

## Individual Differences in Transfer and Entrenchment

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Bilingual speakers living in an L2 environment oftentimes experience transfer from their second language to their native language. Research has shown that there is large individual variation in this regard, both in speakers' extent of transfer and in the constructions that are being transferred. In this study, we aim to explore this variation in detail by looking at native German speakers living in the Netherlands and their transfer from Dutch to German. Previous research has shown that these speakers experience transfer quite extensively, for instance regarding the placement of prepositional phrases, which are placed more often after the verb in Dutch than in German. Transfer of this Dutch placement preference is therefore likely to result in an increased use of this so-called postfield position in German. In this study, we test whether different speakers experience this transfer to the same extent and whether they differ in its lexical manifestations.

To do that, we first look at their language use in a bilingual corpus consisting of German e-mails written by native German speakers living in the Netherlands (N = 8, word count: 1,370,708) and then test whether variation between speakers in this corpus – both in terms of the extent and the lexical manifestations of their transfer – is linked to variation in the same speakers' responses (i.e., grammaticality judgments, reaction times) in an experimental task. Our results show that the bilingual speakers clearly differ in the extent to which they transfer the Dutch placement preference to their German, with percentages of postfield use ranging from 3.34% to 26.42%, and that they also differ in the lexical items that they prefer to place in that Dutch-like position. The experimental study further builds on this lexical variation, by asking participants to judge the use of the postfield position in combination with exactly those lexical items that the participants frequently used and did not use in that position themselves. The results showed that speakers oftentimes rejected the Dutch-like postfield position, but less so in cases when they themselves used the lexical item in that position. Importantly, predictors based on speakers' own placement preferences for lexical items were better predictors in this regard than predictors based on amalgamated corpus data.

We discuss these results in terms of what they can tell us about bilingual speakers' language representations: first, they suggest that variation is usage-based, with speakers responding differently to transfer depending on their own language use. Secondly, their judgments seem to be based on the general pattern (i.e., the postfield position) and its lexical instances (i.e., individual preferences for certain lexical items), suggesting that speakers store and attend to both when making their grammaticality judgments. These conclusions are in line with a usage-based approach.