

Intra-sentential referential behaviour of German demonstratives

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INTRODUCTION

1. Personal pronouns (PPro) 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 (Wiltschko 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?

Experiment 1: Forced-choice

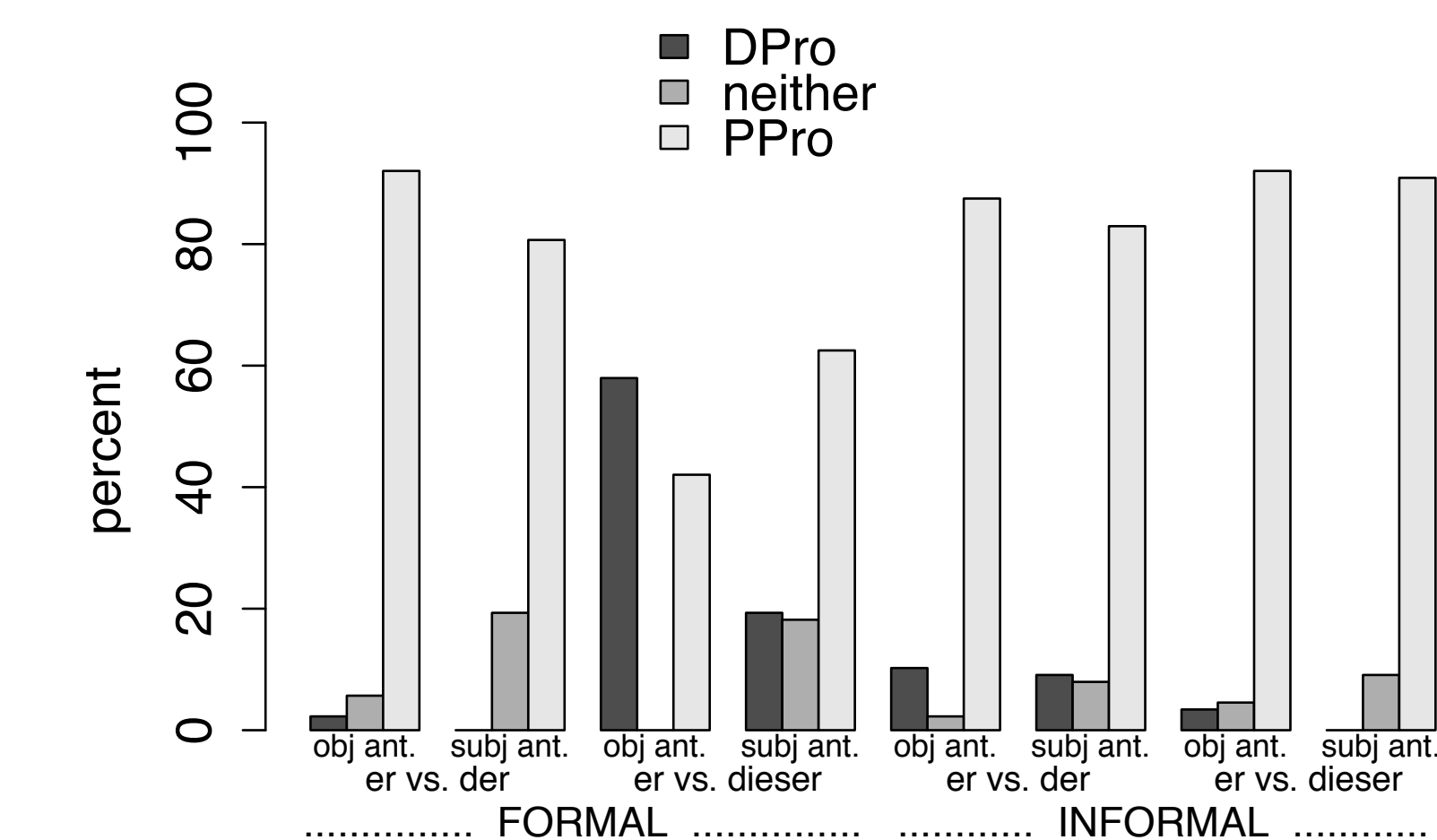
[three alternatives (pronoun-1, pronoun-2, and neither), n = 88]

