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► **To cite this version:**

Marie Perini. Learning written French in a deafness context: a particular L2 acquisition? Some clues from written productions of deaf adults. SIGN CAFÉ 2: Second international workshop on cognitive and functional explorations in sign language linguistics, Oct 2022, Raguse, Italy. . halshs-04436756

HAL Id: halshs-04436756

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-04436756>

Submitted on 3 Feb 2024

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LEARNING WRITTEN FRENCH IN A DEAF CONTEXT: A PARTICULAR L2 ACQUISITION? SOME CLUES FROM WRITTEN PRODUCTIONS OF DEAF ADULTS.

BACKGROUND : Deaf people and written language (both signers and non signers)

Just difficulties ?

Daigle & Dubuisson 1998, Tuller 2000, Perini 2013, ...

Or... specificities ?

Charrow 1975, Dubuisson et al. 1998, Millet 2011, ...

Diffic. with tense system : infinitive or present tense overgeneralized	1) Moi n'pas faim, hier mange beaucoup I not hungry, yesterday eat a lot	Temporal markers carried by the lexicon
Frequent omission of subject and complement pronouns	2) J'ai rencontré à Tours comme ça (je l'ai) I have met _ in Tours, like this	"difficult to learn and easy to overlook" (Charrow 1975) = linguistic economy principle
Word order troubles	3) La chambre du lit de l'oreiller The room of the bed of the pillow 4) l'aquarium est dans le poisson The aquarium is in the fish	Visual thinking (Lacerte 1989) Acces to VL linearity (Millet 2011)

Is written language a 2nd language for the Deaf ? (Charrow 1974, Dubuisson et Nadeau 1994)

Deaf English (Charrow, 1974) ; Deaf writing (Lacerte 1989) ; Deaf French ? (Nadeau 1993)

THEORETICAL MODELS

Learners' varieties approach (Klein and Perdue, 1997)

Def learners' variety : coherent linguistic system produced by a language learner

Errors => evidences of the state of the learner's interlanguage

Identification of 3 stages : pre-basic ; basic ; post-basic

Basic variety : stable and simple organizational principles ; Organization of constituents around the verb. Potential fossilization point.

Quaestio model (Klein and Von Stutterheim 1991)

Referential movement : analyze of the way the information is introduced, maintained or elaborated along the text

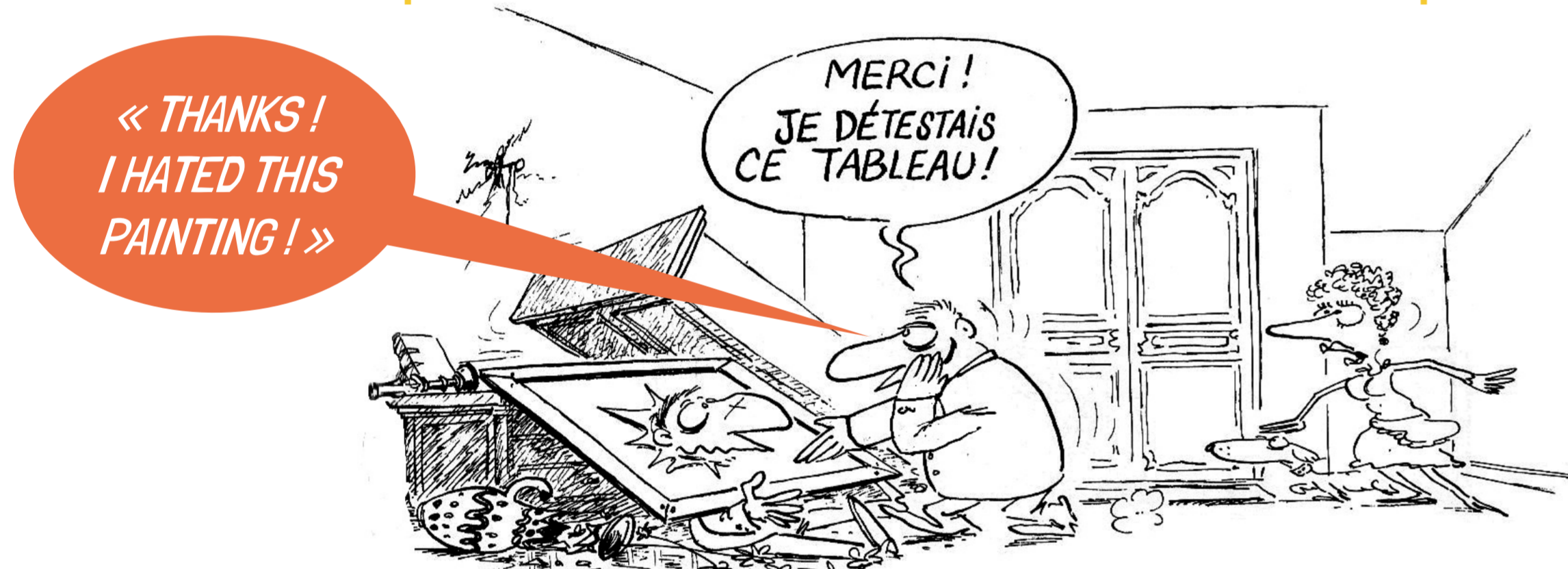
Quaestio in narratives : what happened for P in T ?

