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## **Pattern Replications (PATs) in the Speech of German-Polish Bilinguals**

### **Abstract**

This paper provides an insight into language induced changes in the speech of German-Polish bilinguals living in Germany and in Poland, with a focus on generational differences in the use of pattern replications (PATs). The relevance of the study of pattern replication in the speech of bilinguals is based on the fact that it has so far not attracted as much scientific interest as other linguistic phenomena resulting from frequent contact of two or more languages. Therefore, the article contributes to closing the research gap regarding the study of German-Polish language contact. The source of linguistic material for the analysis is language biographies of German-Polish bilinguals that have been recorded, by the author among others, transcribed, and annotated in regard to the morphosyntactic changes induced by German-Polish language contact. In particular, attention is paid to the interplay of bilingual language repertoires, focusing mainly on pattern replications (PATs). The peer group for the interview are two generations of Germans: Generation Poland and Generation Germany – the first are Germans who after World War 2, decided, or were forced to stay in the newly obtained Polish territories, the latter are descendants of the first group, living in Germany. The following presentation is based on the examples of pattern replications and statistical analysis of the linguistic changes resulting from language contact, developed on the basis of material published in the “LangGener” spoken corpus.

**Keywords:** German-Polish bilingualism, German Minority in Poland, German-Polish language contact

### **1. Introduction**

This paper provides an insight into language induced changes in the speech of German-Polish bilinguals living in Germany and in Poland, with a focus on generational differences in the use of pattern replications. This study is part of a larger international linguistic project examining the interplay between language

biographies and contact induced change in the morphosyntax of German-Polish bilinguals.<sup>1</sup> The main objective of the project was answering the question of whether the morphosyntactic changes induced by German-Polish language contact in bilingual speech differ across generations.

Research on the effects of Polish-German language contact is not completely unknown, but rather limited. There are works dealing with lexical or morphological interference (*cf.* Podgórní 2010, Bawiej 2014) – focusing mainly on the aspects of contrastive speech error analysis and didactics. However there are not many works analyzing the topic of replication of morphosyntactic patterns in bilinguals. Bučková (2021) examines pattern replications in German-Czech bilinguals, concentrating on developing a suitable interpretative framework for the analysis of pattern replications in the area of argument structure and the valence associated with it. With regard to German-Polish bilinguals, Centner (2022a) investigates pattern replications, with a focus on construction as an overarching element. She examines the lexical replications of German-Polish bilinguals. Księżyk (2023) analyzes the occurrence of pattern replication due to the impact of language biographical and language ideological factors, with a focus on age of onset, education, language ideologies and more. Księżyk also publishes an article in English on the language contact phenomena observed in German-Polish bilinguals, with a focus on language attitudes. The author analyzes, among other aspects, pattern replications from a statistical perspective (*cf.* Księżyk 2024).

To the best of our knowledge, however, no other papers in English have addressed examples of German-Polish pattern replication. This study aims to fill this research gap.

## 2. Peer Group

The research focuses on generational differences in the speech of bilinguals. The informants belong to one of two generations of German-Polish bilinguals: Generation Poland and Generation Germany. The generations are defined by a selection of linguistic criteria (*cf.* Centner 2022b: 27ff.).

Generation Poland (GP), named after the place of residence of the informants, refers to the persons born before 1945 in German territories (according to the present nomenclature: Upper- and Lower Silesia, Lebus, Pomerania, Warmia and Masuria) that were incorporated into Poland after World War 2. The end of World War 2 was a turning point for many millions of people whose reality changed because of the newly drawn borders. This reality also applied to the Germans who, with different turns of fate, remained on the territory of the People's Republic of Poland. The first language (L1) of this generation is German, but the new order meant having to learn a new official language, Polish. The representatives of this generation acquired Polish as their second language (L2) in their childhood (before they turned 12 years old) and were usually socialized in educational institutions. In most cases, marriage (mainly to a Polish woman or man)<sup>2</sup> was followed by a language shift to Polish.

1 The research project "Language across generations: contact induced change in morpho-syntax in German-Polish bilingual speech" was financed by the National Science Centre, Poland, project no. 2016/23/G/HS2/04369 and the German Research Foundation (DFG) and carried out at the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences as well as at the University of Regensburg. The LangGener research team included also scientists from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, University of Warsaw and University of Opole.

