A mental-space account of embedded viewpoint for anaphoric constructions countering coreference rules

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Lexical forms of anaphoric constructions in written discourse tend to pattern according to well-investigated coreference rules. For example, the higher the degree of accessibility or activation of the referent, the lighter the lexical form of anaphora (Ariel 1990, Chafe 1996). Conversely, when referents are less or hardly accessible due to changes of topic or changes in time/space/character settings, stronger recalls of old-discourse items/people occur (Clancy 1980, Van Vliet 2002). In addition, scenes or argumentative parts involving more participants may feature more specific coreferences serving disambiguation purposes (Fox 1987, Emmott 1997).

However, referent accessibility is not determined in a vacuum. Items and people may have lower or higher accessibility in the minds of readers as well as of story characters, who may themselves utter anaphoric constructions. Moreover, information about items or people is updated multiple times as discourse unfolds, and anaphoric constructions may represent an economic way to convey additional information explicitly or implicitly (Enfield 2007, Betz 2015). Previous work (Bonifazi et al. 2022) has shown that even variations in forms of proper names used anaphorically can be sensitive to discourse discontinuities within and across paragraphs.

This paper accounts for anaphoric constructions countering canonical coreference rules (often labeled in literature "over- and under-specification") in terms on embedded viewpoint spaces. The Viewpoint Space framework (Dancygier 2012; Dancygier & Sweetser 2012) combines mental spaces (small cognitive structures that are updated as discourse progresses; Fauconnier 1985) and viewpoint, taken as a conceptual category embracing the discourse participants' alignments, attitudes, and epistemic stances beside their physical position (Dancygier & Vandelanotte 2016). Viewpoint spaces interact with each other to form networks, and in texts they may range from higher-level discourse configurations such as the main story space (or "Ground Viewpoint Space" in Kwon and Kim 2021) to lower-level constructions such as local or embedded viewpoint spaces.

The paper assumes that each anaphoric construction profiles a referent against the background of a particular viewpoint (mental) space. For example, the character "Mrs Dacre", known to the reader, at some point is referred to as "the unfortunate lady": the construction invites the reader to follow the viewpoint space of a character who would call her "the unfortunate lady".

The questions guiding the analysis include a) which linguistic features of anaphoric constructions within the host paragraph prompt discontinuity in viewpoint spaces; b) how embedded viewpoint spaces relate to the hierarchy of viewpoint spaces in the story; c) which are the input viewpoint spaces if embedded viewpoint spaces are blended spaces (Bonifazi 2018).

Data come from a corpus of 6 short classical British detective stories including 3,842 anaphoric constructions with individuals as referents. Such a corpus maximizes the potential viewpoint spaces within the general expectation of smooth referential management. Each story is populated by multiple speakers (7 to 11) and multiple referents of anaphoric constructions (44 to 134, mostly individual characters). Moreover, the size (257 to 640 sentences) allows the observation of patterns concerning the use of a variety of anaphoric NPs reflecting or countering canonical coreference rules. Finally, the progress of detective stories enhances a dynamic coding of implicit updates about individuals through discoveries and potential gaps of knowledge (Tobin 2006).

In Example 1 (see below), the second occurrence of "the great Valentin" puzzles the reader, because the writer's access to Valentin's mental states and the preceding coreferential forms "he", "his", "he", and "he" establish Valentin as higher in focus than the other male character (Flambeau). In Example 2,"the criminals themselves" is uttered by Miss Marple at a moment where characters and readers have no clue about the referents, whereas Miss Marple does. In both cases, the reading of an embedded viewpoint space can explain the otherwise unnecessary (Ex. 1) or too cryptic (Ex. 2) anaphoric constructions.

*Example 1: Hence the great Valentin, when he set out to find Flambeau, was perfectly aware that his adventures would not end when he had found him. But how was he to find him? On this <u>the great Valentin</u>'s ideas were still in process of settlement." (*The Blue Cross *by Chesterton, §§4-5).*

*Example 2: "Bloodstains dropped on the pavement from the bathing dress hanging above, and being a red bathing dress, of course, <u>the criminals themselves</u> did not realize it was bloodstained" (*The Bloodstained Pavement *by Christie, §59).*

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