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Tapping into semantic recovery : an event-related potential study on the processing of gapping and stripping

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Tapping into semantic recovery

An event-related potential study on the processing of Gapping and Stripping

This dissertation investigates the processing of ellipsis, in particular the ellipsis type Gapping and its sub-type Stripping. After a thorough review of the theoretical and experimental background on Gapping (and Stripping), five electrophysiological studies are reported – including one replication study. Using the method of event-related potentials, questions are tackled regarding the nature of syntactic, semantic and prosodic processes and how they interplay. Two mechanisms described in the experimental literature - “Copy α ” and “cue-based retrieval” - are drawn upon to connect theory to processing. It is true that a mapping between existing theoretical insights and actual processing may be problematic, however, commensurate with theoretical insights, all experimental findings underscore the multidimensional nature of Gapping and Stripping. It is further argued that ellipsis resolution is sustained by a two-stage mechanism that is based on retrieval and integration processes.

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