
Some implicatures are more complex than others: the acquisition of scalar some and object relatives

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Abstract

We propose a parallel between the acquisition of scalar implicatures and complex syntactic structures like object relative clauses. Focusing on the quantifier scale, an intervention-based, syntactic approach is adopted in order to explain the well-known difficulties that selectively prevent preschool children to master both types of structures. An experimental design to verify the theoretical model is then presented: Italian-speaking children will be involved in a picture selection task targeting both scalar implicatures and object relatives. Systematic, simultaneous appearance of both structures within the same child will provide support to the common syntactic analysis.

Keywords: scalar implicatures, featural Relativized Minimality, intervention effects

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