressed fact is not analysed in a different world, but the speech situation itself is shifted to a different context, in which the parameters are set for another speaker, addressee, time of speech, etc. How these contrasts are to be derived under an assignment of Konjunktiv 1 to present tense on the one hand and Konjunktiv 2 to past tense on the other under the existing assumptions about temporal and modal interpretation is an interesting but largely unanswered question. But see again section 3.2.2, "The Interpretation of Tense and Mood," for a proposal for an answer.

The classical interpretation of the present tense as a reference to "now" is also problematic if one includes historic, future, or generic interpretations:

(7) a. Im Jahr 1492 entdeckt Columbus Amerika.   (historic)
         In year 1492 discovers Columbus America.
         "In 1492 Columbus discovers America."

     b. Nächste Woche fährt   Karl   in Urlaub.   (future)
         Next   week   drives Charles in holidays.
         "Karl is going on holiday next week."

c. Die Winkelsumme im Dreieck   beträgt   180 Grad.   (generic)
   The angle-sum   in the triangle   amounts to 180 degrees.
   "The sum of the angles in the triangle is 180 degrees."

This has led to the assumption that the present tense is not a tense at all, but is interpreted depending on explicitly or implicitly existing adverbials.[19] The so-called present tense thus becomes an underspecified category that is only related to the time of speech (or another reference time) via the adverbial. Present reference thus becomes a special case of a much more abstract property and corresponds – if nothing else suggests itself – to a default interpretation with regard to the standard orientation system of the speaker's I-here-now-origo (Bühler 1934).

The list of problematic cases could be continued. However, I do not want to pursue this further here, but rather take the variants of interpretation in (5), (6) and (7) as an opportunity to motivate a research perspective that consistently detaches itself from the concepts of traditional grammar. To this end, tense and mood are consistently related to the markers that the grammatical system provides overtly in order to derive the interpretative effects from their properties and their interaction in a regular manner. The next section uses the difference between infinite (and semi-finite) on the one hand and finite constructions on the other to discuss which basic possibilities of expression become available with the category of finiteness.

3. Infinite, Semi-Finite, and Finite Clauses

From the set of possible types of sentences, declaratives (not interrogatives, imperatives, optatives, or exclamatives) are the vast majority of sentences in narratives. Their central characteristic with regard to narration or report is the basic property of being potentially true or false. Since narrative or reporting sentences deal with characters, situations, and events in a (fictional) world, these objects are *talked about* and certain properties are assigned to them. If these properties apply to the objects in a (fictional) world, the declarative sentence is true, otherwise it is false. Through the assertion (with a declarative sentence), a verbal assignment of properties to a situation, its participants or its environmental conditions takes place. The term *truth* can only be meaningfully applied to such a declarative sentence. However, the declarative sentence in turn requires the category *'finiteness.'* The following section shows that grammatically well-formed infinite or semi-finite sentences can neither narrate nor report.

3.1 Infiniteness and Semi-Finiteness

German has finite and infinite verbs. The infinite verbs can be categorised into two stages (*Stufen –supinum* and *participium*), each with three types of status:

(8) Infinite morphology (Bech 1983 [1955/57]):

Stufe / Status	1. Stufe (Supinum)	2. Stufe (Partizipium)
1.	lieben	lieben -d
2.	zu lieben	zu lieben -d
3.	geliebt	geliebt

Infinite clauses occur in German as dependent and independent constructions. Three types of dependent infinite constructions can be distinguished – the control infinitive, the AcI, and the raising infinitive:

(9) a. Karl   überredet seinen Freund,
        Charles persuades his   friend
        "Charles persuades his friend"

    i. [finite dass er ins Kino   geht].
        that he in Cinema goes.
    "that he goes to the cinema."

    ii. [infinite ins Kino   zu gehen].   (control
        in   cinema to go-Inf.   infinitive)
    "to go to the cinema."

  b. Maria hört,
    Mary listens
    "Mary hears/listens to"

    i. [finite dass der Star-Tenor eine Arie singt].
        that the star tenor   an   aria   sings.
    "that the star tenor sings an aria."

    ii. [infinite den Star-Tenor eine Arie singen].   (accusativus
        the star tenor   an.   aria sing-Inf. cum infinitivo)
    "the star tenor singing an aria."

  c. i. Es scheint [finite dass der Junge ein Schläfchen hält] .
      It seems   that the boy   a   nap   takes.
      "It seems that the boy is taking a nap."

    ii. Der Junge scheint [infinite ein Schläfchen zu halten]. (raising
      The boy   seems   a   nap   to take-Inf infinitive)
    "The boy seems to be taking a nap."

(9.a) with the continuation in (9.a–ii) represents a so-called control infinitive, which results as a grammatical structure if the finiteness features in (9.a–i) are omitted. As a consequence, the subject of the finite embedded clause becomes inaudible in the infinite embedded clause.[20] (9.b–ii) is an AcI construction (accusativus cum infinitivo) that is created by removing the finiteness features in (9.b–i). The effect is that the subject marked with the nominative (the star tenor) in the finite clause in (9.b–i) is realised with the accusative in the infinite clause in (9.b–ii). In the raising construction in (9.c–ii), the finiteness features occurring in (9.c–i) are also removed, with the effect that the subject (*the boy*) of the dependent clause in (9.c–i) appears as a nominative subject in the finite main clause in (9.c–ii).

The infinite constructions in ii. differ from the constructions in i. in that they have no congruence or tense and mood markers, and therefore no audible nominative subjects in their original place. The inaudibility of the subjects, whose existence can be shown, though, is related to the government of the nominative case, which cannot be assigned in the absence of finiteness features.[21] However, the dependent infinite constructions in (9) are subordinated to finite main clauses, so that further central properties can only be visualised with a great deal of effort in analysis. I will not pursue this here, but rather discuss some typical properties of infinite constructions on the basis of independently occurring infinite clauses, so-called *root infinitives*.

In German, exactly five types of such root infinitives can be distinguished:[22]

(10) a. Rauchen einstellen! (1st status)
      smoking cease-Inf
      "Stop smoking!"

   b. Jetzt aber mal gearbeitet! (3rd status)
      Now but once worked.
      "Now let's get to work!"

   c. Alle Kinder ins Bett gehen! (with nominative case)
      All children in bed go-Inf.
      "All children go to bed!"

   d. Noch einmal Champagner schlürfen! (wish infinitive)
      Once again champagne sip-Inf.
      "One more sip of champagne!"

   e. Warum denn gleich in die Luft gehen? (wh-infinitive)
      Why then immediately in the air go-Inf?
      "Why go up in the air right away?"

It can be stated that only the first and third status can occur, root infinitives in the second status do not exist in German, or are constructions that at first glance resemble root infinitives in the second status, but must be analysed as elliptical structures (cf. Reis 1995, Gärtner 2014). On the functional side, there are some interesting features. For example, all sentences in (10) can only be appropriately paraphrased as a finite construction with a modal verb such as *sollen* (*shall*) or

wollen (*want*), i.e., all root infinitives are to be interpreted as modalised. This is not the case in the dependent infinitive constructions in (9).

Furthermore, a 'spoken about'-relation cannot be expressed with these constructions, and as a consequence none of these sentences is capable of a truth value. Another significant characteristic is that an actor (speaker or addressee) from the context of speech must always be an actor of the expressed event situation. This binds the expressed event to the situation of speaking, so that no freely selectable events or situations can be reported or narrated with regard to another time or possible world. The expressed situation is always linked to the speech situation via a participant (speaker or addressee) in this very situation.

Similar characteristics can also be found in semi-finite imperative clauses.[23] They are considered semi-finite forms because they are marked neither by tense nor by mood. They only show a difference in the overt marking for the number:

(11) a. Spiel-∅! (singular)
play-Imp-Sg
"Play!"

b. Spiel-t! (plural)
play-Imp-Pl
"Play!"

In addition, the choice of the pronoun for reflexive verbs in the imperative shows that they are restricted to the 2nd person singular or plural (see Fries 1992):

(12) Restriction to the 2nd person:

a. Schäm *mich / dich / *sich! (singular)
Shame *me / you / *herself
"Shame on you!"

b. Schämt *uns / euch / *sich! (plural)
Shame *us / you / *themselves
"Shame on *us / you / *themselves!"

This commitment to the 2nd person, singular or plural, leads the identification of the addressee (or a subset of the addressee set) and thus also shows a firm commitment to the context of speech: the addressee is the actor of the expressed event property (see Lohnstein 2019, 58).

Subjects are just as inaudible in imperative clauses as in root infinitives. The nominative variables in (13.a) to (13.c) are each (subsets of) addressees and not freely selectable subjects that are predicated (see Reis 1995):

(13) No subject licensing:

a. Geh Du zum Rektor!
Go-Imp-Sg you to rector
"Go to the rector!" (imperative: 2nd pers. sg-addr.)

b. Geht   Ihr zum Rektor!
Go-Imp-Pl you to   rector
"Go to the rector!"   (imperative: 2ⁿᵈ pers. pl-addr.)

c. Geh   einer zum Rektor!
Go-Imp-Sg one   to   rector
"Go to the rector!"   (imperative: 2ⁿᵈ sg. ∈ addr.)

d. *Geh   Hans / er zum Rektor!
Go-Imp-Sg Hans / he to   rector
*"Go Hans / he to the rector!"   (imperative: 3ʳᵈ pers.)

e. Einer / Hans / er geht zum Rektor.
One / Hans / he goes to   rector
"One / Hans / he goes to the rector."   (✓finite: 3ʳᵈ pers.)

