

Two systems of anaphorically used pronouns in plain text and in reported speech: *der/die* and its counterparts in spoken German

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1 Scope and aim of the study

- *der/die* (traditionally seen as a demonstrative) vs. *er/sie* (anaphoric) vs. clitic pronouns, forming a threefold distinction of anaphoric (or: anaphorically used) pronouns in spoken German;
- corpus-based study (narrative texts);
- pronouns are organised in 2 different systems in plain text vs. in reported speech sequences;
- which role do the main pronoun functions of tracking referents and of structuring information play within these 2 systems?

2 Corpus description

- spontaneous spoken German, predominantly narrative texts; East Franconian dialect as spoken in the village of Hetzles (1200 residents, Northern Bavaria) – but not a Bavarian dialect;
- informants from two generations: ~ 30 years and ~ 60-70 years. Both men and women, at least 1 person for each of the possible combinations included; total 7 informants, amount of text roughly equally distributed among generations and sexes.
- recordings made in 1999, monolog and dialog texts, ~ 40 min (out of 5,5 h) selected, ~ 1100 pause units ~ 10.000 running words;
- small corpus, but pronouns as extremely frequently occurring elements! Text data completed/expanded by cautious elicitation data (e.g. to obtain negative evidence).

3 Anaphorically used pronouns in plain texts

3 types of anaphorically used pronouns in the phoric system in plain text/discourse: d-pronouns (*der/die*), k-pronouns (simple clitics, < *er/sie*), and s-pronouns (*er/sie*).

3.1 Quantitative findings

somewhat surprising frequency figures (only pronouns referring to entities, not to clauses or propositions; generally no neuter forms counted):

- (1)
- 188 d-pronouns
 - 190 k-pronouns
 - 25 s-pronouns

→ it is the s-pronoun that is the marked member and that needs a particular explanation!

3.2 Qualitative analysis

d-pronouns, typical example (Geyer 2003, ex. 1-69, transcription simplified)

- (2) ... is a glans maadlë dabai gveesn **dii** is nauf und nundëglofm
'... ist ein kleines Mädchen dabei gewesen, die ist hinauf- und hinuntergelaufen'
'... a little girl took part, she ran up and down'

k-pronouns, typical example (Geyer 2003, ex. 7-53ff, transcription simplified)

- (3) no hãd=s doch dsvaa nefm und **dii** hãm=s/ imë gsãchd jaa unë feënseedaame vii=s
nãchë haamghumë sen hãm=si=s abl rechd dsum naën ghaldn
'da hat sie doch zwei Neffen und die haben sie/ immer gesagt ja unsere Fernseh
dame als sie dann nach Hause gekommen sind haben sie sie immer recht zum
Narren gehalten'
'so she's got two nephews and they called her/ used to say oh our TV-lady when
they came home then, they always made a fool of her'

cf. also (4) (Geyer 2003, ex. 2-1ff, transcription simplified)

- (4) also guud dãã vãë a mõõ und **deë** hãd biën grism und also **deë** vãë seë schdolds
auf sai biën und dan hãd=ë an ghoëb ...
'also gut da war ein Mann und der hat Birnen gerissen ('gepflückt') und also der
war sehr stolz auf seine Birnen und dann hat er einen Korb...'
'well, there was a man and he was picking pears and well he was very proud
of his pears and then he [had] a basket...'

Main difference in the information structural value of the respective referents:

cf. Lambrecht 1994: 109 ("identifiable" branch only):

- (5)
-
- ```
graph TD
 identifiable --> inactive
 identifiable --> accessible
 identifiable --> active
 accessible --> textually
 accessible --> situationally
 accessible --> inferentially
```

Lambrecht 1994: 163:

„In selecting a topic for a sentence, a speaker makes a communicative decision as to the ‘point of departure’ for the new information, i.e. as to the entity that she wishes to convey information about. But before making this communicative decision, the speaker must make certain hypotheses concerning the status of the referent of the topic in the mind of the addressee at the time of the utterance. On the basis of these hypotheses, the speaker then decides upon the form of the sentence in which the topic is to be coded. However, the fact that a particular referent has the activation properties required for topic function in a sentence does not entail that it must be coded as topic.“

- Function of the d-pronoun: establishing already active referents as new topics.
- Function of the k-pronoun: continuing already topical (and active) referents as topics.

