Assessing event perception in adults and prelinguistic children: A prelude to syntactic bootstrapping

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Event Representation in Verb Learning

Participant-Argument-Match (PAM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence: N-Arguments</th>
<th>PAM</th>
<th>Event Concept: N-Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anne is swimming.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>SWIM: swimmer, FLAIL: failer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MOVE: mover, BREATHE: breather</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problem: one event, many mutually entailed concepts

Presumption of PAM: Swimming is viewed under SWIM but not SWIMP, SWIMT, etc.

Question: Is this presupposition true? If not, PAM won’t work.

Identifying Participants

Do people care about the involvement of a third entity in a scene? If yes: Consistent with participant-hood for that entity. If no: Inconsistent with participant-hood for that entity.

We compare such contrasts with mere perceptual differences between scenes.

Adults: Similarity rating (1-7), explicit judgment & RT measures
Children: Habituation/Switch (Gordon 2003), dishabituation measure

Experiment 1 & 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence: 2-Arguments</th>
<th>PAM??</th>
<th>Event Concept: 3-Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Mike stole a purse.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>STEAL: thief, loot, victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mike jimmed the door.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>JIMMY: agent, patient, lever</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experiment 3 & 4

Contrast A

o1: open [-instrument, from right]
o2: open [+instrument, from right]
o3: open [-instrument, from left]

Contrast B

Experiment 5

Contrast A

o1: open [-instrument, from right]
o2: open [+instrument, from right]
o3: open [-instrument, from left]

Experiment 5: Adults

t1: take [+owner, from left]
t2: take [+owner, from left]
t3: take [+owner, from right]

Implications:

Adults: “take-from-owner” = 3 participants “take-from-table” = 2 participants “take-from-left” = 2 participants “take-from-right” = 2 participants

Selected References


Thanks

Xuan Wang, Dept. of Philosophy, Univ. of Maryland
Rachel Dudley, Dept. of Linguistics, Univ. of Maryland
Project on Children's Language Learning
UMD Language Science fellowships to He & Wellwood