

INDEFINITE *THIS* AND THE GIVENNESS HIERARCHY

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INDEFINITE "THIS" AND THE GIVENNESS HIERARCHY

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Abstract

The Givenness Hierarchy attempts to explain referential options by defining cognitive statuses that constitute necessary and sufficient conditions for appropriate use of the different referential forms. It has been claimed that the statuses form a Gricean quantity implicature scale, and this fact has been used to explain cases in which the necessary conditions for appropriate use of more than one form are met. It is shown that scalar implicatures in their semantic formulation do not account for referential options; a pragmatic formulation fares better in capturing the intuition behind cognitive status.

The Givenness Hierarchy is notable for attempting to account for the often overlooked form indefinite *this* *N*. Indefinite *this* functions two ways in discourse: in its introductory function, it is used to introduce an entity that is unknown to the addressee; in its predicative function, it is used to emphasize some attribute of the referent. Appropriate use of indefinite *this* in its introductory function requires a referent that is referential or uniquely identifiable, but not familiar. The pragmatic formulation of scalar implicature fails to predict that the referent of an indefinite *this* NP is unfamiliar to the addressee. An explanation in terms of the newness of the referent to the addressee is offered.

Since indefinite *this* can be used at once predicatively and to refer, predicative uses should be explicable by any theory of reference. Syntactic definitions of predicativity fail to account for all such uses of indefinite *this*, so a pragmatic definition is proposed. Indefinite *this* in its predicative function is always emphatic; this fact is used to explain why a speaker might choose a relatively prolix form using indefinite *this* over a more economical construction. The Givenness Hierarchy provides a principled account of the two functions of indefinite *this*: if the referent is in focus or activated, then the use is predicative, and if the referent is at most uniquely identifiable or referential, then the use is introductory.

This thesis is dedicated to all the dead horses who have been flogged
throughout the vicissitudes of time.

K. E. Williams

One bean does not a hill make.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In its everyday sense, reference is the act of indicating an entity. Within linguistics, the study of reference has been undertaken in two ways. The first, which springs from a long tradition in philosophy, is semantic in nature. The concern in this case is with the relations between linguistic expressions and what obtains in some possible world; that is, the focus has been on the truth relation. The second approach is cognitive in nature. It seeks to explain the relations between linguistic expressions and the knowledge that communicative participants have about the entities under discussion. The term *knowledge* is here used very loosely to include not only information about entities, but also the communicative participants' memory and attention states.

This latter approach, the approach taken in this thesis, is pragmatic in that it casts reference in terms of speaker intentions. In pragmatic terms, to refer successfully is to enable the addressee¹ to identify the intended entity. Note that, from the point of view of pragmatic reference, the referential act is deemed to be successful or unsuccessful, rather than correct or incorrect. In the semantic sense, reference is correct if there is an entity that the expression describes. From the point of view of pragmatic reference, it doesn't matter whether the description the speaker uses actually applies or not, as long as it isolates the same entity for both communicative participants. Thus it is possible to have successful reference, and hence a successful communicative exchange, about an entity using a description that doesn't actually apply to the intended referent.

¹ Of course, there can be any number of communicative participants. For the sake of simplicity, throughout this thesis I will talk as if there is exactly one speaker and one addressee at any given time. The term *speaker* should be understood to include writers, just as *addressee* includes readers.

In the pragmatic view, reference is a human activity. It is a communicative participant who refers, rather than an expression. A *referring expression* is one which is used with the intention of referring; an expression refers derivatively by being employed by the speaker to specify an entity.² In this thesis, discussion will be limited to reference that is appropriate and successful: appropriate in the sense that the speaker uses a form that would enable an alert addressee to resolve the reference, and successful in the sense that the addressee isolates the intended entity.