The examples in (11) to (13) show that the semi-finite imperatives have a *person* and *number* specification, i.e., agr. However, they have neither *tense* nor *mood* features and thus share essential characteristics with root infinitives. In both cases, the propositional content is linked to the context of speech via the external argument. An actor in the context of speech (speaker or addressee) must always occupy the external argument position in the event situation:

(14) Infinite and semi-finite constructions:
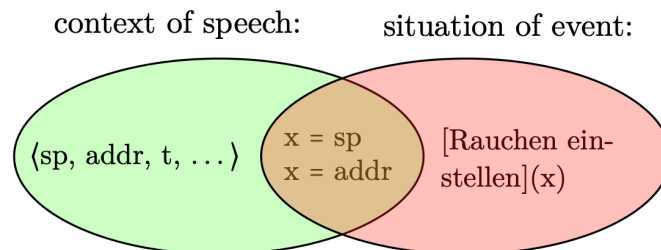
The properties discussed show that infinite and semi-finite constructions form a class whose elements – presumably due to a lack of subject realisation – cannot express the 'spoken about'-relation. They can therefore not be used as constructions that can be used for reports or narrations. The freedom of expression in infinite and semi-finite constructions is so severely restricted by the circumstances of the speech situation that neither freely selectable subjects can be predicated nor can the time and the world be freely chosen. The licensing of (overt) subjects and thus the realisation of the "spoken about" relation is therefore – as the semi-finite imperative clauses show – not related to the markings for person and number, so that only tense and mood can be responsible for this. In the following, I will focus on these two grammatical categories. It will be shown that the socalled *tense* is probably not a purely temporal marker, but must be related to the more abstract category of 'distance,'[24] which – beside others – has a temporal dimension.[25]

3.2 Finite Structures

3.2.1 Finite Forms

Finite verb inflection in German can be divided into two main classes, which have been differentiated for *strong* and *weak* verbs in the grammatical description of German since Jacob Grimm. Strongly inflected verbs are characterised by the ab- and umlaut of their stem vowel, while weakly inflected verbs use the suffix *-t*. In contemporary German, the systematic and productive inflectional form is weak, which can be seen in newly formed verbs in German. Thus, the stem formation of the verbs in (15) follows the regular pattern of weak inflection:

(15) a. googeln, googel-t-e, gegoogel-t

b. outen, oute-t-e, geoute-t

c. twittern, twitter-t-e, getwitter-t

If we look at the entire inflectional paradigm of strongly and weakly inflecting verbs, we can see some interesting characteristics:

(16) Strong and weak verb inflection (Bredel / Lohnstein 2001):

	Ind Pres (weak)	Ind Pret (str)	Konj 1 (weak)	Konj 1 (str)
1 Sg	lach–e	geb–e	lach–e	geb–e
2 Sg	lach–s–t	gib–s–t	lach–e–s–t	geb–e–s–t
3 Sg	lach–t	gib–t	lach–e	geb–e
1 Pl	lach–e–n	geb–e–n	lach–e–n	geb–e–n
2 Pl	lach–t	geb–t	lach–e–t	geb–e–t
3 Pl	lach–e–n	geb–e–n	lach–e–n	geb–e–n
	Ind Pres (weak)	Ind Pret (str)	Konj 1 (weak)	Konj 1 (str)
1 Sg	lach–t–e	gab	lach–t–e	gäb–e
2 Sg	lach–t–e–s–t	gab–s–t	lach–t–e–s–t	gäb–e–s–t
3 Sg	lach–t–e	gab	lach–t–e	gäb–e
1 Pl	lach–t–e–n	gab–e–n	lach–t–e–n	gäb–e–n
2 Pl	lach–t–e–t	gab–t	lach–t–e–t	gäb–e–t
3 Pl	lach–t–e–n	gab–e–n	lach–t–e–n	gäb–e–n

Firstly, the marker *-t* occurs systematically with all weakly inflected verbs in the preterite forms (dashed box). Secondly, the marker *-e* occurs in all conjunctive forms of both strongly and weakly inflected verbs (dotted box). And thirdly, the marking with *-t* together with the marking *-e* is only found consistently in the preterite and Konjunktiv 2 of the weakly inflecting verbs.

If one assigns properties to the markings of *-t* and *-e*, these can be characterised in a first approximation as in (17):

(17) a. *-t* marks the temporal relationships

b. *-e* marks the modal relationships

In the following, I use [±e] and [±t] as notation for abstract features that characterise the modal and temporal properties of finite verbs respectively. These properties also characterise the strongly inflecting verbs, although they are realised differently in terms of inflectional morphology. However, the properties represented by the two features [±e] and [±t] can be assigned analogously according to the table in (16).[26]

Accordingly, the following combinations of the overt features [±t] and [±e] are used in a compositional manner to capture the tense and mood interpretation of the weak and also the strong verbs (see Bredel / Lohnstein 2001):

(18) a. [−t, −e]: Indicative present tense

b. [+t, −e]: Indicative past tense

c. [−t, +e]: Konjunktiv 1

d. [+t, +e]: Konjunktiv 2

Since two features [±e] and [±t] ("et-features" for better reference) can each be assigned two possible values (+, −), four classes can be distinguished, which can be assigned exactly to the concepts of traditional grammar. In the following, only these overt markers are used to characterise the essential properties of the verbal inflectional system of German.

3.2.2 The Interpretation of Tense and Mood

Hans Reichenbach (1947) has proposed an influential analysis of tense forms which is still widely used in linguistics. He distinguishes three points in time: **S**(peech time), **E**(vent time) and R(eference time), which are arranged specifically relative to each other for the respective tenses:

(19) Reichenbach's (1947) arrangements of S, E, R:
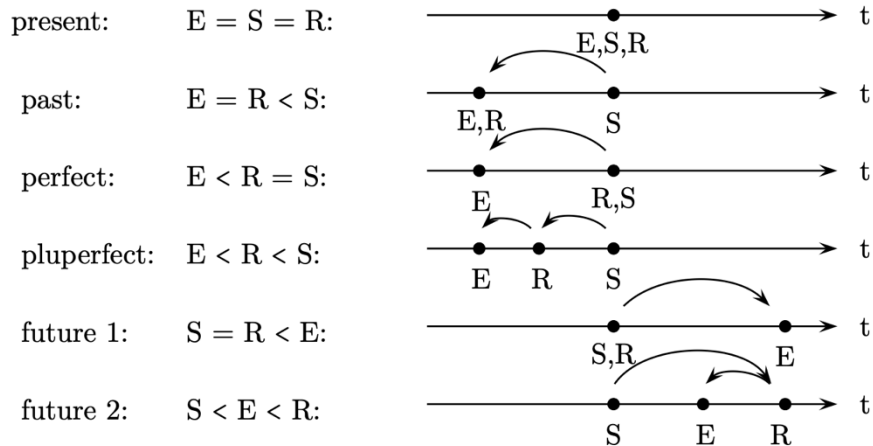
The event time E specifies the time at which the expressed event takes place. This time is calculated relative to the reference time R and speech time S. In each finite sentence, therefore, the speech time in particular must be determined in order to assign a value to the corresponding variable in the semantics of the tense. However, the information about the speaking time is not determined by grammatical properties, but by the *context of discourse* (see also Doron 1991, 60f.). For both categorisations of the mood Konjunktiv (1 and 2) it holds that it shifts a situation to another situation. The Konjunktiv 1 does not assign the expressed proposition to the speaker in the current context of speech c_1, but to a speaker in another speech context c_2. Here, c_1 and c_2 usually belong to the current world, because indirect speech indicates what another speaker (usually with a claim to truth) has said.[27] In the (counterfactual) Konjunktiv 2, on the other hand, the world of evaluation of the expressed proposition is shifted to a counterfactual world in which the extension of the proposition is to be determined. It is a world that is in a sense (minimally) different from the actual world, i.e., a possible fictional world (see Lewis 1978). As a result, we can conclude:

(20) *Tense* and *mood* are indexical signs that are interpreted depending on the discourse context in which they are used.

According to Charles Sanders Peirce (1897) indexical signs lose their sign character if the object they are supposed to identify is not present: "An index is a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose that character if there were no interpretant" (104). In relation to the two categories of tense and mood, this means that the discourse context must be given so that speaking time and speaking situation are available as values for the indexical components. Horst Lohnstein (2020) makes systematic use of these properties in order to provide a justification for the fronting of the finite verb in main clauses in the Germanic languages. The central idea is that the variables for speech time and speech situation introduced by tense and mood can be assigned values provided by the discourse context only in the

left sentence periphery. Fronting the finiteness enables this variable binding, so that the expressed proposition is anchored in the discourse context. For main clauses, the discourse context represents a higher-ordered structure in the sense of Luigi Rizzi (1997, 283). The information about the speech time and speech situation is obtained from this context. Sentences with a fronted finite verb thus become autonomous and independent of matrix structures. The triggering element for the fronting of the finite verb is the finiteness, not the verb (see Bayer 2010). When a sentence is anchored in the context of discourse, the interactional setting encompassing the speaker and the addressee, it becomes illocutionary and thus can be interpreted by the addressee as an assertion, question, or request. This discourse anchoring does not take place in dependent clauses, which typically show the verb final pattern. Accordingly, they usually also have no illocutionary potential.

