

## From sentence to discourse: Event representations by monolingual and bilingual children

Donnerstag,  
05.03.2020  
13:45–14:45  
VMPS 2091/2201

**Tetyana Vasylyeva**

University of Paderborn

tetyanav@mail.upb.de

### AG 3

The present contribution investigates the selection and organization of information in discourse by child and adolescent monolingual and bilingual speakers within the “thinking for speaking” framework (Slobin 1996). Crosslinguistic studies show that speakers of languages with grammaticalized aspect reveal different preferences than those of speakers of languages without overt aspect marking on the sentence level, which leads to different patterns of discourse organization (von Stutterheim & Nüse 2003). Speakers of aspect languages like Russian tend to select phases of events (e.g. russ. *on pobežal k vode*, engl. ‘he (has/had) started to run towards the water’) for verbalization while speakers of non-aspect languages like German choose to describe events as a whole (e.g. germ. *Er läuft zum Wasser*, engl. ‘he runs towards the water’). In this contribution, I will report the results of a study of 80 oral re-narrations of a silent film by monolingual and bilingual speakers of Russian and German aged 7 to 14. Monolingual children of all age groups have acquired morphologic tense and aspect markings of their L1 and chose the respective L1-perspective for verbalization of events. At the age of 11-12 they start using L1-principles for text construction, which could be seen in re-narrations of adults. While the L1 German speakers produce longer texts choosing all scenes of the film for verbalization from the perspective of a protagonist, the speakers of L1 Russian mostly elaborate on a few key scenes and may choose a narrator- and listener-oriented perspective. All bilingual children acquired the L1-markings at the same age as well, and they tend to choose the same perspective on single events in German but describe the events as a whole (L1 German perspective) in L1 Russian. Also, a smaller variation of aspect uses on the sentence level (e.g. perfective in resultative meaning) could be found in Russian bilingual L1 data compared to monolingual data. Finally, the texts of bilinguals are not constructed by the principles of their respective L1’s but in an additive fashion. A possible explanation within the Cognitive Grammar framework is that some discourse properties depend on different degrees of entrenchment of particular time schemas in relation to a particular type of event (Bylund & Jarvis 2011). In this contribution I will argue, that the representations of certain discourse-shaping categories such as aspect should be investigated also within the discourse.

**References:** Bylund, E. & Jarvis, S. (2011). L2 effects on L1 event conceptualization. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 14(01), 47–59. Slobin, D. (1996). From “thought and language” to “thinking for speaking”. In J. Gumperz & S. Levinson (eds.), *Rethinking linguistic relativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 70–96. von Stutterheim, C. & Nüse, R. (2003). Processes of conceptualization in language production: Language-specific perspectives and event construal. *Linguistics*, 41 (5), 851–881.