

## **Abstract**

**Three self-paced reading experiments were conducted to explore the syntactic and semantic interplay in Chinese pronoun assignment. Results show that pronoun assignment in Chinese is solely based on structural factors like order of mentioning. There is no evidence that pronoun resolution can be altered by the presence of other semantic biases (such as thematic role, additional semantic disambiguating information preceding the pronoun, and the discourse topic). These findings support syntax-first models which posit that initial parsing decisions are made on purely syntactic considerations, whereas semantic influences are confined to later operations. Furthermore, the present study also provides support for the notion that there are universal cognitive mechanisms for parsing sentences.**