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When Discourse Elicitation Tasks Go Dialogue: Introducing Entities in French, German, and Italian

Abstract This paper presents first results from a study on oral picture description dialogues produced by native speakers of French, German, and Italian. The aim is to find out how speakers of these languages introduce the objects they want to talk about so that their interlocutors can identify and localise them while building a coherent representation of the picture. In doing so, we are tying in with work on the description of spatial configurations by Christiane von Stutterheim and colleagues (Carroll & von Stutterheim, 1993; von Stutterheim, 1997a), who used a similar method, keeping the stimulus and the procedure constant while running the task with speakers of different languages. When compared with the highly sophisticated non-verbal data elicitation techniques used by the Heidelberg team in their more recent work on event cognition, asking someone to describe a picture at their own pace seems quite a trivial approach. We are convinced, however, that it is worthwhile to go back to (some of) the roots, building on earlier work and at the same time changing a parameter that has quite some impact on the course of events: Instead of quasi-monologues with a rather passive addressee, we are studying dialogues in which two speakers are acting at eye level when describing and comparing mutually unknown spatial configurations. The reconstructed *Quaestio* (Klein & von Stutterheim, 1987) that is assumed to support a speaker's selection and organisation of information in a monologue might be locally overwritten in a dialogue when an interlocutor's real questions or statements alter the information flow.

Keywords Discourse, dialogue, typology, information structure, spatial description, entity introduction and contrast

Introduction

Describing a picture so that a listener can mentally reconstruct it requires that the speaker produces subsequent discourse moves during which he or she identifies a specific object (the *Entity-Theme*) and indicates its position in relation to something the hearer can localise because it is already part of the common ground (the *Relatum*). Von Stutterheim & Carroll (1993) and Carroll & von Stutterheim (1997) identified different strategies speakers use to establish a spatial relation between a Theme and a Relatum when describing static configurations. When speakers follow a global strategy, they localise entities relative to salient regions of the overall scenery. In a picture description task, these are regions of the picture itself, e.g., its borders or corners. When speakers follow a local point-by-point strategy, the Relatum is the space occupied by an entity that both interlocutors can identify. In addition, speakers can adopt a linear strategy and describe the content as if they were following an imaginary path. In all cases, speakers will also take care to signal the information structure of the utterance and the relation of its elements to the preceding discourse. In the introduction of a Theme, for example, the relevant entity will, per definition, be new to the discourse, and the expression referring to it will constitute the focus of the utterance as in (1a). The expression encoding the Relatum, on the other hand, might also be new, but in a coherent description, it will probably bear some anaphoric relation to what was said before. What is used as the Relatum might, for example, be an entity that represented the Theme or the Relatum of an earlier utterance, as in (1b). In picture description monologues, the expression referring to the Theme and the expression referring to a position identified with the help of the Relatum are the two central information units. We will call them Entity and Localisation, respectively.

(1a)   There is a teapot [Entity] in the top right corner [Localisation]
(1b)   Below the teapot [Localisation] there is an orange [Entity]

In the current study, two speakers interact while describing two (slightly) different pictures to each other in a "spot-the-difference-task". The pictures show random collections of everyday objects that are partly similar and in the same location, partly similar and in a different location, and partly dissimilar but in the same location (see Appendix). Each participant could only see his or her own picture, and both were instructed to jointly detect as many differences between their pictures as possible.

We assume that this manipulation has consequences on three different levels: (1) a **collaborative discourse construction**, (2) an **extra information unit**, and (3) the possibility of **contrastive content**.

A **collaborative discourse construction** involves joint common ground management (Stalnaker, 2002). Both speakers are contributing content and they must react to the interlocutors' discourse moves, e.g., answer explicit and implicit questions concerning the existence and the location of entities or express confirmation[1] and disconfirmation of descriptions proposed by the interlocutor, until they get to a shared representation of similarities and differences.

A disconfirmation does, however, not mean that speakers disagree with each other because there are two different pictures. Diverging statements are thus not mutually exclusive but will eventually become part of a shared situation model involving a representation of both pictures. When comparing their pictures, speakers might feel the need to indicate which picture they are talking about. Next to the Entity and its Location, there is thus **an additional information unit** to deal with. We will call this information unit the Frame of Reference[2] and consider all sorts of linguistic expressions speakers use to indicate the picture they are referring to (e.g., *in my picture …; as for me, I have …*).

Even though the presence of two Frames of Reference excludes disagreement, speakers must cope with signalling **contrastive content**, for example, in expressing that the situation in their own picture is partly different from a previous description produced by the interlocutor (*where you have an apple, I have a pear*). In the contexts we study, the information units Frame of Reference and Entity can be contrastive, whereas the Location talked about is not.[3] The resulting discourse relations might lead to an increase in marked structures. Overall, we assume that all three differences (co-constructing the discourse, referring to an additional information unit, and signalling contrasts) induce communicative effort.

As Christiane von Stutterheim and colleagues have shown, conceptual structure is not a simple reproduction of the speaker's memory representation of a spatial configuration, but perspective-driven and influenced by the speakers' communicative intention. A successful spatial description not only requires that the discourse moves contain the relevant information units but that they are tied together to form a coherent whole (von Stutterheim & Carroll, 1993; von Stutterheim, 1997b). When trying to fulfil these parallel requirements that have an impact on the selection and linearisation

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1   See Dimroth & Starren (2022) for a study on confirmation based on data from the same task.
2   The Frame of Reference contributes to the identification of the two different "Topic Situations" (Klein, 2008) that are at stake in our task.
3   Utterances in which the Entity is maintained and the Location is contrasted occur in the data but are not considered here.

of information units, speakers rely on quasi-automatised routines. Cross-linguistic comparisons reveal that these routines are shaped by the lexical and grammatical resources available in a language. These resources provide a scaffolding for the conceptual material and lead the speaker to adopt the perspective that is most easily expressed. "What is striking here is that speakers so rarely make use of options that differ from the norm." (Slobin, 1991, p. 17, cited in Carroll & von Stutterheim, 1993, p. 1012).

In our study, we will investigate how speakers use the different options at their disposal when reacting to their interlocutors' contributions in a dialogue. The study of speakers adapting to listeners when presenting complex information also has a predecessor in Christiane von Stutterheim's work. Von Stutterheim and Kohlmann (1998) conducted experiments in which speakers had to instruct listeners how to construct a toy village. During the experiment, the listener first shared the speaker's perspective and later changed place (looked at the scene from with a deviation of 90°). Interestingly, speakers barely reacted to this change of position (see also the study by Speck, 1995). If the listener signalled comprehension difficulties, speakers tried to make their own viewpoint more clearly accessible to the listener but did not take the listeners' perspective. These findings were interpreted as supporting a view according to which the macro-structural organisation of discourse moves is determined by the *Quaestio* and not accommodated to the listener's perspective: "Das bedeutet, daß auf makrostruktureller Ebene angesiedelte 'Entscheidungen' des Sprechers hinsichtlich Kohärenz, Perspektive, Linearisierung, etc. keine Kandidaten für hörerbezogene Revisionsprozesse sind." (von Stutterheim, 2001, p. 478).

Importantly, though, the listener in these experiments was a passive addressee (mostly a confederate speaker) who sometimes signalled misunderstandings but did not otherwise contribute actively to the success of the exchange. In the empirical study we present here, we investigate the interaction between two speakers who actively contribute to the communicative task. The participants alternate between the speaker and the listener role while both describe aspects of their own picture to the interlocutor in order to detect similarities and differences. Both speakers thereby adapt to their interlocutor's contribution. In this sense, our "interlocutor adaptation" differs from the type of "hearer adaptation" investigated in these earlier studies. The main differences are the shared discourse construction, the extra information unit (Frame of Reference), and the presence of contrastive content.

The languages in our study

Data were collected from native speakers of German, French, and Italian. The languages differ in many typological parameters concerning the basic sentence structure (see Table 1) that have an impact on the introduction of entities in different dialogue configurations.

