

**Aspects of topicality in the use of demonstratives in German and Russian**

Mi 15.30 – 16.00

It has been repeatedly claimed that referential choice and the activation level of a referent in the memory of the speaker/listener are interconnected (e.g. Chafe 1994; Tomlin and Pu 1991). Here, the cognitive-psychological model of Gundel et. al. (1993) regarding this connection is assessed on two corpora of English and German newspaper texts and formulated more precisely. We argue that the scope of appropriate uses of demonstrative is wider than is assumed by Gundel et. al. (1993). The resulting model can be summarized as follows:

- Low activation is sufficient for appropriate use of a plain NP, but it can also expand to referents that have middle or high activation.
- High activation is necessary and sufficient for appropriate use of pronouns.
- Middle activation is sufficient for appropriate use of demonstrative NPs, yet these can expand the scope of its possible uses in both directions, that is, it can also be appropriately used for coding referents enjoying *both high and low activation*.
- In other words, a pronoun cannot expand the scope of its possible appropriate uses, while a demonstrative NP and a plain NP can – to all other statuses.

We found a clear tendency for demonstratives to code second mentions of the referents for both German and Russian data as compared to personal pronouns and definite NPs (cf. Diessel 1999). Surprisingly, we found that demonstrative pronouns and NPs tend to refer to non-central referents (measured by the relative frequency of mention) which show a lower persistence than those encoded by personal pronouns and definite NPs. Comparing the relative position of referring expressions within the referential chain, it turned out that demonstrative pronouns tend to appear as last mentions, rather than at the beginning of the referential chain, whereas personal pronouns have a preference for medial position in a referential chain. This suggests that chains in which demonstrative pronouns are used are shorter than those in which they are not used. Accordingly, demonstratives appear to establish local discourse topics, rather than global ones.

Chafe, W. (1994). *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time. The Flow and Displacement of Conscious Experience in Speaking and Writing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Diessel, H. (1999). *Demonstratives: Form, function and grammaticalization*. *Typological Studies in Language*, 42. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Gundel, J., N. Hedberg and R. Zacharski (1993). Cognitive status and the form of referring expressions in discourse. *Language* 69(2): 274-307.

Tomlin, R. and M. Pu (1991). The management of reference in Mandarin discourse. *Cognitive Linguistics* 2: 65–93.