The pragmatic view of reference has as a consequence a similar view of meaning. A speaker successfully conveys her intended meaning only if the addressee identifies the entity that the speaker intended her to identify. If the addressee fails to isolate the intended entity, then the meaning has not successfully been conveyed. Once again, successful reference, hence successful conveyance of meaning, depends not on the description actually applying to the entity, but rather on the description isolating the same entity for both conversational participants.³

This thesis is concerned with pragmatic reference, specifically *discourse reference*, since the constructs assumed are those of a theory of discourse reference. A theory of discourse reference assumes a model of reference something like the following: suppose there is an entity, *e*, for which both communicative participants have a representation. Although private, these representations are similar in a crucial way, viz., they are representations of the same entity. A theory of discourse reference posits an entity called a *discourse entity* that captures the fact of this crucial similarity. In other words, we posit a discourse entity for *e*, call it *d(e)*, that represents the fact that both communicative

² Whenever mention is made of an expression referring to an entity, it should be interpreted in this derivative sense.

³ See Donnellan [1966] and Kripke [1977] for discussion of the view of reference taken here.

participants have a representation of e . Successful reference to e can be seen to be made via $d(e)$; in this case, we say that $d(e)$ is the *discourse referent*.

A theory of discourse reference further assumes that there is a set of discourse entities, called the *discourse space*, that represents (part of) the shared knowledge of the communicative participants. There are three ways that an entity can become part of this shared knowledge: by having been mentioned in the current discourse, by being part of the communicative participants' past experience (including world knowledge and past discourses), or by being a spatio-temporally manifest entity in the communicative participants' awareness.⁴

Table 1.1 provides an example of how the different types of entities that make up the ontology of a theory of discourse reference might be related in a particular situation. $O \rightarrow e_3$ means that O is a representation of entity e_3 . Each discourse entity is numbered to reflect which entity it corresponds to; for example, since both the speaker and addressee have a representation of entity e_2 , there is a discourse entity labeled 2.

Speaker representations	O	O			O	...
	↓	↓			↓	
Entities and discourse entities	e_1	$e_2, d(e_2)$	e_3	e_4	$e_5, d(e_5)$...
		↑	↑		↑	
Addressee representations		O	O		O	...

Table 1.1: Illustrates the ontology of a theory of discourse reference.

⁴ For more information on discourse entities, see Karttunen [1969], Heim [1982], and Landman [1985]. Discussions of discourse reference can be found in Landman [1986], Kamp [1981], and Webber [1979].

Of course, it is possible for a conversational participant to refer to an entity that is not currently represented in the discourse space; that is, a speaker can introduce a new entity. In this case, the addressee must first construct an appropriate representation with which information about the entity can be associated.⁵ Suppose, for example, that the speaker in Table 1.1 above introduces entity e_1 into the discourse. Assuming the speaker has used an appropriate form and the addressee is being attentive and attempting to resolve the reference, the addressee must first construct a representation for the entity, as illustrated in Table 1.2:

Speaker representations	O	O		O	...
	↓	↓		↓	
Entities and discourse entities	e_1	$e_2, d(e_2)$	e_3	e_4	$e_5, d(e_5)$...
	↑	↑	↑		↑
Addressee representations	O	O	O	O	...

Table 1.2: The addressee constructs a representation of entity e_1 .

The addressee will associate all the information he has pertaining to e_1 with the newly constructed representation, just as the information the speaker has pertaining to e_1 is associated with her existing representation. Now that both communicative participants have a representation of e_1 , there can be seen to be a discourse entity $d(e_1)$, as illustrated in Table 1.3:

⁵ The term *reference* thus includes both indication of an existing entity within the discourse space, and indication of an entity for which a representation must be newly constructed.

Speaker representations	O	O			O	...
	↓	↓			↓	
Entities and discourse entities	$e_1, d(e_1)$	$e_2, d(e_2)$	e_3	e_4	$e_5, d(e_5)$...
	↑	↑	↑		↑	
Addressee representations	O	O	O		O	...

Table 1.3: Mutual knowledge about e_1 is associated with discourse entity $d(e_1)$.

The conversational participants' mutual knowledge about e_1 , i.e., information pertaining to e_1 that is communicated in the discourse, can be seen to be associated with $d(e_1)$.