Table 1. Basic grammatical properties in German, French, and Italian

	German	French	Italian
word order	V2	SVO	SVO
word order flexibility	+	–	+
pro-drop	–	–	+
subj pronouns	one series of pronouns for first and second person[4]	weak (clitic) and strong pronouns for all syntactic contexts	one series of overt pronouns for all syntactic contexts

The three languages also differ with respect to the constructions available for the locational predications that are at the centre of our interest in the current paper. Locational predications concern the spatial relation between a Theme (the entity whose position is described) and a Relatum (the entity used as a reference point for the spatial relation). Following Creissels (2019), we can identify two alternative locative predications differing in perspectivation: a Plain Locational Predication (PLP) selects the Theme ("Figure" in Creissels' terminology) as its starting point (and possibly topic), whereas an Inverted Locational Predication (ILP) has the Theme as its endpoint and (part of) the focus[5]; see examples in Table 2. From a typological perspective, verb forms used for PLP and ILP constructions frequently align with other predicative types, such as:

— existential predications, concerning the existence or long-term presence of an entity in the world as in (2),
— equative predications, concerning an entity and its attributes as in (3), and

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4   There are two series of pronouns (*er/der*) with slightly different functions in third person contexts, but these do not play a role in the current discourse configurations.
5   An alternative description in this much debated matter is provided by Koch (2012), who adopts the labels of Thematic Location (PLP) and Rhematic Location (ILP).

— possessive predications, concerning a relation between a possessor and a possessee as in (4).

(2)   There are many good books on Napoleon's campaigns.
(3)   The books on Napoleon's campaigns are boring.
(4)   Mary has a book on Napoleon's campaigns.

Each of the languages considered in the present paper (German, French and Italian) has three verbal constructions for these predication types. They differ in their alignment with locational PLP and ILP predications, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Form and alignment of language-specific constructions for existential, locational, equative, and possessive predications

Type of Predication		Syntactic Construction		
		German	French	Italian
Existential predication		*it_give*	*there_have*	*there_be*
Locational predication	ILP predication	*be*[6]		
	PLP predication		*be*	*be*
Equative predication				
Possessive predication		*have*	*have*	*have*

As shown in Table 2, the three languages share the same syntactic construction for equative (*be*) and possessive predication (*have*) and they differ in the construction for existential predication (GER *it_give*; FRE *there_have*; ITA *there_be*). There are also differences in the domain of locational predications, and these are most relevant for our study. None of the languages has a specialised form confined only to ILP and / or PLP and they differ in their "alignment". In French and Italian, PLP aligns with the equative predication and ILP aligns with the existential predication; in German, they both align

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6   German also has posture verbs that can be used in ILP and PLP constructions (e.g., *Der Baum steht vor der Kirche / Vor der Kirche steht ein Baum*). Their use is however not as systematic as it is in other Germanic languages (Czinglar 2002) and we will not discuss them in detail since they did not occur in our data. This is probably due to the display of the objects on our stimuli pictures that did not show any supporting surface (see below for details).

with the equative predication. As a consequence, only constituent order distinguishes ILP and PLP in German (see 5a and 5b).

(5a)   Das Buch von Marie **ist** auf dem Tisch. (PLP)
(5b)   Auf dem Tisch **ist** das Buch von Marie. (ILP)

In French and Italian, a change in the lexical verb is required.[7]

(6a)   Le livre de Marie **est** sur la table (PLP)
(6b)   Sur la table **il y a** le livre de Marie (*Sur la table **est** le livre de Marie) (ILP)
(7a)   Il libro di Maria **è** sul tavolo (PLP)
(7b)   Sul tavolo **c'è** il libro di Maria (*Sul tavolo **è** il libro di Maria) (ILP)

The aim of this study is to find out whether and how these cross-linguistic differences in the availability and the mapping of localising constructions onto predication types have an impact on speakers' preferred solutions for introducing entities in the dialogue task. Our study addresses the following research questions and hypotheses:

1.   How do speakers introduce entities when they spontaneously mention them for the first time? We will refer to the relevant instances as First Move Introductions because they appear at the beginning of a sequence, i.e., they do <u>not</u> answer an overt preceding question (A: *What do you have at the bottom of the picture?* B: *A yellow teapot*.), and they are <u>not</u> in contrast to a preceding utterance about the same location (A: *There is an apple in the corner*. B: *In my picture, there is a pear*!). We hypothesise that speakers of all three languages will mainly choose ILPs for First Move Introductions since these constructions allow them to start from information that is identifiable to the addressee before mentioning the new information. In addition to an adverbial identifying a position on the picture and the NP encoding the new (and focal) entity, speakers might find it relevant to indicate which picture they are talking about, i.e., to explicitly refer to one of the pictures or its owner (the Frame of Reference). The presence of this third information unit next to Entity and Location might lead to some competition for the topic role / position and it might also encourage a different choice concerning the locational predications adopted when compared to First Move Introductions in monologic descriptions.

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7   Note that constituent order can change in addition, i.e., a PLP could also be rendered as *Il y a le livre de Marie sur la table / C'è il libro di Maria sul tavolo*.

2. In Second Move Introductions speakers introduce entities in utterances that directly relate to a preceding utterance produced by their interlocutor. The preceding utterance can either be a question (*What do you have there?*) or it can be a First Move Introduction (*I have an orange to the right*). The question is, how Second Move Introductions differ from First Move Introductions. We assume that in replies to questions, Second Move Introductions are likely to be elliptical (*A teapot*). When following First Move Introductions, the Second Move can confirm or disconfirm the interlocutor's description. In the latter case, speakers often introduce a contrasting entity that occupies the position described by the interlocutor (*I have a tennis ball where your toothpaste is*). Contrastive Second Moves do not only assert a claim about the existence or the position of an entity, but also take a stance towards the similarity of the two pictures. They can, for example, contain an overt rejection of the content of the First Move Introduction (*No, I have an apple in the same place!*). We hypothesise that speakers adopt a different information structure when compared to First Move Introductions to signal the contrastiveness of (parts of) the information.

We assume that First and Second Move Introductions behave similarly with respect to some general properties of the three information units. The most central information unit in an introduction is the Entity (as we will see in the results, some introductions do not contain any other information). The Entity represents new information and is likely to be treated as focal (answering a question like *What is in your picture*?) in all cases. The information status of the other two information units (Location and Frame of Reference) could differ between First and Second Move Introductions. It is fair to say that the Frame of Reference (the picture talked about) can always be easily recovered from context: Even without any specific indication, it will be clear that speakers are talking about their own picture throughout the entire dialogue. It is, however, likely that speakers will more consistently mark the Frame of Reference in Second Move Introductions where it constitutes changing or contrastive information in addition to the Entity.

In contrast to the Frame of Reference, Location cannot be recovered on pragmatic grounds and is thus more informative in this sense. While the information about the location of an entity is new in First Move Introductions, it is maintained from the preceding context in Second Moves, where speakers talk about the same position (e.g., *the upper left corner*) on both pictures and contrast the entities encountered there.

In the following, we will compare First and Second Move Introductions in the three languages and describe whether and how they differ from introductions in monologues. The focus will be on the speakers' choice of predication

types / syntactic constructions and on the slots that these constructions open for the encoding of the three central information units (Entity, Location, Frame of Reference). In addition, we will look at the effect of information structure (topic, contrast, anaphoric relations) on the type of expressions that speakers chose and on their preferred word order in the given constructions.

Empirical part: Method

Participants: For each language, 20 native speakers (university students, age range 19–32) were recruited. They were randomly assigned to one of ten dialogue pairs per language.

Procedure: The speakers in a dialogue pair were seated opposite of each other at a table. Each speaker received a picture that the other speaker could not see. The participants were informed that their pictures were not fully identical and that their task consisted of identifying as many differences as possible.[8] Speakers were not informed about the number of differences between the pictures. Note that there were no predefined speaker and addressee roles. Unlike comparable dialogue tasks (e.g., the "giver" and the "receiver" in Map Tasks; Anderson et al., 1991), participants had to establish a suitable division of labour on their own. They mainly took turns in providing their interlocutors with a description of some details of their pictures that were subsequently confirmed or disconfirmed by their interlocutors. Occasionally, this was explicitly negotiated in the beginning of the dialogue (*I start telling you what I see in my picture, OK?*), but roles typically shifted several times during the interaction.

Materials: The pictures (see Appendix) show photographs of twelve everyday household objects and food items (the "Entities") that are arranged on a black background without any visible surface supporting them. Half of the twelve entities were similar, i.e., the same entities were in the same location on both photographs. Three entities were identical but were placed at a different position, whereas another three were at the same position on both pictures but differed in some property (e.g., full vs. empty toilet roll). Details are given in Table 3.