2 Sometimes marriages took place with Ukrainians, Lemkos, or other displaced ethnic groups.

Generation Germany (GD), also named after the place of residence of the informants, refers to the persons born after 1945 in Poland in former German territories (according to the present nomenclature: Upper- and Lower Silesia, Lebus, Pomerania, Warmia and Masuria) who are (not necessarily direct) descendants of Generation Poland. The L1 of these persons is Polish. Unlike their parents or grandparents, they did not know German and learned it only after emigration to Germany (in most cases in the period 1960–1990). Their acquisition of German as their L2 occurred at over 12 years of age. Many speakers of this generation actively use both languages but in different language domains.

The two generations undoubtedly share the same place of origin and roots, but also the experience of acquiring a second language, which results in successive bilingualism. The sudden and irreversible confrontation with a different linguistic reality undeniably affected the language of our informants, resulting in their use of language, code switching or replication of morphosyntactic patterns, among other things. However, the order of the acquired languages and the age of onset of L2 are completely different (for the discussion of the term “generation” in the LangGener project *cf.* Centner 2022b: 23ff.).

### 3. Research Methodology

Using the language biographical method<sup>3</sup> (*cf.* Franceschini 2006, Franceschini & Veronesi 2016, or Zielińska 2018) in guided interviews, the research focused on the histories of family languages (including language acquisition, in some cases language loss, language attitudes, *etc.*) on the one hand and on the determination of morphosyntactic changes occurring in the speech of German-Polish bilinguals (first of all on pattern replications) on the other. About 80 questions, posed by two interviewers (one German and one Polish) in German and in Polish, enabled the collection of bilingual material (German-Polish).

The annotation of linguistic changes resulting from language contact encompassed two levels: the type of phrase and the type of deviation attributed to language contact. The first level involved the identification of the deviation from the homeland baseline in the field of the relevant clause (*cf.* Bučková *et al.* 2022: 53ff.). Six types of phrase were distinguished: the Noun Phrase (NP), Prepositional Phrase (PP), Verb Phrase (VP), Adjective Phrase (AP), Adverbial Phrase (AdvP), and whole sentence (S). In the process of determining a phrase, the principle of evaluating the phrase on the basis of existing material, rather than the one that was supposed to be there but was missing, was applied. Therefore, phrases that lacked an explicative subject were qualified as a whole sentence (S). In regard to the type of deviation, six patterns were annotated: Replication of linguistic matter (MAT), Pattern replication (PAT), Code-switching (CS), Self-correction (SC), Word order (WO), and Other Deviations (AA).<sup>4</sup>

The third element in the comparative analysis of the deviations is the home baseline – the colloquial language spoken in the region, which often differs from the standard language variety of the languages studied (Bučková *et al.* 2022: 53ff.).

The recorded material was transcribed and elaborated in several steps using the tools Oetra, WebMAUS, EXMARaLDA and finally ELAN for the annotation. Transcribed and annotated material was released in the form of the “LangGener” Spoken Corpus.

3 Language biographies are “the narratives that revolve around acquiring one’s own language and are embedded in narrative interviews” (Franceschini 2006: 32).

4 Abbreviation for the German term “andere Abweichungen”.

#### 4. Pattern Replication

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One of the possible phenomena in the speech of bilinguals are pattern replications (also called PATs) (*cf.* Matras & Sakel 2007: 829ff.). These grammatical replications of patterns are triggered by language contact (Bučková 2021: 83, 100).

The study of pattern replication in the speech of bilinguals has so far not attracted as much scientific interest as other linguistic phenomena resulting from frequent contact of two or more languages, such as the emergence of loanwords or the formation of fused lects.

According to the definition of Matras and Sakel (2007: 841) and Sakel (2008:15), respectively, PATs occur when “only the patterns of the other language are replicated, i.e. the organization, distribution and mapping of grammatical or semantic meaning” while the “morphological material and its phonological shape” are not transferred. Simply put, a PAT is a borrowing of the grammatical constructions. The opposite of this phenomenon is the Replication of linguistic matter (MAT) which refers to the “direct replication of morphemes and phonological shapes from a source language” (Matras & Sakel 2007: 829).

#### 5. PATs in the Speech of Polish-German Bilinguals – Examples

The analysis of the linguistic material will be limited only to a discussion of the predominant PATs occurring in the speech of the respondents, according to the types of phrases mentioned above. It will be offered according to typical phenomena occurring in the given phrase type.

