

Take-home midterm

This midterm is an attempt to quiz you on things that we've covered in class to this point. It is for you to take home and work on, to be returned to me within a week. Unlike with homework assignments, this should not be covering any completely new material. Also unlike with homework assignments, you need to do this one on your own.

1 A Givenness Hierarchy

Gundel et al. (1993) elaborated some on Chafe's (1976) discussion of givenness. They proposed a six-level "Givenness Hierarchy":

- In focus (*it*)
- Activated (*that, this, this N*)
- Familiar (*that N*)
- Uniquely identifiable (*the N*)
- Referential; indefinite (*this N*)
- Type identifiable (*a N*)

They suggest that the restriction on the parenthesized forms above is that they are only appropriate when their cognitive status is met. However, this is a hierarchy.

Six categories? Really? Look at the tables on pp. 291–292 of Gundel et al. (1993). I'm not all that convinced that the corpus study showed us what we'd have expected from their hierarchy. What do you see there? Does it look like there are really *six* categories? (Is there a smaller number of categories that might seem to match the overall pattern of data?)

A hierarchy? Really? Look also at the same tables for evidence that there is a *hierarchy*—that is, that the contexts that satisfy higher steps on the hierarchy become increasingly restrictive. Something that is in focus is necessarily activated, familiar, uniquely identifiable, etc.—but something that is familiar may not be activated or in focus (though it is necessarily uniquely identifiable, referential, type identifiable). Can you see this effect in these tables?

Quantity? Really? Gundel et al. (1993) close their article talking about “Grice’s Maxim of Quantity”—the idea that you would basically say the most informative thing you can. Given that the contexts become more restrictive as we go up the hierarchy, using a form that corresponds to a higher position on the hierarchy is more informative than using one that corresponds to a lower position. Thus, if you, as a hearer, hear somebody using a form associated with “familiar,” the referent (logically, necessarily) has all of the lower cognitive statuses, and you can assume that the referent does *not* have any higher status (it is neither activated nor in focus). Never mind what they actually say in that part of the paper (though you can read it again if you like), just looking those same tables, to what extent does this Maxim of Quantity seem to be distribution of forms over contexts?

2 Givenness, contrastiveness

Questions. How are the questions in (1) relevant when considering the answer in (2)? (There are at least five different information “packagings” that (2) can have—how do (1) help in identifying those, and what goes with each question?)

- (1) a. What happened?
 - b. Who found Falcon in the garage?
 - c. What did the police do?
 - d. Who did the police find?
 - e. Where did the police find Falcon?
- (2) The police found Falcon in the garage.

Only. What is the difference between (4a) and (4b) as an answer to (3)? Consider (5) as a followup statement to the one in (4). Is it any good? Is it better in one case than the other? How can you describe the effect that *only* seems to be having here?

- (3) Who did the police introduce to Bill?
- (4) a. The police only introduced *Mary* to Bill.
 - b. The police introduced *Mary* to Bill.
- (5) Furthermore, they introduced *Sue* to Bill.

3 Salad

Concerning the proposal from Ghomeshi et al. (2004). What differentiates the ones in (6) from those in (7) (that is, in what way would they predict these judgments)?

- (6) a. These aren't PAPER-papers.
b. Those aren't COW-cows.
- (7) a. * She's not a GAME-gamer.
b. * He's not a TEACH-teacher.
c. * Those aren't OX-oxen.

4 Peppers v. Carrots

The sentence in (8) is intended to read as part of a monologue that continues with (9). We're only going to talk about (8), though.

- (8) Peppers, I like.
- (9) Carrots, not so much.

Peppers. What is the status of <i>peppers</i> in (8)? Convince me.

- (10) Peppers, I think they're called.

What they're called. What is the status of <i>peppers</i> in (10)? Convince me.
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References

- Chafe, Wallace L. 1976. Givenness, contrastiveness, definiteness, subjects, topics and point of view. In Charles N. Li (ed.) *Subject and Topic*, 27–55. New York: Academic Press.
- Ghomeshi, Jila, Ray Jackendoff, Nicole Rosen & Kevin Russell. 2004. Contrastive focus reduplication in English (the SALAD-salad paper). *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 22: 307–357.
- Gundel, Jeanette K., Nancy Hedberg & Ron Zacharski. 1993. Cognitive status and the form of referring expressions in discourse. *Language* 69(2): 274–307.