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8   Whereas the German participants were told that they should complete the task within five minutes, there were no time constraints for the other groups. Given that most of the recordings in all three languages are between 4 and 5 minutes long, it is unlikely that this had a considerable impact on the descriptions.

Table 3. Individual entities depicted on the stimulus pictures according to comparative categories

Comparative category	N.	Depicted entities
same entity, same position	6	orange, tea pot, sellotape dispenser, plastic cup, tea light, cream jar
same entity, different position	3	tennis ball, toothpaste, pear
entity with different details, same position	3	empty vs. full toilet roll, real vs. wooden apple, yellow text marker vs. yellow crayon

Note that the pictures differ from materials used in earlier studies (description of a poster with a small town; Watorek, 2003; Carroll & von Stutterheim, 1997) in that a) the twelve entities are not located in any canonical spatial relation to each other, and b) the pictures are strictly 2-dimensional (there is a horizontal and a vertical axis, but no sagittal axis) and the objects do not have an intrinsic front-back or left-right orientation. Descriptions like "the tree is in front of the house" that rely on intrinsic object properties, or a depicted sagittal perspective are thus largely ruled out. The same holds for vague localisations like "next to the house there is a tree" where world-knowledge tells us that the most likely position of the Theme is left / right or in-front-of / behind, but not underneath or on top of the Relatum.

Carroll & von Stutterheim (1993) proposed to subdivide a Relatum's space into an INNER space, an EXTERIOR space, a BOUNDARY space, and a NEIGHBOUR-ING space. These categories do not apply to the possible Relata on our pictures where Themes are never located in or outside others or at their boundary. Instead, all items covered regions of roughly the same size (independently of their real size) and were presented in roughly equal distance to each other. In the absence of any logical or prototypical spatial relation between the entities, the only dimension that speakers could exploit was the NEIGHBOURING space that is not associated with any particular features of either Theme or Relatum.

Database

With twelve entities and ten dialogues we expected 120 introductions per language (12 entities introduced in each dialogue). We found slight deviations from the expected numbers due to glitches occurring in the dialogues: speakers occasionally forgot that their interlocutor had already mentioned a particular entity and introduced it again; on other occasions, objects with

slightly different properties were treated as two entirely different entities and introduced independently.[9] It also happened that speakers introduced more than one item within one utterance (e.g., *To the right I have an apple and a teapot*). We counted these double introductions as one utterance if they met at least two of the following criteria that are supporting a list reading: they are marked by one continuous intonation contour; they are not interrupted by some back channeling signals from the interlocutor (*hmhm*); and are not linked to the preceding text by an overt connector. The resulting data is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Data included in the analyses

	First Move Introductions	Second Move Introductions	Total
German	99	28	127
French	98	25	123
Italian	92	27	119

Results Part I: First Move Introductions

In First Move Introductions, speakers spontaneously mention a particular item for the first time without contrasting the information they convey with something the interlocutor said before. Even though we are dealing with dialogue data, First Move Introductions are thus relatively independent of the interlocutor's contribution. The results can therefore be compared to findings from picture description monologues to isolate the impact of the additional information unit (Frame of Reference).

First Move Introductions often occur at the beginning of new discourse segments, typically after the interlocutors reached agreement about the position or properties of another entity. Utterances mentioning unspecified items (*There are twelve objects in my picture*) and utterances proposing a new label for a given entity (*You called this an orange, but I think it is a tangerine*) were not counted as Introductions.[10] In the following, we will only consider introductions in statements and exclude introductions in questions (*Do you*

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9 Some speakers overlooked the differences between the two apples. Some others described the text marker and the crayon as two unrelated entities instead of two yellow pens with slightly different details.

10 See also note 11 concerning labelling and identification.

also have an apple?) due to their different syntax. The numbers of included utterances per language are given in Table 5.

Table 5. First Move Introduction: the subcorpus considered

	Total First Move Introductions	Introductions in questions	Introductions in assertions (considered)
German	99	1	**98**
French	98	11	**87**
Italian	92	11	**81**

When introducing entities, speakers can provide different amounts of details. They can simply assert that a particular entity exists on the picture they are describing (*There is a teapot*), or they can add information about the entities' location (*There is a teapot in the upper left corner*) and / or its properties (*I have a big yellow teapot*) in the same utterance. In our analyses, we largely neglect the description of properties and focus on the way entities are introduced and localised.

In our comparative analysis, we will first investigate language specific preferences for particular construction types in First Move Introductions (see the distinctions based on Creissels, 2019, that were proposed in the Introduction). The selection of a construction goes hand in hand with the availability of options for the expression of information units. In subsequent steps, we will report how often the information units Entity (ENT), Localisation (LOC) and Frame of Reference (FRA) are mentioned and where these information units are placed in terms of constituent order.

Construction type

The following types of constructions occurred in First Move Introductions (see Table 2 in the Introduction):

there_have construction (FRE):	impersonal construction consisting of semantically bleached locative (*y*) + expletive subject (*il*) + verb of possessive predication *avoir;* the two arguments encode the Entity (NP) and the Location (PP or adverbial);
there_be construction (ITA):	copular verb like in equative predication (*essere*) + semantically bleached locative (*ci*); the two arguments encode the Entity (NP) and the Location (PP or adverbial);

be construction:	copular verb (GER *sein*; FRE *être*; ITA *essere*); the two arguments encode the Entity (NP) and the Location (PP or adverbial);
have construction:	transitive verb (GER *haben*; FRE *avoir*; ITA *avere*) used in possessive predication; the two arguments encode the Entity (NP object) and the Frame of Reference (NP subject);
verbless construction:	information units are juxtaposed; Entity is encoded as NP; Location as adverbial or PP.

Concerning the possibilities to integrate the three information units, we can maintain that:

— LOC and ENT are largely similar across languages. LOC is always encoded as an adverbial / PP and ENT is always encoded as a nominal verb argument.
— The newly introduced ENT constitutes part of the focus. Across languages, PLP constructions (where ENT would be the topical starting point of the sentence) are therefore not well suited in these contexts.
— FRA is encoded as the first person subject argument of the verb in the *have*-construction. It can furthermore be encoded as an adverbial / PP (*in my picture*) in all constructions. The expressions differ in prominence: zero pronoun (Italian), obligatory clitic pronouns (French) and fully-fledged personal pronouns (German) are relatively light markers of FRA that come with the choice of a *have* construction. Stronger pronominal forms (overt pronouns in Italian or the strong pronoun *moi* in French) might have a similar "heaviness level" as explicit references to the speaker's picture (*in my picture*). Note that forms can also be combined (*moi, sur mon image, j'ai une poire* 'As for me, in my picture, I have a pear').

Table 6 shows the frequency of the main construction types in the three languages. A small number of utterances (4 in German, 3 in French, 2 in Italian) contained individual lexical verb constructions (like *being located, being depicted*) that will be excluded from further analyses. Percentages (rounded) are given in brackets.

Table 6. Absolute numbers and frequency of construction types
(First Move Introductions)

	there_be/have	*be*[11]	*Have*	verbless	*Total*
German	–	29 (31%)	15 (16%)	50 (53%)	*94*
French	15 (18%)	3 (3%)	62[12] (74%)	4 (5%)	*84*
Italian	23 (29%)	1 (1%)	40 (51%)	15 (19%)	*79*

The first striking feature is the presence of *have* constructions and verbless constructions in all languages although in different proportions. As far as we can tell from the existing literature, there were no noteworthy amounts of these constructions in monological picture descriptions. Examples for the four main construction types attested in the dialogue data are given below.

there_be/have construction:

   (8a) (FRE):   juste au-dessus **(il) y a** un tube de dentifrice
   (8b) (ITA):   sotto **c'è** un barattolo blu

be construction:

   (9) (GER):   rechts daneben **ist** bei mir so ein tesafilmabroller

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11 Note that the three occurrences of the *be* construction in French and the one occurrence in Italian can actually be considered as borderline cases. The French utterances have a clitic subject (*ce*), e.g., *le dernier objet à droite c'est une bougie* ('the last object to the right is a candle'). We decided to count them as introducing (instead of a merely identifying) an entity, even though the indefinite NP is preceded by an unspecific reference ("object") in the left dislocation, that also hosts the localisation. The only occurrence of a *be*-construction in Italian is an even more doubtful case: The speaker starts the sentence as a (verbless?) locative predication, but then stops and wonders about the nature of the item she is introducing: *e sotto un # mmm suppongo sia un bicchiere delle macchinette del caffè* ('and below a # well I suppose it-is a cup for the coffee vending machines').