##### 5.1. Sentence (S)

All the replications that had a syntactic effect on the whole sentence were classified as PATs at the sentence level. They usually refer to cases with a missing subject, or mark negations, word order, conjunctions and discourse markers (*cf.* Bučková *et al.* 2022: 58).

##### Absence of Pronominal Subject or Formal Subject

Personal pronouns in subject function are optional in Polish (unlike in German) and are only used when the context requires it (*cf.* Kulik 2016: 96, Sopata 2016, Sopata, Długosz & Brehmer *et al.* 2021). Polish is a pro-drop language. Since subject is implicitly marked in conjugation endings, personal pronouns often seem redundant (*cf.* Engel *et al.* 2000: 226f.). The transfer of the Polish pattern and the omission of the personal pronoun in the subject function is a common occurrence found repeatedly in the utterances of German-Polish bilinguals (see the Examples [1] and [2]):

[1]	und da	habe	*	drei Jahre auch studiert (BK_HAM)
	And there	have	[I]	three years also study/VVPP

Trans: And I have also studied there for three years.

- [2] ja und # \_ am Anfang war war \* wirklich für mich ein Horror (BK\_AUG)  
 Yeah and at the beginning be/VAFIN.Past [it] really for me a horror.  
 Trans: Yeah, and at the beginning, it was really a horror for me.

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In both cases, the speakers omit the obligatory personal pronoun in the function of the subject calibrating the Polish construction. In example [1], the obligatory personal pronoun “ich” – [En.: I] is omitted. The second example [2] is missing the impersonal pronoun “es” – [En.: it] – that would fulfil the role of formal subject in the sentence.

### Double Negative (Negative Concord)

While negation in German is expressed at the sentence level with the help of only one negation word (Engel *et al.* 2000: 352, 1222), in Polish negative concord applies (so-called double negation) (*cf.* Czerepowicka & Przybyszewski 2017: 60). Due to the replication of this linguistic pattern in the following examples through the transfer of the Polish structure two negators occur at sentence level:

- [3] der hat immer gesagt so wenn **keiner** das **nicht** wusste, ne (BQ\_RAC)<sup>5</sup>  
 der/PDS. has always said so when **nobody/PIS** das/PDS. **not/PTKNEG** knew, not.  
 Trans: He always said so, when nobody knew, didn't he.

- [4] Herr -- darf **kein** den den Verdienstkreuz **nicht** bekommen (QK\_BOB)  
 Mr. -- may **none/PIS** den/PDS den/PDS Cross of Merit **not/PTKNEG** receive.  
 Trans: Mister -- must not receive a Cross of Merit.

In both examples [3] and [4] the multiple marking of negation by the indefinite pronoun “kein” [En.: nobody, none] and negation particle “nicht” [En.: not] that would be required in Polish refer to the entire sentence and violate German syntactic rules. In addition, in example [4], the use of the indefinite pronoun “kein” precludes the use of a determiner before a noun that also goes against the rule.

PATs appear not only as a result of the use of double negation, but also due to the frequent failure of speakers to distinguish between the indefinite pronoun “kein” and the negation particle “nicht,” both of which are realized as the negation “nie” in Polish (*cf.* Bučková *et al.* 2022: 59).

### Temporal Conjunctions

Another category that contributes to pattern replication are the temporal conjunctions “als” and “wenn” [both En.: when]. While both in Polish and English there is only the conjunction “kiedy”, in German there is a distinction between “als” (related to a single action or event in the past) and “wenn” (related to other cases) (*cf.* Engel *et al.* 2000: 432f.). The lack of distinction between those conjunctions in Polish frequently leads to their misuse in German:

<sup>5</sup> Pl. trans.: On zawsze tak mówił, kiedy **nikt** tego **nie** wiedział.

[5] sie sprachen immer Deutsch, als sie nicht wollten, dass wir verstehen, worum es geht (JS\_STR)

They spoke always German, when/KOUS they not want/VMFIN:Past that we understand about what it went

Trans: They always spoke German when they did not want us to understand what was going on.

In example [5] the adverb “immer” – [En.: always] – indicates the repetitiveness of the activity performed in the past. Therefore, the conjunction “wenn” should be used.

### 5.2. Noun Phrase (NP)

Pattern replications that affect articles or are neologisms were classified as a Noun Phrase in our project (*cf.* Bučková *et al.* 2022: 59).

