Pronoun resolution in native Spanish: evidence from offline questionnaires

Israel de la Fuente

Previous (psycho)linguistic work on pronoun resolution has shown that, for a hearer/reader to successfully recover the information encoded in a pronominal expression, the mental entity it represents (i.e. its antecedent) has to be salient or accessible in the interlocutors' minds (e.g. Ariel, 1990, 1994). But what exactly contributes to or affects antecedent saliency (or accessibility)? Some factors that have traditionally been put forward in the literature are the syntactic function and the informational status of the antecedent, the order of mention of discourse referents, and the distance between the antecedent and the pronoun, among others (e.g. Arnold, 1998; Carminati, 2002; Clifton & Ferreira, 1987; Gernsbacher, 1989). It has to be noted, however, that most of these studies did not disentangle these factors adequately. The goal of the present study is to address this shortcoming. Following up on previous work on French, English and German (Colonna et al., in press; Hemforth et al., 2004, 2010), our study uses several offline "paper and pencil" questionnaires to pinpoint the role that several factors that have usually been confounded in previous studies play in the process of pronoun resolution in native Spanish. In this presentation, we will (i) present the methodology employed in the study, (ii) present and discuss the results obtained, and (iii) discuss potential lines of future research.