Lign 104: Language and Conceptualization

Prof. Andrew Kehler

Spring, 2001

Part I: Attention, Reference, and Metonymy
Part II: Coherence and Metaphor
Part III: Attention, Coherence, and Lexical Semantics
Reference

Natural languages offer us many ways to refer to things:

- Linguistics 104
- Language and Conceptualization
- The class that Andy teaches
- The class for which Anne is the TA
- The class
- This class
- That class
- It
- This
- That

But why?
Pronouns

Why do we have them? How do we interpret them?

(1) a. John went to the Acura dealership with Bill. He bought an Integra.

    b. Bill went to the Acura dealership with John. He bought an Integra.

    c. John and Bill went to the Acura dealership. He bought an Integra.

Syntactic position of antecedent?
Pronouns

However:

(2) a. John telephoned Bill. He lost the pamphlet on Acuras.
   b. John criticized Bill. He lost the pamphlet on Acuras.

(3) a. John seized the Acura pamphlet from Bill. He loves reading about cars.
   b. John passed the Acura pamphlet to Bill. He loves reading about cars.

(4) a. The car dealer admired John. He knows Acuras inside and out.
   b. The car dealer impressed John. He knows Acuras inside and out.
(5) a. *The ham sandwich* is waiting for his check.

b. Norman likes to read *Shakespeare*.

c. *The White House* announced a bold new policy initiative today.

d. The Padres need *a stronger arm* in right field.

e. *Bush* bombed *Saddam* yesterday.

f. *I’m* parked out back.

g. *Wall Street* is in a panic.
A coherence constraint on discourse:

(6) a. John hid Bill’s car keys. He was drunk.
   b. John hid Bill’s car keys. He likes spinach.

*Coherence relations* that establish connections between utterances in a discourse:

**Explanation:** Infer that the state or event asserted by $S_1$ causes or could cause the state or event asserted by $S_0$. 
Result:

(7) John bought an Acura. His father went ballistic.

Parallel:

(8) John bought an Acura. Bill leased a BMW.

Elaboration:

(9) John bought an Acura this weekend. He purchased a beautiful new Integra for 20 thousand dollars at Bill’s dealership on Saturday afternoon.

Occasion:

(10) John bought an Acura. He drove to the ballgame.
Metaphor is *pervasive* in natural language:

(11) a. The theory of relativity *gave birth to* an enormous number of ideas in physics.

b. A new influx of investment helped to *resuscitate* Wall Street today.

c. Ford was *hemorrhaging* in 1990, with losses of over $1.2$ billion.

d. Try to *pack* more thought *into* fewer words.

e. We will be *going deeply* into the nature of metaphor.

f. I’m going to *plow through* a lot of material in this course.
Frame Semantics

The role of scripts, scenarios, frames, etc. in lexical meaning.

1. ‘Accuse’ vs. ‘Criticize’
   - Accuse: Presupposes blameworthiness of ‘Situation’, asserts that ‘Judge’ claims that the ‘Defendant’ is responsible for Situation
   - Criticize: Presupposes that the ‘Defendant’ is responsible for Situation, asserts that ‘Judge’ claims that Situation is blameworthy

2. ‘Buy’ vs. ‘Sell’
   - Buy: focus on buyer, backgrounding seller and goods
   - Sell: focus on seller, backgrounding buyer and goods
Frames and Perspective

1. ‘Land’ vs. ‘Ground’
   - Land: dry surface of Earth as distinct from sea
   - Ground: dry surface of Earth as distinct from air

2. ‘Shore’ vs. ‘Coast’
   - Shore: boundary between land and water from perspective of water
   - Coast: boundary between land and water from perspective of land
Frames and Perspective

‘Come’ vs. ‘Go’:

(12) a. I’ll come home right away.
    b. I’ll go home right away.

(13) a. Please come here.
    b. ? Please come there.
    c. ? Please go here.
    d. Please go there.