Another concept of tense and finiteness was presented by Klein (1994). He also assumes three tenses, but they are characterised in a different way than in Reichenbach (1947). He distinguishes between
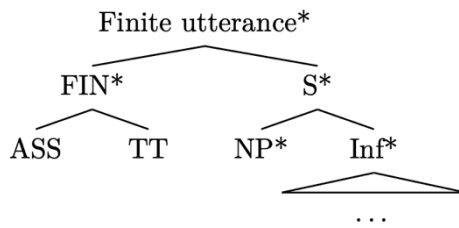
(21) a. the topic time TT (for which the expressed assertion holds),
    b. the utterance time TU ("time of utterance")
    c. the situation time TSit (in which the expressed situation exists)

In this analysis, the concept of *topic time (TT)* corresponds to the time for which the assertion of a declarative sentence holds. A distinction must be made between TU (time of utterance) as the speaking time and TSit as the time at which the expressed state exists or the event takes place. The relation between TU and TSit is not direct, but mediated by TT (Klein 1994, 138):

(22) a. The grammatical category *tense* expresses the relation between the speech time TU and the topic time TT.
    b. The grammatical category *aspect* is defined as the relation between the time at which the situation exists (*time of situation (TSit)*), and TT, so that *aspect* is reconstructed as the relation between TT and TSit.

In Klein (1998, 234) a structural pattern of the following kind is proposed: "Fin* [TT, ASS] is applied to INF*," where TT is further marked with respect to the speaking time. Klein (1994, 180) also suggests a structural configuration: "FIN* has two components: the 'assertion component', here abbreviated ASS, and TT, which constrains ASS":

(23)

```
                    Finite utterance*
                   /              \
              FIN*                  S*
             /    \               /    \
         ASS       TT         NP*        Inf*
                                        /    \
                                      . . .
```

According to these assumptions, the pragmatic category *assertion (ASS)* is a constitutive component of the category FIN*.

The assumption of an assertion that always occurs with finiteness can be criticised in various ways, some of which Klein discusses himself. The relevant data include (Klein 2006, 263):

(24) a. Non-declarative main clauses
     i.   imperative
     ii. yn-questions
     iii. norm-constituting statements, such as laws
    b. Subordinate clauses

Klein discusses the cases in (24.a) using the terms *truth* and *validity*. Both are to be clearly distinguished from the term *assertion*. The latter includes the speaker's judgement about the truthfulness of the expressed proposition. Klein concedes these properties, but does not offer a solution for non-declarative sentence types.

For the large class of sentences that are subsumed under (24.b), he proposes two possible solutions: First, that an operator *validity* positioned higher than FIN, so that FIN initially contains only tense, whereas mood and validity is introduced by the operator (Klein 2006, 264). Secondly, that no such operator exists and that FIN also has the property *validity* in addition to *tense* and *mood*. FIN can retain or lose *validity* depending on other factors.

The problem that *validity* does not mean *assertion* remains regardless which of these options is choosen, so that the solutions outlined tend to obscure the core problem.

In Klein (2009, 338) the connection between finiteness and assertion is no longer characterised so strictly, as becomes clear in (25.b) in particular:

(25) a. Finiteness is not just an issue of verb inflection; it is deeply rooted in the way in which utterances are structured. We must distinguish between the "finiteness" and the way in which it is encoded in a particular language, e.g., by verb inflection.
    b. Finiteness is connected to the "illocutionary status" of the sentence and the "topic status" of constituents.

Now, finiteness is only *connected* with the illocutionary status of the sentence. Klein does not specify the type of connection any further.

If we furthermore look at declarative V1 sentences (cf. Önnerfors 1997, Reis 2000, Beutler 2018), we can see that although they express a certain truth validity, an assertion does not occur. The following examples from Önnerfors (1997, 4, 99) illustrate this fact:
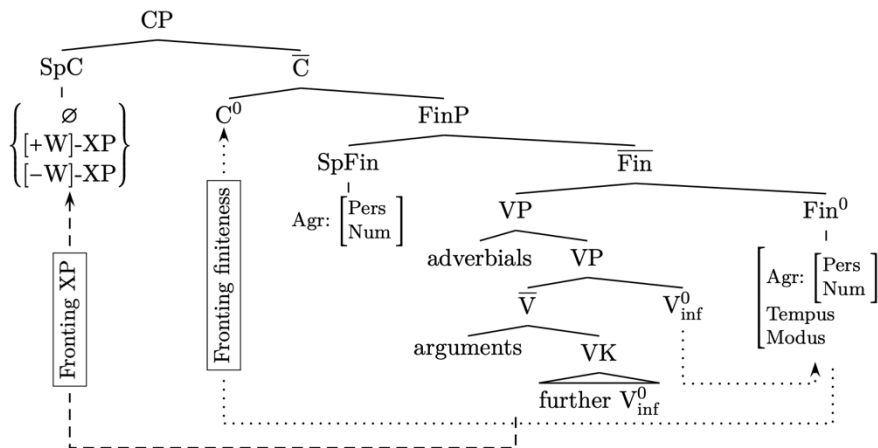
(26) a. Kommt 'n Skelett   in die Bar, bestellt 'n Bier und 'n Schwamm.
Comes   a skeleton in the bar orders   a beer and a sponge.
"A skeleton comes into the bar and orders a beer and a sponge."

b. (Hans hat zugesagt.) Bleibt   abzuwarten, ob   er kommt.
(Jack has said yes.)   Remains to await   whether he comes.
"(Hans has said yes.) It remains to be seen whether he will come."

c. Soll er doch zum Teufel geh'n!
Shall he Part to   devil   go!
"Let him go to hell!"

d. (Fritz wird kommen.) Hat er doch noch seinen Koffer   hier.
(Fritz will come.)   Has he Part still   his   suitcase here.
"(Fritz will come.) He still has his suitcase here."

For the class of non-declarative V1 sentences as in (26), it is true that they express the truth, but they do not assert it (see Reis 2000, 224). This is shown, among other things, by the fact that they are not compatible with verum focus or assertive modal particles and that they cannot be used as answers to questions (see Beutler 2018).[28] Apparently, the occupation of the position SpC with a [−W] phrase seems to be a necessary condition for the expression of an assertion (see the structure in [27]).

If we separate the sentence types, as Klein does, into declaratives and non-declaratives, then the V2 main clauses actually express assertions. V1 declarative clauses, as well as wh- and yn-questions, imperatives and optatives do not.[29] Although Klein argues in a similar way, he sticks to the concept of *Topic Time*, so that the assertive component remains in the category of 'finiteness' (see [23] and Klein 1998).

If we take into account the standard assumptions of generative syntax theory, we can distinguish (at least) two functional syntactic domains, one of which is constituted by finiteness (FinP), and the other is used to mark the sentence type (CP). The latter can be understood as a domain, in which the sentence mood is determined. The declarative sentence mood is prototypically interpreted as an assertion.[30] Based on these assumptions, the structural configuration is roughly as in (27):

(27)

```
                        CP
              ┌──────────┴──────────┐
            SpC                      C̄
             |              ┌────────┴────────┐
             ø             C⁰               FinP
        ⎧ [+W]-XP ⎫         ↑        ┌─────────┴─────────┐
        ⎩ [−W]-XP ⎭       SpFin                      Fin̄
             ↑              |            ┌───────────┴───────────┐
                          Agr:[Pers]    VP                     Fin⁰
        [Fronting XP]        [Num ]  ┌───┴───┐                   |
             ¦      [Fronting        │       │           Agr:[Pers]
             ¦       finiteness]  adverbials VP              [Num ]
             ¦                          ┌────┴────┐        Tempus
             ¦                         V̄        V⁰_inf     Modus
             ¦                      ┌───┴───┐      ¦
             ¦                  arguments  VK      ¦
             ¦                         ┌───┴───┐   ¦
             ¦                     further V⁰_inf  ¦
             └─────────────────────────────────────┘
```

In German, assertive declarative main clauses are derived using the two operations:

(28) a. Finiteness fronting (head movement of the finite verb: $V^0 \rightarrow Fin^0 \rightarrow C^0$)

   b. XP fronting (A-bar movement of a [−W] phrase to SpC)[31]

as indicated in the structure in (27). The propositional core of the sentence is located in the phrase VP, which is structurally integrated into the finiteness phrase FinP, resulting in a proposition marked with finiteness. If finiteness is fronted, the proposition is anchored in the discourse situation, otherwise in the grammatical environment (Lohnstein 2019, Lohnstein / Tsiknakis 2020). Only in the C-domain CP is the sentence mood – and thus the semantic precursor of the assertion – determined. Klein does not commit himself to an exact structural representation – except for (23) – but discusses the case of dependent clauses. There the possibility of a higher instance is assumed to be responsible for the truth or validity of the clause, so that his analysis can certainly be harmonised with (27) under these assumptions.