In natural language discourse, reference may be made in different ways on different occasions. If successful communication is to take place, the speaker must choose a form that enables the addressee to resolve the reference. The way in which an entity can be referred to on a particular occasion depends in part on the cognitive status the entity has for the addressee, where cognitive status is understood to be information about attention state and the location in memory of the representation of the referent. One device that has been developed [Gundel, Hedberg, & Zacharski 1993] to explain referential options, the Givenness Hierarchy, defines cognitive statuses as constituting necessary and sufficient conditions for appropriate use of the different referential forms.

The Givenness Hierarchy defines six cognitive statuses: in focus, activated, familiar, uniquely identifiable, referential, and type identifiable, as shown in Table 1.4:

<u>Statuses</u>		<u>Forms</u> ⁶
In Focus	→	<i>it</i> , unstressed personal pronouns
↓		
Activated	→	<i>this, that, this N</i> , stressed personal pronouns
↓		
Familiar	→	<i>that N</i>
↓		
Uniquely Identifiable	→	<i>the N</i>
↓		
Referential	→	indefinite <i>this N</i>
↓		
Type Identifiable	→	<i>a(n) N</i>

Table 1.4. The Givenness Hierarchy.

The statuses are ordered in such a way that an entailment relation holds between adjacent statuses;⁷ that is, being in focus entails that the entity is also activated, being activated entails that the entity is also familiar, etc. Each status constitutes necessary and sufficient conditions for appropriate use of the form(s) associated with it. So, for example, if an entity is in focus, then it can appropriately be referred to using an unstressed pronoun.

This thesis is concerned with how the Givenness Hierarchy accounts for indefinite uses of the determiner *this*. Although indefinite *this* corresponds to referential status in the Hierarchy, like other referential forms, it can also be used under certain conditions when a higher status obtains, and it is these conditions that will be the focus of this thesis.

⁶ The *N* in *this N, that N*, etc. stands for *noun*.

⁷ The arrow indicates entailment.

The thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 introduces a particular type of reference, namely, *deictic* reference, with an emphasis on uses of the deictic determiner *this*. The intent here is to provide enough background information about the different uses of *this* to enable the reader to distinguish between definite and indefinite *this*. In Chapter 3, the Givenness Hierarchy is described. This chapter includes descriptions of the cognitive statuses themselves, as well as the relations among the statuses and referential forms. The cognitive status of entities that are being introduced into the discourse is also discussed. Chapter 4 contains an analysis of problematical or unusual uses of indefinite *this*, and attempts to explain the data in terms of the Givenness Hierarchy.

Chapter 2

Deixis

The term *deixis* is derived from a Greek word meaning directly demonstrative. Traditionally, deixis has been viewed as the mechanism through which utterances manifest their dependencies on the various aspects of the situation in which they are made. For example, the interpretation of words like *now* and *then* depends on the time of utterance, the interpretation of words like *here* and *there* depends on the place of utterance, and pronouns like *I* and *you* are interpreted according to who is speaking and who is being addressed. Time, place, and person also affect interpretation of a more general deictic mechanism, the determiners *this* and *that* and their pronominal counterparts.

Although deictic reference can be categorized according to the type of referent, such as time, place, or person, it is not generally categorized this way. Instead, taxonomic schemes are based on the *way* in which the referent is indicated.⁸ Deictic reference can be direct, in that the referent is immediately accessible to the addressee via sensory perception, or indirect, which is to say, reference is resolved via information that is part of the speech itself, rather than some extra-linguistic aspect of the speech situation. The taxonomy of deixis described below, outlined by Lakoff [1974], is based on this distinction between direct and indirect reference.

In broad terms, deixis falls into three categories:⁹

⁸ It was Karl Bühler [1934] who first systematically investigated deictic phenomena based on this kind of distinction.

⁹ Lakoff further elaborates on different types of emotional deixis in the same paper. Discussion of the subcategories of discourse deixis can be found in Lyons [1977]; Lakoff does not discuss reference to a linguistic item. Fillmore [1975] uses a five-way classification: person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. The first three of these comprise the first category, spatio-temporal deixis, in the scheme used here. The latter, social deixis, will not be discussed in this thesis. Levinson [1983] provides a good introduction to deixis based on Fillmore's taxonomy.

