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Presentational/Existential Structures in Spoken versus Written German: *Es Gibt* and *SEIN*

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This article presents a synchronic, corpus-based examination of spoken German with regard to the distribution and function of presentational/ existential *es gibt NP* and a range of *SEIN NP* structures such as *da SEIN*, *locative SEIN*, *es SEIN*, and *zero-locative SEIN*. In particular, the use of *da SEIN* has been neglected in previous research. While *es gibt* is equally frequent in the spoken and written data, *SEIN* structures are typical of spoken German only, with *da SEIN* being the most frequent. The article concentrates on clauses with indefinite NPs, while the presentation of events with *da* and wider *da*-usage in spoken German are also considered.[*]

1. Introduction.

The distribution and function of spoken German presentational and existential *es gibt* and *SEIN* structures have not been investigated comprehensively. Previous accounts make very little mention of differences between written and spoken data. Yet spoken language deserves to be studied in its own right, given that it is prior and primary in human communication and, crucially, since a range of fundamental differences between the structures of spontaneous talk and most written texts have been demonstrated across languages (Miller & Weinert 2009[1998]). This article provides overall frequencies for spoken and written data and some comparative discussion. The main qualitative analysis focuses on a corpus of spontaneous spoken data. In particular, the use of *da SEIN* has been underestimated in previous work. This is surprising given the ubiquity of *da* in spoken German (Weinert 2007). In addition, the relationship between the various *SEIN* structures, especially in spoken

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German, remains to be fully explored. The corpus-based analysis does not answer all the questions, but it is an essential step in ensuring that the linguistic data under investigation are adequate.

The analysis is embedded in the wider theoretical context of presentationals and existentials, including selective comparison with English *there BE*, which has been studied extensively (Lakoff 1987, Lumsden 1988, Firbas 1992, Lambrecht 1994, McNally 1998, Biber et al. 1999). The present article assumes, in line with previous accounts based on information structure, that presentational and existential structures serve a pragmatic function of introducing or focusing on entities and events (whatever else they may do). In addition, the semantics of existentials involves asserting existence or presence—typically of entities referred to by indefinite NPs. Lambrecht (1994) distinguishes between those structures that present entities and those that present events.

The examples in 1 contain existentials that introduce an entity (or a class of entities) into the discourse by means of an NP and assert its existence per se. The examples in 2 introduce an entity and assert its presence in a location: The existence of cats is presupposed. The examples in 3 introduce an entire event and could answer the question *what happened* or *what occurred*. The examples in 4 predicate the activity expressed by the main verb of the entity referred to by the subject noun phrase and could answer the question *what did Max do*. The examples in 5 present and draw attention to an event. Small capitals indicate word stress. An English example is always listed first and can be taken as a translation of the non-English examples.

(1) a. There are blue-eyed cats.

    b. Es gibt blauäugige Katzen.
       it   gives blue-eyed   cats

(2) a. There is a cat in the garden.

    b. Da   ist eine Katze im   Garten.
       there is   a   cat   in-the garden

(3) a. MAX phoned.

    b. MAX hat angerufen.
       MAX has phoned

    c. Ha telefonato MAX. (Italian)
      has phoned   MAX

(4) a. Max called ANna.

    b. Max hat ANna angerufen.
       Max has Anna phoned

    c. Max ha   telefonato a ANna. (Italian)
       Max has phoned   to ANna

(5) a. There's Max talking to Lisa.

    b. Da   redet Max gerade   mit Lisa.
       there talks Max just-now with Lisa

    c. There's a drop of paint hanging from the paintbrush.

    d. Da   hängt ein Tropfen Farbe vom   Pinsel.
       there hangs a   drop   paint from-the paintbrush.

In 3a,b, German and English syntax and prosody do not distinguish between a contrastive predicational reading used to identify Max (Max called, not Karl) and a presentational reading whereby the whole event—Max called—is presented. In contrast, Italian does distinguish the two readings syntactically by subject-verb inversion, as in 3c (see Lambrecht 1994:181). English and German use *there*-clauses and *da*-clauses, respectively, to draw attention to (more or less dynamic) events, as in 5a,b, or (more or less static) occurrences, as in 5c,d.

    The range of presentational and existential structures and verbs is potentially rather wide. This article concentrates on *es gibt* and *SEIN* structures involving entities referred to by indefinite NPs, illustrated again in more detail by examples 6–10. Some *da*-clauses that are used to

present events and occurrences are also considered. They are exemplified by 11–12.[1]

(6) **es gibt**
   a. es gibt   blauäugige katzen
      it gives blue-eyed   cats

   b. es gibt   in athen   ein katzenmuseum
      it gives in athens a   cat-museum

In terms of structure, *es gibt* consists of the impersonal subject *es* + 3rd person singular *gibt*; in spoken German, *es* can be cliticized, as in *sgibt* or *gibts* when inversion is required. Otherwise, *gibt* follows the patterns for the full verb *geben*, that is, it is tensed and requires an accusative complement. In SEIN structures, SEIN is a full verb, exhibiting obligatory agreement with the nominative NP complement. In the present analysis, a distinction is made between *da SEIN, locative SEIN*, *es SEIN*, and *zero-locative SEIN* exemplified in 7–10. The label *locative SEIN* is restricted to structures that contain a lexical locative expression exem-plified by 8. The position of lexical locative expressions and their co-occurrence with *da* is discussed later.

(7) **da SEIN**
   a. da   ist eine katze
      there is   a   cat

   b. da   ist eine katze im   garten
      there is   a   cat   in-the garden

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[1] For the sake of consistency, from this point onward, the presentation of ex-amples follows transcription conventions for spoken language (except for some constructed examples in section 8). These can be found in the appendix. Glos-sing follows *JGL* conventions as far as this is practical for the spoken data, especially where the nature of structures is an issue. Some longer German examples only include translations in order to aid readability. Written language punctuation is also not used in the translations since this might skew analysis and interpretation and would not do justice to the spoken data.

(8) ***locative SEIN***
   im   garten ist eine katze
   in-the garden is   a   cat

(9) ***es SEIN***
   es   ist eine katze im   garten
   it (dummy)   is   a   cat   in-the garden

(10) ***zero-locative SEIN***
   waren noch zwei blitzbirnchen
   were   still two   flash-bulbs-DIMINUTIVE

   In terms of function, example 6a asserts existence per se, while examples 6b and 7–10 assert existence or presence in a location (with an implicit location (a camera) in 10). This distinction is a recurring theme in studies. For example, Milsark (1974) talks of ONTOLOGICAL versus LOCATIONAL existential sentences. These issues are elucidated in section 2.

   In addition, this article briefly considers *da*-clauses with other verbs used to present entities, as in 11, or whole events/occurrences, as in 12. Since *da* is frequent in spoken German, this part of the analysis serves to clarify some functional boundaries:

(11) da   kommt n zug
   there comes a train
   'there's a train coming'

(12) A: STÖR ich ↗
        disturb I
        'is this a bad time'

   B: nee nee da   wird grad das bayern spiel übertragen
       no   no   there is   just the bavaria game   transmitted
       'no no the Bayern Munich game is on tv just now'

       ich mach mal   leiser
       I   make PARTICLE quieter
       'I'll turn it down'

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 provides some theoretical background and section 3 presents an overview of previous work on German. Section 4 describes the corpus data and section 5 provides an overview of the quantitative findings. Sections 6 and 7 present the analysis of *es gibt NP* and *SEIN NP*, respectively. Section 7 also comments on the use of *da*-clauses with other verbs used to introduce entities and events, and addresses the wider issue of *da*-usage in spoken German. This is followed by a short comparison of *es gibt* and *SEIN* in section 8 and conclusion in section 9. Much of the discussion centers around *da SEIN* since it is frequent in spoken German yet has received relatively little systematic attention. The discussion of *es gibt* is detailed up to a point, but its main purpose is to serve as a background to the study of spoken presentational/existential *SEIN* structures.

