

Asymmetry between Encoding and Decoding of Wh-scope in Japanese

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In this paper, we will take up Wh-interrogatives in Tokyo Japanese and attempt to elucidate how language users strive for effective encoding and decoding of Wh-scope interpretations. In particular, based on the production and comprehension studies, we will point out the discrepancy between the way speakers encode the scope information in the prosodic structure and the way listeners identify the syntactic structure through prosodic cues. We will further argue that the mismatch comes from the processing strategy under the incrementality pressure and that it results in apparently more error-inducing processing when the Wh-item takes a matrix scope.