1. spatio-temporal deixis, in which entities in the extra-linguistic environment are referred to directly;
2. discourse deixis, in which reference is made to or in conjunction with other linguistic items;
3. emotional deixis, in which reference is made to an entity in such a way that some emotional effect is intended to be produced in the addressee.

The first two types of deixis, spatio-temporal deixis and discourse deixis, are types of definite reference. Some of the uses Lakoff describes as emotional are definite, and others are indefinite. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to describing the individual categories in more detail. The critical fact to keep in mind while reading this chapter is that all the examples of reference given are definite, except for those that appear in the section on indefinite *this*, Section 2.3.1.

2.1 Spatio-temporal Deixis

Spatio-temporal deixis can be divided into two subcategories which will be described separately: spatial deixis and temporal deixis.

Spatial deixis, in which objects or spaces in the physical presence of the communicative participants are indicated directly, is grounded by default to the speaker (the *I*), the place of utterance (the *here*), and the time of utterance (the *now*); these defaults also hold for deictic expressions of the form *this (N)*.¹⁰ The *you*, *there*, and *then*, as well as expressions of the form *that (N)*, are taken to be in opposition to these default referential coordinates, in the sense that the *you* is not whatever is *I*, the *there* is not whatever is *here*, the *then* is not whatever is *now*, and *that (N)* is not whatever is *this (N)*. Of course, the defaults can be over-ridden by specifying a point of reference from which to determine the opposing coordinates; it is only in the absence of an explicitly named reference point that the default coordinates are used.

¹⁰ Karl Bühler [1934] first developed the notion of default grounding.

Spatial deixis may require ostension to enable the addressee to resolve the reference. As a general principle, ostension is required only if the addressee cannot resolve the reference without the additional information provided by the physical indication. Since reference is grounded by default to the time and place that the utterance is made, in the following example no gesture is needed in order for *this house* to successfully refer to the house the communicative participants are in at the time of utterance:¹¹

[2.1]

N: *This house* is always dark and cold=

A: =Cold. It's freezing in here.

[Frederickson Transcript 1976 #2 p. 7]

A gesture may be required, however, to isolate one entity among several that fit a description:

¹¹ The data in this thesis comes from two major sources: the Frederickson Transcripts, and Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song*. The Frederickson Transcripts are transcripts of tape recordings of gatherings of the Frederickson family of Minnesota. Since I had access only to the transcripts and not to the tapes, intonational clues as to how to interpret utterances were for the most part unavailable. Stress is sometimes marked in the transcripts, and is indicated by an accent over a vowel, as in, for example, *I have this phóbia*. The equals sign indicates run-on, i.e. utterances with no pause between them. Pauses are indicated by strings of periods, where the number of periods is in proportion to the length of the pause. Anything enclosed in square brackets was added by me; anything enclosed in parentheses appeared in the original transcript. Italics are used to isolate the focal NP(s) in each datum. Data from *The Executioner's Song* consists partly of letters Gary Gilmore wrote to his girlfriend from prison, and partly of interviews that were conducted when Gilmore's case was being investigated. Mailer comments that some editing was done in transcribing the interviews, but that Gilmore's letters are "virtually intact".

[2.2]

K: (bursts out laughing) Uhh! There was coffee in that and I hung it up on the wall! (laughs hysterically)

(general laughter)

N: Totally weird.

M: Ok, which one is it, the blue one?, the blue?

K: It was *this one*.

N: Lookit all that coffee on the floor.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #1 p. 20]

Here, K must provide some physical indication of which cup *this one* refers to, perhaps by holding it out for M to see.

Spatial deixis paradigmatically includes instances in which ostension is essential for reference resolution, such as when a demonstrative is used without an accompanying noun to refer to something that was not previously in the addressee's awareness, as in the following example:

[2.3]

I really got tricky before, I'd have it [the tape recorder] plugged in and I'd record with the cord, y'know?, and then I'd pull the cord out, and unplug *this*, but have it displayed prominently...