2. Theoretical Background, Terminology, and Analytic Categories.

2.1. Linguistic Approach.

The present study works with background principles common to usage-based approaches and earlier perceptions of grammar maintaining that linguistic structures cannot be studied in isolation from meaning, function, context, use, and users (Barlow & Kemmer 2000, Halliday 1985, Langacker 1987, Palmer 1968). The term *structure* has been used above as a theory-neutral, general term to refer to form. CONSTRUCTIONS are considered theoretical primitives and conceived of as form-function pairings, that is, different syntactic constructions enable language users to perform different communicative acts. Carving out constructions involves complex decisions on the basis of structure and function and raises the question of linguistic gradience (Aarts 2004, 2007; Miller 2010). These issues surface throughout the discussion, but the main aim is to provide a description of observable linguistic facts. While such description necessarily involves theory (general as outlined above and specific in relation to the linguistic phenomena under investigation), I do not adopt or develop a particular framework in this article.[2] Since spoken language is not analyzed in terms of sentences, which is a unit relevant for written language, the term *clause* is used instead, which can be

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[2] See Miller 2010 for a discussion of the relationship between description and theory.

applied to both the spoken and written structures in question (see chapter 2 of Miller & Weinert 2009 for a full discussion).

2.2. *Presentation versus Predication.*

A detailed typology of the pragmatics and semantics of presentational structures is beyond the scope of this article, but a brief outline is needed to clarify how terms are used in the analysis of German.[3] As stated in the introduction, the purpose of presentationals and existentials is not to predicate something of an entity; instead, they are devices that introduce or focus on entities or events.[4] Existential constructions are considered presentational in this pragmatic sense since they introduce or focus on new entities (Lumsden 1988). Other types of presentationals include situationally/exophorically used clauses with proximal deictics (*hier ist ein Schirm*/*here's an umbrella*) and constructions with definite NPs (*da ist dein Papa*/*there's your dad*), each with their own specific function. In terms of semantics, existentials can be said to assert existence per se, and they can assert existence or presence in a location.

2.3. *Existence versus Location.*

This section goes to the heart of the characterization of *es gibt* and SEIN constructions. One of the main issues to be clarified is the distinction between existence and location, especially in *da SEIN*. While languages need to be analyzed on their own terms, it is nevertheless instructive to take into account work on English *there BE*. Lakoff (1987) distinguishes between deictic *there*, which is locative, and existential *there*, arguing that deictic *there* is prototypical and that existential *there* is based on

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[3] In the literature on the topic, both *presentative* and *presentational* are used. Here *presentational* is preferred since it allows the adverb form *presentationally*.

[4] The introduction of new entities as subjects of predicational structures follows restrictions that have been related to information structure. According to Lambrecht (1994), presentationals are useful because they avoid the processing difficulties of "out-of-the-blue" sentences with dispreferred new (sentence) topics (for example, *a lorry is in the street* uttered as a conversation opener). Firbas (1992) proposes a range of distinctions, accounting for various levels of acceptability of such clauses.

deictic *there*.[5] He also suggests that speakers may use distinguishing properties of the two types directly, without using prototype structures. Lakoff (1987) and Biber et al. (1999) adopt similar criteria for distinguishing existential *there* from deictic/locative *there*. Deictic *there* refers to real or abstract locations. Existential *there* is typically unstressed; it has no locative meaning and it functions as a subject. It can co-occur with locative *there*, as in *there's still no water there*.

Lambrecht (1994:179) argues that "mere assertion of the existence of some entity" is a relatively rare communicative act, and that asserting presence in a location is more common. By "mere existence" Lambrecht means ontological existence. His example is *there are cockroaches*, and such bare existential statements may indeed be rare. However, the assertion in example 6a—*there are blue-eyed cats*—is more noteworthy and hence communicatively useful. This applies to kinds of concrete entities, but also to unique concrete entities, as, for example, in 13. Indeed, in Weinert 2004, existentials feature prominently in constructions with relative clauses that describe unique entities, and while Biber et al. (1999) do not give a breakdown of *there*-constructions, they note that in conversation, 40% of *there*-constructions are postmodified.

(13) a. is there a tool for taking the core out of a pineapple
      b. there is a lift powered by water

Example 13a queries the existence of a special tool, and example 13b can be used to focus on the fact that such a thing as a lift which is powered by water is technically possible. Abstract entities in particular are asserted to exist or not, for example, *there are two possibilities*, *there is a solution*, *there is no alternative*. While such uses may not be strictly ontological (that is, it is not a question of whether the concept *solution* etc., exists), they are effectively existential, with the entities in question being specific, rather than generic or conceptual. In other words, existential constructions are motivated from a semantic point of view, not only

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[5] Lakoff (1987) examines a wide range of *there*-constructions, which he relates to the two central types, that is, deictic and existential. He uses *there*-constructions as a case study in support of a cognitive model of grammar which accommodates central and radial categories of clause structures.

in terms of the information structure of clauses as part of coherent or interpretable discourse.[6]

Nevertheless, the question still remains whether existential *there BE* is devoid of locative meaning. Lumsden (1988) argues that it does exhibit locative adverbial properties. For example, a *there BE*-clause may be interpreted as asserting existence in a location through the prior discourse (*what can you tell me about the zoo? there are giraffes*). Even ontological existential *there* can be seen to express location *somewhere*. As evidence, Lumsden compares *there BE* with the verb *exist*, arguing that the occurrence of *exist* with locative adverbials is severely restricted, as in ?*tigers exist in India*, whereas it is not with *there*. In contrast, temporal adverbials are compatible with *exist*, as in *computers did not exist in those days*.

This view seems to be at odds with the one expressed by Lyons (1975), Lakoff (1987), and Biber et al. (1999), who see the co-occurrence of locative and existential *there* as evidence that existential *there* has lost its locative meaning. Bolinger (1977) and Halliday & Hasan (1976) also argue against the locative semantics of existential *there*. Lakoff, who distinguishes deictic (locative) *there* from existential *there* and analyzes each in terms of prototypicality, conceives of a locative-nonlocative continuum. Pfenninger (2009:303) comments that with *SEIN* and *da*-constructions "we are confronted with the existential nature of the locative and the locative nature of the existential."

2.4. Analytic Framework.

The present study sees the *es gibt*- and *SEIN*-constructions under investigation as manifesting existential and locative meaning to different degrees, both across and within classes. When location is backgrounded, existence may be foregrounded; when location is foregrounded, presence may be foregrounded (but not exclusively). When location is back-grounded in *da SEIN*, *da* is nevertheless considered to be deictic. If

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[6] Whether a particular instance of a construction foregrounds existence in a location or presence in a location easily turns into a philosophical issue and depends on subtle factors, including the speaker's and hearer's knowledge (for example, their world knowledge, shared knowledge between speaker and hearer, expert or specific knowledge, etc.), discourse context, and lexis. It is therefore beyond the scope of this study to apply the distinction to each corpus example.

abstraction away from the concrete, physical, and situationally present is conceived of as opening the potential for existential meaning, then a range of factors become relevant to the existential-locative dimension: whether entities are situationally or textually evoked and whether they are concrete versus abstract; whether locations are explicit versus implicit, specific versus vague, and physical versus metaphorical. This framework is elucidated and illustrated in full throughout the analysis.

2.5. Enumeratives.
Existentials are associated with indefinite NPs since they introduce new entities. Lumsden (1988) refers to existentials which contain definite NPs as *enumerative* and argues for a pragmatic account in terms of implicature: The speaker reminds the hearer of the existence of an entity in order to indicate its relevance in a given discourse context, as shown in 14a from Lumsden (1988:224). Enumeratives also occur in German, as in 14b,c.

(14) a. what could I give my sister for her birthday
         there's john's book on birdwatching

    b. wer   kümmert sich   denn um   ihn
       who   cares   themselves then about him
       'who is looking after him then'

       da   ist doch   die tante
       there is   MODAL PARTICLE the aunt
       'there's always his aunt'

Enumeratives are included in the present study in order to provide an indication of frequency, but they are not studied in detail.

