
The Role of Working Memory in the Processing of Negative Sentences

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Abstract

For negation processing, we propose that language comprehension has a normal parallel process which simultaneously computes information about what is under discussion and the true state of affairs of a sentence. In this new work, we explore the potential effect of working memory on negation processing by presenting a dual-task study, WSPAN task and probe recognition task, which measure participants' working memory capacity and investigate the relative costs of inferring content and relevance. The overall results indicate that inferring aspects of the actual states of affairs for simple negative sentences is more resource intensive than computing the expected context.

Keywords: Negation, Sentence processing, Working memory

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