

# Areal Variation in Case Government

## of the German verb *vergessen* 'to forget' in contrast with Czech *zapomínat/zapomenout* 'to forget'

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### Institutional Context

- CENTRAL** -Kolleg  
"Empirical Perspectives on area-typological Phenomena of language contact and language change"
- SFB "German in Austria"** /PP06  
„German and the Slavic languages in Austria – Aspects of language contact“

### Context and Questions

#### Point of departure

The **case variation** of German *vergessen* 'to forget' in Austria is usually explained as a result of **intense language contact with Czech**.

#### Research questions:

- R1)** Is the construction *vergessen* [*auf* + acc] restricted to German in Austria (DiÖ)?
- R2)** Do the patterns of case variation of the equivalents of 'to forget' correspond in Czech (Č) and DiÖ? Is a contact explanation therefore possible?

parallel constructions in Č and DiÖ germ. *auf* ~ cz. *na* 'on'

### Deutsches Referenzkorpus – DeReKo

- C1)** year: 2010–2015  
area: D, A, CH, L  
genre: newspapers/magazines  
size: 715.338.107 tokens  
hits: 2164 (*vergessen* [*auf* + acc])
- C2)** year: 2010  
area: A(ustria)  
genre: selected newspapers/magazines  
size: 11.217.843 tokens  
hits: 999 (*vergessen*)

### Corpora, Grammatical Constructions

#### accusative argument (acc)

*vergessen* [+ acc]\*  
*zapomínat* (ipf.) / *zapomenout* (pf.) [+acc]\*

#### prepositional argument (praep)

*vergessen* [*auf* + acc]\*\*  
*zapomínat* (ipf.) / *zapomenout* (pf.) [*na* + acc]\*

### Český národní korpus – SYN2015 (subcorpus)

- C3)** year: 2010  
genre: newspapers/magazines (all)  
size: 7,981,747 tokens  
hits: 961 (*zapomínat/zapomenout*)

\* standard varieties / \*\* colloquial (standard) variety of DiÖ

### Areal distribution within German (R1/C1)

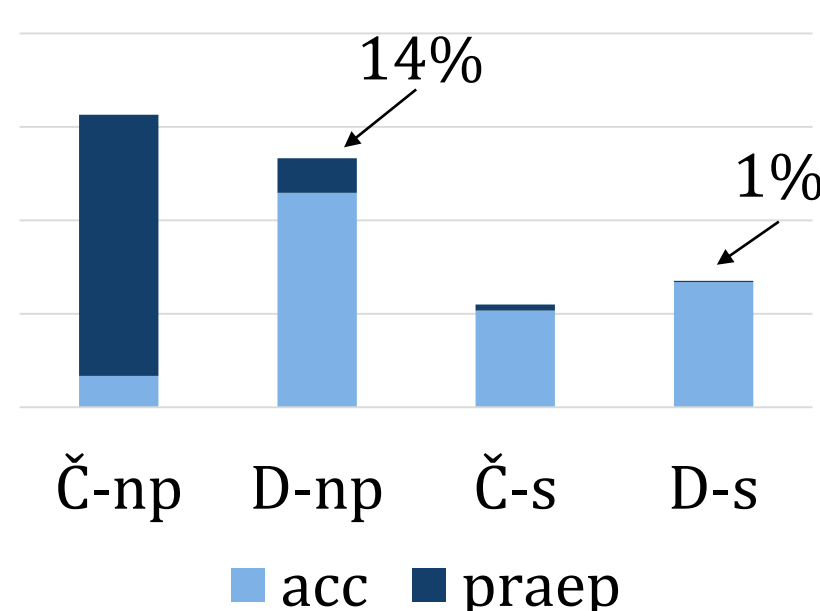
Search query: *vergessen* + *auf*

Treffer	rel. Häuf.	Texte	von	bis	Land
1.539	6.323 pMW	1.506	2010	2015	A
218	1.028 pMW	205	2010	2015	CH
363	1.566 pMW	340	2010	2015	D
44	1.563 pMW	42	2010	2015	L
2.164	3.025 pMW	2.093	2010	2015	4 Länder

→ High relative frequency of *vergessen* [*auf* + acc] in DiÖ.