12 The total includes 4 occurrences of the lexical verb *voir* (see), which has the same argument structure as *avoir*.

have construction:

(10a) (FRE): à droite du scotch j'**ai** une pomme
(10b) (ITA): alla sinistra della candela **ho** un tubetto di dentifricio
                  senza tappo
(10c) (GER): daneben **hab** ich ne küchenpapierrolle

Verbless construction:

(11a) (FRE): et un petit peu en dessous un pot bleu
(11b) (ITA): e accanto una mela
(11c) (GER): daneben ein apfel

As shown in Table 6, German differs from the two Romance languages in the huge amount (53 %) of verbless constructions. As far as one can tell, the NPs referring to the entities are in the nominative (due to syncretism this can only be seen with masculine NPs as in [11c], but there is no exception with these). When these structures are analysed as elliptical, they should thus be considered as instances of *be* constructions (with the Entity as the subject NP) rather than *have* constructions, where the Entity would have to show up as an (accusative) object NP.

Disregarding the verbless utterances for a moment, we will next study the distribution of the verb-containing constructions across the three languages. Figure 1 shows the relative frequency of the main construction types in verb-containing utterances.

The two Romance languages show a comparable distribution of construction types amongst the verb-containing utterances: next to the *there_be / have* construction, the *have* construction is used in the majority of the cases. German differs from the two Romance languages not only in the use of the *be* construction instead of *there_be / have* construction, but also in the comparably low frequency of the *have* construction. The predominance of the *be* construction in German corresponds to what was found in picture description monologues (Carroll & von Stutterheim, 1997). Recall that the verbless cases (Table 6) are likely elliptical *be* constructions as well.

Some of these results were expected on the basis of the typological differences described in Table 2. The main function of Introductions is a localisation going from the Relatum to the newly introduced and focal Entity-Theme. Speakers chose Inverted Locational Predications (ILP) to realize this function. Purely existential *es gibt* is thus impossible in German, and German speakers resort to the *be* construction instead. *There-be / have* constructions in French and Italian cover ILP-localisations and can therefore be used, while the *be* construction is not available for this function (**a gauche est une orange* 'to the left is an orange').
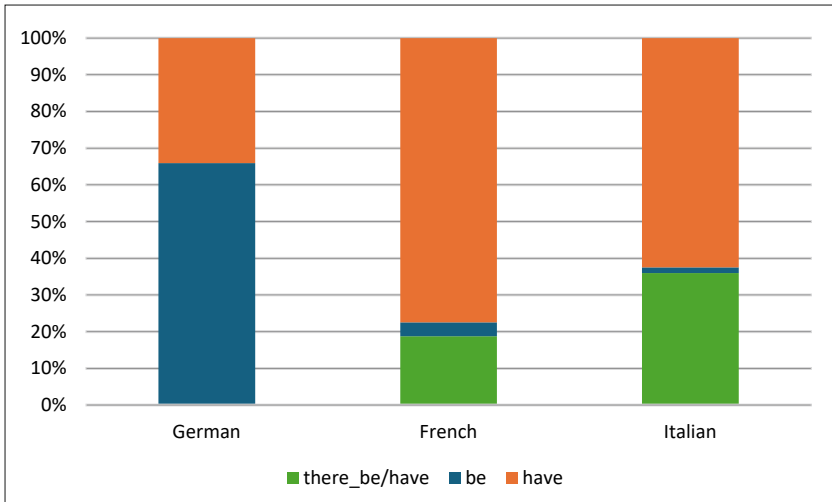
Figure 1. Frequency of construction types (First Move Introduction; only verb-containing utterances)

This typological distinction does, however, not explain the unexpected differences concerning the frequency of *have* constructions in German and in the Romance languages. Recall that *have* constructions were not attested in monological picture description tasks involving only one picture (e.g., Watorek, 2003). We assume that the structure shows up in our dialogue data as it presents an easy way to encode the speaker's Frame of Reference. Moreover, like the ILP constructions *there_have / be* (FRE, ITA) and *be* (GER), it allows an introduction that goes from the Relatum in initial position to the Entity-Theme in focal position: *links habe ich eine orange* (GER); *à droite j'ai une orange* (FRE); *a destra ho un'arancia* (ITA). We will come back to this issue in the following section where we consider the consequences of these cross-linguistic differences for the integration of the optional information units Location and Frame of Reference as well as the information structure of the resulting utterances.

Information Units

In a first step, we only count whether the relevant information units are present or not. In addition to the obligatory Entity (ENT), i.e., all types of NPs and pronouns referring to the entities on the pictures, we will consider localising adverbials or prepositional phrases as Location (LOC)[13] and all kinds of

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13 The data contained also temporal adverbials (FRE *ensuite* / ITA *poi* / FRE *dann*) that can be interpreted as conveying spatial information, when speakers follow a linear

expressions referring to the current speaker's picture or the speaker as its possessor as Frame of Reference (FRA).

Location Recall that the items on the stimulus pictures were presented in a random arrangement. Speakers could thus not rely on world knowledge when localising entities, because no kind of spatial relation between objects could be a priori excluded. When speakers followed a global strategy, regions of the picture were mainly indicated with adverbials like *bottom left* without mentioning the global Relatum (i.e., the picture). In a point-by-point strategy, expressions referring to specific locations typically had the form of a prepositional phrase including reference to the Relatum (*under the teapot*) but there were some (language specific) variants as well. German has so-called prepositional adverbs (*darunter* – 'there-below', *daneben* – 'there-to-the-side') in which the first part (*da*) anaphorically refers to the space occupied by the Relatum, and the second part indicates the relative position of the space occupied by the Theme. In French and Italian, reference to an already established entity functioning as a Relatum can be elliptical (ITA: *in alto a sinistra c'è un'arancia… sotto* [all'arancia] *c'è un bicchiere di plastica… di fianco* [al bicchiere] *c'è una pera*. 'On top to the left there is an orange below [the orange] there is a plastic cup… besides [the cup] there is a pear.')

Frame of Reference Mentioning this information unit in a First Move Introduction might seem redundant, as each speaker could only see his / her own picture, but quite a few introductions indeed contain this information. Expressions indicating the Frame of Reference are quite heterogeneous. We subsume all verbal cues indicating that a speaker is referring to one of two pictures under this category. The most prominent solution consisted of an explicit reference to the speaker's picture (FRE: *dans mon image*; ITA: *nella mia immagine*) or to the location of the speaker (GER *bei mir*)[14]. Moreover, reference to the speaker is always present in the syntactic frame of *have* constructions that opens a second argument slot for a 1st person pronoun. Because of the morphological differences described in Table 1, German, French and Italian behave differently in this respect. As a pro-drop language,

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strategy and engage in a mental tour through the picture, as indicated, for example, by an explicit indication of the direction taken (*I'm going from left to right*). In these cases, it is likely that the order of mention corresponds to the relevant spatial relations. As it was not always possible to decide whether these temporal adverbials were indeed encoding spatial information or the temporal organisation of discourse segments, they were not counted as expressions of Location.

14 Speakers can also produce possessive pronouns to indicate that they are talking about one of two similar items (*my pear is below the orange*). As this definite marking presupposes an agreement on the existence of the relevant entity, it occurred only rarely in introductions and was therefore not counted as an expression of Frame of Reference.

a subject pronoun (*io*) is not obligatory in Italian; however, even with a null subject, reference to 1st person is available through verb morphology (*ho*: have.1P.Sg.). As non-prodrop languages, German and French always have a subject pronoun in *have* sentences; this is a clitic in fixed preverbal position in French (*je*), while German *ich* can be stressed and is syntactically mobile. French has the further possibility of a strong pronoun (*moi*) occurring as an independent constituent, together with the clitic pronoun.

Given that *have* constructions were not attested in description tasks involving only one picture, their presence can be interpreted as reflecting the speaker's decision to encode the Frame of Reference in a relatively light way. This strategy can be reinforced by the other markers (overt pronoun in ITA, strong pronoun in FRE, adverbials referring to the picture in all Ls), whereby the latter can also be used outside of the *have* construction. Table 7 shows the relative frequencies of mention for the information units Localisation and Frame of Reference in First Move Introductions. Cells with an absolute number of utterances below 3 are shaded. As reference to the speaker is inherent to the *have* constructions, the relevant cells (marked with*) show a 100 % in all languages: see below for further discussion.