However, this poses a serious problem for his theory of tense: If finiteness and assertion are to be located in their own syntactic domains, then their interpretation must be compositional in some way. The theoretical price to be paid for this is that the topic time TT cannot be an elementary parameter of the tense category. Although the concept of topic time can be retained, this is not possible in the form assumed by Klein in (23). It can only come about through the interaction of time structure and sentence mood. The restriction for the time interval for which the assertion applies must be reconstructed from the information given by two distinct domains of grammatical knowledge.
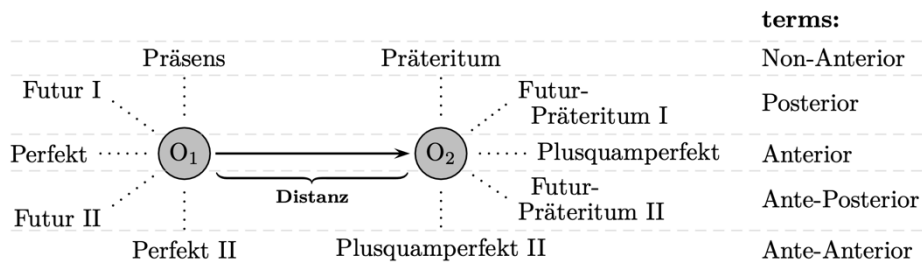
A possible way to give a reconstruction of topic time under these conditions could consist in an approach suggested by Rainer Bäuerle (1978). He assumes

that explicitly mentioned or contextually induced time adverbials determine a temporal frame with respect to which the assertion holds.[32]

Topic time is then composed of the constituted sentence mood and the temporal relation between the time of the topic situation TT and TU. Such a conception can capture the interplay between finiteness and sentence mood (and its pragmatic interpretation) much more adequately, because it is not committed to justifying the concept of *assertion* in all non-assertive finite clauses. Rather, the specific relationship between finiteness and the respective sentence mood can also be characterised specifically in each case. The contribution made by finiteness then only needs to be reconstructed by the temporal and modal relation between the expressed event situation and the speech situation. Klein's tense theory – without the concept of topic time (TT) which contains an assertion component – appears to boil down to the standard assumptions about the time structure expressed by the category *tense*.

Another interesting theory of tense was proposed by Rolf Thieroff (1992, 1994). In this theory, the category of *distance* plays a central role. Thieroff initially distinguishes between ten tenses in German, which are grouped around two origines. The present tenses are grouped around an origo O_1 and the preterite tenses around an origo O_2. The temporal relations around O_1 and O_2 are the same in each case, but are newly labelled, as can be seen in the right-hand part of the diagram:

(29) The tense system of Thieroff (1994: 128):

				terms:
	Präsens	Präteritum		Non-Anterior
Futur I			Futur-Präteritum I	Posterior
Perfekt	O_1 →	O_2	Plusquamperfekt	Anterior
		Distanz		
Futur II			Futur-Präteritum II	Ante-Posterior
	Perfekt II	Plusquamperfekt II		Ante-Anterior

According to this analysis, the difference between the present tense and the past tense lies in the category *distance*, so that the marker [±t] can be directly assigned to this category: [±t] = [±distance]. This expresses that the scope of the proposition is shifted away from the speech context and the speaking time by means of [+t].

The [+e] marker for the (present) Konjunktiv 1 leads to indirect speech in the canonical cases. This introduces a new context whose parameters are specified with a different speaker, addressee, time, place, etc. (cf. also Fabricius-Hansen / Sæbø 2004). Completely different conditions apply to the (preterital) Konjunktiv 2. Here, the event situation is located in a world other than the current one, which results in the interpretation of the counterfactual Konjunktiv 2. So while the Konjunktiv 1 operates on the speech context, the Konjunktiv 2 operates on the event situation. The following chart illustrates the correlations:

(30) Function of the et-features:
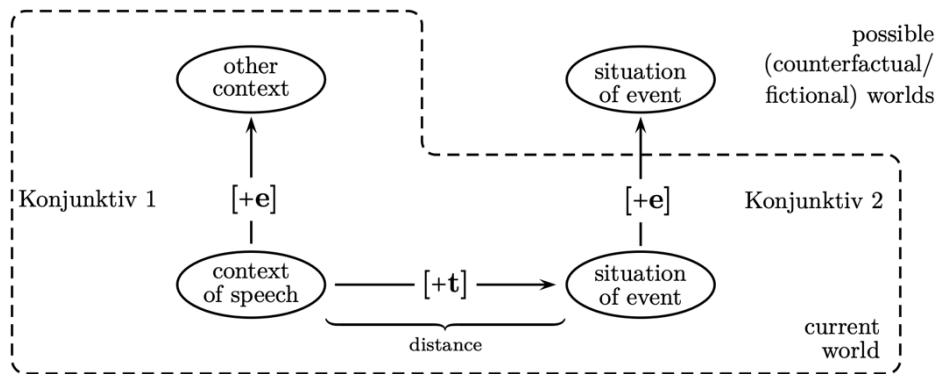
If the et-features are specified negatively – [−t]- and [−e] – we are in the speech context (bottom left). Marking with [+t] places the event situation at a distance from the speech context. Since only past situations and events are epistemically accessible, the interpretation of the past event situation relative to the speech context can be obtained from this, resulting in the standard interpretation of the past tense. The feature [+e] can also operate on the speech context. Then it leads to a different context c_2 with a different speaker Sp_2, addressee Adr_2, speaking time t_2 etc. The interpretation of the indexical expressions *I* and *yesterday* in direct (31.a) and indirect speech (31.b) illustrates the effect:

(31) a. Karl sagte: „Ich bin gestern gesehen worden.“
    Charles said: "I   am yesterday seen   was."
    "Charles said: 'I was seen yesterday.'"

  b. Karl sagte, dass ich gestern   gesehen worden sei.
    Charles said that I   yesterday seen   was-Konj1.
    "Charles said that I had been seen yesterday."

In both sentences, the pronoun *I* refers to the speaker in the respective context. In direct speech (31.a), this is Charles. In indirect speech (31.b), it is the speaker of the entire utterance. The same applies to the adverb *yesterday*, which in (31.a) refers to the day before Charles' utterance and in (31.b) to the day before the entire utterance.

By contrast, if the [+t] feature is used first, i.e., the speech context is left and the expressed event is placed at a distance from it, and if, additionally, the [+e] feature is applied, the *event situation* is shifted into another world, which provides the canonical interpretation of the (counterfactual) Konjunktiv 2. In both cases, [+e] operates as a shift operator: the propositional content of the expressed clause is shifted from the current *context of speech* to another context of speech with the [+e] marker. With the Konjunktiv 2, the *situation of event* is shifted from the current world to a counterfactual (fictional) world. The analysis also shows how the relationship between the Konjunktiv forms and the tense forms can be determined. This reveals how the tense-mood system of German can be recon-

structed *compositionally* so that the systematic relationship between Konjunktiv 1 and present tense on the one hand and Konjunktiv 2 and past tense on the other can be determined. In combination, the features lead precisely to the canonical interpretations that were characterised in (18) with the classical terms.

However, the analysis also reveals that an event that takes place in a counterfactual/fictional world cannot be expressed directly by grammatical means, but only by taking a path that first leads to a distance from the speech context and only then is shifted to another world. A *direct* connection between the speech context and an event situation in another world cannot be expressed using inflectional means, i.e., for a diagonal connection between the speech context and the fictional world no grammatical markers exist in the grammatical system of German.

The relationship between the speech context and the expressed event situation has a different structure in the finite constructions than in the infinite and semi-finite constructions in (14), since a subject must be realised overtly in finite sentences in German, expressing the "spoken about" relation. At the same time, the event situation is fully specified with all arguments realised. It is therefore autonomous and independent of the actors in the speech context. (For infinite and semi-finite sentences, the external argument of the verb needs an actor of the speech context.) The only connecting references to the speech context in finite constructions are provided by the indexical components of finiteness, *tense* and *mood*:

(32)
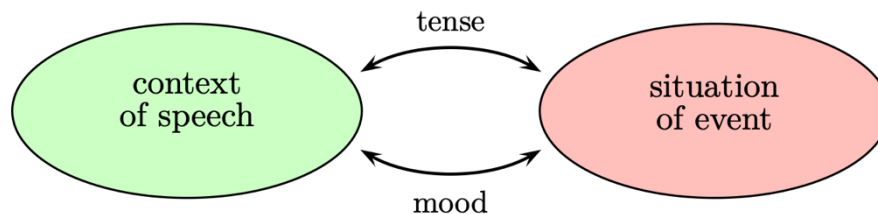
As a result, with finiteness event situations can be expressed verbally in a free and independent manner. Infinite constructions do not allow this. In the next section, I will use the characteristics of the et-features reconstructed in this way to derive the constitution of a narrator of fictional texts on the basis of the regular grammatical devices in German.

4. Inflection in Narratives

We have seen in the previous section that a fictional (counterfactual) world can only be achieved grammatically through the use of [+t] and [+e]. Factual distance and a subsequent modal shift must occur in order to reach the fictional domain. Propositional contents need these markers to get evaluated wrt. situations and

events in the worlds of this domain. Grammatically speaking, there is no direct path from the speech context to a situation that lies in a world other than the current world – our assumed reality. In contrast to the shift in the evaluation worlds of the proposition, indirect speech – ([+e] and [-t] marking) – has the characteristic that the speaker of the overall utterance is not committed to the truth of the embedded proposition, because they report that another speaker considers certain assertions to be true.

