

ANAPHORA RESOLUTION IN TELUGU

Considerable amount of work has been done both syntactically and psycho-linguistically on null pronoun languages and their anaphora resolution; the syntactic and semantic principles guiding the interpretation and distribution of anaphora and also whether there are any pragmatic principles that play a role in this process. Anaphora are the expressions which need an antecedent to refer back to for their interpretation. Binding principles are universal in nature but anaphora resolution depends on the parametric values the languages take to some extent. Theories that have been proposed for anaphora resolution are the Null and Overt Subject Alternation by Luján.(1985), the Position Antecedent Strategy by Carminati(2002) etc.

In this paper, we examine anaphora resolution in Telugu, a Dravidian language, which is a pro-drop language. An experiment was conducted to identify the preference in assigning antecedents to anaphors. The number of subjects who participated were 10 and each of them were given a set of 10 sentences. The sentence consists of two clauses one main and one subordinate. The subject of the main clause was always an NP; the subject of the subordinated clause could be either an overt pronoun or a null subject. The task was a picture verification task.

Example:1 Overt Pronoun

Telugu: Sekhar Ravinichusaadu, waaDu video game aaDukunTunDagaa
English: Sekhar Ravi saw he video game was playing while
'Sekhar saw Ravi while he was playing the video game.'

Example:2 Null Pronoun

Telugu: Sekhar Ravinichusaadu, video game aaDukunTunDagaa
English: Sekhar Ravi saw video game was playing
'Sekhar saw Ravi while (pro) was playing the video game.'

The experiment results showed that in sentences with null pronouns, the subjects preferred the Spec IP subject position as their antecedents whereas in the case of overt subjects, the preference was for the object.

References

Carminati, Maria Nella (2002). The Processing of Italian Subject Pronouns. Ph.D. thesis, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Luján, M. (1985), Binding properties of overt pronouns in null pronominal languages, in W.Eilfort, P. Kroeler & K. Peterson, eds, 'Papers from the general session: CLS 21, Vol. Part 1, Chicago Linguistic Society, Chicago, Illinois.