Table 7. Absolute numbers and frequency of Localisation and Frame of Reference (First Move Introduction)[15]

		there_be/ have	be	have	Tot verb-containing	verb-less	Total
German	**LOC**	–	29 (100 %)	15 (100 %)	44 (100 %)	21 (42 %)	65 (69 %)
	FRA	–	14 (48 %)	15 (100 %)*	29 (13 %)	0	29 (31 %)
	Tot	*0*	*29*	*15*	*44*	*50*	*94*
French	**LOC**	15 (100 %)	2 (67 %)	55 (89 %)	72 (90 %)	2 (50 %)	74 (88 %)
	FRA	1 (7 %)	0	62 (100 %)*	63 (79 %)	0	63 (75 %)
	Tot	*15*	*3*	*62*	*80*	*4*	*84*

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15 As in all the following tables, percentages are rounded. The percentages in grey correspond to 3 or less utterances.

Table 7. (*continued*)

		there_be/ have	*be*	*have*	Tot verb-containing	*verb-less*	Total
Italian	**LOC**	14 (61%)	1 (100%)	24 (60%)	39 (61%)	6 (40%)	45 (57%)
	FRA	3 (13%)	0	40 (100%)*	43 (67%)	0	43 (54%)
	Tot	*23*	*1*	*40*	*64*	*15*	*79*

Location can be explicitly expressed in all construction types, but it occurs with reduced frequency in verbless constructions. When only verbal constructions are considered, both German and French speakers nearly always mention LOC, while Italian speakers are less systematic (90–100% of mention in French / German vs. 61% in Italian). Introductions without LOC also appear in the *there_be* construction in Italian. These cases are mainly due to a particular strategy adopted in some dialogues. When the interlocutors do not immediately realise that not only the type of entities, but also their location can differ between the pictures, they sometimes start with a list of Entities produced by one speaker. Localisations are only provided in a later segment of the discourse, typically after the first mismatch that informs speakers about the possibility of differences in LOC. A single pair of interlocutors starting with the assumption that only the Entities matter, can severely alter the quantity of LOC in First Move Introductions. The lower frequency of LOC expressions in Italian does probably not reflect structural properties but is simply due to more Italian dialogue pairs falling into this trap.

Frame of Reference: The first observation concerns the absence of FRA markings in verbless introductions across all languages. The comparably high totals for FRA in French and (partly) Italian are directly reflecting the low number of verbless introductions in these languages. Put the other way around, one could also interpret the high number of verbless utterances in German as a way to compensate for the missing *there_be / have* structure. This structure allows speakers of French and Italian to introduce entities without additional specification of LOC or FRA (*c'è una mela*), whereas the *be* construction that is predominant in German requires at least one of these information units. In that sense, the verbless constructions might be interpreted as a variant of the *be* constructions that allows to circumvent this constraint.

In the Romance languages, the (very low frequent) *be* construction seems incompatible with FRA markings, whereas this is not the case in German,

where 45 % of the introductions in *be* constructions contain an adverbial FRA marker (exclusively *bei mir*).

Reference to the speaker is inherent to the *have* constructions: therefore, the relevant cells show a 100 % of FRA in Table 7. This masks, however, the additional presence of optional (and stronger) FRA-markings. In Table 8, we indicate how often the *have* constructions in the three languages contained one of the following <u>additional and optional</u> FRA-markers: Overt 1st person pronoun *io* in Italian; strong pronoun *moi* in French, adverbials referring to picture or speaker in all languages.

Table 8. Absolute numbers and frequency of optional FRA-Markers in the *have* construction (First Move Introduction)

	*Have*_construction with optional FRA-marking	*Total*
German	0	*15*
French	16 (26 %)	*62*
Italian	18 (45 %)	*40*

Even though FRA-adverbials are not excluded from *have* constructions (*In my picture I have a tea pot*), they are nearly absent in the three languages (there is only a single occurrence in French, and it is combined with the strong pronoun). Nearly all additional FRA markers in Table 8 are thus pronouns. Speakers of Italian used overt pronouns in 45 % of the cases. This relatively light marking seems to be licensed under First Move conditions. The strong pronoun (*moi*) in French that occurs in combination with the obligatory clitic pronoun leads to a construction that is heavier that the corresponding one in Italian. This might explain its lower frequency (26 %). The German subject pronouns (that were not counted as additional FRA markers because of their obligatory presence) were unstressed and the vast majority occurred in postverbal position.

To sum up, all verb-containing introductions in German contain a LOC expression. The many verbless constructions drop this rate to 66 % overall. LOC expressions are equally frequent in verb-containing utterances in French. Due to the lower number of verbless constructions, their overall share is even higher than in German. The lower frequency of LOC in Italian introductions cannot be explained by structural differences and is attributed to the comparably high number of Italian interlocutors starting with a list of entities before realising that differences between the pictures can also be a matter of location.

FRA is marked in only 30 % of the German introductions, mainly by adding a *bei mir* adverbial to the predominant *be* construction, and more rarely by choosing the *have* construction instead. FRA is clearly more frequently marked in French and Italian. There are, however, only 7–13 % FRA markings in the *there_be / have* constructions. The bulk of the markings is due to the predominant *have* constructions in the Romance languages. They have an inherent FRA component and are often used with additional pronouns whose frequency might depend on their perceived heaviness.

<u>Information Structure</u>

With respect to the position of the different information units, the Entity occurs in final, i.e., focal position, in the large majority of cases in all three languages. This holds irrespectively of the chosen construction and the number of information units involved. In this section, we are particularly interested in the filling of the initial utterance positions that link the introductions to the preceding context and represent the speakers' choice for a topical backbone organising their discourse. As we will see later, this is particularly relevant in comparison to the Second Move Introductions.

In the following, we will report which information units (FRA or LOC) were placed in a position preceding the finite verb. We are therefore only considering verb-containing utterances. Due to the V2-constraint in German, this position is in principle restricted to only one constituent (either FRA or LOC), whereas a combination is possible in French and Italian (both SVO languages). Since we were interested in speakers' choices, elements that obligatorily occur in preverbal position were excluded from the analyses (we will thus count the personal pronouns *io, ich*, and *moi*, but not the French clitic *je* that has to directly precede the verb in all cases). Furthermore, each information unit was counted only once, even though double markings (*moi* [= FRA]*, dans mon image* [= FRA]*, j'ai une poire*) occasionally occurred. Utterances in which the preverbal position was not used for reference to either LOC or FRA (e.g., the preverbal position was not filled at all, or it was filled with an NP referring to the Entity, or with a temporal adverbial, for example), were counted as "other". The results are summarised in Table 9. The high number of verbless utterances in German and (less so) Italian, that were excluded from this analysis, explains the differences in the totals.

Table 9. Absolute numbers and frequency of Information units
in preverbal position (First Move Introduction)

		there_be/ have	be	Have	Total
German	**LOC**	–	22 (76 %)	11 (73 %)	33 (75 %)
	FRA	–	3 (10 %)	2 (13 %)	5 (11 %)
	both	–	0	0	0
	other	–	4 (14 %)	2 (13 %)	6 (14 %)
	Tot	*0*	*29*	*15*	*44*
French	**LOC**	14 (93 %)	2 (67 %)	34 (55%)	50 (62,5 %)
	FRA	0	0	2 (3%)	2 (2,5 %)
	both	1 (7 %)	0	14 (23%)	15 (19 %)
	other	0	1 (33 %)	12 (19%)	13 (16 %)
	Tot	*15*	*3*	*62*	*80*
Italian	**LOC**	13 (57 %)	1 (100 %)	15 (37,5 %)	29 (45 %)
	FRA	2 (9 %)	0	8 (20 %)	10 (16 %)
	both	1 (4 %)	0	8 (20 %)	9 (14 %)
	other	7 (30 %)	0	9 (22,5 %)	16 (25 %)
	Tot	*23*	*1*	*40*	*64*

Figure 2 displays the relative frequency of the relevant information units in preverbal and topic position in the three languages.