Against this background, one can ask why the author of a fictional text is also not responsible for the truth of the assertions expressed and in what way a fictional narrator is brought into existence at all, so that this narrator takes over the guarantee for the truth of the propositional content expressed instead of the author. "The same sentences, on the other hand, are attributed to the fictional narrator as authentic sentences, but they are imaginary - because they are asserted by the narrator, but only in the context of an imaginary communication situation." (Martínez / Scheffel 2019 [1999], 20; my translation).[33]

The question arises as to how it is possible to create this "imaginary communication situation" with regular grammatical means, because "belongs to the adequate reception of narrative fiction that we understand it as the real (albeit fictional) speech of a certain (albeit fictional) speaker, which does not refer to nothing, but to certain (albeit usually fictional) things and circumstances" (Martínez / Scheffel 2019 [1999], 20; my translation).[34] Since the grammatically well-formed sentences of fictional poetry also need the category of 'finiteness' it makes sense to take a closer look at the properties of tense and mood or the [+e] and [+t] markers in order to clarify this connection.

The next section discusses the characteristics of the indirectness of narratives and the existence of an imagined narrator of fictional content in the context of analysing the inflectional system with the help of the et-markers. It shows what the grammatical configurations must look like for a narrator to come between the author and the fictional narrative and why this is not the case with reports about the real world.

4.1 Preterite Tense

We have seen in (30) that the evaluation of propositional content in (fictional) worlds is only possible with the positive specification of the et-features. The inflectional paradigm of German in (16) shows a syncretism of the forms of the Konjunktiv 2 and the preterite of the weakly inflected verbs. In Bredel and Lohnstein (2001), we assumed that this syncretism came about without a systematic relation between the respective forms. Here, I would like to pursue the idea that these forms are not coincidentally the same, but are based on different functions of the flexives involved, but that it is systematic. The forms of the preterite and the Konjunktiv 2 are not only identical on a phonetic level, but the assertion is that the functions of the flexives [+t] and [+e] involved are also

identical. The difference between the respective interpretations is therefore reduced to a difference in the readings.

Since the verbal inflection system only uses the markers *-e*, *-t*, *-n*, and *-s*, it is easy to imagine that the grammatical system could have chosen different markers if the difference were to be expressed explicitly. That the difference in meaning between the two forms exists is without doubt, as the following two constructions with their respective continuations demonstrate:

(33) a. past tense:

Weil   du gestern dreimal   <u>lach-t-e-st</u>,
Because you yesterday three times laughed
(waren alle   entspannter).
(was   everyone relaxed-Komp).
"Because you laughed three times yesterday, (everyone was more relaxed)."

b. Konjunktiv 2:

Wenn du   auch mal <u>lach-t-e-st</u>,
If   you too   also laughed
(wären alle   entspannter).
(would everyone relaxed-Komp).
"If you also laughed sometimes, (everyone would be more relaxed)."

If there is no other functional difference, syncretism is somewhat unexpected, because the expression of different functions with only one form naturally leads to ambiguity, which the system could easily avoid – but it doesn't.

Against this background, it can be envisioned that the diagram in (30) is *commutative*, i.e. on the one hand there is the application sequence [+t] > [+e], but the reverse application [+e] > [+t] is also possible. Under the second possibility, the shift from the current speech context to another different speech context takes place first, as also happens with indirect speech. Moving on from this new speech context, the evaluation of the propositional content is brought into a distance by means of [+t]. This relation establishes a *fictional distance* in contrast to the *factual distance* that is present when forming the reading of the preterite and the Konjunktiv 2 derived from it.

The reverse application ([+e] > [+t]) leads to the state of affairs that a speaker other than the current speaker expresses a propositional content that is not analysed relative to the current world (as is the case of a report), but in a different fictional world. Under these assumptions, the speaker in the current speech context can be assigned to the *author* and the speaker in the different speech context to the *narrator* – quite analogous to indirect speech. The marker [+t], then, leads to a fictional distance between the narrative context and the world in which the narrated content is interpreted. We can refer to this world as the *storyworld* in the sense of Marie-Laure Ryan (2019). The indirectness that results from the evocation of a mediating instance (narrator) is therefore identical to indirect speech on a grammatical level. However, while indirect speech locates the propositional

content in the current world, narratives can convey fictional propositional content and evaluate it relative to a world other than the current one.

The diagram in (34) outlines the two paths into the counterfactual/fictional worlds together with the background of the grammatical system in (30) – the *path of the counterfactual Konjunktiv 2* and the *path of the (epic) preterite*:

(34) Function of -e and -t (in narration):
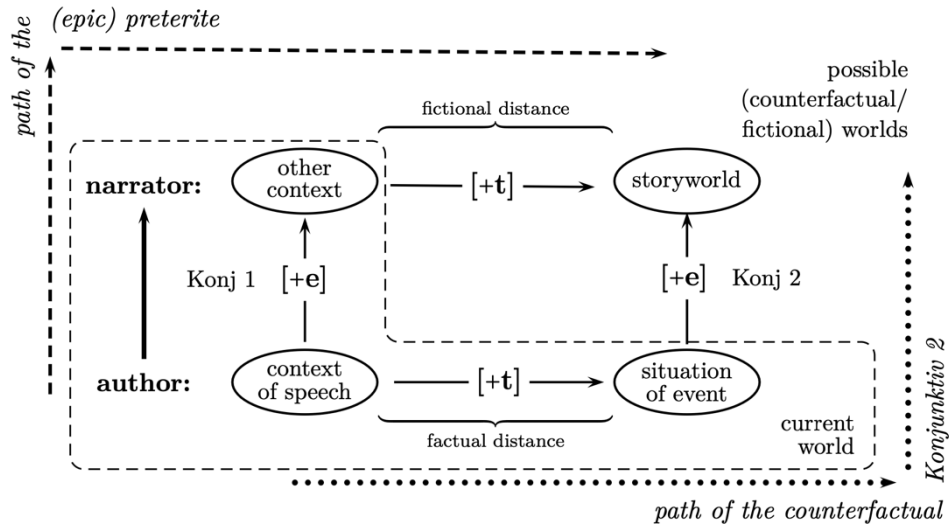
The grammatical devices used are the same for both readings – only the order in which they apply is reversed. The [+e] marker introduces a new context with corresponding parameters – the narrator's context. Because of the [+t] marker, the events narrated are at a distance from reality – they are part of a fictional world or the storyworld. In this world, in which characters deal with each other in certain ways, new speech contexts can arise, the parameters of which are determined by the characters themselves and their position in the story. This means that there are different contexts in relation to which the indexical expressions used can be interpreted:

(35) a. context of the author,

    b. context of the narrator,

    c. context of the figure, and

    d. context of the recipient.

The next section therefore presents a concept that can indicate the interpretation of utterances depending on their context of use.

4.2 Contexts

David Kaplan (1989) has presented a general theory for the interpretation of indexical signs in linguistic expressions. The central idea is this: If indexical expressions occur in a linguistic expression α, the indexical expressions must first be assigned values from the discourse context in order to determine the intension of α. A *context* can be thought of as a tuple $\langle$sp, addr, time, place, world, ... $\rangle$, in which at least one component exists for each indexical expression in a language, which assigns its reference. For the prominent indexical expressions *I*, *here*, and *now*, in the context c, these are the speaker in c, the place of c, and the time of c.

In order to integrate the interpretation of indexical expressions into a semantic theory, Kaplan constructs a so-called *character function* from contexts into intensions, so that for each indexical expression in α, a value from the context is first inserted for it. Accordingly, a character function can be defined in the following way (Kaplan 1989, 505f.):

> (36) If c is a discourse context and α is a linguistic expression, then:
>
> Character(c, α):   c $\rightarrow$ Intension(α)
>
> $\uparrow$ $\uparrow$
>
>   context   content
>
> is a function from discourse contexts c (= context) into the intension of α (= content).

The character function takes as arguments the discourse context c, in which α occurs, and α itself and provides the intension of α. If α contains indexical expressions, it assigns a value from c to each of them. If α does not contain any indexical expressions, the character is a constant function that returns the same intension(α) as a value in every context.

A distinction must be made between the context of use (context) and the circumstances of evaluation (content). For an indexical expression γ, Kaplan's conception of direct reference states that the referent of γ in context c is also the referent in every circumstance of evaluation. Thus, if the application of the character to context c has determined the referent of γ, this determination is constantly maintained at every world-time at which the proposition is evaluated (see [T2] in Kaplan 1989, 500).

As soon as the intension is determined, it can be *evaluated* (extensionalised) with respect to a time and a world, as proposed by Rudolf Carnap (1947) and others:

> (37) If α is a linguistic expression, w a (possible) world and t a time, then: Intension(α): $\langle$w, t$\rangle$ $\rightarrow$ Extension(α) in $\langle$w, t$\rangle$ is a function from possible world-time pairs into the extension of α at this world-time pair.

Under this conception, a sentence such as 'I am here now' in the context c_1 – uttered by Pope Frances in St Peter's Square in Rome on 15 March 2013 – has the same character as a sentence uttered by Mary in Paris in the context c_2 on 28 May 2024.