3. Background to German *Es Gibt-* and SEIN-Constructions.
The German Duden 2005 reference grammar does not single out the *es gibt-* and SEIN-constructions; Weinrich's text grammar (2005) only has a section on *es gibt*, and Durrell (2002), who specifically looks at the translation of *there BE*, does not discuss *da SEIN* in its own right. Weinrich (2005) considers *es gibt* to have a presentational function, serving to introduce and draw attention to nouns. Durrell (2002:372–373)

observes that "*es gibt* indicates existence in general" and "*es ist/sind* indicates the presence of something at a particular place and time." Furthermore, he claims that *es ist/sind* refers to permanent or temporary presence in a definite, limited place or temporary presence in a large area, and to record events and weather conditions. He adds that these can also be expressed using *es gibt*, which usually indicates emphasis on the thing, rather than the place, marks the event as exceptional, or points to the future. Durrell also states that sentences with *es ist/es sind* require an indication of place, which is often provided by *da*.[7]

Research on the whole does not distinguish systematically between spoken and written language (for instance, Czinglar 1998, 2002), and work on *da* SEIN is sparse. Lambrecht (1994) only mentions *da* SEIN in a short footnote. Erdmann (1979) provides a taxonomic overview of *there*-clauses and corresponding German structures (see also Zydatiß 1978, 1981 for a language learning perspective). His contrastive analysis does not make use of supporting text or corpus analysis, however. Erdman notes that *da* can be an alternative to *es* but considers this use infrequent. He furthermore suggests that in certain contexts, German uses *haben*, as in *dein Strumpf hat ein großes Loch* 'your sock has a big hole' versus *es ist ein großes Loch in deinem Strumpf*, lit. 'it is a big hole in your sock'.[8] He does not consider *da ist ein großes Loch in deinem Strumpf*, 'there is a big hole in your sock' as a viable alternative. Weinert 2007 has a section that argues for existential *da*, as part of a wider study of *da* in spoken German.

The most comprehensive recent analysis of written English and German existential constructions is provided by Pfenninger (2009), who examines examples from contemporary English fiction and their German translations as well as their elicited translation.[9] Pfenninger argues that

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[7] Notions such as "permanent or temporary presence" and a distinction between "definite and limited places" and "large areas" may be relevant (Durrell 2002: 372–373), but applying the distinctions to the data proved far from straight-forward, and it is beyond the scope of this study to operationalize them.

[8] The *es hat*-construction appears to be a feature of certain varieties of German, such as Southern German and Swiss German.

[9] The research for the present article was part of a larger project that preceded the publication of Pfenninger 2009. I would like to thank Ralph Salkie for drawing my attention to her work.

High German does not feature a prototypical existential construction equivalent in syntactic and pragmatic function and semantics to the English existential *there*-construction. Pfenninger considers SEIN as a verb of location that requires a locative complement since her data contain only three counter-examples (that is, where an existential meaning resides in SEIN). Pfenninger reports the regular occurrence of the existential *da*-construction. She suggests that it has a locative flavor and assigns the locative function to the whole construction, not to adverbial *da*, which often does not provide a specific location. Furthermore, she sees no clear dividing line between existential and locative meanings in SEIN-constructions, and between the existential *es gibt* and the existential *da*-constructions.

Some functional differences between *es gibt* and SEIN-constructions are to be expected, however, given their lexical make-up and origins. Previous work lends support to the view that *es gibt* is not historically associated with presence in a location (in contrast to *there* and *da*). The existential meaning can be conceived of as an extension of giving, that is, the result of giving is the manifestation or provision of an object (Joseph 2000; Newman 1996, 1997; Pfenninger 2009). This extension may have been from the sense of *yield* attested in late Middle High German and *providence* that *gives*, *provides*, and *produces* (Newman 1996). It is not clear whether *give* itself may have developed from *have*, *hold*, or *take*. The origins of *es gibt* account for what Pfenninger terms its dynamic force, exemplified by 15.

(15) a. es gibt   schnee
        it   gives snow
        'there will be snow' 'there's snow on the way'

     b. es gibt   bestimmt   ärger
        it   gives very-likely trouble
        'there will be trouble' 'it is bound to lead to trouble'

Pfenninger argues that such cases involve actions and processes leading to the coming into existence of an entity. They are associated with cause and consequence, related to the providential meaning of *geben*. Pfenninger considers this phenomenon a case of persistence in grammaticalization (Hopper & Traugott 2003). In the present article, the

term *contingent* is used since existence is seen as sourced. I proceed now to a corpus analysis of spoken and written German, with a focus on spoken language.

4. The Data.

The main corpus data represent the German spoken in Germany, including over 140 speakers from a variety of regions and social backgrounds. The corpus contains ca. 180,000 words: 60,000 from informal conversations, 60,000 from semiformal and formal television and radio discussions, 30,000 from formal academic supervision sessions, and 30,000 from map task data, that is, informal goal-oriented dialogues involving a spatial task. The length of the spoken language transcriptions ranges from 500–5000 words. All of the data sets involve spontaneously produced spoken language of entire conversations or dialogues. Of particular interest is informal, everyday conversation, which is the form of spoken language common to all unimpaired humans; *da* is especially frequent in this type of data (Weinert 2007). At the same time, the issue of formality may be relevant with respect to abstract entities and the expression of ontological existence, hence the inclusion of semiformal and more formal spoken data. The map task allows for a more detailed investigation of the relevance of concrete entities and explicit locations. In the task, one speaker instructs the other on how to draw a route around various landmarks. They each have a map, screened from each other's view. The speakers are aware that their maps may be different. While the map task data are produced in the context of a set task, they are nevertheless spontaneous.

In order to provide overall frequency comparison with relatively formal written language, ca. 100,000 words from various written sources were also examined: 30,000 words from broadsheet newspapers and leisure magazines, 30,000 words from fiction, 30,000 words from academic and scholarly texts, and 10,000 words from travel guides. The latter were chosen since they involve locations and landmarks as well as some route descriptions. The texts are between 500 and 3000 words long. In the case of novels and book-length academic texts, only the first 2000 words were examined in order to ensure representativeness. Beyond genre, dates, and topics, specific texts were selected randomly.

Table 1 provides an overview of both the spoken and the written data sources. For the spoken data, the column *Interlocutors* gives the number

of speakers per individual conversation/discussion, etc., and the total
number of speakers for each entire data set is listed underneath (hence
the figures do not add up). Since the written corpora include over 50
texts, full sources and references are not provided. The sports commen-
taries are only referred to in section 8.

Data	Words	Inter-locutors	Year	Data Sources/ Compilers/ References
Spoken	180,000			
Conversation Everyday, face-to-face	35,000	3–4	2006– 2007	Anna Linthe, Janine Soffner, Regina Weinert
Everyday, face-to-face	10,000	2–4	1960– 1974	Freiburger Corpus (FK), Institut für deutsche Sprache, Mannheim
Informal interview, face-to-face	5,000	2	1990	Dittmar and Bredel (1990); on-line corpus (has since been removed)
Everyday, telephone	10,000	2	1977– 1978	Brons-Albert (1984)
Total number of speakers		41 speakers		
Discussions Formal/ semiformal, public TV/radio	20,000	2–6	2007	Regina Weinert (German networks *ARD*, *ZDF*, *NDR*, *WDR*, *RTL*)
Formal/ semiformal, public TV/radio	40,000	3–5+	1960– 1974	Freiburger Corpus (FK), Institut für deutsche Sprache, Mannheim
Total number of speakers		ca. 50 speakers		

Map task	30,000	2	1994	Gillian Razzaki, Regina Weinert
Total number of speakers		14 speakers		
Academic supervision sessions	30,000	2	1997	Andrea Krengel
Total number of speakers		38 speakers		
Sport commentaries	10,000	1–3	2000–2007	Torsten Müller, Regina Weinert
Written	100,000			
Newspapers/ magazines	10,000		1970–1999	*Spiegel, Zeit, Welt, Tageszeitung, Brigitte*
	20,000		2000–2012	ditto
Fiction	10,000		1974–1990	(alphabetically) Braun, Dückers, Frank, Giordano, Grass, Hein, Kehlmann,
	20,000		1997–2012	Königsdorf, Lenz, Reimann, Schwanitz, Tellkamp, Walser, Weiler, Wolf
Academic/ scholarly texts	10,000		1970–1980	Books and articles on language, history, literature, psychology, environmental
	20,000		1982–2012	and social sciences
Travel guides	10,000		1990–2011	*Cyklos, DuMont, Merian, Polyglott, Viva*

Table 1. Spoken and written data sources.