(P : person ; T : time)

Control the distribution of the information between foreground and background

METHODOLOGY (2008-2009)

Task : written production - Narratives based on a picture



Gr 1 profound prelingual deaf adults (n = 20)

> various educational and linguistic profiles (bilingual and oralist curricula)

Gr 2 control group of hearing adults having French as L2 (n=12)

Gr 3 control group of hearing adults having French as L1 (n=8)

Meaning control : LSF or French restitution + interviews

Mostly qualitative analysis

« arrive femme est choc. Elle dit cet comment Deux »

« "Mon dieu, mon tableau" crie la femme surprise choquante choquée venant d'arriver dans le salon avec son chien »

« En voyant la scène, elle est choquée. Non seulement l'armoire est tombé, mais le tableau de fleurs qu'elle adore et hérité de sa famille, est déchiré. »

RESULTS (PERINI, 2013)

1) Great disparity in the texts

=> refinement acc. to degrees of mastery

Non autonomous	Partially autonomous Poorly developed text	Autonomous Extensive text
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Not or poorly grammaticalized
Verb : not a key term

« Deaf characteristics » :
density is the highest

Closest of Gr 3
Some points of resistance ...

« **naked** » texts: no initial situation, lack of background informations (> parachuting effect), limited language resources for introductions and maintenance of information.

Elaborated texts: long initial situation, richness of information about the characters and the scenery, wide-ranging language resources for introductions and maintenance of information.

2) Highlighting of new characteristics

Detail-oriented narratives

Il vient d'entrée et mettre ce tableau avec un clou frappe marteau pour crochet. » (Simon)

Christophe a fait taper avec un clou et un tableau à côté du mur (Phil)

Il a tapé la pointe sur le mur avec le marteau (Charles)

Visual restitutions

il a tenu sa main gauche sur sa visage, oh là là (Charles)

Il a glissé car il a tenu la moitié de chaussure (Charles)

DISCUSSION

(1) Few differences with the French foreign language texts on the morphosyntactic level

(2) The "Deaf French" is to be defined rather as a pattern of features, with intermediate deaf writers having the highest density ;

(3) Some particular "deaf forms" which could be explained by the visual saliency in the organization and transmission of information.

(4) The high writing level of some deaf persons indicates that it is absolutely possible for this particular public to be perfectly competent in writing.

CONCLUSIONS

Universal : L2 learners strategies

Specific : a "deaf norm", which is based on a cognitive functioning framed by deafness ? (Garcia & Perini, 2010)

Teaching Implications : specific L2 teaching, using Deaf learners visual potential ;
❖ Sign Language : the best language to support this acquisition ?