UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

Effects of lifetime knowledge on language processing in German and English

Permalink

Journal

ISSN

Authors

Palleschi, Daniela
Knoeferle, Pia
Rodriguez Ronderos, Camilo

Publication Date

2021

Peer reviewed

Effects of lifetime knowledge on language processing in German and English

Daniela Palleschi
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Pia Knoeferle
Humboldt University of Berlin, Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Camilo Rodriguez Ronderos
Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Abstract

In two self-paced reading experiments, we investigated the integration of knowledge about cultural figures during language processing. Experiment 1 investigated how contextually-defined lifetime information (dead/alive) was integrated with temporal verb morphology (English Present Perfect and Past Simple). Experiment 2 investigated how long-term knowledge about a cultural figure, prompted by their picture, is integrated with two types of linguistic input in German: temporal phrases containing a year, and biographical information (e.g., Joaquin Phoenix: "In the year 2013 / *1960, I starred in the film 'Her' / *'Psycho'"). Experiment 1 revealed longer reading times and higher rejection rates when life status mismatched tense (i.e., dead – Present Perfect, alive – Past Simple). In Experiment 2, shorter reading times and higher accuracy rates emerged in conditions containing lifetime-year mismatches. No effects were found for biographical information violations. Together, the two experiments provide cross-linguistic evidence that knowledge of a referent's lifetime is integrated during language processing.