5. Overview of Results.

Table 2 provides an overview of the frequency of German presentational/ existential *es gibt*, *da* SEIN, *locative* SEIN, *zero-locative* SEIN, and *es* SEIN involving entities. The table presents raw figures and figures per 10,000 words in brackets. The entire corpus was analyzed manually, with the aid

of some word searches, but ensuring that the data were read and coded as running text. The study comments on major trends but does not aim to differentiate statistically among genres with respect to the various constructions.

Spoken	total es gibt	total SEIN	*da* SEIN	loc. SEIN	zero-loc. SEIN	es SEIN
Conversation 60,000	82 (13.6)	69 (11.5)	48 (8)	13 (2.2)	5 (0.8)	3 (0.5)
Discussion 60,000	82 (13.6)	20 (3.3)	11 (1.8)	4 (0.7)	0	5 (0.8)
Academic 30,000	34 (11.3)	19 (6.3)	14 (4.6)	1 (0.3)	0	2 (0.7)
Map Task 30,000	3 (1)	51 (17)	29 (9.6)	21 (7)	0	1 (0.3)
Total spoken 180,000	**201 (11.2)**	**159 (8.8)**	**102 (5.7)**	**39 (2.2)**	**5 (0.3)**	**11 (0.6)**
Written						
News 30,000	39 (13)	4 (1.3)	2 (0.6)	1 (0.3)	0	0
Fiction 30,0000	26 (8.6)	2 (0.6)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	0	0
Academic 30,000	36 (12)	2 (0.6)	0	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	0
Travel 10,000	7 (7)	0	0	0	0	0
Total written 100,000	**108 (10.8)**	**8 (0.8)**	**3 (0.3)**	**3 (0.3)**	**1 (0.1)**	**0**

Table 2. Presentational/existential constructions in German.

Overall, *es gibt* appears with more or less equal frequency in the spoken and written data, that is, 11.2 versus 10.8 per 10,000 words.[10] In

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[10] The spoken data include another eight cases of *es gibt*, which are excluded from the analysis since they are pragmatic formulas such as *das gibt's gar nicht* used in the sense of 'that's ridiculous/astonishing'. In their discourse context,

contrast, *SEIN*-constructions are typical of the spoken data only, outnumbering written instances by a factor of eleven. The picture for the spoken data is intriguing. *Es gibt* and the combined *SEIN*-constructions are fairly close in frequency, with 11.2 versus 8.8 per 10,000 words. *Da SEIN* reaches almost 6 per 10,000 words and is the most frequent *SEIN*-construction in all spoken data sets. It may not be so surprising that in the context of concrete route descriptions required by the map task, *locative SEIN* and *da SEIN*-constructions are used. Yet *da SEIN* is also well represented in the academic supervision sessions and particularly common in everyday, informal conversation. *Es SEIN* is rare, with a higher number in formal discussions. *SEIN*-constructions without a locative are also rare, with only 11 cases, including six *es SEIN*-constructions. While the figures need to be interpreted with caution, they suggest that *es gibt* may be distributed fairly evenly in spoken genres (excluding the specialized map task). In contrast, *da SEIN* and *locative SEIN*, and even *zero-locative SEIN*, are more prominent in conversation, where *es gibt*- and *SEIN*-constructions are close in frequency. This would appear to be an important finding, given the status of everyday, informal spoken language as the predominant means of linguistic communication. The findings with respect to the conversation data did not suggest that *da SEIN* has become more frequent or *es gibt* less frequent over the last forty years, although the corpus data are too stratified for quantitative/ statistical comparison of two points in time.

6. Analysis: *Es Gibt NP.*
This analysis is based on the 201 spoken and 108 written *es gibt*-clauses. Most NPs in the spoken data are indefinite, with 35, or 17%, being definite (compared with 5, or 4.6%, in the written data). Definites are used for the enumerative function as in 14b above. The spoken data contain 10, or 5%, contingent instances, and for the written data the figure is 6, or 5.5%. Table 3 provides an overview of three main functions/features of *es gibt*-clauses relating to existence and location (excluding contingent case; they all involve implicit locations in the data). The labels *explicit* and *implicit* refer to the presence or absence, respectively, of an expression of location (physical or metaphorical)

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they do not serve to deny the existence of an entity. Five of these occur in the conversations.

within the *es gibt*-clause itself. The table also shows the distribution of abstract and concrete entities for all clauses. The percentages out of the total have been calculated separately for the spoken and written data and should therefore be read from left to right.

	Ontological existence	Existence or presence explicit location	Existence or presence implicit location	**Total**
spoken	3 1.5%	82 43%	106 55.5%	**191** **100%**
written	3 3%	38 37%	61 60%	**102** **100%**
	abstract entities	concrete entities		
spoken	84 42%	117 58%		**201** **100%**
written	61 56%	47 44%		**108** **100%**

Table 3. *Es gibt NP* in German.

In the spoken data, concrete entities are slightly more frequent overall than abstract ones, 117 (58%) versus 84 (42%), but both are well represented. Not surprisingly, the picture is reversed for the more formal discussions (50 versus 32 cases). In the written data, 47 entities, or 44%, are concrete and 61, or 56%, are abstract. Ontological *es gibt* is rare in both the spoken and written data, while implicit locations are slightly less frequent in the spoken than in the written data, with 55.5% versus 60%. The figures do not suggest very pronounced differences between spoken and written German in terms of the examined features. The various *es gibt*-clauses are illustrated with examples from the spoken data below.

6.1. Asserting Ontological Existence.
Es gibt is used only three times to assert ontological existence—or indeed nonexistence—in the universe, as in 16 and 17. The utterances are contextualized, however, rather than coming "out of the blue."

(16) a. es gibt   einen ara und nen kea
        it gives an   ara and a   kea
        'there is an ara and a kea'

   b. es gibt   keinen nachtvogel
        it gives no   night-bird
        'there's no such thing as a night bird'

The speaker of 16a was completing a crossword and already had the letter *a* in third position of the required three-letter word. Example 16b was used by a mother talking to her young son who was scared of sleeping on his own because the night bird might harm him.

     Example 17 can also be considered as asserting (the necessity for) ontological existence. It was uttered as part of a discussion about the difficulties of being a teacher and the suggestion that few people are suited to the job.

(17) es muss ja   lehrer   geben
       it   must   MODAL PARTICLE teachers give
       'there have to be teachers'

While ontological cases are rare in usage, there is no question that they are acceptable. Furthermore, their use is semantically motivated.

6.2. Asserting Existence/Presence in a Location.
The large majority of *es gibt*-constructions assert existence or presence in a location, although there are no cases of situationally evoked entities in the data. The examples in 18 below illustrate the range of *es gibt* instances. Abstract entities are typically associated with metaphorical locations.

(18) a. *Concrete entity in an explicit physical location*
       im   hafen gab es immer so   kantinen
       in-the port   gave it   always PARTICLE canteens
       'in the port there used to be canteens'

b. *Abstract entity in an explicit metaphorical location*
  da   gibts   irgendwelche faktoren
  there gives-it some   factors
  'there are certain criteria'
  [Context: admission criteria for a university course]

c. *Concrete entity in an implicit location*
  es gibt ja   auch konfessionelle krankenhäuser
  it gives MODAL PARTICLE also denominational hospitals
  'there are also denominational hospitals'
  [Location: Germany]

d. *Abstract entity in an implicit location/situation/context*
  gibt   es soziale sicherheitssysteme
  gives it social   security-systems
  'are there any social security systems'
  [Location: an unspecified country]

While temporal expressions can be considered as denoting metaphorical locations, they have not been counted as explicit locations (see example 19). The reason is that temporal expressions can and do co-occur with explicit locations.

(19)   *Implicit context + time*
    es gibt   gute   sicherheitsbindungen jetzt neuerdings
    it gives good   safetybindings   now   recently
    'there are good new safety bindings now'
    [Context: skiing]

The interaction of spatial and temporal expressions in presentationals/ existentials is left to a separate study.

6.3. Asserting Contingent Existence/Presence.
Although the proportion of contingent *es gibt* is low in the data, it is not negligible (around 5%). This function of *es gibt* is shown in 20.

