INTRODUCTION

1. Personal pronouns (PPros) in German have only a mild preference towards the subject antecedent, while demonstrative pronouns (DPros) have a strong preference against the subject antecedent (the subject avoidance hypothesis, Bosch et al. 2007, Kaiser 2010).
2. German DPros are R-expressions and cannot be syntactically bound (Wittscho 1999).
3. German demonstratives from the dieser paradigm are believed to be associated with the formal language register, but the intuition has never been tested experimentally.
4. The der paradigm demonstratives are associated with the informal language register (Bosch et al. 2003, Weinert 2007).

MOTIVATIONS

1. Can German DPros be bound? (Hinterwimmer, in print)
2. Do the dieser paradigm DPros behave the same way as the der paradigm DPros?
3. Does the language register (formal vs. informal) influence the use of the two types of DPros?
4. Can the inter-sentential behavior of DPros and PPros be generalized to intra-sentential constructions?

REFERENCES


CONCLUSIONS

1. DPros in German can be bound by both, the subject and the object antecedent.
2. DPros prefer object antecedents over subject antecedents.
3. DPros from the dieser paradigm prefer the formal register.
4. DPros from the der paradigm prefer the informal register.
5. With unambiguous antecedents PPros have no strong preference towards the subject or object antecedent (Expt. 1 and 2).
6. With ambiguous antecedents PPPro have strong preference towards the subject antecedent (Expt. 3).

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Experiment 2: Rating of speaker’s language ability

Stimuli

The judge_FEM informed the prosecutor_MASC that [der-DPro / dieser-DPro / neither] must take on another case.

Results
- DPros from the der paradigm are judged to be less natural than DPros from the dieser paradigm which in turn are judged to be less natural than PPros.
- There was no significant effect of the antecedent type or interaction between the pronoun and the antecedent type.

Experiment 3: Direct antecedent probe

Stimuli
Noun-Noun: Paul teilt Tom mit, dass er/der ausgewählt wurde.
Noun tells Tom that PPro/DPro has been chosen.

Noun-Quantifier: Tom teilt jedem mit, dass er/der ausgewählt wurde.
Tom tells everyone that PPro/DPro has been chosen.

Quantifier - Noun: Jeder teilt Tom mit, dass er/der ausgewählt wurde.
Everyone tells Tom that PPro/DPro has been chosen.

Probe question: Wer soll hier angeblich ausgewählt worden sein?
Who is said to have been chosen?

Results
- DPros show clear preference towards object antecedents across all three conditions, but subject-reference is also possible.
- Subject antecedents are preferred for PPros in Noun-Noun and Noun-Quantifier conditions, but object antecedents are preferred in the Quantifier-Noun condition.