

The German word *sowieso* originally derives from a compound form consisting of three elements: *so wie so*, literally ‘so as so’, i.e., this way the same as that way. Its most frequent use is as an adverb or a modal particle, roughly meaning *anyway* in an example like (1). This presentation is concerned with the distribution and meaning of *sowieso* used as a standalone response marker in (2). The pragmatic function of *sowieso* can be described as rendering the initial question superfluous to ask, because it is conveyed that an affirmative response is obvious. We argue that the distribution of *sowieso* as a response marker is governed by its adverb meaning and try to give a unified analysis for all cases.

- (1) Ich kann dein Buch zurückgeben. Ich muss sowieso in die Bibliothek.
 I can your book return I must SOWIESO in the library
 ‘I can return your book. I have to go to the library anyway.’
- (2) A: Freust du dich auf den Urlaub? B: Sowieso.
 A: are happy you yourself on the holiday B SOWIESO
 ‘A: Are you looking forward to the holiday? B: Of course.’

Standard adverbial use. We follow Weydt (1983) and Helbig (1988) in their assessment that *sowieso* has an inherently causal meaning. We suggest the meaning proposal in (3), to be read like this: *sowieso* requires a proposition p in the context that is a potential cause of the host proposition q (\rightsquigarrow_c), and it states on the at-issue level that there is a different proposition r , which is causally decisive for the host proposition q . The speaker in (1) conveys that they have to go to the library (q) for a reason (r) that is different from returning the addressee’s book (p).

- (3) use condition for *sowieso*(q): $\exists p[p \rightsquigarrow_c q]$
 $\llbracket \text{sowieso}(q) \rrbracket = \exists r[r \neq p \wedge r \rightarrow_c q]$

A special use of *sowieso* is scalar as in (4).

- (4) Ich danke dir für die Kritik, und für das Lob danke ich dir sowieso.
 I thank you for the criticism and for the praise thank I you SOWIESO
 ‘I thank you for the criticism and for the praise in any case.’

We can explicate its meaning in the following way: according to our meaning proposal in (3), we need a potential reason p for the host proposition q (= ‘I thank you for the praise’) to fulfill *sowieso*’s use condition. We can infer such a reason from the directly preceding clause. There is reason why the speaker would thank the addressee for the criticism, e.g., because it helps them with their assignment. This can also be considered a possible reason for q . On the at-issue side, the speaker asserts that there is a different reason (r) for q . This reason is left unspecified, but could be inferred, e.g., that it is nice to hear something positive. The parallel structure of the two clauses invites us to compare reasons for both cases, and we end up with a scalar reading because there are more or more compelling possible reasons for thanking for the praise.

Elliptical responsive. Most cases of standalone responsive *sowieso* can be reduced to an elliptical version of (4). Consider for example, the final response clause in (5)

consisting only in the responsive *sowieso*. We argue that this clause is elliptical with the fullform being: *Köln ist sowieso gut* ‘Cologne is good sowieso’. Whatever reason there is for considering Hamburg good, there is an additional reason that holds for Cologne being good.

- (5) Alle Deutschen, die nicht in Berlin wohnen, finden nämlich, dass Berlin
all Germans that not in Berlin live find namely that Berlin
schrecklich ist. Hamburg? Ist gut. Köln? Sowieso.
terrible is Hamburg is good Cologne SOWIESO
‘All Germans who don’t live in Berlin think that Berlin is terrible. Hamburg? Is
good. Cologne? Of course.’

Without the insertion of *Hamburg? Ist gut.*, the use of the responsive *sowieso* would indicate that Cologne is terrible for another reason different from why Berlin is terrible. This indicates that the short answer is elliptical with an antecedent from the immediately preceding context. The elliptical form and the fullform are equivalent. We can call this use elliptical responsive *sowieso*.

Plain responsive. (2) seems to behave differently from (5). Indeed, (2) does not seem to be elliptical in the same way that (5) is. The difference can be brought out by using a full answer containing *sowieso* (6), which is not equivalent to using the standalone short answer in (2). This difference is illustrated by the translation provided in (6). We can call this use plain responsive *sowieso*.

- (6) A: Freust du dich auf den Urlaub? B: #Ich freue mich sowieso
A: are happy you yourself on the holiday B I am happy myself SOWIESO
auf den Urlaub.
on the holiday
int.: ‘A: Are you looking forward to the holiday? B: I am looking forward to the
holiday for a reason different from what has been mentioned.’

As argued, the plain responsive does not convey the same meaning as the full answer in (6). Instead, the responsive conveys a scalar meaning according to which looking forward to a holiday is higher on a scale of things that B tends to do. While the elliptical responsive is still close to the adverbial meaning, the plain responsive seems more bleached than its adverbial cousin. But the behaviour of plain responsive *sowieso* can still be analyzed as a generalized version of the elliptical responsive. Schematically, the analysis for (6) could look as in (7): p holds, and SOWIESO I am looking forward to the holiday. We receive the reading that that one has more or better reasons for looking forward to the holiday than for generic alternative things.

- (7) Are you looking forward to the holiday? [p , and] SOWIESO q .

Summing up: Starting from the standard case in (1), we have proposed a meaning for the adverb *sowieso* (3), which states that the host proposition is true for a reason different from a potential one mentioned in the context. For scalar cases like (4), this potential reason has to be inferred. The elliptical responsive *sowieso* (5) can be seen as an elliptical version of the scalar case. Finally, the plain responsive *sowieso* (6) requires that even more heavy lifting be done in the context: it is not only the potential reason that has to be inferred but also the proposition from which it is inferred is covert. We speculate that

plain responsive *sowieso* is bleaching to the point that it resembles *definitely* losing the contextual requirements of its adverbial origin.

Helbig, Gerhard (1988). *Lexikon deutscher Partikeln*. Leipzig: VEB Verlag.

Weydt, Harald (1983). "Semantische Konvergenz. Zur Geschichte von *sowieso*, *eh*, *ohnehin* – Ein Beitrag zum Bedeutungswandel von Partikeln". In: *Partikeln und Interaktion*, pp. 172–187.