Referencing Words in Italian Language Acquisition

This paper provides a background for Italian language acquisition specifically concerning the way salience works in these young learners. In examining the givenness of words as comprehended by children, the reference to salience will be analyzed as well. In looking at accounts from Ellen Prince (1981), Barbara DiEugenio (1997) and Dore et al (1975), salience in language learners becomes apparent. Prince’s article provides a background for givenness and salience. While looking specifically at Italian, DiEugenio’s article on movement will provide insight into the use of clitics and their effect on salience. Dore et al’s article examines circumstances of child reference during the transitional phases of language acquisition. In order to analyze these elements of child language, consultations of Calambrone’s acquisition transcripts provide the data. In the paper, I give examples of child utterances that rely on saliency and possibly result from given or evoked phrases said by a parent.