LOC is topical in most cases (in French and Italian, either alone or together with FRA), although in different proportions: 75 % GER; 81 % FRE; 59 % ITA. In comparison, FRA is much more rarely topical (once again, in French and Italian it can occur together with LOC): it is chosen as a topic in 11 % GER, 21 % FRE, 30 % ITA. In other words, as a single topic, LOC is preferred over FRA. The possibility to combine LOC and FRA encourages speakers of French and Italian to also mention FRA early in their utterances, whereas the need to decide between LOC and FRA in topic position in German clearly privileges LOC over FRA.

Concerning the verbless structures that we have excluded here, the linear order of information units is also telling. In German, for example, where
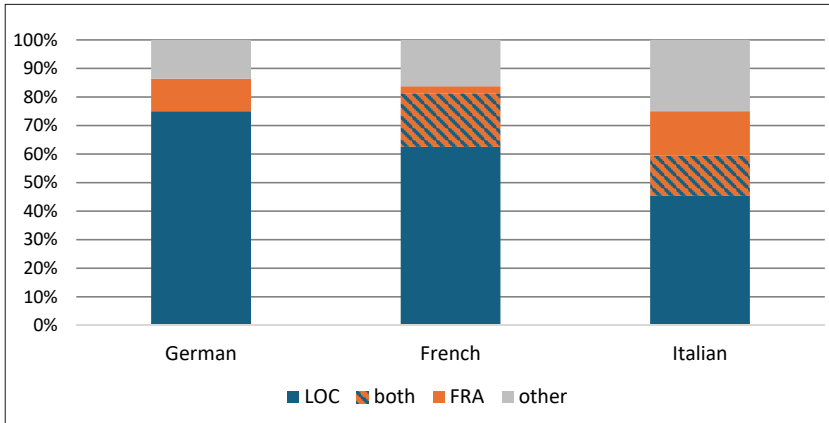
Figure 2. Frequency of Information units in preverbal position
(First Move Introduction; only verb-containing utterances)

verbless utterances make up for more than half of the First Move Introduc-
tions, they typically have either LOC or some other constituent like a temporal
adverbial preceding the NP referring to the Entity (if there is anything at all).
Both elements can also be combined, as in: *und dann rechts etwas höher so
'ne leere Klopapierrolle* ('and then to the right, somewhat higher, an empty
toilet roll'). However, such combinations account for only a small fraction of
the verbless utterances and speakers of German never combined FRA and
LOC in the positions preceding ENT. It is therefore unlikely that they resort
to verbless utterances in order to circumvent the V2-constraint and find a
structure resembling the Romance languages with their possibility of topical-
ising both information units. Instead, the verbless constructions in German
can be considered a reduced variant of the frequent and multifunctional *be*
construction, albeit without the obligatory extra information unit (FRA or LOC
or both) associated with the latter.

Results Part II: Second Move introductions

As explained in the introduction of the paper, we will now analyse the second
turns of interactional sequences, i.e., utterances that directly react to what
the interlocutor said before. Second Move Introductions were found in replies
to questions and in contexts, in which speakers introduce an entity that dif-
fers from the entity their interlocutor proposed for a given location (A: *Below
I have a teapot.* B: *No, there is an apple in my picture!*). The latter type will
be referred to as Contrastive Introductions. They will constitute the focus of

our analysis after a short paragraph on the replies. Table 10 summarises the frequency of both types in the three languages.

Table 10.   Second Move Introductions

	Total Second Move Introductions	**Introductions in replies**	**Contrastive Introductions**
German	28	10	**18**
French	25	10	**15**
Italian	27	12	**15**

<u>Introductions in replies to questions</u>

Replies can again come in two forms. The majority of them are replies to explicit WH-questions (*What do you have below the teapot?*). The replies are often elliptical, i.e., they are verbless and consist of the NP referring to ENT only. There are also some verb-containing replies that typically have LOC in preverbal topic position. The other type of replies are so-called *co-constructions* (Sacks, 1995; Lerner, 1991). These are cases in which both speakers co-construct an utterance consisting of the topical location provided by speaker A, followed by the verb (if there is one) and the Entity produced by Speaker B, as in example (12). Replies to WH-questions outweigh co-constructions in all languages.

(12)   A: *Und dadrunter?*   B: *ist eine Klopapierrolle.*

Introductions in replies will not be further considered in the analyses of Second Move Introductions.

<u>Contrastive Introductions</u>

In the following analyses, we include all utterances specifying the presence of a contrasting entity in a position that was mentioned in the preceding First Move Introduction. The relevant entities were often new, i.e., mentioned for the very first time in this contrastive utterance (A: *next to the orange there is a teapot.* B: *I have a candle there!*). In some cases, however, the relevant entity was mentioned by the current speaker or the interlocutor at some earlier point in the dialogue and is taken up again when specifying that there is a contrast between both pictures concerning the entities encountered in a similar location. In accordance with all other introductions, the focus is on the expression referring to the entity in both cases. As with the First Move

Introductions, we will treat the construction types chosen in Second Move Introductions, the integration of the information units LOC and FRA, and the information structure of the utterances.

<u>Construction types</u>

As can be seen from Table 11, the number of central construction types used is reduced to two (the *be* construction in German and the *have* construction in French and Italian). The *there_be/have* construction and the verbless construction play a marginal role at best.

Table 11. Absolute numbers and frequency of construction types
(Second Move Introduction)

	there_be/have	*Be*	*have*	*verbless*	*Total*
German		13 (72 %)	3 (17 %)	2 (11 %)	*18*
French	0	1 (7 %)	14 (93 %)	0	*15*
Italian	0	0	14 (93 %)	1 (7 %)	*15*

Examples for the two main construction types:

be construction:

    (13) (GER):   A: *rechts daneben ist bei mir ne birne*
                      B: *da ist bei mir ein tennisball.*

have construction:

    (14a) (FRE):   A: *juste à gauche j'ai une balle de tennis*
                      B: *non moi juste à gauche j'ai un (.) un tube de dentifrice.*
    (14b) (ITA):   A: *di fianco c'è una pera*
                      B: *no (.) io di fianco al bicchiere* **ho** *una pallina da tennis.*

The considerable reduction of verbless constructions in Second Move Introductions does not come as a surprise. As speakers are engaged in contrastive comparisons, mentioning the Frame of Reference is important (see details below) and verbless constructions are not suitable to host this information unit as we saw above. The motivation for abandoning the *there_be/have* construction is less clear, as it can in principle be combined with FRA-expressions in French and Italian as shown in Table 7. We will come back to this point in
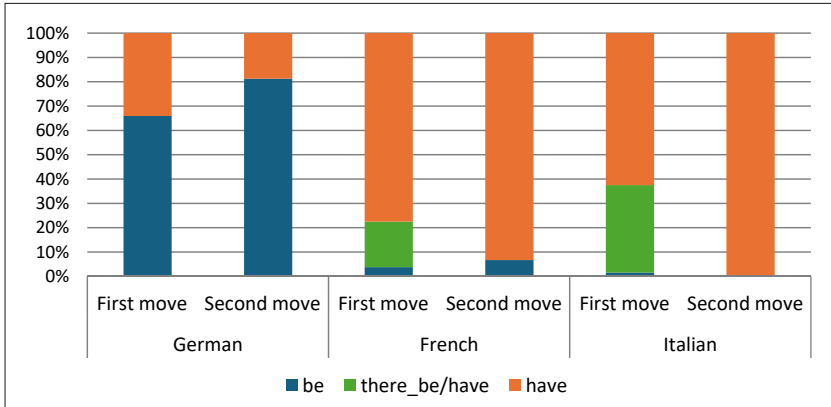
Figure 3. Distribution of construction types in First vs. Second Move Introduction
(only verb-containing utterances)

the discussion and first home in on the relative distribution of verb-contain-
ing constructions. Figure 3 shows, whether and how the speakers' choices
differ from their preferences in First Move Introductions.

In Second Move Introductions, speakers of all three languages select the con-
struction type that was already dominant in First Move Introductions, now largely
neglecting all other possibilities. Within the remaining two syntactic construc-
tions, German and Romance languages are once again different: At the expense
of variation, German uses *be* as the preferred pattern, while the Romance lan-
guages systematically chose *have*. In the next steps, we will check whether this
is likely to be motivated by differences in the presence of the information units
LOC and FRA and by the information structure of the relevant utterances.

