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Alan Hasselberger, Marie-France Agnoletti

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## **Intergroup cleavage bias in a job interview proposal: the role of cleft vs. uncleft sentences and connectors**

Hasselberger, A.<sup>1</sup> & Agnoletti, M.F.<sup>1</sup>

*Université de Lorraine, CNRS, ATILF, F-54000 Nancy.*

This presentation is a comparable version of Hasselberger and Agnoletti (2024), with the difference that it is in English and covers additional concepts.

Because of social norms, intergroup prejudice cannot be explicitly expressed (N'Dobo & Gardair, 2006). However, it can be identified through language indicators. This was highlighted by the study of explanations of (non-)hiring decisions. For instance, opposition (and comparison) connectors, used to justify a decision about an exocategory member, indicate a possible reality. Some connectors (or addition connectors), used in justifications concerning an endocategory candidate, reflect an asserted reality (Ghiglione, 1989; Ndobu, 2008). Other markers, such as cleft ("It's X that I'm selecting") vs. uncleft ("I'm selecting X") sentences, express a truthful speech (Tilmant & Hupet, 1990).

The aim of this study is to point out the role and impact of the use of cleft sentences and connectors, in the explanations given to justify a job interview proposal for an endocategory vs. exocategory candidate.

193 participants (all-comers) completed a survey. They were presented with a recruitment narrative for a multi-skilled employee position involving two candidates. Their CVs were comparable for skills and experiences. Their category belonging (endocategory vs. exocategory) was specified by mentioning volunteer activity in an association. Participants were asked to select a candidate to continue the recruitment process and to explain their choice.

The results showed no difference between the candidates in cleft sentences in the interview proposals ( $p < .60$ ). However, the way in which the proposal is formulated, has an impact on the use of connectors in explanations. Addition connectors are over-represented in

explanations provided for the endocategory candidate, and opposition/comparison connectors in explanations on the exocategory, when the interview proposal is given by a cleft sentence rather than an uncleft sentence ( $\chi^2(6,793) = 17.34, V=0.06, p < .01$ ).

Cleft sentences express a clear interview proposal and show superiority of the endocategory candidate over the exocategory candidate (Downing, 2001). The results will be discussed in the light of the cleavage bias.

Downing, A. (2001). "Surely you knew!": Surely as a marker of evidentiality and stance. *Functions of Language*, 8(2), 251-282. <https://doi.org/10.1075/fof.8.2.05dow>

Ghiglione, R. (1989). Discours et attitudes : La notion de consistance à propos du politique. *Hermès, La Revue*, 2(5-6), 201-218.

Hasselberger, A., & Agnoletti, M.-F. (2024, juin). *Biais de clivage inter catégoriel dans une proposition d'entretien d'embauche et son explication par des participants tout-venant* [Communication orale]. 10e JUNIOR COLLOQUE du Réseau de Recherche en Psychologie du Travail et des Organisations, Dijon, France. <https://hal.science/hal-04604104>

Ndobo, A. (2008). «Je ne suis pas d'accord et je le fais savoir» Le discours de la réactance à la pression pro-exogroupe en situation de sélection professionnelle. *Les cahiers internationaux de psychologie sociale*, 2, 5-20.

N'Dobo, A., & Gardair, E. (2006). Le discours de la discrimination en situation de sélection professionnelle : Un exemple de persistance du biais de différenciation intergroupe. *Les Cahiers Internationaux de Psychologie Sociale*, 70(2), 21-34. <https://doi.org/10.3917/cips.070.0021>

Tilmant, B., & Hupet, M. (1990). Effets du degré de conviction de l'interlocuteur sur l'usage de phrases clivées. *L'Année psychologique*, 90(2), 213-229. <https://doi.org/10.3406/psy.1990.29396>