
The conjunctive interpretation of disjunction is not just an experimental artifact: Insights from marked and unmarked disjunctions in child Romanian

Adina Camelia Bleotu^{*1}, Rodica Ivan², Gabriela Bîlbiie^{*†3}, Mara Panaitescu^{*‡3}, Monica Casa^{*§3}, Anton Benz^{*¶4}, Lyn Tieu^{*||5}, and Andreea Nicolae^{**4}

¹University of Bucharest – Romania

²Acuity Insights, University of Bucharest – Romania

³University of Bucharest – Romania

⁴Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS) – Germany

⁵UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO – Canada

Abstract

We investigate multiple simplex disjunctions (neutral/prosodically marked *sau*) and complex disjunctions (with/without a simplex counterpart: *sau...sau*, *fie...fie*) in child Romanian. We ask whether morphological/prosodic markedness affects interpretation, and children’s conjunctive interpretation of disjunction is an experimental artifact arising in contexts where the disjunctive statement mentions all the objects in the display. In Experiment 1, where the disjunctive statements mention all objects, adults are exclusive, while children are conjunctive with *fie...fie* but inclusive elsewhere. Experiment 2, containing additional unmentioned objects, shows similar results. Thus, morphological (not prosodic) markedness affects interpretation, and *fie...fie* is often conjunctive for children regardless of experimental manipulations.

Keywords: Romanian, first language, disjunction, implicatures, conjunction

*Speaker

†Corresponding author: gabriela.bilbiie@lls.unibuc.ro

‡Corresponding author: mara.panaitescu@lls.unibuc.ro

§Corresponding author: monicamihaelarizea@gmail.com

¶Corresponding author: benz@leibniz-zas.de

||Corresponding author: lyn.tieu@utoronto.ca

**Corresponding author: nicolae@leibniz-zas.de