Depending on the two *contexts* c_1 and c_2, the sentence has its own *contents*. The indexical expressions *I*, *here* and *now* (as well as all other indexical expressions) are assigned the values obtained from the respective context using the character function. This means that the intension varies depending on the context selected. The truth conditions of the resulting intensions vary depending on the time and the world in which they are evaluated, as the following example shows:

(38) α = I am here now.

    a. $c_1 = \langle Sp_{c1}$=Frances, Adr_{c1}=..., t_{c1}=15 March 2013, s_{c1}=..., loc_{c1}=Rome$\rangle$

       i. Character(c_1, α) = Intension(Frances is in Rome on 15 March 2013)

      ii. If p := Frances is in Rome on 15 March 2013, then
          1. Intension(p)($\langle w_0, t_1 \rangle$) = true, iff Frances at t_1 = 15 March 2013 is in reality w_0 in Rome.
          2. Intension(p)($\langle w_0, t_1 \rangle$) = false, otherwise.

    b. $c_2 = \langle Sp_{c2}$=Maria, Adr_{c2}=..., t_{c2}=28 May 2024, s_{c2}=..., loc_{c2}=Paris$\rangle$

       i. Character(c_2, α) = Intension(Mary is in Paris on 28 May 2024)

      ii. Wenn p := Mary is in Paris on 28 May 2024, then:
          1. Intension(p)($\langle w_0, t_1 \rangle$) = true, iff Mary at t_2 = 28 May 2024 is in reality w_0 in Paris.
          2. Intension(p)($\langle w_0, t_2 \rangle$) = false, otherwise.

First the character function is applied to α and the respective context c_1 or c_2. This results in the intensions in (38.a–i) and (38.b–i), which depend on the respective context. The respective intensions are then applied to a world-time point in (38.a–ii.1) and (38.b–ii.1) in order to determine the extension of α there. This is true if the situation denoted by the proposition exists in this world at this time (cf. Austin's [1950] topic situation), otherwise it is false.

As shown, *truth* is not only determined relative to a world and a time, but also depends on the contexts of use when indexical expressions occur. Accordingly, the truth of sentences in fictional texts can be determined relative to the contexts of the narrator or character and the worlds of fiction. The fact that the conditions are much more complex is of course related to the concept of *truth*, which I will not discuss further here.

A context includes a *common ground (CG)* (Stalnaker 1978, 2014), which contains the propositions that the participants in the discourse have agreed to be valid. Since propositions denote sets of possible situations – i.e., those situations that they describe accurately –[35] each proposition denotes a set of situations. If several propositions occur, the intersection of their respective situation sets specifies exactly those situations that are characterised by all of them. This set of situations is called the *context set CS*.

In the case of the reception of a narrative, CG can be imagined as the set of propositions that have become familiar with the text. Each new proposition that is added to CG reduces CS (the set of situations characterised by CG). In the case of a narrative, CG can be interpreted as a component into which each sentence read is incorporated as the story progresses. CS is reduced with each of these sentences because the narrated propositions increasingly specify the situations further, so that the number of situations compatible with CG becomes smaller. With this idea, the conceptualisation of the "storyworld" (Ryan / Bell 2019) can be specified more precisely step by step with each new sentence that is added.[36]

In addition to CG, a recipient has a *world view* that can be characterised by the set of propositions that he or she knows or believes. Under these assumptions, the phenomenon of *immersion* can be defined in such a way that the recipient's world view recedes into the (conceptual) background and the CG induced by the narrative becomes prominent in the (conceptual) foreground. On the basis of these terms, the concept of *context* and the parameters it provides can be specified to such an extent that the respective information components can be isolated and systematically varied so that literary effects can be produced in controlled ways. In the next section I would like to use this concept to characterise central features of present tense narratives in more detail with reference to the grammatical et-features.

4.3 Present Tense

The present tense has the grammatical features [-e] and [-t], but its functions can vary to a considerable degree especially in narratives. Carolin Gebauer (2021) has presented a nuanced and meticulous analysis of novels in the present tense and proposed a matrix with eight functions that serve to design the mental model of a fictional world:

(39) Functional matrix (Gebauer 2021, 136):
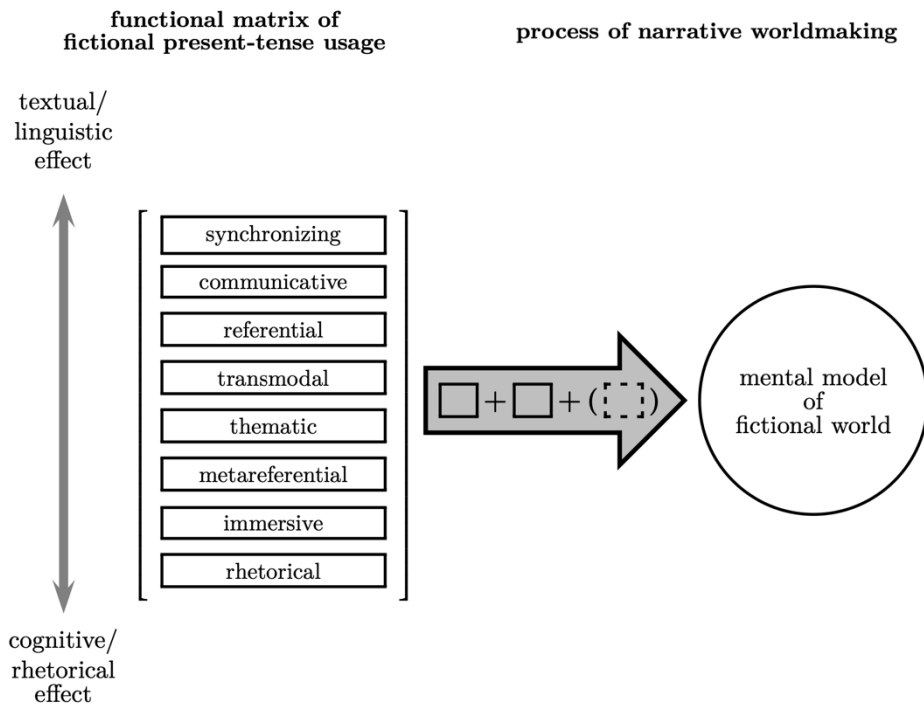
Of these eight functions, the following four have a special status in present tense narratives:

(40) a. The *immersive* function projects readers into the fictional world via deictic shift (see Gebauer 2021, ch. 5.3).

b. The *communicative* function simulates the scenario of oral story-telling and thus increases the illusion of someone telling someone else a story (see ch. 5.5).

c. The *synchronizing* function leads to a synchronisation between the narrated events and the act of storytelling (see ch. 5.6).

d. The *rhetorical* function refers to the spatiotemporal configuration and the development of the story (see ch. 5.8).

Gebauer rightly and convincingly argues against what she designates as "the 'grammatical' fallacy," which consists in the

> the erroneous belief that fictional tense usage in general and present-tense narration in particular can be explained solely with recourse to the grammatical rules applying to ordinary language usage. The result of this fallacy is the conceptualization of tense as a deictic category which points to the temporal relation between the narrative events and the act of narrating these events. This, in turn, has often led to the incorrect equation of present-tense narration with simultaneous narration. [...] By introducing the distinction between *grammatical tense* and *fictional tense*, I will adopt the linguistic and philosophical position that tense usage operates differently in factual and fictional discourses. (Gebauer 2021, 13)

I would like to argue here – from the perspective of modern linguistics – that the grammatical system only knows one kind of present tense, but that its properties must be characterised in a more abstract way than was done by classical grammatical theorizing.[37] In order to incorporate the findings of narratological research on the use and functioning of the tenses into the grammatical characterisation, the grammatical theory must be modified in controlled ways so that the range of functions occurring in narratives is also covered. Insofar as this programme is successful, the use of the present tense in fictional texts can be derived from the regular properties of the grammatical tense category, so that no "fictional tense" specially conceived for fictional texts has to be assumed.

Since the present tense – in contrast to the past tense – does not show overt markers in terms of inflectional morphology, it cannot be analysed in the same way as the past tense; instead, its meaning must be determined by other means. Given the lack of inflectional markers for tense and mood, it is often assumed in semantic research that the present tense has no temporal meaning of its own and that it is semantically empty (see, e.g., von Stechow / Beck 2015), or at least that it is underspecified in such a way that it only has a non-past meaning (see Thieroff [1992] and [29]). Thus, a sentence like (41) cannot mean that the parcel is already there before the time of speech:

(41) Das Paket kommt heute.
     The parcel arrives today.
     "The parcel arrives today."

However, this characterisation is only partly correct. It does not apply to state predicates. Thus, the sentences in (42) can certainly be used to express that the designated states and circumstances may have existed before the time of their utterance:

(42) a. Heute geht es Maria gut
         Today goes it Mary good
         "Mary is doing well today."

     b. Seit   drei Stunden trinkt Otto Schnaps
         Since three hours   drinks Otto schnapps
         "Otto has been drinking schnapps since three hours."

     c. Heute kostet das Karussellfahren nur zwei Euro
         Today costs the carousel ride   only two euro
         "Today, the carousel ride only costs two euros."

But if the present tense is not a tense at all,[38] the question arises as to how the different uses of the historical, future or generic present tenses come about. The examples from (5) – repeated here as (43) – illustrate the point:

(43) a. Im Jahr 1492 entdeckt Columbus Amerika.   (historical)
         In year 1492 discovers Columbus America.
         "In 1492, Columbus discovers America."

b. Nächste Woche fährt   Karl   in Urlaub.   (future)
   Next   week   drives Charles in holidays.
   "Charles is going on holiday next week."

c. Die Winkelsumme im Dreieck beträgt   180 Grad.   (generic)
   The angle-sum   in triangle   amounts to 180 degrees.
   "The sum of the angles in the triangle is 180 degrees."

