

## Syntactic Persistence in a Translation Task: Ditransitives

Robert M Maier, University of Edinburgh

(Poster)

This poster presents the results of two experiments in which speakers of L1=German and advanced L2=English spontaneously translated different types of German ditransitive constructions into English. For ditransitives, English typically uses either a double object construction (ex.1a) in which the recipient (R) follows the verb directly and the theme (T) is in final position, or a prepositional object construction (ex.1b) where the verb is followed by T first, then by R, which is additionally marked with a preposition (p). German obligatorily marks R either with a preposition or the dative case (d) and accepts both orders of R and T with both markers (ex.2a-d). Without further context, all of the following examples carry the same meaning:

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| (1a) <i>The boy sends the girl the letter.</i>         | R-T  |
| (1b) <i>The boy sends the letter to the girl.</i>      | T-pR |
| (2a) <i>Der Junge sendet dem Mädchen den Brief.</i>    | dR-T |
| (2b) <i>Der Junge sendet den Brief an das Mädchen.</i> | T-pR |
| (2c) <i>Der Junge sendet den Brief dem Mädchen.</i>    | T-dR |
| (2d) <i>Der Junge sendet an das Mädchen den Brief.</i> | pR-T |

In experiment 1, source sentences for translation were of types (2a) and (2b), and in experiment 2 of (2a) and (2c). In both experiments, record was taken of both the constructional choice made in the translation, and the latency until onset of production. It was predicted that translations in which syntactic surface structure could be carried over from source into target would show signs of facilitated processing, i.e. shorter response latencies. This prediction was confirmed; however, constructional data showed a significant preference for prepositional constructions (1b) even where double object constructions were clearly facilitated.