

## Formation and Evolution of Infinitive in German (8th – 20th centuries)

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### Abstract

This research focuses on the study of structural and functional properties of German infinitive viewed from the historical perspective. The dual nature of this grammar form which combines the properties of the verb and those of the noun has been elucidated and the vectors of its evolution in the German language have been determined.

The difference in infinitive structure between Old Germanic and Old / Middle High German can be accounted for two tendencies of morphological modification of German verbs: in the first place its structure will be simplified from of four / five till two elements:

Old Germ. (gi)-nem-a-n(n)-es (5/4)

Old High Germ. (gi)-nem-an(n)-es (4/3)

Middle High Germ. nem-en (2)

In the second place we can reveal the formation and evolution of analytical forms of infinitive: Infinitiv II Perfekt Aktiv, Infinitiv I Vorgangspassiv, Infinitiv I Zustandspassiv, Infinitiv II Vorgangspassiv, Infinitiv II Zustandspassiv.

By means of comparative historical analysis the cyclic character of grammatical changes of German infinitive has been revealed and it has been explained by the expansion of its substantive features during Old and Middle High German periods, succeeded by their reduction and gradual acquisition of the verbal ones. New High German period witnessed the re-activation of the infinitive substantive features, which manifested itself in its combinability with substantive prepositions while its verbal characteristics were gaining further prominence.

The infinitive's grammatical evolution is proved to reflect the direction of grammatical meanings' development in Modern German: expansion of the duration and the resulting paradigm of the category of tense as well as ramification of modal operators.