

Better alone than in bad company. Trade-offs between redundant and deficient cues assist the integration of ORCs.

A well-known generalisation holds that Object Relative Clauses (ORCs) are more costly than Subject Relative Clauses (SRCs) across (most) languages, populations, and modality (Kidd et al. 2007; Friedmann and Novogrodsky 2004; Kim and O'Grady 2016). Despite this, ORCs can be made better under specific conditions (Adani et al. 2010; Belletti et al. 2012 i.a.). Within the generative framework, a most seminal account of this observation is provided by Relativised Minimality theory (RM) (Rizzi 1990, 2004, 2013, 2018). In my last presentations, I attempted to demonstrate that the latter possibly builds upon some theoretical inconsistencies and fails to fully embrace crosslinguistic data. I then presented an alternative view, whereby amelioration effects are modulated by morphosyntactic cues that are capable of unambiguously distinguishing between subjects and objects. In this talk, I show how experimental results on children comprehension of Spanish ORCs can support and further refine this account. In particular, evidence is provided that disambiguating cues are not all equally effective and that they interact when concurrent. This will allow me to initiate some parallel reflections on how redundant and deficient information affects the (child) parser.

References

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