Do scalar polarity and individual differences matter in scalar implicature processing?

Michael Vrazitulis*†[1], Jia E. Loy[1], and Vera Demberg[1]

[1]Saarland University – Germany

Abstract

It has recently been proposed that scalar polarity is a relevant factor in predicting response behaviour during scalar implicature (SI) processing. After conducting two experiments through online crowdsourcing (N=100 and N=400), employing a sentence–picture verification task, we obtain mild support for this view, although large between-scale differences remain unaccounted for. In addition, we tested if individual differences in working memory capacity, print exposure, or fluid intelligence modulate response-time latencies when processing SIs. Most saliently, subjects with higher fluid intelligence appeared to slow down more drastically whenever encountering pragmatic ambiguity due to a potential SI.

Keywords: scalar implicature, polarity, individual differences

*Speaker

†Corresponding author: michaelv@lst.uni-saarland.de