

Do L2-Learners of German Use Triggers for Free Indirect Discourse in Perspective-Taking?

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We report on an experiment investigating how L2-Learners of German process three different types of triggers of Free Indirect Discourse (FID). Kaiser & Cohen (2012) investigated the influence of two types of FID triggers, epithets and epistemic adverbs, on participants' resolution of ambiguous pronouns in two-sentence discourses, which is taken as an indicator of perspective-taking. They reported on a strong preference for epithets to induce a resolution toward the object in (2) as compared to (1), and a somewhat weaker preference for perspectivization in (4) in comparison to (3).

- (1) Mary looked woefully at Elizabeth. She was sick. (plain condition)
- (2) Mary looked woefully at Elizabeth. Poor girl; she was sick. (epithet condition)
- (3) Luke glanced at Tom warily. He'd put toothpaste in the shampoo bottle again. (plain)
- (4) Luke glanced at Tom warily. He'd probably put toothpaste in the shampoo bottle again. (epistemic adverb condition)

We were interested to which degree the results of Kaiser & Cohen carry over to German, and whether L2-Learners of German show the same pattern as L1 speakers of English. 24 German items similar to those of Kaiser & Cohen were constructed; in addition, we constructed a condition with the German discourse particle 'doch'/'doch tatsächlich'/'doch allen Ernstes'; the rationale behind this was to test for the cueing potential of these particles, which are acquired very late in L2 acquisition, and which we thus predicted to be relatively subtle.

- (5) Luise traf Steffi vorm Stadion. Sie hatte den Marathon gewonnen. (plain condition)
- (6) Luise traf Steffi vorm Stadion. Sie hatte doch tatsächlich den Marathon gewonnen. (particle condition)

These items were presented to participants on a paper-and-pencil questionnaire, along with a sufficient number of fillers. So far, we tested 11 participants.

In our analysis of the preliminary results the L2-learners show a similar pattern as L1 speakers of English for the paradigm in (1) through (4). In addition, our participants showed a weak effect of the presence of discourse particles. Taking proficiency status into consideration revealed that only highly proficient learners were able to detect and use the particle cue, while less proficient learners showed no difference between the conditions exemplified by (5) and (6); for the epithet and adverb conditions, the influence of proficiency was much less pronounced.

This being preliminary data, our conclusions are limited as of now. Still, our results show that L2-Learners of German honor the function that different cues for FID play in perspectivizing events.