

De schlussaendlich entscheidet er sich doch z'springe: contrastive linking in oral narrative in (Swiss) German and French

Applied research on information structure detected a 'German way' (assertion-oriented) and a 'French way' (entity/predicate/time-oriented) to highlight relations across utterances (e.g. Dimroth et al. 2010), which arguably influences L2 learning (e.g. Benazzo et al. 2021).

In our talk, we focus on lexical markers (prosody is ignored for methodological reasons) used to enhance cohesion in contexts in which the same entity does not perform an action at first, e.g. *Mr. Red did not jump out of the window despite the fire in his flat*, but later does it, e.g.:

German	French	
1.a. <i>Er ist <u>doch</u> gesprungen</i>	b. <i>Il a <u>quand même</u> sauté</i>	(He still jumped)
2.a. <i>Er hat <u>sich entschieden zu</u> springen</i>	b. <i>Il s'<u>est décidé à</u> sauter</i>	(He decided to jump)
3.a. <i>Er ist <u>schliesslich</u> gesprungen</i>	b. <i>Il a <u>enfin</u> sauté</i>	(He finally jumped)

The frequently used contrastive particle *doch* (1.a) signals the polarity change of the action and has no equivalent in French. Thus, French speakers either use enrichments of the predicate (2.b), temporal markers (3.b), or, more rarely, concessive adverbs (1.b).

These differences between French and German adults in marking contrastive relations were described based on data from relatively small samples. In our study, we collected additional data which also represent a slightly different context: adult monolinguals in Switzerland (with French or Alemannic Swiss German as their L1) and bilinguals ((Swiss) German-French).

We replicated the study of Dimroth et al. (2010) with 20 Swiss-German and 20 Swiss-French monolinguals as well as with 71 bilinguals. Participants retold the segmented silent movie *Finite Story* in which three entities successively perform among other opposite actions. The bilinguals told it once in each language. The overall language dominance was measured with the *Bilingual Language Profile* (Birdsong et al., 2012). Language proficiency was tested in the bilinguals using the *LexTALE* tests (Lemhöfer et Broersma, 2012; Brysbaert, 2013).

Regression analyses indicate that the language of retelling (and not the participant profile) is the strongest predictor of the frequency of adverbial markers of the action (contrastive and concessive, 1.a and b.), enrichments of the predicate (2.a and b.), and temporal markers (3.a and b) in monolinguals and bilinguals (see also raw numbers in Table 1). However, two results concerning the adverbial markers are surprising and will be discussed in more detail:

1. A dialectal effect was observed with frequent use of the Swiss German word *glich*, which meaning is more concessive than assertive (s. Idiotikon). This opens the question of whether speakers of German varieties are really assertion-oriented or they just prefer particles, which are economic. To better understand this finding, we analyze the intra-individual crosslinguistic choices for marking the change in the action by bilinguals.
2. Some Swiss German retellings by our monolinguals resemble more the French style (fewer adverbial markers), whereas the bilinguals prefer adverbial markers in Swiss German rather than in French.

These results question the comparability of the data sets and the generalizability of such findings.

References

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Information marked and cohesive means used		DL1 (N= 40)	CHDL1 (N= 20)	CHDBIL (N= 71)	CHFBIL (N=71)	CHFL1 (N=20)	FL1 (N= 20)
Time		43 (37%)	19 (33%)	80 (42%)	98 (50%)	32 (57%)	34 (60%)
Action - Adverbials	Contrastive particles	<i>doch</i> (32) <i>wohl</i> (1) (28%)	<i>doch</i> (5) (9%)	<i>doch</i> (16) <i>wohl</i> (1) (9%)	-	-	-
	Concessive adverbs	-	<i>glich</i> (2) (4%)	<i>glich</i> (18) <i>trotzdem</i> (4) (12%)	<i>quand même</i> (23) (12%)	<i>quand même</i> (3) <i>tout de même</i> (1) (7%)	<i>quand même</i> (4) <i>tout de même</i> (1) (8%)
Action – Enrichments of the predicate		25 (21%)	20 (35%)	35 (19%)	68 (35%)	21 (38%)	26 (46%)
Total numbers of retold video segments analysed		117	57	189	196	56	57

Table 1: Numbers and percentages of retold video segments documented with a specific type of marker for each data sample (German monolinguals, Swiss German monolinguals, bilinguals in Swiss German, bilinguals in French, Swiss French monolinguals, French monolinguals). Three narrative sequences were retold by each participant (6 for the bilinguals). The total number of segments varies proportionally with the number of participants as well as with the number of NA statements. The three categories (“Time”, “Action -Adverbials” and “Action – Enrichments of the predicate”) are not mutually exclusive. A statement can be marked with more than one means, e.g. *mais il se décide quand même à sauter finalement* (but he still decides to jump finally).