The omission or misapplication of the article seems to be a natural consequence of the interpenetration of the two language systems for German-Polish bilinguals. Due to the fact that the grammatical category is missing in Polish, it is unclear and often confusing when to apply it (*cf.* Engel *et al.* 2000: 802).

[6] i mój mąż później pojechał do Murnau na ten na ten Sprachkurs (JS\_STR)

And my husband later went to Murnau on this/PDS on this/PDS language course.

Trans: And my husband later went to Murnau for the language course.

In example [6] the speaker adds a demonstrative pronoun in the adnominal function, which, albeit redundant in Polish, forms a bridge between the sentence beginning, uttered in Polish, and the German noun “Sprachkurs” [En.: language course]. There is a functional proximity of definite articles to possessive pronouns in the German language (*cf.* Engel *et al.* 2000: 803, Ahrenholz 2007: 12ff.)

On the other hand, the typical pattern replication in German relies on omitting the use of the article in cases where its use should be obligatory:

[7] hat \* Problem gehabt ne? (BN\_WUP)

Have/VAFIN:3.Sg.Pres [**a**] problem have/VVPP, no?

Trans: Had a problem, didn't [he/she/it]?

In example [7] the indeterminate meaning of the noun implies the use of an indefinite article. As is the case in German, the indefinite article marks the referent of a noun as not known, not introduced (*cf.* Vater 1982: 68ff.). However, since Polish does not have an article category, the pattern is based on the absence of the obligatory article in the German sentence.

### 5.3. Verb Phrase (VP)

In the Verb Phrase, the deviations from the baseline occur at the lexical-semantic level, at the morpho-syntactic level, or at both levels (*cf.* Bučková *et al.* 2022: 61).

The first case is illustrated by example [8]:

- [8] so \_ ich habe neunzehnhunderneunzig [sic!] bin ich aus Polen weggefahren (UC\_LUC)  
 So, I have/VAFIN:1.Sg.Pres 1990 be/VAFIN:1.Sg.Pres I from Poland drive/VVPP  
away.

Trans: I left Poland in 1990.

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The verb “wegfahren” used in example [8] as a participle is a direct lexical translation of the Polish expression: “wyjechać”, the correct expression should be “ausreisen” [En.: to leave, to depart].

One of the multiple patterns at the morphosyntactic level in the Verb Phrase was the use of reflexive verbs (that involved the omission or misapplication of reflexive pronouns):

- [9] also zuerst habe ich mich in München gelernt also sechs Jahre bei einem Professor  
 (BL\_AUG)  
 so first have/VAFIN:1.Sg.Pres I me/PRF in Munich learn/VVPP so six years by a professor.

Trans: So, first, I studied in Munich for six years under a professor.

The pattern replication in example [9] lies in the difference between “to learn” and “to teach” which in Polish is expressed only by the use or omission of the reflexive pronoun. The former is reflexive: “uczyć się” [En.: to learn], and the latter: “uczyć” [En.: to teach]. In the example the informer uses the verb “lernen” and tries to modify its meaning by adding the reflexive pronoun.

#### 5.4. Prepositional Phrase (PP)

PATs in the Prepositional Phrase involve adding or omitting the prepositions that either occur, or are absent in the model language.

- [10] tak bo ja mam też tutaj wujka also brat od mojego taty  
 (LC\_BUR)  
 Yes because I have/VAFIN:1.Sg.Pres also here uncle so brother from/APPR my father.

Trans: Yes, because I also have an uncle here, so the brother of my father / my father’s brother.

Possessive constructions are expressed in the Polish homeland baseline using the subjective genitive, while German constructions are often expressed by a Prepositional Phrase with prepositions “von” or “durch” [En.: of] (*cf.* Engel *et al.* 2000: 928) though genitive constructions are also possible in German: “meines Vaters Bruder”. In example [10] the speaker LC\_BUR uses the preposition “od” – “von” [En.: of] as in the model language: “der Bruder von meinem Vater” [En.: the brother of my father].

Another phenomenon in a Prepositional Phrase resulting from pattern replication is the omission or addition of the article (as in the case of Noun Phrases):

- [11] no to też jechał z tym autobusem [KI\_VIM]  
 so this also [he] go/VVFIN:3.Sg.Past with that bus

Trans: So, he went by bus.