[Frederickson Transcript 1976 #1 p. 1]

In cases like this, *this* is typically, although not obligatorily, stressed.

Demonstratives can also be used to refer to some quality of a physical gesture itself, rather than merely being accompanied by one:

[2.4]

[In the photo] they're kind of, they're kind of hugging and looking like *this*, and, and they look like they have a real nice relationship.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #1 p. 32]

Temporal deixis involves reference to an instant or interval of time. Since reference is grounded by default to the present, in the following fragment *this moment* is taken to refer to the time of utterance:

[2.5]

B: Gary Gilmore, are you in fact at *this moment* ready to accept execution?

G: Not at *this moment*, but I am ready to accept it... next Monday morning at 8:00 a.m. That is when it was set. That is when I am ready to accept it.

[Mailer p. 523]

Tense, being one manifestation of temporal deixis, may also affect interpretation of the temporal information encoded in the sentence. For example, *this summer* could mean the summer just past, the summer in progress, or the coming summer, depending on the tense of the dominating verb.

2.2 Discourse Deixis

The second category of deixis is discourse deixis, which can be classified according to whether reference is made to a linguistic item, or via a linguistic item; the former will be called *textual deixis*, the latter *coreference*. In either case, reference can be made either forward or backward in the discourse; forward coreference is called *cataphora*, backward coreference, *anaphora*. The discussion will start with coreference.

First, a general point about coreferential discourse deixis is worth making: entities referred to coreferentially may, like the referents of spatial deixis, be spatio-temporally manifest. As mentioned, the difference between spatio-temporal deixis and discourse deixis lies not in any attribute of the referent, but in *how* reference is made and resolved. To refer to a spatio-temporally manifest entity discourse deictically is to refer via at least one other referring expression. Discourse deictic resolution never depends on ostension, even in cases in which the entity can be indicated in that way.

Thus the term *coreference* is limited to referential acts in which the referent is referred to at least twice; it minimally involves a phore and its *anchor*. The anchor is the referring expression that enables the addressee to identify one particular referent without dependence on any other referring expression; the phoric referring expression refers in

virtue of being coreferential with the anchor, which is to say, the addressee could not resolve the reference given only the phore. Note that the referential act associated with the anchor may be spatio-temporal, as in example [2.3], in which *this* is the anchor and the following *it* is the phore, or it can be non-deictic, as in the following example:

[2.6]

K: I remember learning in Medieval History the types of interpretations of scriptures that they did and they had to do it.. They were, they were sposed to do all of *them*. [...]

N: Um-hmh.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #2 p. 4]

Here, the anchor, *the types of interpretations of scriptures that they did*, is a linguistic description that provides enough information to enable the addressee to construct a representation for the referent; the phore is *them*.

Of course, it is also possible to have coreference chains that comprise an anchor and any number of phoric items, as the following fragment attests:

[2.7]

This fuckin guard sittin out here just got done blowin *his* nose. Took *him* 5 minutes. Musta really had something lodged up there.

A harsh grating ungodly sound.

When *he* finally got done I told *him*: "Well, *your* horn works. Now try *your* lites." *He* gave me a bleery-eyed red-nosed look.

Now *the guard* is pacing. Clopping back and forth in about a size 13EEE shoe that looks too tite. *The boorish fucker* is bored stiff.

[Mailer p. 763]

In this case, the first referring expression, *this fuckin guard sittin out here*, is the anchor. The only other referring expression in the chain that could potentially (accompanied by some accommodation on the part of the addressee) function as an anchor in some discourse is *the guard*; in the given discourse, it functions as a *refresher* anchor, which is to say, it is not the anchor proper, but is informative enough to serve as a strong reminder to the addressee of what (or who) the active referent is.

