The relationship of language type and parsing strategy

Christopher Graham*

Department of Linguistics
University of California, Davis

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Abstract

Language parsing is a necessary part of linguistic comprehension which has traditionally been researched using various psycholinguistic paradigms. A lot of work has attempted to extrapolate language-specific data into universal cognitive models of parsing. This paper argues that this kind of generalization misses an important point, specifically that there is a link between language type and parsing requirements which should not be overlooked. A brief overview of information encoding by grammars is given, and two possible incremental parsing methods to extract that information are aligned with typological language data. Deeper patterns involving these parsing strategies are shown to explain the existence of typologically rare word orders in some Indo-European languages (German, Dutch, Kashmiri) as well as cross-linguistically. Possible differences in processing difficulty between parsing methods are discussed with relevant data, as well as implications for future research in multiple fields.

References


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