Example [11] is based on the difference in using objects. In Polish there is a separate case, the Instrumental, to express the use of objects, among other things, whereas in German this kind of action is represented by a Prepositional Phrase in the third case, the Dative: “mit+Dativ” (cf. Engel *et al.* 2000: 349). The correct expression would be: jechał [tym] autobusem.

### 5.5. Adjective Phrase (AP)

Pattern replications in Adjective Phrases are a rather rare phenomenon. As in the Verb Phrase analyzed above, they appear on the lexical-semantic or morpho-syntactic level. The transfer of the lexical pattern from German into Polish is illustrated in example [12]:

- [12] to pod pod pas zawsze wkładała poduszkę tak że jakby że była **wysokociężarna** [CS\_GIZ]  
 That under under belt always put/VVFIN:3.Sg.Fem.Past pillow so that as that be/VAFIN:3.Sg.Fem.Past **highly pregnant**.  
 Trans: So, she placed a pillow under the belt, as if she were heavily pregnant.

The adjective in the predicative function “wysokociężarna” is a direct translation of the German construction “hochschwanger” [En.: heavily pregnant]. The Polish expression “być w wysokiej ciąży” [literally in En.: to be high in pregnancy] requires the use of an adjective in the attributive function.

The replication of a morpho-syntactic pattern is illustrated in example [13]:

- [13] denn sie hat uns gelernt [sic!] tanzen oder singen  
 von hier **die alle** Lieder [BQ\_RAC]  
 Because she have/VAFIN:3.Sg.Pres us learn/VVPP dance/VVINFINF or sing/VVINFINF of here **the all** songs.  
 Trans: Because she taught us to dance or to sing all these songs/the whole songs.

In German, similarly to English, the possible construction would involve the use of the adjective “alle” and the demonstrative pronoun “diese” – “alle diese Lieder” – [En.: all these songs], or the construction: “die sämtlichen Lieder” with the same meaning. The expression: “die alle Lieder” is a direct replication of the Polish construction: “te wszystkie piosenki”.

### 5.6. Adverbial Phrase (AdvP)

Similarly to the Verb Phrase, pattern replications in Adverbial Phrase occur again on the lexical-semantic level or morpho-syntactic level. The case of the lexical-semantic replication is illustrated in example [14]:

- [14] damals möchte ich das **besser** als heute (QX\_BER)  
 Then will/VAFIN:1.Sg.Konj I it **good/ADJD:Comp** than today  
 Trans: Then, I liked it more than today.



In example [14] one can observe the replication of the Polish colloquial expression “lubię to lepiej” [En.: I liked it better]. Even in Polish, the proper form would be “bardziej” (as in the German case “mehr”) [En.: more]. Although in both languages the expected phrase would be: “I liked it more”, the expressions “lubić bardziej” [En.: to like better] or “lubić najbardziej” [En.: to like the most] were also used in 20th century Polish literature (cf. Maeterlinck 1903: 164, Fleszerowa Muskat 1961: 215) and may have penetrated into colloquial speech.

Example [15] shows the replication in Adverbial Phrase on the morpho-syntactic level:

- [15] i to mi to było **obojętnie** BN\_WUP]  
and this me it be/VAFIN:1.Sg.Past **indifferent/ADV**  
Trans: And I did not care.

In example [15] the phrase: “I było mi to obojętnie” [En.: And I did not care] is the replication of the German expression “und es war mir egal”. In German, the use of an adverb is expected. In Polish, an adjective in the predicative function is required: “i to było mi obojętne”. A possible form would also be: “i było mi wszystko jedno” [En.: it was all the same to me].

### PAT Statistics

The “LangGener” Spoken Corpus contains almost 680,000 words and 85,000 utterances (540,000 words and 66,000 utterances of which were produced by the interviewees) over 78 hours of recordings in both languages. The distribution of the lengths of interviews of both generations is almost the same (Generation Poland produced a slightly higher number of words, 5%) (cf. LangGener Corpus).

