

De schlussaendlich entscheidet er sich doch z'springe

Contrastive linking in oral narratives in (Swiss) German and French

Keywords: information structure; monolinguals; bilinguals; film-retellings; language dominance; assertive particles; concessive adverbs

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/Christine/Santiago 2021).

In our talk, we focus on lexical markers (prosody measure was not reliable) 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 m�me</u> saut�</i> (He still jumped)
(2) a. <i>Er hat <u>sich entschieden</u> zu springen</i>	b. <i>Il <u>s'est d�cid�</u> � sauter</i> (He decided to jump)
(3) a. <i>Er ist <u>schliesslich</u> gesprungen</i>	b. <i>Il a <u>enfin</u> saut�</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 with diverse levels of education. 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/Gertken/Amengual 2012). Language proficiency was tested in the bilinguals using the *LexTALE* tests (Lemh fer/Broersma 2012; Brysbaert 2013).

Regression analyses indicate that the language of retelling, rather than the participant profile, is the strongest predictor of the frequency of contrastive and concessive markers of the action (1), enrichments of the predicate (2), and temporal markers (3) in most cases (see Table 1). However, two results concerning the adverbial markers (1) 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 (Schweizerisches 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 analyzed 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 and more enrichments of the predicate), whereas the bilinguals follow the typical monolingual trend described in Dimroth et al. (2010) in each language. By highlighting such differences between the model study and our replication we address the problems that arise when generalizations on 'languages' and their comparisons are made based on small samples.

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	<i>doch</i> (32) <i>wohl</i> (1) (28%)	<i>doch</i> (5) (9%)	<i>doch</i> (16) <i>wohl</i> (1) (9%)	-	-	-
	Concessive	-	<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%)
Numbers of 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). 3 narrative sequences were retold by each participant (6 for the bilinguals). The total number of segments varies proportionally with the number of participants and with the number of NA statements. The categories “Time”, “Action -Adverbials” and “Action – Enrichments of the predicate” are not mutually exclusive, e.g. *mais il se décide quand même à sauter finalement* (but he still decides to jump finally).

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