Constructions and language processing: Performance-driven constraints on perception and production

Workshop at BICLCE2017 (7th Biennial International Conference on the Linguistics of Contemporary English, https://biclce2017.wordpress.com/) in Vigo, 28-30 September 2017

Convenors

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There is a growing body of research that addresses language processing from a constructional point of view. For instance, argument structure constructions have been shown to aid the comprehension of denominal verbs (Kaschak and Glenberg 2000) or of general sentence meanings (Bencini and Goldberg 2000), and a range of experimental studies have highlighted the importance of pre-emptive contexts in the perception of a particular construction as ungrammatical (e.g. the attributive adjective construction, cf. Boyd and Goldberg 2011). Constructions have also been shown to affect speech production in several ways. Thus, frequency-driven phonetic reduction is well documented (Jurafsky et al. 2001, Gahl and Garnsey 2004). Furthermore, syntactic priming (Gries 2005), lexical boost (Pickering and Ferreira 2008) and simple relative frequencies (Gries et al. 2005) have an impact on the online performance of ensuing speech or on sentence completion.

Processing has also been dealt with from the perspective of efficiency, i.e. in terms of the linguistic variants that might arise under the pressure of increased processing constraints. Most of these approaches assume that simplicity in one part of the grammar often results in complexity in another (e.g. sentence end weight acting as a trade-off for a long subject constituent). In this vein, Rohdenburg (1996), Hawkins (2004) or Mondorf (2009), among others, account for language variation by posing processing-based psycholinguistic generalizations such as: 'Complexity Principle', 'Minimize Domains', 'Maximize Online Processing', 'Minimize Forms', 'Support Strategies', etc.

Designed to encompass both the constructional and the efficiency-based approaches to processing, the workshop invites synchronic and diachronic corpus-based or experimental research on the impact of language processing on spoken language and communication (at any level of linguistic analysis).

Call for papers

The workshop will consist of full papers and work-in progress reports, which will be allotted 20 minutes for presentation (plus 10 minutes for discussion). The deadline for submissions of abstracts (ca. 500 words, excluding title, references and keywords) is 31 January 2017. Notification of acceptance will be sent out by the end of 15 March 2017. Abstracts should be sent to biclce.processing.workshop@gmail.com.

We are planning to publish the papers after peer-review process in a special issue of a reputable journal.

References

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