(20) a. es gibt   noch nachtisch
         it gives   still dessert
         'there's dessert to come'

     b. wenn du   das nicht annimmst gibts   ärger
         if   you that not   accept   gives-it trouble
         'if you don't take that there'll be trouble'

Note that 20a could mean either 'there is still some dessert left' (that is, dessert is existent or present) or 'there will be dessert' (that is, dessert will be provided). The latter meaning was intended by the speaker and cook of a family meal, advising the others not to eat too much and to leave room for dessert. Example 20b was uttered jokingly while the speaker gave the addressee some money as a present. The contingent function is not be analyzed further in this paper.

    To summarize, *es gibt* involves a fairly even proportion of concrete and abstract entities and slightly more implicit than explicit locations in both the spoken and written data. This suggests that within the construction, location is regularly backgrounded and existence/presence—foregrounded.

7. Analysis: *SEIN*-Constructions in Spoken German.
SEIN-constructions are a feature of the spoken as opposed to the written data and are especially frequent in everyday conversation. *Es SEIN* and *zero-locative SEIN* are rare, accounting for 7% of *SEIN*-constructions each (recall that some *zero-locative SEIN* are, in fact, instances of *es SEIN*). While *locative SEIN* is certainly not marginal—it accounts for ca. 25% of the *SEIN*-constructions—*da SEIN* is most frequent overall with ca. 64% of the total. Although *da SEIN* is found in all data types, it occurs most frequently in informal conversation and the map task, and least frequently in more formal discussions. It is also well represented in the academic supervision sessions. In the following section, I proceed from the least frequent to the most frequent construction to allow for a coherent later discussion.

7.1. Es SEIN.
The data contain only 11 cases of *es SEIN*. Both concrete and abstract entities are involved (five versus six). Six examples do not include a

location, as in 21–23. Example 21, from a formal discussion, refers to a
time in the past when people experienced a greater sense of security.

(21) es war also   eine größere sicherheit
  it was therefore a   greater   security
  'there was a greater sense of security'

 In 22, from an informal conversation, the previous discourse makes
it clear that a specific railway station is implied and that the *wo*-clause is
a restrictive relative clause.

(22) es war   kein   schalter
  it was   no   desk

  wo   man fahrkarten verkaufte
  where one   tickets   sold

  'there wasn't a desk where they sold tickets'

 A few cases include metaphorical locations, as in 23 from a formal
discussion, but none involves an explicit physical location.

(23) es war   eine wirklich geistige   gemeinschaft
  it was   a   real   intellectual common-ground

  zwischen den beiden
  between   the   two

  'there was a real intellectual bond between the two'

Es SEIN is rare, but possibly varied. It is used with both concrete and
abstract entities, both explicit and implicit, as well as metaphorical and
physical locations.

7.2. Zero-Locative SEIN.
In addition to the six cases of *es SEIN* that do not involve a location, there
are five other instances of *zero-locative SEIN*. In two cases, the clause-

initial position is filled by a temporal deictic, as in 24a. In three cases, this position is empty, as in 24b.

(24) a. danach   war   kein schöner tag   mehr
       after-that was   no   nice   day   more
       'after that there wasn't another day with good weather'

   b. sind ja   so viele kontrollen   im   augenblick
       are   MODAL PARTICLE so many radar-controls at-the moment
       '[there] are such a lot of radar-controls at the moment'

Pfenninger (2009) considers examples without an additional constituent inside the VP ungrammatical. She sees this ungrammaticality as the historical result of the emergence of the existential *es gibt*-construction and the grammaticalization process of SEIN. Recall that Pfenninger's study is based on written language and does not specifically consider potential differences between spoken and written data. Although such constructions are clearly marginal in the spoken data of the present study, they do occur (see 10 and 22 above). Further investigation of the factors contributing to the acceptability of such structures and of the contexts favoring their use is desirable.

7.3. Locative SEIN.
There are 39 instances of *locative* SEIN, which, by definition, contain an explicit location. The discussion data yield the only case of a metaphorical location, which occurs with an abstract entity. Not surprisingly, all 21 cases in the map task involve physical locations. Speakers often verify their landmarks, as in 25a. Example 25b comes from the conversation data.

(25) a. zwischen startpunkt und palme   ist n brunnen
       between   start-point and palm tree is a   well
       'between starting-point and palm tree there is a well'
       [speakers often use the landmark labels on maps like proper nouns]

   b. im   bad   ist kein licht
       in-the bathroom is no   light
       'in the bathroom there's no light'

The relatively low number of *locative SEIN* may seem surprising. There are two likely reasons, which are related. First, in presentational/existential constructions, the NPs which refer to the entities in question typically do not occur in clause-initial position. Second, there is evidence that in spoken German, by far the most common elements in clause-initial position in main clauses are pronouns, deictic adverbs, or other cohesive devices (Weinert 2007, 2010).[11] There are, then, two opposing forces at work in *locative SEIN*-clauses. On the one hand, the locative should appear in clause-initial position, which happens in 32 out of 39 cases. On the other hand, lexical locatives should be less frequent than deictic adverbs since proforms are preferred in clause-initial position in main clauses. Indeed, *da SEIN* occurs over two-and-a-half times more frequently than *locative SEIN*.

The occurrence of four temporal deictics and two discourse connectors in initial position of main clauses with *locative SEIN* is also consistent with this preference. (One locative occurs postverbally, with the NP complement in clause-initial position. One locative occurs in a verb-final complement clause). I can only suggest, tentatively, that the construction largely involves concrete entities in physical locations (but the data contain no examples of situationally evoked entities). These features can be considered to strengthen the locative nature of *locative SEIN*, and hence the presence of entities.

7.4. Da SEIN.

Da SEIN is the most frequent of the existential/presentational *SEIN*-constructions overall and in each data set. Only those cases are included where *da* is either in clause-initial position or in the nearest to it available slot. With *da* in final position the clause is not presentational (as in *gestern war jemand da,* lit. 'yesterday was someone there'). In this case, *da* has what I call "attendant" meaning, denoting presence versus absence. The data include a few cases where *da* follows a locative expression (as in *im kühlschrank da is saft* 'in the fridge there is juice').

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[11] Lexical adverbs account for only 8% of elements in clause-initial position in a sample of 2000 main clauses from informal conversations and semiformal public discussions. Fewer than 5% of these lexical adverbs are locative.

These clauses are classed as *locative SEIN*, and *da* can be considered to have a focusing function.[12]

The data mostly contain cases where *da* appears in initial position of a declarative main clause, as in *da ist ein berg* 'there is a mountain' (76 out of 102 instances, or 75%). This position is not always available syntactically. Therefore I also include cases where *da* immediately follows the finite verb of a main clause that requires subject-verb inversion, as in *dann ist da ein berg* 'then is there a mountain' and *ist da ein berg* 'is there a mountain'. There are six declarative clauses and 11 yes/no questions. In eight cases, *da* immediately follows the conjunction in a verb-final clause, as in *ob da ein berg ist* 'whether there a mountain is'. In one clause, the NP complement is in initial position. Three cases of *da* are stressed—they are used to clarify a previously mentioned location— and the rest are unstressed. Recordings were not available for the data from Brons-Albert 1984, which contain thirteen cases of *da SEIN*. The transcriptions and content suggest that these cases are not stressed, though this cannot be guaranteed. Table 4 presents an overview of the main functions and features of *da SEIN*-constructions.

Ontological existence	Existence or presence vague *da*	Existence or presence specific *da*	Existence or presence *da* + locative	Existence or presence situational	**Total**
0	39 37%	45 43%	12 14%	6 6%	**102 100%**

Table 4. *Da SEIN NP* in spoken German.

Only two enumerative cases occur; in all other cases, the NPs are indefinite. Although almost 75% of entities are concrete, the 25% made up by abstract entities are not negligible. In the case of *es gibt*—which does not in itself carry a locative element—I distinguish between explicit

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[12] See Weinert 2007 for further discussion of the focusing function of *da*. The analysis of *da* in various clause-internal positions in *SEIN*-clauses is in fact complex and its function highly dependent on lexis and context. Note that this discussion raises the issue of whether the various functions are assigned to *da* or to the whole construction and it hints at the gradience of constructions. These issues cannot be resolved here.

and implicit locations on the basis of the presence or absence of a locative expression within the *es gibt*-clause. Since *da* can function as a locative adverb, its reference to location is classed as (more or less) vague or (more or less) specific. Vague uses can be seen to background location whereas specific uses foreground location.[13] This is illustrated shortly. Eighty percent of specific locations are physical, while 20% are metaphorical (vague locations are difficult to classify, although there are some clear cases, exemplified below). Importantly, while concrete entities and physical locations predominate, ca. 37% of *da SEIN*-clauses do not involve a specific location. As suggested in section 2, any abstraction away from specific locative meaning can be considered to open up the potential for existential meaning. There are no cases of ontological existence, however.