Bäuerle (1978, 172) has suggested that the respective adverbials define "Betrachtzeitintervalle" (intervals of consideration) and that the present tense determines that the expressed event is to be localised with reference to these intervals. They can be explicitly named or arise implicitly on the basis of certain contextual conditions. Barbara Partee's (1973) example in (44) shows not only that the assumption of tense operators in interaction with negation leads to incorrect interpretations, but also that a contextually given time interval must exist relative to which the sentence is evaluated. If it is uttered after one has just left home and turns onto the motorway, the tense refers to the time interval shortly before leaving the house, although it is not explicitly mentioned:

(44) I didn't turn off the stove.

Tempora – according to Partee's suggestion – therefore tend to have the properties of pronouns that refer to discourse referents that have already been introduced. Bäuerle's analysis captures these intuitions quite well. However, the present tense is not only suitable for localising a proposition within a time interval, but a modal framing can also define a domain relative to which the expressed event can be anchored:

(45) a. In Karls   Phantasie ist Maria immer noch eine Heilige.
        In Charles' fantasy   is Mary always still a   saint
        "In Charles' fantasy, Mary is still a saint."

     b. In einigen meiner Träume wandere ich durch   karge Landschaften.
        In some   my   dreams walk   I   through barren landscapes.
        "In some of my dreams, I walk through barren landscapes."

Thus (45.a) expresses that Charles's fantasy has contained certain assumptions about Mary for some time, and (45.b) states that the present tense assigns the walking situation to a subset of the dreams whenever they occur.

If we look, against this background, at the difference between the present tense and the past tense in the following two sentences, it seems to be that in (46.a) we are looking back at the past event from the current time, whereas in the present tense sentence in (46.b) we have the impression that an observer is watching Caesar crossing the Rhine from a hill in the year 55 BC:

(46) a. Im Jahr 55 v. Chr. überquerte Caesar den Rhein.
     In year 55 BC   cross-Past   Caesar the Rhine.
     "Caesar crossed the Rhine in 55 BC."

   b. Im Jahr 55 v. Chr. überquert   Caesar den Rhein.
     In year 55 BC   cross-Present Caesar the Rhine.
     "Caesar crosses the Rhine in 55 BC."

The inflectional morphological difference between (46.a) and (46.b) is that the former occurs with the features [+t, +e], while the latter has the features [−t, −e].[39] If this marking is interpreted according to the system outlined in (30), then there is

(47) a. no indirectness because of [−e] and

   b. no distance because of [−t].

The expressed event is realised without these two markers, creating the effect that the expressed event is presented directly and without distance. The impression is created that the event is perceived immediately. The origo of the recipient is determined by the here-and-now of the story, without any intervening factors. This becomes clearer in a somewhat longer passage of text:

> Ganz langsam wird die Wohnungstür geöffnet, Schritte hallen im Treppenhaus, jemand sagt leise Gute Nacht, das ist die Stimme von Herrn Karnau. Er schließt die Tür ab und geht in sein Zimmer. Jetzt ist der Lichtstreifen verschwunden, jetzt ist es völlig dunkel. (Beyer 1996, 39)[40]

The sentences marked with the present create the impression of the immediate perception of the event. The (double) occurrence of the temporal adverb *jetzt* ('now') binds the recipient's context variable t_r to the time t_e of the events in the story. At the same time, the location of the recipient's context loc_r is also determined by the narrated circumstances and their surroundings loc_e. The objects referred to in the story receive their *referential* fixation in the immediacy of the representation. *Identification* of the location loc_e and the time t_e (beside other parameters) of the story with the conceptualised location loc_r and time t_r of the recipient's conceptualisation in time and space seems to be the core process to bring about the *immersive* function. It specifies the recipient's orientation through the parameters of the narrative so that the recipient experiences the ongoing events in the story as a perceiving subject. As Ryan (2015, 93) puts it: "One of the most variable parameters of narrative art is the imaginative distance between the position of narrator and addressee and the time and place of the narrated events. Spatio-temporal immersion takes place when this distance is reduced to near zero."

Based on Banfield (1982), Schlenker (2004, 297f.) has distinguished between two contexts, the context of thought (CT) and the context of utterance (CU), which generally coincide in everyday speech, are separate in (written) narratives.[41] An essential characteristic of narration in the present tense seems to be that it unites these two contexts and *synchronises* them with the context of the recipient. For this purpose, the contextually given time of the narrated events t_e and their

location loc$_e$ are *synchronised* with the context coordinates for the recipient's conceptualisation of time and location t$_r$ and loc$_r$. This synchronisation results in: t$_e$ = t$_r$ and loc$_e$ = loc$_r$. In contrast to the use of the past tense, which is always associated with a certain distance between the narrative situation and the narrated events, the substantial identification of these spatiotemporal parameters leads to a view of the events as an immediate perception for the recipient: "As it [the present] creates the simulacrum of a real-time 'life' (rather than of the speech situation) the shift from past to present pulls the reader from the *now* of the storytelling act to the *now* of the storyworld and completes the deictic shift toward the narrative window." (Ryan 2015, 98)

The *rhetorical* function comprises similar characteristics, but goes beyond the local description of the events and captures the control of the course of events. A sentence-grammatical analysis can only contribute to this textual function to the extent that the events are perceived from a certain perspective, but not to the sequencing of these events in the course of the narrative. To make the point clearer, with the more abstract properties of the [−t, −e] features in (47), the essential characteristics of the effects can be derived, which are characterised by Gebauer (2021, 124) in the following way:

> As a result, present-tense narratives facilitate a specific type of narrative progression which, I believe, is not to be found in past-tense narratives. The reason for this is that the use of the present tense controls readers' experience of the spatiotemporal storyworlds in that it highlights either narrative space or narrative time.

The *communicative* function is also brought about by the coincidence of the context of the narrative with the context of the recipient: What is being told is what is currently happening mentally in the recipient. The context of thought (CT) and the context of utterance (CU) in Schlenker's sense are directly related. But this is precisely the situation in everyday speech, so that the impression is created that the events are told as if they would occur in oral speech. Gebauer (2021, 106) characterises this property as follows: "in its communicative use, the fictional present simulates a scenario of oral storytelling, enhancing readers' impression that they are literally being told a story by the 'voice' speaking in the text."

Summarising the results of the present contribution, it can be seen that the analysis of finiteness in terms of the et-features and their interpretation in (34) and (47) has led to a reconstruction of some functions that have been observed in narrative structures. It offers an explanation which captures – with the help of regular grammatical means – a certain range of the manifold functions of finiteness in narrative texts with a few abstract assumptions.

5. Conclusion

'Finiteness' is a grammatical category that enables the freedom of linguistic expression through the realisation of the "spoken about" relation and the free choice of time and world. This means that situations can be narrated independent of and apart from the speech situation by means of finiteness. Infinite and semi-finite sentences, in contrast, do not allow this.

Two subcategories, 'tense' and 'mood,' locate the respective propositions in a coordinate system of times and worlds, the space of epistemic possibilities (possible worlds/situations) and epistemic freedom. In German, these two categories are expressed with the features [±e, ±t], whereby there is a systematic interaction and interweaving of tense and mood. The relationships outlined in (30) lead to a more abstract interpretation of their grammatical properties than is assumed in classical grammatical notation.

Narratological research has shown that the classical concepts are not sufficient to adequately capture the richness of literary functions. Since it has essentially orientated itself towards the organisation of the Latin system, categories and their interpretations have found their way into the grammatical description of German, which have been adopted largely independently of the markings that actually occur, without taking a closer look at their exact realisation.

On the basis of an analysis of the overtly observable markings and their appropriate interpretation, a functional spectrum can be derived that also allows us to grasp the narratological findings as, for instance, detected by Gebauer (2021). Such a reconstruction is desirable and naturally to be expected if we understand the human grammatical system as the rule component that combines the elementary units of language (morphemes and words) into complex linguistic expressions and systematically assigns their respective meanings to them – in everyday talk as well as in fictional narratives (whatever the difference is).

Literary studies and linguistics are two scientific fields, each with its own interest in understanding the phenomenon of language and its manifestations. The fact that they can complement and promote each other pertains to the matter. The present concept aims to make such a connecting proposal.

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1 Eckardt (2015) also makes comparable assumptions. She also distinguishes between two contexts C and c, which are represented in free indirect discourse as an ordered pair ⟨C, c⟩, so that the "NOW" from the narrator's perspective can be distinguished from the now from the perspective of a protagonist (19).

2 See also Eckardt (2015). Rauh (1985, 68f., 75f.) has made a different kind of distinction by assuming two *centres of orientation* within the framework of Bühler's (1934) concept of *deixis*, one of which is assigned to the narrator, the other to the character. The terms *centre of orientation* and *context* can be largely identified in this context. The tense in free indirect discourse is evaluated relative to the context (or centre of orientation) of the narrator, while temporal adverbials such as *today*, *three weeks ago*, *the other day* or *tomorrow* are interpreted relative to the context CT (or centre of orientation) of the character. Continuations of the concepts proposed in the various approaches can be found in Schlenker (2004) and Eckardt (2015).

3 For an overview and different conceptions of fictionality, see Gorman (2005) and Rajewsky (2020). A critical discussion of make-believe theories is provided by Bareis (2014).

