

Are Misinformation Effects of Questions with False Implications modulated by At-Issueness?

Oliver Bott (joint work with Maria Aloni, Tomasz Klochowicz, Sonia Ramotowska, Fabian Schlotterbeck and students from the BA Seminar "Psycholinguistische Experimente" (WiSe 25/26))

In this talk, I will present two studies employing a rather simple question answering task. Visual scenarios are followed or preceded by polar questions querying information about the already encountered or still upcoming scenario. This allows us to manipulate a number of semantic and pragmatic phenomena in the visual context as well as in the question itself. In our second study this experimental paradigm is further extended and applied to misinformation effects on memory by combining the task with a memory task probing into visual memory. A further extension exists in priming paradigms (which will not be covered in this talk).

In our first study we used the basic task to test for effects of unsatisfied presuppositions in the case of quantifiers with empty restrictor sets, violations of cognitive biases of monotone decreasing quantifiers and last but not least the evaluation of scalar implicatures in the case of the quantifier *einige* (*some*). The results reveal that the task allows us to separate effects of presupposition violation from effects of general semantic complexity. These can again be clearly distinguished from effects observed for scalar inferencing. Thus, the basic form of the task provides an interesting tool for comparisons of various semantic and pragmatic phenomena.

In the second study, we present the results of an experiment again investigating the comprehension of questions about previously shown pictures with geometrical objects, this time focusing on resulting intrusion errors on representations in memory. We manipulated whether definite and indefinite descriptions were at-issue or non-at-issue to the task at hand. For this purpose, descriptions were embedded into restrictive vs. non-restrictive appositive relative clauses. The responses to the questions provided evidence for participants' awareness of presupposition violations. Moreover, false presuppositions had an effect on an immediately following memory task. This effect was present no matter whether the presupposition trigger appeared in an at-issue or non-at-issue context. Furthermore, question processing as well as visual memory was unaffected by the wording of the misinformation: in the constructions under investigation, indefinite descriptions patterned with definite descriptions.

I will conclude by highlighting further applications of the present work both on the memory as well as on the experimental pragmatics side. If time allows, I will briefly present the research plans of a preregistered study currently running in our lab.