

## INTRODUCTION

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The present issue of *OSLa* is a follow-up to *OSLa* 9(2) (Fabricius-Hansen et al. 2017). Their common topic is adnominal possessive pronouns/ determiners (in short: *possessives*) in related European languages (English, German, Norwegian, French, Polish, Czech, ...), viewed from the perspective of Ln processing and interpreting or translating between Ln and L1.<sup>1</sup>

As seen in Gunkel et al. (2017: 673–719), the systems of possessives differ across languages in various dimensions (so-called *Varianzparameter*); in particular, this holds of 3<sup>rd</sup> person possessives, which cannot refer to the speaker(s) or the addressee(s) and which may be structurally bound in the sense of Chomsky (1981).

The present issue covers the Ln/L1 pairs English/Polish, French/English, French/German, French/Norwegian, German/Norwegian and to a certain extent also Czech vs. German and Norwegian. It focuses on the following dimensions of 3<sup>rd</sup> person adnominal possessives:

- (i) How many different lexical items does the system of possessives comprise, and to what extent is the choice between them determined by the number and (natural and/or grammatical) gender of the antecedent – the *possessor*?
- (ii) Does the system distinguish between reflexive and non-reflexive (more precisely: irreflexive) possessives? Put differently: In how far are the possessives subject to structural constraints in relation to the *possessor* (Binding Principle A versus B in terms of Chomsky 1981)?<sup>2</sup>
- (iii) To what extent are the possessives inflected, agreeing in number, gender, case ... with their head noun – the *possessee*?

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[1] Ln: L2 or an additional foreign language.

[2] *Reflexive* items are subject to Binding Condition A and consequently *anaphors* in Chomskyan terms. According to the same tradition *irreflexive* items, i.e. items which, obeying Binding Principle B, cannot refer to the subject of their own clause, are *pronouns*. In the contributions to the present issue, the terms *anaphor* and *pronoun* are used in a more traditional, wider sense.

Since we have to do with rather closely related (Indo-European) languages, there is an additional aspect to take into consideration:

- (iv) To what extent are possessive items belonging to different languages recognizable cognates, morpho-phonologically resembling each other?

The first three papers investigate the effects that interlingual variation in these areas may have on L<sub>n</sub> comprehension and/or interpreting. Thus, BERGLJOT BEHRENS, CATHRINE FABRICIUS-HANSEN AND ANNELIESE PITZ specify the difficult task of acquiring the meaning of French possessives for English, Norwegian and German learners of French as a foreign language, and outline an experimental design intended to test learners on their spontaneous interpretation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular possessive determiner in its three possessee-determined forms *son*, *sa* and *ses* ('his'/'her').

CATHRINE FABRICIUS-HANSEN, ANNELIESE PITZ AND HENRIK TORGERSEN investigate how Norwegian learners of German interpret the two German possessives *sein* ('his') and *ihr* ('her'/'their') under given referentially unambiguous conditions and, more specifically, whether the formal similarity between the binding-neutral *sein* and the Norwegian reflexive possessive *sin* may enhance or interfere with the Norwegian speakers' interpretation of *sein*.

KATARZYNA STACHOWIAK-SZYMCZAK AND BERGLJOT BEHRENS report on an experiment investigating the use of possessives in an interpreting task from L2-English, whose possessives are binding-neutral, to L1-Polish, which – like Norwegian – has a reflexive possessive in addition to a set of non-reflexive possessives. The results show that interpreting from a simple system into a complex system yields errors, even by native speakers of the target language, but that the type of audience, as defined for the interpreter, affects the target wording.

In the fourth and final paper, BARBARA MERTINS presents findings from an offline (questionnaire) study of Czech native speakers' interpretation of reflexive vs. non-reflexive possessives. The results reveal that the informants surprisingly often choose a reflexive (local) interpretation of the non-reflexive *jeho* ('his') used cataphorically, indicating a strong uncertainty among Czech speakers concerning the constraints on the two types of possessives. The concluding section briefly discusses how this intralingual variation may affect the acquisition of L<sub>n</sub> possessives when it comes to the language pairs involving Czech as L<sub>n</sub> and Norwegian or German as L1, or vice versa.

## REFERENCES

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- Gunkel, Lutz, Adriano Murelli, Susan Schlotthauer, Bernd Wiese & Gisela Zifonun. 2017. *Grammatik des Deutschen im europäischen Vergleich. Das Nominal*. [...] Berlin: de Gruyter (Schriften des IDS 14.1–2).