

On the choice of relative pronouns in attributive relative clauses in standard German in South Tyrol

Even though *d*-relative pronouns and *w*-relative pronouns can be used in standard German attributive relative clauses without triggering a change in meaning, journalistic texts from South Tyrol, and also from Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Western Austria, exhibit a higher proportion of *w*-relative pronouns than texts published in the remainder of the German-speaking area (see Dürscheid/Elspaß/Ziegler (eds.) 2018, key words: *welcher*, *welche*, *welches*). This study analyses the conditions of use and correction of relative pronouns by various groups of speakers and writers from South Tyrol in medial and conceptual orality and literacy.

With regard to the type of relative clause, the object of research is limited to attributive relative clauses as only these clauses have freedom of choice in terms of the relative pronoun. Due to a lack of this freedom of choice, complementary ('free') relative clauses, unintegrated ('sentential') relative clauses and so-called 'quasi-relative clauses' or 'pseudo-relative clauses' with verb-second word order as well as attributive relative clauses in which the relative pronoun also functions as the article will not be considered.

In this analysis, I refer to Ammon's model to differentiate between the various groups of speakers and writers. Ammon considers four instances – 'language codifiers', 'model speakers/writers', 'language norm authorities' and 'language experts' – responsible for the development of a standard variety while the 'majority of the population', also defined as 'norm subjects' provided that they are dependent on language norm authorities, do not or only indirectly influence the standard variety (see Ammon 1995, pp. 80 f.).

Based on the statements of a 'language expert' (see Rampold 2005, p. 51), supplemented by the grammatical representation of German, the following hypotheses can be inferred:

- 1) The use of *w*-relative pronouns is limited to (medial) literacy.
- 2) *W*-relative pronouns are used to avoid homography between a *d*-relative pronoun and a subsequent *d*-article or a preceding *d*-demonstrative pronoun.
- 3) *W*-relative pronouns are used to vary relative pronouns in the case of two attributive relative connections in the same matrix clause.

Various corpora are used to examine these hypotheses: on the one hand, the language behaviour of model speakers/writers is compared to the language behaviour of norm subjects. On the other hand, the correction behaviour of language norm authorities in the context of external corrections is compared to the correction behaviour of norm subjects in the context of self-corrections.

The language use of model speakers/writers is described by using data from newspapers (medial and conceptual literacy) (see Anstein 2007, p. 18), lectures (medial literacy and conceptual orality) (see Reiterer 2013, pp. 75–79) and radio interviews (medial and conceptual orality). No data exists for the area of medial literacy and conceptual orality of model speakers/writers. The language use of norm subjects is described by using data from Matura exams (medial and conceptual literacy) (see Glück/Leonardi 2019, pp. 448–451, 454 f.), laureate presentations (medial orality and conceptual literacy), interviews

with high-school pupils (medial and conceptual orality) (see Glück/Leonardi 2019, pp. 448–451, 454 f.) and Facebook texts (medial literacy and conceptual orality) (see Glück/Glaznieks 2019, pp. 81–84). Data from Matura exams are also used to examine the correction behaviour of language norm authorities and norm subjects.

The results of the study can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Among model speakers/writers, the use of *w*-relative pronouns is limited to medial literacy while it is predominantly limited to conceptual literacy among norm subjects (see hypothesis 1).
- 2) The use of *w*-relative pronouns is independent of context in both groups. On the one hand, *w*-relative pronouns without a subsequent potentially homographic or homophonic *d*-article or without a preceding potentially homographic or homophonic *d*-demonstrative pronoun occur more frequently than *w*-relative pronouns with a subsequent potentially homographic or homophonic *d*-article or with a preceding potentially homographic or homophonic *d*-demonstrative pronoun. On the other hand, *d*-relative pronouns with a subsequent homographic or homophonic *d*-article or with a preceding homographic or homophonic *d*-demonstrative pronoun occur more frequently than *w*-relative pronouns with a subsequent potentially homographic or homophonic *d*-article or with a preceding potentially homographic or homophonic *d*-relative pronoun (see hypothesis 2).
- 3) The use of *w*-relative pronouns is independent of the number of attributive relative connections in the same matrix clause in both groups. Two relative connections caused by *d*-relative pronouns occur more frequently than two relative connections caused by two different relative pronouns or two *w*-relative pronouns. However, there is less evidence of two relative connections caused by two *w*-relative pronouns than two relative connections caused by two different relative pronouns (see hypothesis 3).
- 4) In the case of the rare external corrections by language norm authorities, only the use of *d*-relative pronouns with a subsequent homographic or homophonic *d*-article is corrected. Neither the use of *d*-relative pronouns with a preceding homographic or homophonic *d*-demonstrative pronoun or with two attributive relative connections in the same matrix clause is corrected nor the majority of cases in which the *d*-relative pronoun is used with a subsequent homographic or homophonic *d*-article (see hypotheses 2 and 3).
- 5) In the case of the rare self-corrections by norm subjects, only the use of *d*-relative pronouns without a subsequent homographic or homophonic *d*-article is corrected. Neither the use of *d*-relative pronouns with a subsequent homographic or homophonic *d*-article or with a preceding homographic or homophonic *d*-demonstrative pronoun is corrected nor the use of *d*-relative pronouns with two attributive relative connections in the same matrix clause (see hypotheses 2 and 3).

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