Fifteen *da SEIN*-clauses contain an additional expression of location: eight are lexical expressions, five are prepositional deictics (*dabei* 'with it', *drin* 'in it', etc.), and one clause contains one of each. There is also one case of *da* co-occurring with *hier* 'here'. These expressions of location appear within the clause in postverbal position, that is, where the locative expression is intonationally integrated into the clause and *da* is unstressed.

The various cases are illustrated in 26–33, including the important distinction between vague reference and metaphorical location. Further discussion in relation to the backgrounding of location is also provided. The data include only four cases of situationally evoked entities, as in 26, uttered in the addressee's home.

(26)   *Situationally evoked concrete entity*
         da   is ne mücke
         there is a   mosquito

In the map task data, 22 instances of *da SEIN* refer to a previously mentioned location involving concrete entities, as in 27: Although *unten rechts* refers to an area rather than a point, it nevertheless indicates a specific location.

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[13] It is a moot point whether it is location or the locative meaning of *da* that is backgrounded/foregrounded—it amounts to the same thing.

(27) *Concrete entity in a specific location*
      fang unten rechts an   da   ist n toter baum
      start bottom right verb-particle there is   a dead tree
      'start at the bottom right hand corner | there is a dead tree'

The locations are varied in type, ranging from landmarks, to areas on the map, and to the end points of movement in a particular direction, as in *du gehst zwei zentimeter nach rechts* 'you go two centimeters to the right'. Constituents expressing such locations typically occur immediately prior to *da*. Example 28 comes from a conversation—*da* refers to *im westteil* (of Berlin) and the entity is abstract.

(28) *Abstract entity in a specific location*
      einkaufn geh ick doch   lieba   in   westteil
      shopping go   I   MODAL PARTICLE preferably in-the west-part

→   weil da   is ürgentwie mehr vakaufskultur
      coz   there is somehow   more   shopping culture

      'for my shopping I'd rather go to west berlin coz there's more of a shopping culture somehow'

Example 29 illustrates the combination of an abstract entity (*erscheinung*) and a metaphorical location (the age range *von zwölf bis zwanzig*). Speakers are discussing the fact that children are physically very active until they reach puberty. Only translations are provided since the example is long. Glosses would obscure the main point of the analysis. In A1, | marks the boundaries of a comment which splits a main clause.

(29) *Abstract entity in a specific metaphorical location*
      A1: schwieriger | und das is jetzt im augenblick bei uns der fall |
           wird s im jugendlichen alter | also von

           'more difficult | and that is our case at the moment | it get's
           more difficult when they reach adolescence | that is from'

B1: zwölf bis
     'twelve to'

A2: zwölf bis zwanzig
     'twelve to twenty'

→   und da is eine eigenartige erscheinung
         'and there is a peculiar development'

         die werden in der pubertät und nach der pubertät im grunde
         fast alle bewegungsträge
         'during puberty and after puberty they all basically become
         averse to exercise'

    While *da SEIN* is certainly used for asserting existence and presence
in specific locations, *da* regularly has a vague locative function. This
occurs even in the map task, when participants discover a mismatch be-
tween their landmarks, as in 30. Again, only translations are provided in
this long example.

(30) *Concrete entity in a vague physical location*
      A1: also von dem zaun | also von diesem rechten ende vom zaun
           'so from the fence | like from this right edge of the fence'
      B1: ja
           'yes'
      A2: gehst du nach rechts | und zwar am aussichtspunkt vorbei so
           ein bisschen
           'you go to the right | that is passing the view point like a bit'
      B2: moment | ich bin noch jetzt
           'hang on | I'm now still'
      A3: du bist am zaun
           'you're at the fence'
      B3: rechts neben dem zaun
           'on the right of the fence'
      A4: ja
           'yes'

      B4: da müsste ich doch nach links gehen um zum aussichtspunkt
            zu kommen
            'so I'd have to go to the left in order to get to the view point'

→   A5: ach da ist ah moment | da ist noch n anderer aussichtspunkt
            'och there is | ah hang on there is another viewpoint'

      B5: also mein aussichtspunkt ist
            'well my view point is'

      A6: du hast nur oben
            'you only have [one] at the top'

      B7: links oben
            'top left'

      A8: ok ich hab den auch | aber ich hab noch einen | der ist ganz |
            der ist im süden vom see
            'ok I have that one as well | but I have another one | it's all the
            way | it's south of the lake'

In 30, A5, *da ist noch n anderer aussichtspunkt* 'there is another view point', foregrounds the existence/presence of the entity. The hearer can assume that the entity in question is located on the map, but the precise location is specified following the assertion in A8 as to the existence of an additional view point.

    In example 31, A1 is a conversation opener, with speaker A just having returned to B's flat from shopping. On the basis of the intonation (as well as local knowledge), A2 is to be interpreted as 'on the right—next to the café' (not 'to the right of the café'), indicated by the marker |.

(31) *Concrete entity in a vague physical location*
      A1: da   is n neuer gemüseladen
            there is a new   greengrocer
            'there is a new greengrocer'

      B1: wo   denn
            where then (MODAL PARTICLE)
            'whereabouts'

      A2: gleich hier unten rechts | neben dem café
            just   here below right | beside the café
            'just down here on the right | next to the café'

It is the existence of a new greengrocer which is news, and the location is vague. The speaker may or may not be thinking about the precise location while uttering A1, depending on what she might have said next had speaker B not asked her to specify the location. The location is not accessible to B, although he may assume a location in the vicinity of the flat where A has been shopping. In other words, the role location plays is highly context-dependent.

The bulk of evidence for presentational/existential *da SEIN* in the data comes in the form of examples such as 30 and 31, where *da* is vague and the clause does not contain any other locative expressions. The analysis of examples that contain an additional locative expression is somewhat complex. I confine myself to two cases. In most clauses in the data, *da* could be considered to refer to a previously mentioned location, as in 32. The speaker has been looking up book titles by a particular author on the web pages of an on-line shop, and *da* refers to this shop.

(32) da   sind jede   menge   drin
     there are every   amount   there-in
     'there are loads [of titles] in there'

At the same time, in 32, *da* is separate from the prepositional *drin*, which is a common feature of spoken German.[14] The alternative order, as in *dadrin sind jede menge*, is more like *locative SEIN*, albeit that it is partly deictic. The separation of *da* from the preposition, which has semantic content, allows *da SEIN* to focus on the entity (via the NP) without intervening material.

The next question is how to analyze clauses which have an additional lexical expression of location, as in 33.

(33) er   wollte ja   anrufen
     he   wanted MODAL PARTICLE   ring

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[14] If the preposition has an initial vowel (*in* 'in', *auf* 'on', etc.), the prepositional deictic includes a linking /r/ or /dr/, as in *darin* or *dadrin* (compare with *damit* 'there-with' or *dazwischen* 'there-between').

aber da   war kein geld   mehr   auf der karte
but   there was no   money more   on the card

'he was going to ring | but there wasn't any money left on the phone
card'

In 33, *da* can only be considered to have specific locative reference if
it is analyzed as cataphorically referring to *auf der karte* 'on the card'.
However, *auf der karte* is intonationally integrated into the clause and is
therefore not an afterthought used in order to clarify the reference of *da*.
Even if a coreference relation obtains, this does not explain why *auf der
karte* is not placed clause-initially. Again, as in 32, placing *da* clause-
initially allows the focus to fall directly on the entity. In fact, the cata-
phoric analysis is compatible with the attention-drawing one since *da* is
considered vague in both. At this point it is worth noting that examples
such as 32 and 33 might be considered variants of *es SEIN*, according to
previous work on German cited in section 3. In order to examine the
spoken examples in their own right, comparison of *da* with *es* has been
avoided until now. This point is taken up again in sections 7.5 and 7.6.