Information Units

Table 12 shows the relative frequencies of mention for the information units
Localisation and Frame of Reference in Second Move Introductions.[16]

Figure 4 presents a comparison of the percentages across all syntactic
constructions in First Move Introductions (Table 7) and Second Move Introduc-
tions (Table 12). It reveals that the relevance of mentioning FRA has increased
in all languages, whereas the frequency of mentioning LOC has decreased in
French and Italian but increased in German.

The result for FRA is expected. Although every speaker can still only see
and comment on their own picture, FRA constitutes contrastive information
in Second Move Introductions. In German, the increase is due to the *bei mir*
adverbial that now occurs in 100 % of the highly frequent *be* constructions.

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16 The percentages in grey correspond to 3 or less utterances.

Table 12. Absolute numbers and frequency of Localisation and Frame of Reference (Second Move Introduction)

		there_ be/ have	be	have	Tot verb-containing	verb-less	Total
German	**LOC**	–	13 (100%)	2 (100%)	15 (100%)	0	15 (83%)
	FRA	–	13 (100%)	2 (100%)	15 (100%)	0	15 (83%)
	Tot	*0*	*13*	*2*	*15*	*3*	*18*
French	**LOC**	–	0	8 (57%)	8 (53%)	–	8 (53%)
	FRA	–	1 (100%)	14 (100%)	15 (100%)	–	15 (100%)
	Tot	*0*	*1*	*14*	*15*	*0*	*15*
Italian	**LOC**	–	–	5 (36%)	5 (36%)	0	5 (33%)
	FRA	–	–	14 (100%)	14 (100%)	0	14 (93%)
	Tot	*0*	*0*	*14*	*14*	*1*	*15*

In the Romance languages, the increase is a consequence of the increase of *have* constructions that come with an implicit FRA. The contrastiveness of FRA becomes clearer when we have a closer look at these constructions and account for additional and optional FRA-markings (overt/strong pronouns, adverbials), as we did for First Move Instructions in Table 8. Table 13 compares First and Second Move Introductions.
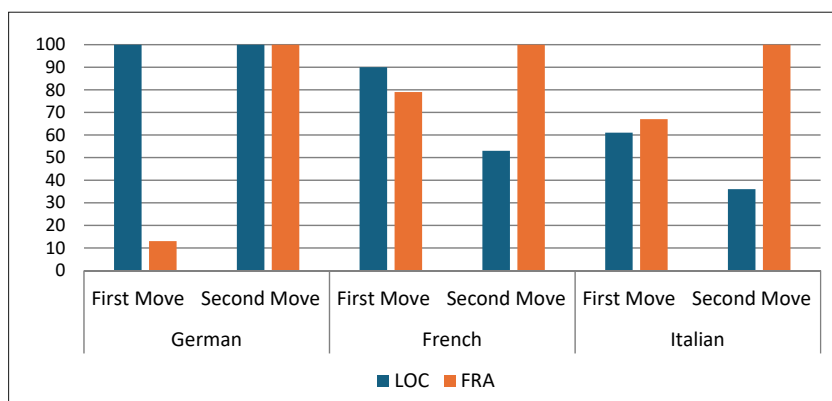

Figure 4. Frequency of Localisation and Frame of Reference in First vs. Second Move Introduction (only verb-containing utterances)

Table 13. Absolute numbers and frequencies of additional FRA-Markers
         in the *have_*construction in First vs. Second Move Introduction

	Have_construction with optional FRA-marking			
	First Move Introduction	*Total*	**Second Move Introduction**	*Total*
German	0	*15*	0	*2*
French	16 (26 %)	*62*	12 (86 %)	*14*
Italian	18 (45 %)	*40*	13 (93 %)	*14*

As before, mainly pronouns were used as additional FRA-markers. Due to the missing variability in the German pronoun inventory, the *have* construction that was already not very frequent in First Move Introductions is even less preferred for expressing the contrast in the FRA unit that is needed for Second Move Introductions. In the Romance languages, on the other hand, there is a clear increase in the frequency of optional additional FRA markings in Second Move Introductions. Speakers thus increased the use of the *have* construction and within that the use of additional FRA markers to solve the communicative need of marking a contrast in this information unit.

The results for the decrease of LOC (see Figure 4) that was attested in the Romance languages is equally expected. In the contrastive introductions, speakers mention different entities that are situated at the same position (on both pictures) and reference to the Relatum can thus often be maintained from an earlier utterance. The high frequency of LOC in German rather comes as a surprise. We will return to this finding in the following section.

Information Structure

In Second Move Introductions, the expression encoding the Entity is again focal and thus mainly placed at the end of the relevant utterances. The Location is given, and the Frame of Reference is contrastive. In the following we will report which information units (FRA or LOC) were placed in a position preceding the finite verb. We are therefore again considering verb-containing utterances only and we excluded elements that obligatorily occur in preverbal position (the French clitic *je*). See the description preceding Table 9 for further coding details. The results are summarised in Table 14. Examples for utterances with LOC and/or FRA in preverbal position are given below.

Table 14. Absolute numbers and frequency of information units
in preverbal position (Second Move Introduction)

		there_be/have	*Be*	*have*	*Total*
German	**LOC**	–	10 (77 %)	1 (50 %)	11 (73 %)
	FRA	–	2 (15 %)	1 (50 %)	3 (20 %)
	both	–	1 (8 %)	0	1 (7 %)
	other	–	0	0	0
	Tot	*0*	*13*	*2*	*15*
French	**LOC**	–	0	2 (14 %)	2 (13 %)
	FRA	–	1 (100 %)	6 (43 %)	7 (47 %)
	both	–	0	6 (43 %)	6 (40 %)
	other	–	0	0	0
	Tot	*0*	*1*	*14*	*15*
Italian	**LOC**	–	–	0	0
	FRA	–	–	8 (57 %)	8 (57 %)
	both	–	–	5 (36 %)	5 (36 %)
	other	–	–	1 (7 %)	1 (7 %)
	Tot	*0*	*0*	*14*	*14*

(15a) GER: **da** ist **bei mir** eine birne
(15b) GER: **rechts neben dem becher bei mir** ist die birne
(16)   FRA: **de façon horizontale sur la gauche moi** j'ai une euh euh orange
(17)   ITA: **io** invece **nella seconda partendo da destra** ho la pallina da tennis

Note that the one occurrence of a German *be_*construction with both LOC and FRA in preverbal position (see example 15b) would be ungrammatical in a written register whereas utterances with a complex topic component regularly occur in French and Italian (examples 16 and 17). Figure 5 presents the findings for the preverbal position in First and Second Move Introductions in a comparative perspective.

The information unit FRA changes from *shifted* in First Move Introductions to *contrastive* in Second Move Introductions. As a consequence, the frequency
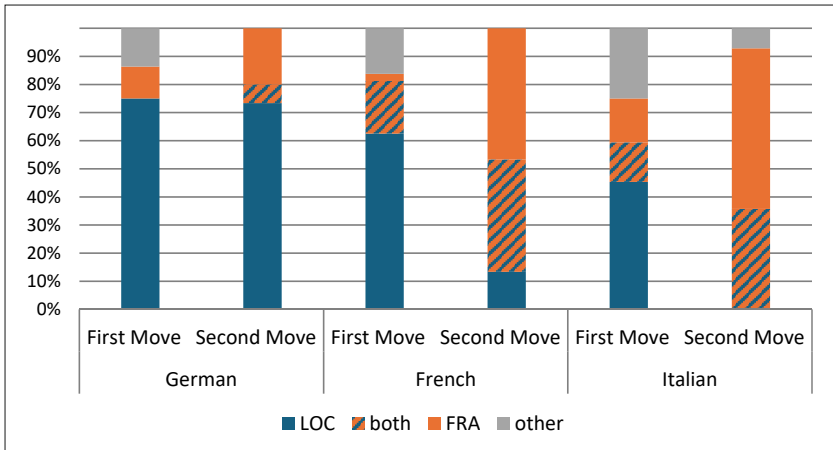
Figure 5. Information Units in preverbal position in First
vs. Second Move Introduction

of mention of FRA in preverbal position sharply increases in French and Italian, in particular when double topics ("both") are considered. In German, on the other hand, there is only a small difference between First and Second Moves. The topic position is mostly occupied by a LOC expression and the changing information status of this information unit is barely relevant for word order. This could be a reflex of the V2 constraint that prevents German speakers from placing both information units in preverbal position. However, a closer look at the preferences in the Romance languages speaks against this idea. When there is only one preverbal constituent in the Romance languages, LOC alone is rare in French and not used at all in Italian Second Moves, whereas FRA alone is frequent in both languages.