The distribution of deviations from the baseline with respect to the studied language contact phenomena looks as follows:

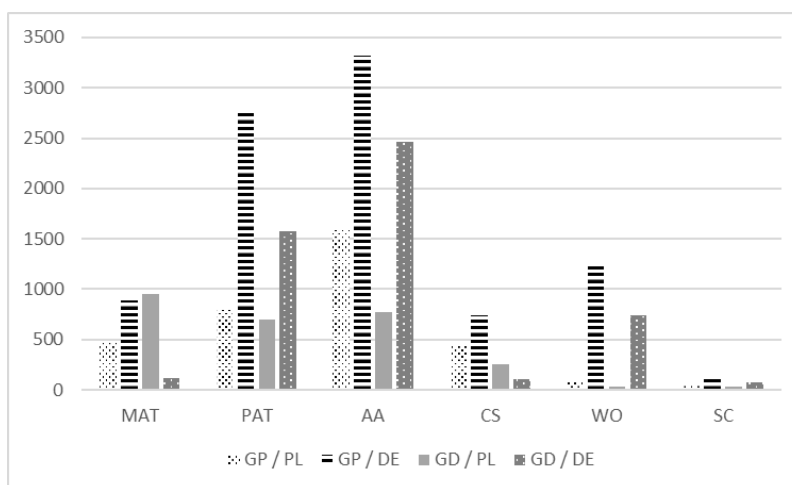


Figure 1: Syntactic Annotation: Distribution of Language Contact Phenomena \* Language \* Generations (graphic by the author based on LangGener Corpus): GP – Generation Poland, GD – Generation Germany, PL – Polish, DE – German

As demonstrated in Figure 1, most of the deviations from the baseline for both Generation Poland and Generation Germany were categorized as ‘Other Deviations’ [AA], followed by “Pattern Replications” [PAT]. In other categories (“MAT”, “CS” and “SC”) the differences between the numbers are far less significant. In both categories [PAT and AA], Generation Poland produces far more deviations than Generation Germany: AA: 4,916 for GP and 3,236 for GD; PATs: 3,541 for GP and 2,271 for GD.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, in both generations more substantial numbers of deviations occur in the German language and the model language is Polish.<sup>7</sup> This is particularly notable because while the speakers of Generation Germany are learners of German as a second language, in the case of Generation Poland, we are dealing with the first, native language.

Table 1 shows that most of the PATs occur in German with respect to the whole Sentence, followed by Noun and Verb Phrases. In Generation Poland, the highest number of deviations occurs in the whole sentence and is almost twice as large as the highest number of deviations in Generation Germany language, which occur in the Noun Phrase.

The number of deviations in Polish is significantly lower and similarly distributed for both generations.

Table 1: PATs according to phrase types \* Language \* Generations

Sentence		Phrase type					
		NP	VP	PP	AP	AdvP	
GP	Polish	139	285	249	126	47	43
	German	<b>1,381</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>892</b>	398	119	321
GD	Polish	194	229	224	120	54	67
	German	<b>596</b>	<b>750</b>	370	317	115	73
Count		2,310	1,942	1,735	961	335	504

## Conclusion

Based on the study, it can be concluded that pattern replication is one of the more common types of deviation from the baseline in the speech of German-Polish bilinguals.

It should be noted that PATs occur in all types of phrases, however, in most cases they involve the whole sentence or Noun and Verb Phrases. Omission of the obligatory subject, deviation in the use of articles, conjunctions, or reflexive pronouns are the most common types of replication. In an overwhelming number of cases, PATs occur in German and the model language is Polish (76% of all PAT cases). This rule applies to both generations of informants.

However, Generation Germany is characterized by less frequent use of PATs in both languages than Generation Poland. This is an interesting result, since it is Generation Germany who learned German as a second language, while Generation Poland are early bilinguals with L1 German.

<sup>6</sup> All the statistical data below was generated from the Corpus. Cf. <https://langgener.ijp.pan.pl> [date of access: 30.06.2023].

<sup>7</sup> Regarding the pattern replications 76% of them occur in the German language: 4,430 out of a total of 5,822 PATs.

**List of abbreviations**

\* – omission  
 3 – 3<sup>rd</sup> person  
 ADJD – adverbial or predicative adjective  
 ADV – adverb  
 APPR – preposition  
 Comp – comparative  
 En. – English  
 Fem – feminine  
 Konj – conjunctive  
 KOUS – subordinated conjunction  
 Past – past tense  
 PDS – substitutional demonstrative pronoun  
 PIS – substitutional indefinite pronoun  
 Pl. – Polish  
 Pres – present tense  
 PRF – reflexive personal pronoun  
 PTKNEG – negation particle  
 Sg – singular  
 Trans. – translation  
 VAFIN – auxiliary, finite  
 VMFIN – finite modal verb  
 VVFIN – finite verb, full  
 VVINFIN – infinitive, full  
 VVPP – past participle, full

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