File-cards and donkeys

Original familiarity theory:

•A definite is used to refer to something that is already *familiar* at the current stage of the conversation.

•An indefinite is used to introduce a *new* referent.

Familiarity theory of definites

Problems: what about non-referential uses of NPs?

- Quantifier phrases and bound-variable pronouns:

(2) Every cat ate its food.

- Indefinites under negation:

(3) John didn't see a cat.

New familiarity theory

Karttunen's proposal:

- It is the "***discourse referent***" rather than a "referent" that has to be familiar or new.

How are "discourse referents" different?

- There are DRs that don't correspond to any referent.

(3) John didn't see a cat.

- DRs can be introduced ***temporarily***, and sometimes cease to exist outside of some local domain:

(4) a. Everybody found a cat and kept it. b. It ran away.

Discourse referents

(4) a. Everybody found a cat and kept it.
b. It ran away.

- “a cat” = indefinite, introduces new DR
- “it” in (4a) = definite, picks up the familiar DR introduced by cat.

However, “a cat” introduced its DR inside the scope of a quantifier. At the end of (4a), the scope ends, the DR ceases to exist.

- “it” in (4b) = definite, fails to find a familiar antecedent.

Anomaly or infelicity results.

Conversation and file-keeping

- A hearer during a conversation is constructing a ***model of discourse***.
- The model is structured like a file. The hearer can
  - Introduce newly indexed file-cards into the model = introduce new DRs.
  - Write information on the indexed file-cards = predicate stuff about the DRs.
  - Remove file-cards from the file.

Example

- F0: empty file

(5) a. A woman was bitten by a dog.

- F1: cards 1 and 2, info from a.

  b. She hit it.

- F2: cards 1 and 2, info from a and b

  c. It jumped over a fence.

- F3: cards 1, 2, and 3, info from a, b, c

File-change semantics

- For each indefinite, start a new file card
- For every definite, update an old card
- Files are evaluated for truth
- Sentence-meaning = recipe for manipulating and changing the file-system

  file-change potential

Different kinds of DPs

- Referential = correspond to file-cards
  - Definites
  - Indefinites
- Quantificational = conduct “tests”

(6) Every cat is fluffy.

- F14: “Every” starts the test on the file-system
- F15: “cat” temporarily introduces a new file-card cat(x)
- F16: add “fluffy” to information about x: fluffy(x)
- Check that every situation that satisfies F15 also satisfies F16, get rid of situations that fail
- Revert to F14 (the pre-test file)

An aside: accommodation

- Definites & other expressions impose pre-conditions on file-systems.
- What happens when these presuppositions aren't satisfied?

(7) a. I boarded a bus. The driver was drunk.

b. I just got in from LA. The plane was late.

c. The guy Ann met last night came in.

Accommodation

(7) a. I boarded a bus. The driver was drunk.

- Accommodation:
  - creating a file-card for the ***definite***
  - as an extra step **before** the file-system is updated with the rest of the sentence-meaning
  - has some pragmatic constraints

FCS vs. GQT

- On this theory, “every cat” (quantificational) has a different type from “that cat” (referential, type *e*)

- But even more disturbingly, “every cat” is different from “some cat”

(8) a. Every soldier will accompany us.

b.He will shoot.

(9) a. Some soldier will accompany us.

b. He will shoot.

FCS vs. GQT

Why non-quantificational treatment of indefinites?

- For simple sentences, like (10), file-change semantics gives existential truth-conditions.

(10) A cat arrives.

- This happens, essentially, because indefinite creates a new file card, and there has to be something in the situation that satisfies the card.

FCS vs. GQT

Problem for quantificational treatment of indefinites:

- Quantified NPs are more restricted w.r.t. anaphora than some other NPs:
  - pronouns cannot get antecedents “from inside” a quantifier scope.
  - So, quantificational treatment of indefinites predicts that pronouns cannot have indefinite antecedents!

(11) A soldier will accompany us. He will shoot.

FCS vs. GQT

- Solution 1: say something about scope options of indefinites.[super-wide scope]
- Solution 2: say something about anaphora resolution [not via co-indexing, but through finding a salient individual]

- But, quantificational account that uses either of the above solutions makes wrong predictions about indefinites within the scope of a universal quantifier.

(13) a. Every time a soldier accompanies us he shoots.

b. He shouts at us.

Quantification in FCS

- Three-part division
  - **Operator**
    - » starts the test
  - **Restrictor**
    - » limits the cases where test applies
  - **Nuclear scope**
    - » states what we're testing for

(13) Every time a soldier accompanies us he shoots.

(14) Most Brandeis students are smart.

Donkeys

- This procedure applies in more complicated sentences, too:

(15) Every man who likes a donkey buys it.

(16) Every man who likes it buys it.

Donkeys

- This procedure applies in more complicated sentences, too:

(15) Every

[man who likes a donkey] [buys it]

(16) Every

[man who likes it] [buys it]