

Identifying a role for frequency information in the acquisition and processing of syntactic structure.

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Abstract

Many formal psycholinguistic theories are resistant to the idea that frequency information might play an important role in language acquisition and processing. In contrast, usage-based approaches identify a central role for frequency. Relative clause constructions (RCs) have played a central role in theory building in modern psycholinguistics, owing largely to the fact that subject RCs (e.g., the woman that kissed the man) are easier to process than object RCs (e.g., the man that the woman kissed). Formal accounts attribute this difference to differences in the complexity of syntactic derivation. However, the two sentence types also differ in their frequency of occurrence. In this talk I present the results of a series of studies conducted with a range of populations (L1 adults, children, bilinguals) and languages (English, German, Cantonese) that indicate frequency information plays an important role in RC representation.

Directions

Coupland One building is on Coupland Street, off Oxford Road, building 43 on the [Campus Map](#).

Further information

For further information about this seminar, please contact michaeline.k.glover@manchester.ac.uk or about LuCiD, please contact helen.allwood@manchester.ac.uk