

最佳碩士論文獎佳作

語意在句法處理中的角色：中文關係子句的眼動閱讀研究

The Role of Semantics in Syntactic Processing:
Eye-tracking Experiments of Reading Chinese Relative Clauses

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Abstract

In this thesis, two eye-movement experiments were conducted to investigate the nature of Chinese relative clause (RC) processing, manipulating semantic plausibility and animacy respectively. The results showed that not only syntactic cues but also semantic cues trigger garden-path effects. Therefore, the syntax-based or memory-based theories cannot explain the involvement of semantic cues in sentence processing. The key to sentence processing is thematic role assignment, to which both semantic and syntactic cues are closely related. Readers utilize the cues available at the moment to assign thematic roles. The interactionist models can account for the Chinese findings better than the two-staged models. This thesis also provides evidence to solve the debates in Chinese relative clauses. In our experiments, Chinese readers' eye movement data showed that they encounter difficulty before the relativizer is encountered for subject-RCs and difficulty at the main verb for object-RCs. The evidence suggests that syntactic-processing-based accounts such as canonical word order and perspective-shifting are essential in Chinese sentence processing, but not memory-based distance accounts. The incremental process of sentence reading leads to a dynamic process of sentence comprehension. As the sentence unfolds, readers acquire different information and meet various integration difficulties of assigning thematic roles at different position while reading the sentence.