
Licensing negative statements in context

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Abstract

Negation processing seems to be facilitated in pragmatically felicitous compared to infelicitous contexts. We investigate whether adult writers are able to produce pragmatically felicitous contexts to affirmative and negative sentences and if adults can anticipate from contexts if an affirmative or negative sentence will follow. Results of our pilot study show that negative statements were chosen more often in contexts that originally included a negative target sentence compared to contexts originally including an affirmative target. We present a planned follow-up study trying to replicate this finding in a more systematic manner and additionally offer linguistic analyses of produced contexts.

Keywords: negative statements, felicity conditions, discourse, expectations

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