Corpus based insights into adverbial morphology: the case of German -(er)weise

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With our poster we want to shed some light on the somewhat neglected field of adverbial word-formation by looking closely at the German suffix -(er)weise. Based on a quantitative analysis of a corpus of German newspapers we argue that in contrast to the common view -(er)weise should better be understood as two suffixes (i.e. -weise and -erweise). Unlike Ronca (1975) and Ros (1992) we do not propose a semantic based typology but argue that a differentiation according to the lexical category of the base captures the semantic and syntactic characteristics of these formations more adequately. Formations with adjectival bases (e.g. glücklicherweise 'luckily') are generally interpreted as sentence adverbials. In the corpus data we also find formations with present participles (e.g. lesenderweise 'while reading') which have not been discussed in the literature so far. Syntactically they either denote a circumstance and modify the event or they modify the process, so they are base-generated in a different position than sentence adverbials (cf. Pittner 2004). On the other hand we find formations with nominal bases (e.g. probeweise 'as a test', kistenweise 'by the case') which can be further subdivided depending on whether the base is a deverbal or non-deverbal noun. As the corpus data show only non-deverbal nouns that denote a container or a measurement have recently developed a use as a quantitative determiner (Die Polizei stieß auf haufenweise Drogen 'The police pounced on heaps of drugs') where haufenweise only denotes a large amount but does not necessarily refer to actual piles or heaps anymore.

References