Stimuli

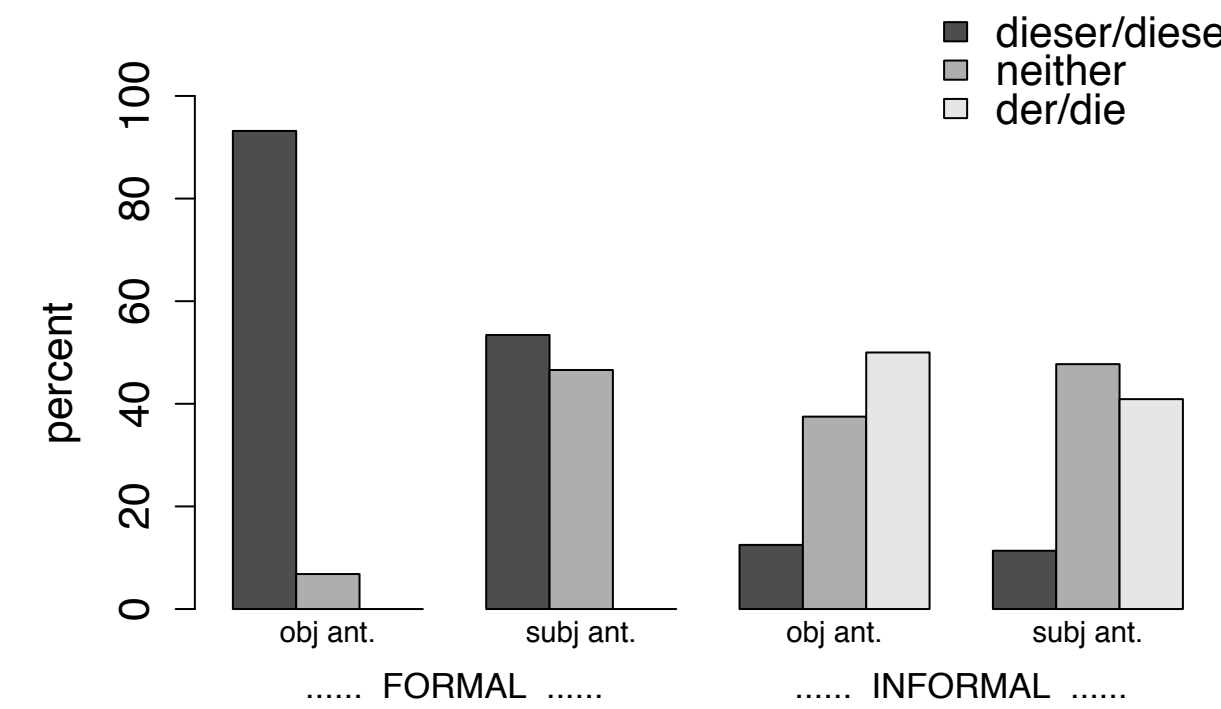
Die Richterin informierte den Staatsanwalt, dass [(er/der/-weder noch-) / (er/dieser/- weder noch-) / (dieser/der/-weder noch-)] einen weiteren Fall annehmen müsse.

“The judge_FEM informed the prosecutor_MASC that [pron 1/pron 2/ neither] must take on another case.”

PPro vs. DPro contrasts



dieser vs. der contrasts



Results

- *Dieser* DPros avoid the subject antecedent.
- *Dieser* DPros are preferred in the formal register.
- *Der* DPros are seldom “produced” in either register (when a PPro is available).
- *Der* DPros are preferred in the informal register.
- PPros do not show any strong preference towards subject or object antecedent.
- In the contrast between *dieser* vs. *der*, *dieser* DPros are preferred in the formal register, and *der* DPros are preferred in the informal register.

REFERENCES

[1] Bosch, Rozario, & Zhao 2003. Demonstrative Pronouns and Personal Pronouns. German *der* vs. *er*. *Proc. of EACL2003*. [2] Bosch, Katz, & Umbach 2007. The non-subject bias of German demonstrative pronouns. In Schwarz-Friesel, Consten, & Knees (eds.) *Anaphors in Text*. [3] Hinterwimmer (in print). A Unified Account of the Properties of German Demonstrative Pronouns. In Grosz, Patel-Grosz, & Yanovich (eds.), *Proc. of the Workshop on Pronominal Semantics at NELS 40*. [4] Kaiser 2010. Investigating the consequences of focus on the production and comprehension of referring expressions. *Int. Rev. Pragmatics 2*. [5] Weinert 2007. Demonstrative and personal pronouns in formal and informal conversations. In Weinert (ed) *Spoken Language Pragmatics*. [6] Wiltschko 1999. On the Syntax and Semantics of (Relative) Pronouns and Determiners. *J. Comp. Germanic Ling.*