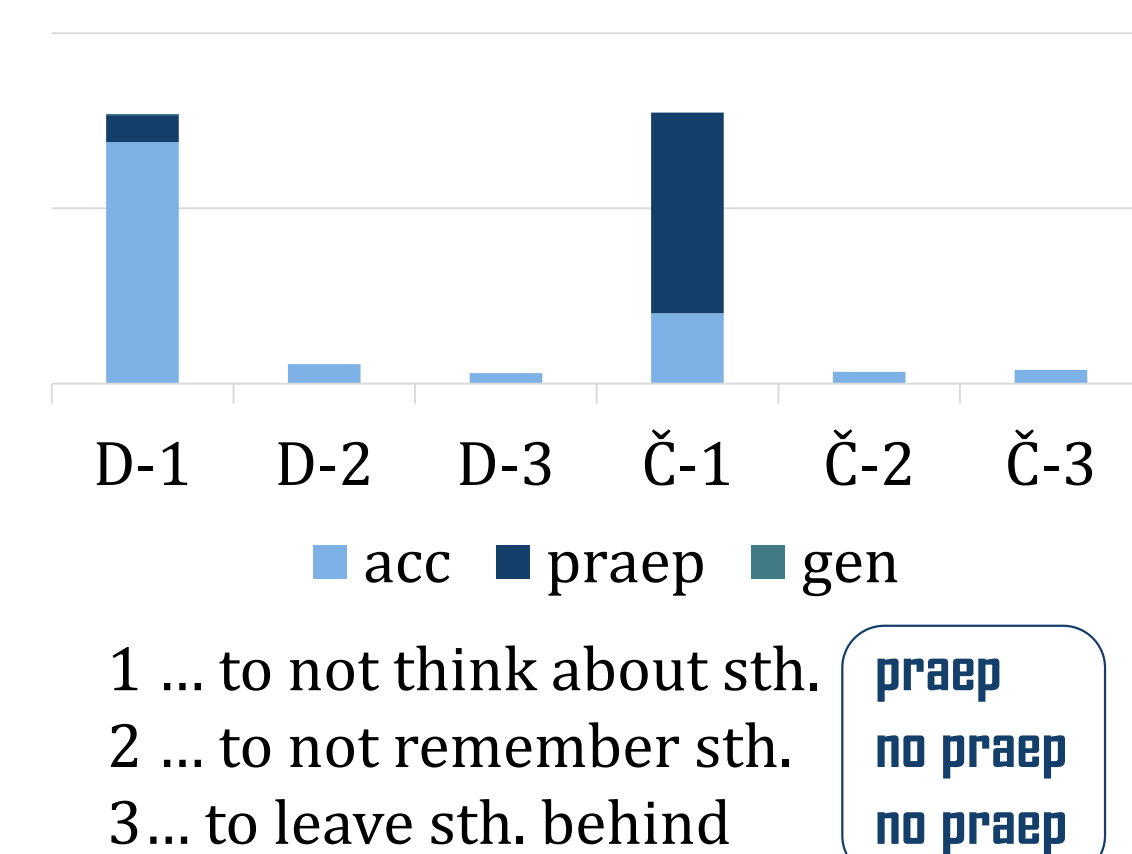
### Results in Contrast

#### Object realization (R2/C2, C3)



**TENDENCY:**  
np: (more) praep  
s: no praep

### Semantical distribution in DiÖ and Č (R2/C2, C3)



- ... to not think about sth. **praep**
- ... to not remember sth. **no praep**
- ... to leave sth. behind **no praep**

### Answers to our research questions

- R1)** Yes, the construction *vergessen* [*auf* + acc] is significantly more frequent in DiÖ.
- R2)** The praep-construction occurs with the same semantics and preferably with NP-object realisation in DiÖ and Č.

### Conclusions

#### To be done ...

Contact perspective  
diachronical (corpus) analysis, development, source language?

(Area-)typological perspective  
distribution in other German varieties, contrast with other languages

#### References:

Český národní korpus, SYN2015  
Deutsches Referenzkorpus DeReKo-2015-II  
For detailed references see our handout.

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