
Information-structural features and depth of processing: a developmental study

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Abstract

The attention people pay to the different parts of a linguistic message is predicted (among other factors) by its Information Structure. Yet, little is known about how this processing strategy emerges during acquisition. To investigate this, we tested Italian-speaking second and fifth graders and adults in a mistake-recognition task. The results indicate a developmental trend in how Information Structure modulates attention during language processing. We found that younger children's accuracy is not modulated by the Information Structure of the message, while older children appear to rely on Information Structure-cues to direct their attention but in a different way from adults.

Keywords: information structure, presupposition, development

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