

The influence of intonation on Norwegian children's pronoun resolution

Using eye-tracking, we investigate at which age Norwegian children learn to use intonation to determine the correct referent of a pronoun.

Earlier research states that if an unaccented pronoun refers to the subject of the preceding sentence, an accented pronoun will refer to the object, and vice versa (Ariel, 1990; Fretheim, 1996; Givón, 1983). English 3- to 5-year-olds seem to choose the correct referents to accented pronouns increasingly more with age (Maratsos, 1973). Our study is the first one to use eye-tracking to investigate children's resolution of accented pronouns, and also the first one to do this in Norwegian. The study will provide detailed data on sentence processing, and reveal whether the previous findings can be generalized to Norwegian.

In this currently on-going study, the participants are monolingual 3-, 5-, and 7-year-old children, as well as a control group of monolingual adults. They listen to sentences like "Sara hugged Maria. Then she/SHE hugged her teddy bear", while watching two corresponding cartoon figures standing passive on a screen. The pronoun has either focal accent or no accent. Eye-gaze data are collected to determine whether the participants look at the subject or object referent while hearing the pronoun. In addition, offline data are collected, by asking the participants to point to the pronoun referent.

References

Ariel, M. (1990). *Accessing Noun-Phrase Antecedents*. Routledge.

Fretheim, T. (1996). Accessing contexts with intonation. In T. Fretheim & J. K.

Gundel (Eds.), *Reference and Referent Accessibility* (pp. 89–112). John Benjamins Publishing.

Givón, T. (1983). *Topic Continuity in Discourse: A quantitative cross-language study*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Maratsos, M. P. (1973). The effects of stress on the understanding of pronominal co-reference in children. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 2(1), 1–8.