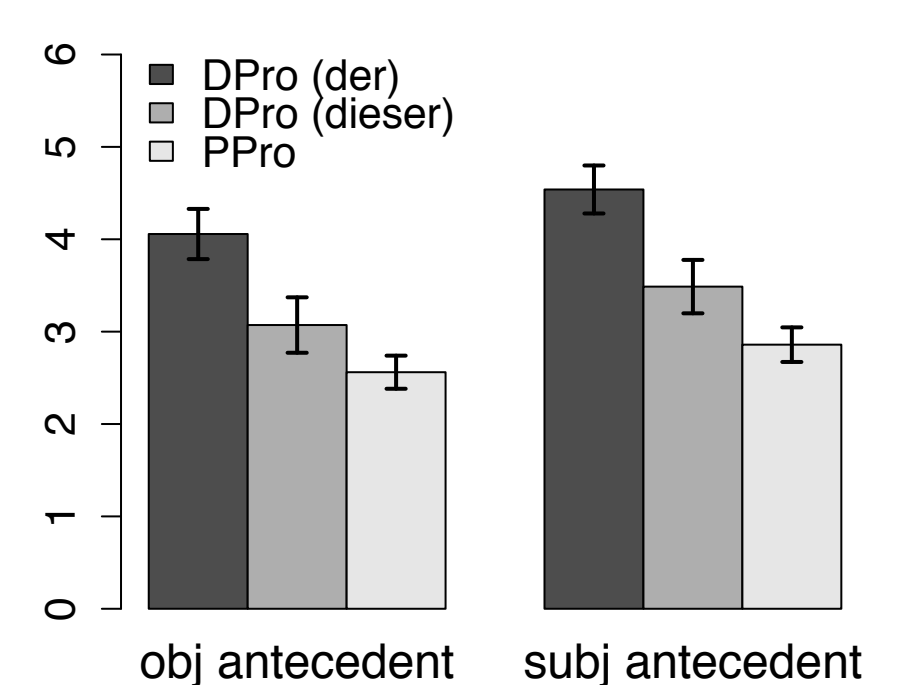
Experiment 2: Rating of speaker’s language ability [1 – 6 scale (native – non-native), n = 52]

Stimuli

Die Richterin informierte den Staatsanwalt, dass [der-DPro / dieser-DPro / PPro] einen weiteren Fall annehmen müsse.

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

Rating (1 = native, 6 = non-native)



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 [n = 147]

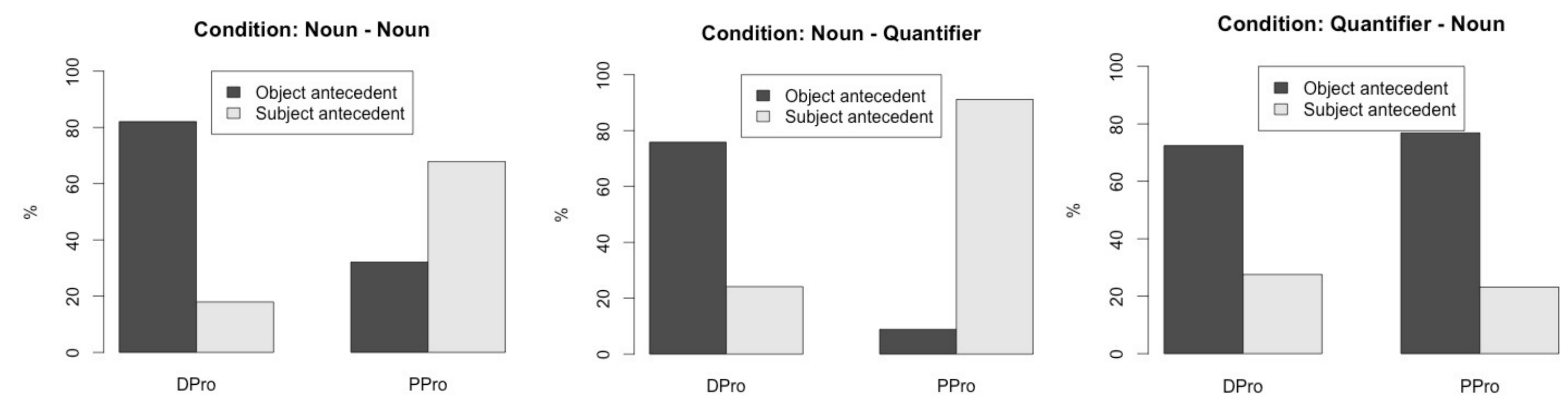
Stimuli

Noun-Noun: Paul teilt Tom mit, dass er/der ausgewählt wurde.
Paul 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.

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 PPros have strong preference towards the subject antecedent (Expt. 3).

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