4 See Platzack / Rosengren (1998, 2017) and Reis (2003) for the observation that the 'spoken about'-relation cannot be expressed with infinite or semi-finite clauses.

5 Cf. on this, Sasse (1987, 1996), Jacobs (2001), Krifka (2008), and Musan (2010).

6 For a discussion of the term *topic*, see also Jacobs (2001), Krifka (2008), Lambrecht (1994), Reich (2012), and Reinhart (1981).

7 For a more detailed analysis of these phenomena, see Lohnstein (2019).

8 "It was late in the evening when K. arrived. The village was covered in deep snow. There was nothing to be seen of the castle hill, fog and darkness surrounded it, not even the faintest glimmer of light gave a hint of the great castle. K. stood for a long time on the wooden bridge that led from the country road to the village and looked up into the apparent emptiness.

Then he went to look for a place to sleep for the night; the pub was still awake, the landlord didn't have a room to let, but, extremely surprised and confused by the late guest, he wanted to let K. sleep on a straw sack in the parlour. K. agreed to this. Some of the peasants were still drinking beer, but he didn't want to talk to anyone, so he fetched the straw sack from the attic himself and lay down near the stove. It was warm, the peasants were quiet, he scrutinised them a little with his tired eyes, then fell asleep." (my translation)

9 The choice of sample text is not important. Every narrated text requires the category 'finiteness' in its sentences, i.e., every sentence in narratives must contain a finite verb.

10 In Chomsky (1986), the since then recognised proposal is made that finiteness – represented in the category INFL(ection) – is the structural head of the sentence (in the sense of X-bar theory).

11 The fact that attention in narratological research has nevertheless focussed at least on tense (see Hamburger [1977 (1957)], Weinrich [1964], and others) does not contradict this finding.

12 See, for example, Bredel / Lohnstein (2001). The fact that these characteristics of the German grammatical system have also gradually found their way into grammatical notation can even be recognised in modern editions of German grammars. In Eisenberg (2006 [1998], 208), for example, there are still six tenses in the finite inflectional forms, whereas in Eisenberg (2013 [1998], 178) there are only two: *Present* and *past tense*. Adelung (1971 [1782], 771) already pointed out the fact that the grammar writing of German is very strongly oriented towards Latin.

13 Ever since Leibniz (1965 [1710]) discussed the theodicy problem, the concept of a possible world has been used to characterise alternatives to reality. The term *possible world* has been labelled in various ways in the course of philosophical semantic development. For example, Wittgenstein (1963 [1921]) speaks of *states of affairs*, Carnap (1947) of *state descriptions*, Kripke (1980) of *possible worlds*, Kaplan (1989) of *circumstances of evaluation*, and Kratzer (2017), following Barwise / Perry (1981), of *situations*.

14 These terms go back to Reichenbach (1947) and are still used in temporal semantics today. Klein (1994) proposed a different characterisation, according to which a time TU (time of utterance) is to be assumed in relation to the time TSit (time of situation) and the time TT (topic time) for which the assertion holds.

15 See, for example, Bredel / Lohnstein (2001), Fabricius-Hansen (1999), Fabricius-Hansen et al. (2018), and Lohnstein (2019).

16 See, for example, the articles in Leirbukt (2004).

[17] Kratzer (2017) has related situation semantics to possible world semantics by conceptualising a world as a maximal situation, while situations in turn form an algebra (Bach [1986]) that can be characterised with the relation of the partial situation. Possible worlds are thus conceptualised as (maximal) situations that contain partial situations.

[18] These include modal verbs, modal adverbs, modal adjectives, modal particles, verbal mood, sentence mood, and possibly others.

[19] For such assumptions, see Ballweg 2008, Bäuerle 1978, Grewendorf 1984, von Stechow 2005, and Zeller 1994.

[20] In a slightly more technical way, this empty subject has been reconstructed as PRO since Chomsky (1981). It has the properties of a pronoun but no phonetic matrix.

[21] For details of the analyses associated with infinite constructions, see Chomsky (1981) and Kiss (1995).

[22] See Fries (1983), Gärtner (2013, 2014), Lohnstein (2019), Rapp / Wöllstein (2013), Reis (1995, 2003), and Weuster (1983).

[23] The term *semi-finite imperative clause* was coined by Donhauser (1986).

[24] Thieroff (1994) was the first to relate this category to German using examples from literary texts and their temporal interpretation.

[25] The central ideas of this analysis were developed by Bredel and Lohnstein (2001), but can also be found in a slightly different form in Fabricius-Hansen (1999). Lohnstein (2019) has proposed an analysis that reconstructs the tense-mood system of German *compositionally*, so that the dependency of the Konjunktiv 1 on the present tense and the Konjunktiv 2 on the past tense becomes evident. This analysis is also used in a slightly modified form in one of the following sections.

[26] Klein (2006, 251) proposes an operator for a comparable, more abstract representation, which he calls FIN [for finiteness], whereby FIN0 transforms the verb *geh* into *geht* and FIN< into *ging*. He also makes the distinction between the two tenses *present* and *preterite*.

[27] In this respect, the Konjunktiv 1 involves a shift to a different model – the speaker's model in c_2 (see Quer 1998). For a differentiated view of the Konjunktiv, see Fabricius-Hansen (1999), Fabricius-Hansen / Sæbø (2004), Fabricius-Hansen et al. (2018), and Richarz (2020).

[28] For further differences between V1 and V2 declaratives in this respect, see Reis (2000, 223f.).

[29] It is notoriously questionable whether the exclamative clause should be understood as a separate sentence type. For a comprehensive description of the different types of sentences in German, see Meibauer et al. (2013).

[30] See Brandt et al. (1992), Lohnstein (2000), Lohnstein (2019), and Truckenbrodt (2006), as well as the extensive literature on verb positioning in Germanic languages, in particular Heycock (2017), Holmberg (2015), Holmberg / Platzack (1995), Lohnstein (2020), Poletto (2013), Vikner (1995, 2001), and many others.

[31] The position SpC does not necessarily have to be filled by A movement, but can also be filled by base generation (see Frey (2004, 2006)). Within the framework of the minimalist program these two options can be unified under internal and external merge.

[32] For the example of a witness interrogation discussed by Klein (1994), this represents the judge's question "What did they see when they entered the room?" The answers apply to the time interval specified by the question. But this information does not have to be represented in the tense category of the answer.

[33] The original reads as follows: "Dem fiktiven Erzähler hingegen sind dieselben Sätze als authentische Sätze zuzuschreiben, die aber imaginär sind – denn sie werden vom Erzähler behauptet, jedoch nur im Rahmen einer imaginären Kommunikationssituation. (Martínez / Scheffel (2019 [1999], 20).

[34] "[…] gehört zur adäquaten Rezeption von fiktionaler Dichtung, dass wir sie als die reale (wenn auch fiktive) Rede eines bestimmten (wenn auch fiktiven) Sprechers verstehen, die nicht auf nichts, sondern auf bestimmte (wenn auch in der Regel fiktive) Dinge und Sachverhalte referiert." (Martínez / Scheffel 2019 [1999], 20)

[35] I do not use the term *possible world* here, but *possible situation*, because I think it is more suitable for narration. As Kratzer (2017) has explained, the situation semantics of Barwise and Perry (1981) can be integrated into possible world semantics under the following – somewhat simplified – agreements: Situations are composed of partial situations. The maximal situation is a (possible) world, so that no situation can belong to several worlds. Situations are the smallest truth domains for a proposition. They represent 'smaller' objects than entire worlds.

[36] This type of treatment refers to the so-called *literal meaning* of the linguistic expressions in the text. It abstracts precisely from what Ansgar Nünning (2010) understands by "worldmaking": "One of the conclusions which can be drawn from this account of narratives as ways of worldmaking is that historical events, media events, and media wars do not emerge 'naturally' but should rather be understood as the result of a series of complex procedures and processes of selection, abstraction, ordering, compression, emplotment, and perspectivisation that go into narrative worldmaking. By telling a story, narrative texts as well as other media, are constructing events at the same time, shaping them in a certain way and endowing them with meaning." (Nünning 209). Of course, these procedures and processes are part of the overall interpretation of a text. However, the principles of (grammatical) structure formation and its (literal) meaning are independent of this.

[37] Some of these aspects are critically discussed in Bredel and Lohnstein (2001).

[38] Such a view is suggested by Thieroff (1992) and von Stechow (2005), for example. A basic presentation of the various interpretations and aspects of the tenses can be found in Fabricius-Hansen (1991). On the existence and characteristics of the present tense in German, see, e.g., Ballweg (1984), Fabricius-Hansen (1986), and Grewendorf (1984). For the semantic properties of the tense forms (see Ballweg 1988, Bäuerle 1978, Partee 1973, and von Stechow 2005).

[39] The *-t* in *überquer-t* in the present tense is not used to mark the proposition, but for predication in the form of person/number congruence (see Bredel / Lohnstein 2001).

[40] "The front door opens very slowly, footsteps echo in the stairwell, someone quietly says good night – it's Mr Karnau's voice. He locks the door and goes into his room. Now the strip of light has disappeared, now it's completely dark." (my translation)

[41] Accordingly, in free indirect discourse, the narrator's speech (CU) can take place through the figure (CT). In the historical present tense, the speaker can assert (CT) that the narrated event takes place at some point in time (CU).