The above discussion has clarified that the use of *da* to refer to a
metaphorical location is not the same as the vague use of *da*. The
distinction between vague and specific uses is equally relevant for physi-
cal locations (for instance, 27 versus 30). The specificity of a location
can be highly context-dependent so that *da* is considered vague in 30
even though the location is limited to the map. When a location is vague
it becomes backgrounded, whereas existence becomes foregrounded.
Vague *da* is nevertheless considered deictic, that is, it points, in the most
basic sense, to the introduced entities, and this use can therefore be
considered metonymic. In contrast, metaphorical locations can be seen as
extensions of the physical spatial domain to other domains, such as time
or discourse/text (see Weinert 2007 for further discussion). The fact that
metaphorical locations may lend themselves to vagueness is a separate
issue. This point surfaces again in the next section, where *da* is
considered in combination with other verbs.

7.5. Da *with Other Verbs and the Wider Context of* Da-*Usage*.

This section discusses the use of *da* with main verbs to present entities
referred to by indefinite NPs on the one hand, and events or occurrences

on the other. It also comments on *es*. A discussion of the wider use of *da* in spoken German is useful for contextualizing the analysis of presentational/existential *da*. It is neither necessary nor even possible to provide a complete analysis of the entire spoken and written corpus— even of one subgenre—given that informal conversations contain well over 100 instances of *da* per 10,000. This section then only gives an overview, citing supporting evidence from some subcorpora: 30,000 words from the informal conversation, 30,000 words from the academic supervision sessions, an additional 10,000 words from sports commentaries (since they report events), and 30,000 words from news and academic writing (all dating from 1990–2012), plus some additional examples.

First, I discuss the presentation of entities. As noted in the introduction, the range of presentationally or existentially used clauses and verbs is potentially wide. This includes existential verbs such as *existieren* 'exist', locative verbs such as *sich befinden* 'be situated', possessive *haben* 'have', evidentials such as *kennen* 'know', and verbs of perception such as *sehen* 'see' and *hören* 'hear'. Many other verbs are closely linked to the introduction of entities and are consistent with presentational interpretations. Most of these verbs are nonagentive (for example, *kommen* 'come/appear/arrive').[15] Within certain structural constraints, both dummy subject *es* and *da* feature in clause-initial or preverbal position as illustrated in 34a and 34b, respectively.

(34) a. es hatten sich   in den vorbesprechungen
         it had   themselves in the   initial-discussions

     ne   ganze menge gezeigt
     a   quite   number shown

     'there were quite a few who showed up at the initial sessions'

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[15] It has been observed that German makes use of such verbs where English uses *there* BE (Erdmann 1979, Pfenninger 2009). A comparison based on spoken language has yet to be carried out.

    b. da   kommt noch england am   siebzehnten
       there comes still   england on-the seventeenth
       'there's still England to play on the seventeenth'

Example 34a comes from an academic supervision session. A lecturer explains that quite a number of students had shown up at earlier sessions to discuss some literary works, but failed to come to subsequent ones. Example 34b was uttered during a football commentary, drawing attention to the fact that England still had to play in their round of the European Championships.

    The data contain some relatively clear cases, such as 34, but the distinction between presentation and predication is not always so clearcut. Extensive analysis of the discourse context is often required, as well as an assessment of the semantic contribution of the verbs. For instance, *sich zeigen* 'show up' in 34a contrasts with the later information that the students were absent; in 34b, *kommen* indicates with certainty that England are still to play. Nevertheless, the semantics of certain verbs is compatible with the introduction of entities. The subcorpus does not contain many clear examples of such *es-* or *da*-clauses. There are three candidates with *es* in the academic supervision sessions and none in the written data; seven candidates with *da* occurred, with five in the spoken academic data. The figures are small, but a potentially interesting observation is that *da* features in the spoken data, yet *es* does not occur in the written data.

    In addition to clauses introducing entities, *da* features in clauses that introduce or focus on whole events or occurrences, as illustrated by 35.

(35) a. wir hatten gerade einen vorfall
        we   had   just   an   incident

        da   ist ein hund ins   rad gelaufen
        there is   a   dog into-the bike run

        'we've just had an incident | a dog has run into one of the bikes'

    b. ich glaube da   ist leider   gerade eben
       I   think   there is   unfortunately just   now

was	falsch	gelaufen	mit	unseren	plätzen
something	wrong	gone	with	our	places

'I think there has just been a mistake with our locations I'm afraid'

c. da   habn sie   wieder mal   ne bank überfalln
   there have they   again   once a bank robbed
   'there's been another bank robbery'

Example 35a reports on the Tour de France. Example 35b comes from the map task. Example 35c is an out-of-the-blue utterance, collected informally. The example was a conversation opener and there was furthermore no clue for the hearer in the situational context as to the possible reference of *da*. This means that the reference of *da* is at most vague, and hence its locative meaning is backgrounded.

A brief comparison with English helps to tease out the issues that arise in the analysis of German. English *there BE* can also introduce events, as in 36–40.[16] The German *da-* and *es-*clauses in 36–40 are functionally equivalent to the English *there*-clause (at least up to a point and not exclusively so).

(36) a. There was singing in the street.
     b. Da wurde auf den Straßen gesungen.
     c. Es wurde auf den Straßen gesungen.

(37) a. There's Max talking to Lisa.
     b. Da redet Max gerade mit Lisa.
     c. Es redet Max gerade mit Lisa.

(38) a. There was a new mosque built.
     b. Da wurde eine neue Moschee gebaut.
     c. Es wurde eine neue Moschee gebaut.

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[16] See Lakoff 1987 and Lumsden 1988 for further discussion.

(39) a. There's a thunderstorm on the way.
   b. Da ist ein Gewitter im Anmarsch.
   c. Es ist ein Gewitter im Anmarsch.

(40) a. There emerged a series of errors.
   b. Da tauchten eine Reihe von Fehlern auf.
   c. Es tauchten eine Reihe von Fehlern auf.

In English, the complements of *there BE* retain the quality of nominals, either through the use of *V-ing* forms or through structures that resemble postmodification, as in 38a. The structure of 40a involves inversion, and the verb *emerge* is associated with the presentation of entities. Inversion is obligatory in comparable German clauses, and the presentational function cannot be made explicit by syntactic means. German readily places nonsubjects in clause-initial position, especially deictics, and *da* is frequent in this position. This opens up the possibility of presenting events with *da*, allowing the nominal element to recede further than is possible in English *there*-clauses, as in 35 above. None of the German examples under 35—which are neither nominal in structure, nor predicational—can be translated into grammatical English *there*-clauses (for instance, 35c: *there they've robbed a bank again). This section is not intended as a full comparison with English, however.

While *da* and *es* can occupy the same position, the two are not structurally interchangeable. In addition, the use of *da* brings in its potential locative meaning, even if it is backgrounded. Such backgrounding is consistent with the wider use of *da* in spoken German. Weinert (2007) shows that *da* is frequently used clause-initially as a focusing and cohesive device in reference to vague contexts or situations and argues that it conveys immediacy.[17] With respect to event-presenting clauses, there is a range of other functions of clause-initial/preverbal *da* and *es*; therefore figures are not provided.

Establishing whether a *da*-clause is used to present an event/occurrence is not straightforward and this issue requires a separate study. Yet considering *da* with main verbs has provided a context for *da SEIN* and has shown that it fits into the wider picture of the frequent use of

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[17] Weinert (2007) reports that in a sample of 200 cases of *da* in informal conversations, 50% refer to contexts/situations rather than specific locations.

nonspecific and only vaguely locative *da* in spoken German as a textual/ discourse device. While it is important not to confound such vague referential and cohesive uses with presentational/ existential uses of *da*, they share their essential deictic, attention-drawing nature. Based on usage, it would appear that the opposition is neither between spoken presentational/existential *da SEIN* and written *es SEIN*, nor between spoken *da-* and written *es*-clauses with other verbs. Instead, the spoken language makes use of presentational/existential *da SEIN*, while the written language may feature other verbs and introduce entities through differently structured discourse.

7.6. *Summary:* SEIN-*Constructions*.