German speakers prefer LOC as a topic, and they stick to this decision in First Move and Second Move Introductions. In the Second Move Introductions, choosing between LOC and FRA corresponds to choosing between a Continuation Topic and a Contrastive Topic. There seems to be a clear preference for the former in German, and for the latter (or a combination of both) in the Romance languages. This suggests that a textual preference, rather than only a syntactic constraint, is at play: German speakers prefer building discourse cohesion on continuity (anaphoric or given LOC), while speakers of French and Italian prefer to encode the contrasting information unit FRA as (part of) the topic in Second Moves.

Summary and Conclusions

The aim of our paper was to explore how native speakers of German, Italian and French introduce entities in an oral picture description task involving a dialogic dimension and a comparative goal (identify an unknown number of differences between two pictures). This makes it relevant for speakers to refer to their own picture (FRA) and to introduce entities in a contrastive way when they react to the interlocutor's earlier statements. The results show both (a) the influence of the type of task and (b) cross-linguistic differences concerning the preferred means employed for strengthening text cohesion under the given conditions.

In First Move Introductions, speakers of Romance languages clearly prefer to introduce entities with *have* constructions instead of the existential *there_be/have* constructions (*il y a / c'è*). *Have* constructions are also present in the German data, albeit to a lesser extent. German speakers frequently use *be* constructions (or equivalent verbless constructions) instead. The use of possessive *have* in the three languages is in sharp contrast with the findings of previous research on monologic descriptive discourse (Carroll et al., 2000; Watorek, 2003; von Stutterheim & Carroll, 2018). We assume that its presence is motivated by the task implying the existence of differences between the two images. We conclude that *have* constructions are licenced as a relatively "light" option, allowing speakers of all three languages to signal a shift between two Frames of Reference without, however, expressing contrasts between the pictures as they do not know yet whether the interlocutor's picture contains the entity they are introducing. Across languages and construction types, there is a general tendency to fill the topical position in First Move Introductions with the information unit LOC. The *Quaestio* "What is there in L?" that Watorek (2003, p. 330) proposed for static spatial descriptions in French seems thus to be valid for Italian and German as well.

The differences between Romance languages, on the one hand, and German, on the other, becomes more clear-cut in Second Move Introductions, where the information unit Frame of Reference (FRA) is contrastive instead of being only shifted. Speakers of French and Italian altogether abandon the *there_be/have* constructions, even though these can in principle be combined with FRA-expressions. The *have* construction that is already frequent in the First Move Introductions turns out to be particularly suitable for encoding this additional information unit, as speakers can easily add optional overt (Italian) or contrastive pronouns (French) to express the contrast in an utterance initial position. The presence of optional pronouns as overt markers of FRA contrasts does not hinder the expression of location (LOC) in the preverbal position. Recall that Location is maintained and non-contrastive information in Second Moves because speakers talk about different entities located in a position

that can be identified as being *the same location* on *different pictures.* This non-contrastive Localisation can be achieved with a global description like *the upper left corner* or with a local description like *next to the orange*, when both interlocutors have agreed upon the position of the Relatum (*orange*) in the preceding discourse. In the Romance languages, the left periphery of an utterance can thus be used to signal contrast and discourse continuity at the same time (***moi juste à gauche** j'ai un tube de dentifrice*).

Optional pronouns do not have a counterpart in German and stressed variants of the personal pronoun *ich* were not attested in the context of entity introductions. This might be one of the reasons why German speakers only rarely use *have* constructions in First Move Introductions, and almost completely avoid them in Second Move Introductions when a contrast on the Frame of Reference is at play. Combinations of *have* have with FRA adverbials are in principle possible but barely ever occurred. The personal pronoun *ich* is more prominent than the French clitic or the Italian null pronoun, so speakers presumably deemed this double marking (*bei mir habe ich* …) too heavy and chose the *be* construction instead.

Furthermore, the V2 constraint forces German speakers to choose between LOC and FRA in the topical preverbal position. Our results show that they invariably select LOC, i.e., a topic of continuity, rather than contrastive FRA for this position (*da ist bei mir Zahnpasta*). The optional *bei mir* adverbials increase in the Second Moves, but FRA does not become the starting point of the utterance, even though syntactic constraints would not hinder speakers to start with *bei mir* and put the local adverbials in a postverbal position instead. Given the necessity of a choice, the initial and topical part of the sentence is used for continuity purposes and the local information constitutes the backbone of coherence in both First and Second Move introductions in German. This also holds for the comparably high number of verbless utterances.

Overall, we found that the adaptation to an interlocutor in a jointly constructed picture description dialogue has different types of consequences, compared to information management in a monologic situation. The three factors discussed in the Introduction left language specific traces in our data. The necessity for a **collaborative discourse construction** leads to local sequences of First and Second Moves. In Second Move Introductions, speakers have to indicate whether their contribution is a confirmation or a disconfirmation of their interlocutor's statement. In the latter case (which was in the centre of our interest) they also have to make clear which part of the information is congruent with the interlocutor's description and where the information conveyed is in contrast to what was said before. In doing so, speakers have to cope with an **additional information unit** (the Frame of Reference). Next to Inverted Locational Predications (ILPs) that were expected as suitable constructions for the introduction of Entities, speakers of all languages solved

this problem with the help of possessive constructions where reference to the speaker is built into the argument structure of *have*. The rich pronoun inventory of the Romance languages reinforces this preference, whereas the multifunctional *be* construction that can be combined with FRA adverbials is prominent in German. The importance of the pronoun inventory in the Romance languages vs. the use of adverbials, particles and intonation in German ties in with earlier findings on signalling discourse alternatives in narratives (Benazzo & Andorno, 2010; Dimroth et al., 2010; Benazzo et al., 2012).

The need to signal **contrastive content** had an impact on information structure. In Second Move Introductions, the information units Entity and Frame of Reference are in contrast to the preceding First Moves, whereas the Location is maintained. At the same time, only ENT is clearly focal, whereas LOC and FRA are indicating what is talked about, i.e., candidates for the topic component of the utterances. In the case of ENT (new and focal) as well as LOC (maintained and topical) these properties go well together, and word order reflected the information status of these information units in all three languages (preverbal LOC, postverbal ENT). The information unit FRA (contrastive and topical) was therefore particularly interesting, and speakers solved this problem in language specific ways. In the Romance languages, FRA was the dominant topic in Second Move Introductions, sometimes in combination with LOC (*Moi (a droite) j'ai une orange*). In German, the topic position was nearly exclusively filled with LOC (*Da ist bei mir eine Orange*). A contrastive information unit was thus deemed to be a suitable way of cohesion building in French and Italian Second Move Introductions, whereas German speakers clearly preferred to use the topic position for signalling continuation.

In languages with SVO syntax, the *have* construction comes with an obligatory preverbal slot for an empty or clitic pronoun that can easily be made more prominent by open or strong pronoun forms in the same position. In German (V2), *be* constructions can be used in First and Second Move Introductions. In the absence of a subject first constraint, the preverbal position is generally filled with the LOC unit that builds the cohesive backbone of the dialogues. Contrastive FRA, if needed in Second Move Introductions, is realised as an adverbial in postverbal position instead.

Coming back to the variant of the *Quaestio* underlying static spatial descriptions in German, French, and Italian (*What is there in L*?), the specific conditions of our dialogue task induce the presence of an alternative *Quaestio*. First Move Introductions are not only descriptions, they also transport an inherent invitation to the interlocutor to check whether the relevant spatial configuration is similar on his or her picture ("What about your picture?"). Differences in information structure in Second Move Introductions between the two language groups suggest that speakers answer two slightly different variants of this question. While speakers of German still formulate their Second Move

Introductions as an answer to "What do you see in L instead?", with the maintained LOC as a topical starting point, speakers of French and Italian adopt a more explicitly contrastive starting point "What do you see in your picture instead?". The specificities observed by Christiane von Stutterheim concerning the dominance of a spatial perspective for German arise in dialogue descriptions as well.

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Appendix

Stimulus pictures

Stimulus picture 1

Stimulus picture 2