

---

## ‘Chameleon verbs’: variation in argument realization

---

Donnerstag  
09.03.2017  
13:45 – 14:45  
B4 1, 0.07

Kerstin Schwabe  
ZAS Berlin

[schwabe@zas.gwz-berlin.de](mailto:schwabe@zas.gwz-berlin.de)

AG10

There are polysemous German matrix predicates the argument realization of which varies while the argument structure remains unchanged – e.g. (*es/darüber*) *diskutieren* ‘discuss’ and (*es/davon*) *hören* ‘hear’. Their propositional argument either exhibits accusative or oblique case. Whereas accusative case expresses a direct relationship between the matrix subject and the embedded clause, the prepositional case indicates that something else is involved in the relationship. Most of the predicates denote an utterance event if used with an accusative propositional argument. If such a predicate denotes additionally an emotive attitude (*mosern* ‘grumble’), it can be used with the prepositional correlate *darüber*. Then, it relates to a proposition that follows from the matrix subject’s knowledge, that is, to a fact. As for predicates that denote mental activities (*sinnieren* ‘ponder’) or the manner or purpose of an utterance (*polemisieren* ‘polemicize’), they relate to propositions that are contingent with or contradict the matrix subject’s knowledge if used with the prepositional correlate. Another subtype of ‘chameleons’ consists of verbs like *wissen* ‘know’ or *hören* ‘hear’. If they co-occur with an *es*-correlate, their embedded proposition is a fact. If they are used with the prepositional correlate *davon*, the embedded proposition follows from what the matrix subject knows or has heard. A further subgroup consists of decision predicates like *abstimmen* ‘vote’. Their oblique argument relates to the question that has to be decided on whereas their accusative argument denotes the result of the decision.