Es SEIN- and *zero-locative SEIN*-constructions are marginal in the spoken data. *Es SEIN* is, therefore, not simply the structure with a dummy subject needed when there is no other constituent in clause-initial position. Although in such cases *es SEIN* is required by syntax, the need rarely arises in usage. *Es SEIN* may have a particular discourse and/or pragmatic function, especially given that it does not require a locative expression, or it may be disappearing, or both. *Zero-locative SEIN* is acceptable partly through the presence of locative expressions in prior discourse; further research is needed to determine the type of contextualization it requires.

Most common in the data is *da SEIN*: It occurs over two-and-a-half times more frequently than *locative SEIN*. This is consistent with the strong tendency in spoken German to have proforms in initial position of main clauses. However, there is an indication that *da SEIN* is not merely a proform variant of *locative SEIN*. It involves more abstract entities (20% versus 0%) and more metaphorical locations (20% versus 0.5% of the specific locations) than *locative SEIN*; ca. 37% of *da* cases are vague, which the locative in *locative SEIN* cannot be by virtue of being a lexical expression (see section 8 below for further discussion). *Locative SEIN* is more likely to be linked to physical presence, although overall numbers are too small to furnish conclusive evidence. *Da SEIN* has the potential for more abstract uses, which means that it can be associated with existence as much as with presence in a location. This brings the discussion to its final point, that is, the difference between *es gibt*, *da SEIN*, and *locative SEIN*.

8. ***Es Gibt* versus *Da SEIN* versus *Locative SEIN* in Spoken German.**
Es gibt and *da SEIN* are both viable presentational/existential construc-
tions in spoken German; in fact, in everyday conversation they are close
to being equally frequent. What distinguishes them? Is there any indica-
tion, beyond their lexical make-up, that *es gibt* is "more" existential in
nature, while *da SEIN* is "more" locative? The data provide some
indications of such a bias, at least in spoken German. Fifty five percent
of *es gibt*-clauses do not contain an explicit expression of location. This
compares with the lower 37% of *da SEIN*-clauses where the locative
meaning of *da* is backgrounded (that is, where *da* is vague) and where no
additional locative is present in the clause. Furthermore, the proportion
of abstract entities is 42% with *es gibt* and 20% with *da SEIN*.[18] Taken
together, these observed tendencies provide some evidence for an
existential versus locative bias of *es gibt* versus *da SEIN*.

Additional evidence comes from (system) acceptability judgments
relating to the extremes of the existential-locative continuum. Only a few
examples are given since this is a data-driven study. Although ontolo-
gical instances are rare in the data (the spoken and the written data each
contain three cases of *es gibt*), it would not be too controversial to
suggest that *es gibt* can assert ontological existence, while *da SEIN* can
probably not, as in the constructed example 41.

(41) a. Es gibt blauäugige Katzen.
    b. *Da sind blauäugige Katzen.
      'There are blue-eyed cats.'

Expression of ontological existence by *da SEIN* may be marginally
possible. For instance, 42b could be expanded along the lines of *I can
feel it* or *I can feel his presence*, that is, when (omni)presence and hence
location is implied.

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[18] As noted earlier, abstract entities are typically associated with metaphorical
locations. Furthermore, it is difficult to categorize implicit locations, and com-
paring only explicit locations leads to small numbers. Separate figures are
therefore not provided.

(42) a. Es gibt einen Gott.
     b. ?Da ist ein Gott.
            'There is a god.'

In contrast, *es gibt* is questionable when used to focus on entities that are situationally present, as shown by the constructed example in 43a. Such uses are naturally the province of *da SEIN* since *da* is deictic, as in 43b. The spoken data contain six *da SEIN* instances (nearly 6% of the total) and no instances of *es gibt*.

(43) a. */??Vorsicht es gibt eine Schlange/eine Stufe.
     b.   Vorsicht da ist eine Schlange/eine Stufe.
                'Careful there is a snake/a step.'

    In addition, *da SEIN* is compatible with the "attendant" meaning of *da*, as in 44a where the second *da* is stressed. In contrast, *es gibt* is incompatible with this meaning, as shown in 44b.

(44) a. Da war keiner da. [auf dem Empfang/bei der Vorlesung etc.]
     b. *Es gab keinen da.
            'there was no one there/present [at the reception/at the lecture etc.]'

    In terms of these extreme points, *locative SEIN* is aligned with *da SEIN*, while it would appear not to have the potential for asserting ontological existence since it cannot be vaguely locative. It is virtually impossible to construct an example where the lexical locative can be interpreted as vague in a way that *da* can. Even *irgendwo ist ein Gott/ein neues Museum* 'somewhere is a God/a new museum' imply that *Gott/ein neues Museum* are to be found in a specific location. This supports the analysis of vague *da* as essentially a nonlocative deictic, used metonymically to draw attention.
    There is then an indication of some semantic differences between *es gibt* and *da SEIN* in terms of (system) acceptability and usage. The differences are also likely to be reflected in pragmatic and/or discourse function, given the role of *da* as a cohesive and contextualizing device in spoken German. Interestingly, a preliminary analysis of the conversation data shows that only 50% of clauses have *es gibt* in clause-initial position of the main clause (excluding contingent cases). Twenty three percent

have clause-initial locative expressions (12% *da*), and 12% even have the NP complement in this slot. This could mean that, even though *es gibt* is a presentational construction, its use is affected by the semantic content of the verb, whereas the use of *da SEIN* is more pragmatically motivated, on account of the deictic. In other words, *es gibt* could be seen as an existential presentational and *da SEIN* as a presentational existential. In turn, each construction may then contribute differently to topic and interactional development. These suggestions deserve further study.

9. Conclusion.

The main purpose of this article has been to demonstrate that informal spoken language has a different set of presentational/existential constructions from formal written language. The results of this corpus study show that the spoken German data feature presentational/ existential *SEIN*-constructions in addition to *es gibt,* in contrast to written German where there is little evidence of the former. In spoken German, *da SEIN* is the most frequent *SEIN*-construction in all data sets. It is a viable presentational/existential construction and not merely a variant of *es SEIN* or a *SEIN*-construction with a locative adverb. While a locative element is certainly often present in *da SEIN*, it is frequently backgrounded. Overall, *da SEIN* appears to be positioned somewhere between *es gibt* and *locative SEIN* along the existential-locative/presence continuum. *Da* also features in clauses with main verbs that introduce entities and events or occurrences. This can be related to the wider usage of *da* as an attention-drawing deictic in spoken language with the proviso that more specific functions can be and have been established and should not be conflated. In other words, not all vague instances of *da* are alike. The discussion has shown that there is some justification for treating the various *SEIN*-structures as constructions, given their distribution and function. The precise categorization has to be left to a separate argument and would need to address the contribution of specific lexis and deixis to the nature of constructions and vice versa, as well as the related issue of linguistic gradience.

Further corpus-based work on spoken German is needed, especially on situationally evoked entities, since these are not well represented in the data sets overall. The context-dependence of *zero-locative SEIN* also deserves more attention, as well as the status and function of *es SEIN*. Some targeted corpus and experimental studies are required to establish

when *es gibt* can be used to assert the presence of entities and to what extent *da SEIN* can be used to assert ontological existence. Also needed is work that taps into specific discourse-pragmatic differences between these two constructions. Comparison of written and spoken *es gibt* might reveal the effect of clausal position and structural complexity on the discourse-pragmatic function of the construction.

On a larger scale, further examination is needed as to how the global discourse structures of spoken and written German affect the way in which entities are introduced. An even larger project would consider the relation between *es* and *da*, as well as their distinctiveness across speaking and writing. Distinguishing between the spoken and written mode and paying attention to spoken language is not only essential for obtaining adequate data; such an approach might provide alternative starting points for future investigation, both theoretical and empirical.

APPENDIX

Transcription Markers

A B	speakers
stressing	stressed syllable (main)
STRESSing	highly stressed syllable
hm	monosyllabic hearer signal
mhm	disyllabic hearer signal
I	the English first person pronoun 'I' is in capitals in order to avoid confusion
|	marks a boundary to guide the interpretation of an example (no syntactic or other status is implied)

Transcription markers are excluded where they are not relevant to the discussion. Where necessary, decisions regarding clause boundaries were taken on the basis of auditory judgments on intonation and pausing, with the exception of the data from Brons-Albert (10,000 words) for which recordings were not available.

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