
Thinking of the alternative: commitment is modulated by the salience and plausibility of the alternative interpretations

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Abstract

In the current study, we examined how the salience of alternatives affected perceived commitment to intended meaning, and whether plausibility moderated this effect. We presented dialogues with relevance implicatures and then one of three alternative types (no/likely/unlikely alternatives) in a within-subject design. We asked an explicit commitment question before (Experiment 1) or after (Experiment 2) the inference was voided, and two trust questions after it was voided. Results suggested that the salience of the alternative decreased perceived commitment levels, but only when the alternative was plausible.

Keywords: Commitment, Implicatures, Plausibility

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