Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to offer a comprehensive account of the concept of contextual prediction. This phenomenon occurs during sentence processing and can be defined as an active anticipation of the upcoming language based on the available context. In the theoretical section, the thesis presents an overview of relevant research in the respective area. Several studies investigating the scope and potential forms of predictive sentence processing are mentioned. Theories of the general mechanisms of contextual prediction and its practical significance for language comprehension are emphasized as well. The thesis, however, focuses primarily on the use of case morphology in the prediction of thematic roles. The empirical section applies this issue on the Czech language. This section includes an experiment which investigated the predictive use of case-markings in the processing of Czech sentences. For this purpose, the experiment measured eye movements during a simultaneous presentation of sentences with a visual context. Although the experiment clearly demonstrated the presence of contextual prediction in the processing of Czech sentences, the influence of case morphology on the predictive processing remains questionable.

Keywords: Prediction, Context, Language Processing, Psycholinguistics