The Topic Acceptability Scale (cf. Lambrecht 1994: 165)

(6)

| activation state   | acceptability as topic |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| active             | maximal                |
| accessible         | ↑                      |
| inactive           | ↓                      |
| ...                |                        |
| (not identifiable) | (minimal)              |

Preferred topic expression

(7)

| Zero | Clitic/bound pronoun | Pronoun [-stress] | Pronoun [+stress] | Definite NP | Indefinite NP |
|------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
|      |                      |                   |                   |             |               |

—————→  
 Markedness of occurrence as topic (Van Valin / LaPolla 1997: 205)

- s-pronoun, as an allomorph of the k-pronoun, is being used if the host for the clitic pronoun is lacking (e.g. utterance-initial or after a pause)

Examples: (Geyer 2003, ex. 1-7f, transcription simplified)

- (8) guud **dii** is efangelisch abë **sii** voond ja eds scho a dsaidlang in hedsles  
 ‘gut die ist evangelisch aber sie wohnt ja jetzt schon eine Zeitlang in Hetzles’  
 ‘well she is Lutheran but now she has been living in Hetzles for a time’

word order changed (by elicitation):

- (9) ... abë eds voond=s ja scho a dsaidlang in hedsles  
 ‘... aber jetzt wohnt sie ja schon eine Zeitlang in Hetzles’  
 ‘...but now she has been living in Hetzles for a time’

### 3.3 Related notions

- Weinrich 1993: thematicity (s-pronoun) vs. rhematicity (d-pronoun); d-pronoun is rarely used (!), in order to keep the d-pronouns' function as "Aufmerksamkeitssignal" 'signal of attention'
- Delisle 1993: d-pronouns is characterised by the notion of contrast
- Zifonun / Hoffmann / Strecker 1997: d-pronouns for re-orienting the hearer, s-pronouns for maintaining the hearer's orientation; based on Ehlich's concept of deictic procedure vs. (ana)phoric procedure: „The anaphoric procedure is a linguistic means to make the hearer sustain a previously established focus towards a specific item. The deictic procedure is a linguistic means to achieve the focusing of the hearer's attention towards a specific item.“ (Ehlich 1979)
- Behaghel 1923: "ruhige Weiterführung" 'calm continuation' for s-pronouns, "gewisse Spannung" 'certain tension' for d-pronouns
- similar findings (plain discourse) for Dutch by Comrie 1997?

### 4 Anaphorically used pronouns in reported speech

- d-pronouns force an interpretation of disjoint reference of reporting and reported speaker (more 'basic' pronominal function than in plain text).
- k-pronouns allow both a coreferential interpretation of reporting and reported speaker as well as disjoint reference.
- s-pronouns indicate coreference of reporting and reported speaker (logophoric? somewhat unclear data...)

cf. (10) – (12), based on Geyer 2003, ex. 1-50, modified by elicitation:

(10) (und dan hād=ë<sub>i</sub> gsâchd) naa und des mâchd=ë<sub>i/j</sub> ned  
'und dann hat er<sub>i</sub> gesagt nein und das macht er<sub>i/j</sub> nicht'  
'and then he<sub>i</sub> said no, he<sub>i/j</sub> would't do that'

(11) und dan hād=ë<sub>i</sub> gsâchd naa und des mâchd deë<sub>\*i/j</sub> ned  
'und dann hat er<sub>i</sub> gesagt nein und das macht der<sub>\*i/j</sub> nicht'  
'and then he<sub>i</sub> said no, he<sub>\*i/j</sub> would't do that'

(12) und dan hād=ë<sub>i</sub> gsâchd des mâchd eë<sub>i/\*j</sub> ned  
'und dann hat er<sub>i</sub> gesagt das macht er<sub>i/\*j</sub> nicht'  
'and then he<sub>i</sub> said no, he<sub>i/\*j</sub> would't do that'

## 5 Conclusions

- 3 pronouns in spoken German: d-, k-, and s-pronouns, the latter being used only under certain, restricted conditions;
- 2 different systems in plain discourse and in reported discourse;
- discerning information structure differences as main function in plain discourse: establishing active referents as new topics (d-pronouns) vs. continuing already established topics (k-pronouns) (in narrative text with a dynamic structure);
- discerning reference in reported discourse: d-pronouns for different-speaker reading, s-pronouns for same-speaker reading, k-pronouns for both of them.

Open question: Is the d-pronoun a true demonstrative at all? It does not take part in the distinction proximal – remote, the core characteristic of demonstratives (cf. Diessel 1999, Bhat 2004 and others). How valid is the historical argument, d-pronouns being historically derived from an I-E. demonstrative \*to (cf. e.g. Szemerényi 1990)?

## 6 References

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