

Debunking the myth of principle C reconstruction in ATB and parasitic gaps

Timea Szarvas (University of Potsdam)

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Principle C reconstruction is assumed to provide insight into the underlying structure of across-the-board and parasitic gap dependencies, although the reported patterns diverge. In this talk, I present evidence from coreference judgment experiments showing that the overall patterns found in ATB and PG dependencies are strikingly similar, lending support to unificational theories at first glance. However, I demonstrate that principle C reconstruction completely loses its relevance in multi-gap constructions. The supposed principle C reconstruction data are thus orthogonal to whether ATB and parasitic gaps are syntactically related. Preliminary data from a follow-up experiment supports the hypothesis that the effect on coreference is not simply determined by the linear distance between the R-expression and the pronoun, opening up a debate on discourse-based effects on anaphora resolution.