

Relative clause acquisition in German: the effect of case and agreement

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In this talk, we discuss experimental data of both production and comprehension of object relative clauses by German children. Arosio et al. (2012) compared the comprehension of relative clauses that are temporarily ambiguous but disambiguated by either the case of the relative pronoun or the agreement on the verb of embedded clause. They found that case was a more effective disambiguation cue, and that short-term memory modulates the comprehension of object relative clauses among 9-year-olds. We expand their experiments in two dimensions, wider range of age-group, and another way to disambiguate temporarily ambiguous relative clauses (case of relative-clause internal argument). We discuss the production data of 4 to 8-year-old children, which aim to force them to produce temporarily ambiguous relative clauses disambiguated either by agreement, or by case.