As mentioned, reference can be either anaphoric or cataphoric. If the anchor precedes the phore(s), then it is a case of anaphoric coreference; in cataphoric coreference, the anchor follows the phoric item(s). In the following example of anaphoric coreference, reference is anchored by *convicted killer Gary Mark Gilmore's conversations with his girlfriend Nicole Barrett in the week preceding suicide attempts by both*; the noun phrase¹² *these conversations* is the phore:

[2.8]

Death and suicide were the main topic in convicted killer Gary Mark Gilmore's conversations with his girlfriend Nicole Barrett in the week preceding suicide attempts by both.

Nicole confided *these conversations* to me.

[Mailer p. 571]

This is a case of *direct* anaphora, which is to say, the same noun head appears in both the anchor and the anaphor. In indirect anaphora, the same head noun does not appear, so the addressee must infer the referent. In the following example of indirect anaphora, the addressee infers from *sentence a man to die* that there is a death sentence at issue, and that *this most extreme punishment* refers to that death sentence:

[2.9]

Don't the people of Utah have the courage of their convictions? You sentence a man to die --- me --- and when I accept *this most extreme punishment* with grace and dignity, you, the people of Utah want to back down and argue about it. You're silly.

[Mailer p. 511]

Cataphoric coreference occurs relatively infrequently in speech; it is somewhat more common in written language, and lends a formal flavour to the text. In the following example, *she* is the phoric item, *a woman* the anchor:

¹² *Noun phrase* will henceforth be abbreviated *NP*.

[2.10]

If *she* feels so inclined, a woman can have both a family and a successful career. This, according to Camille Paglia, is one of the great lies of contemporary feminism.

[Constructed Example]

Forward reference is considerably more common in textual deixis than in coreference, and doesn't impart the same sense of formality. Recall that textual deixis is discourse deixis in which reference is made to a linguistic item in the discourse, as the following example illustrates:

[2.11]

S: Do you feel like you had control of yourself or your action?

G: No, I don't.

S: Do you feel like --- Well, let me ask you *this*: Do you know why you killed Benny Bushnell?

G: No.

[Mailer p. 435]

The referent of textual deixis is an abstract entity such as a word, sentence, or proposition, rather than the utterance itself. The utterance thus serves as a representative of the referent.¹³ In this case, the referent is the question *Do you [Gary Gilmore] know why you killed Benny Bushnell?*

2.3 Emotional Deixis

The final category of deixis, emotional deixis, is described by Lakoff as including a number of "problematical uses" of the demonstrative determiners that have something to do with the speaker's emotional involvement in the topic. In using emotional deixis, the speaker expresses an attitude toward the referent, such as contempt or awe. The speaker may further hope to evoke a sympathetic attitude in the addressee, although, of course, one cannot make someone be disposed in a particular way. As might be expected, emotional deictic utterances often show a marked intonational pattern. It is not intonation

¹³ Reference to the speech signal itself would be classified as spatio-temporal deixis.

alone, however, that makes emotional deixis emotional; the form of the expression may also contribute to the effect. In particular, determiner choice affects emotionality.

Like spatial *this*, which is used for objects that are close at hand, emotional uses of *this* also communicate a sense of closeness. Emotional uses of *this* are thus described as being vivid, although this apparent vividness may simply be a result of their being colloquial.

Although intuitions about the emotionality of referential acts are slippery, there are paradigmatic cases of emotional deixis. Use of a determiner that is not necessary for reference resolution is one such case. In the following example, the determiner *that* contributes nothing to resolution, since the referent, Mariah Carey, is culturally known and can be identified on the basis of her name alone. Even if the addressee is not familiar with the referent, the determiner provides no help in resolving the reference.

[2.12]

Oh, *that Mariah Carey* is just such a perfectly perky pop princess, isn't she? Hey, if you didn't think so before, you definitely will after watching her first TV special tonight [...]

[Vancouver Sun, Nov. 25, 1993]

Another case that seems to be emotional is use of the distal determiner *that* in place of the second-person pronoun, *your*. Imagine a doctor greeting a patient with:

[2.13]

How's *that throat*?

[Lakoff 1974 (35) p. 351]

Lakoff calls this a solidarity use, the intuition being that the doctor has expressed solidarity with the patient by not calling attention to the fact that the infirmity is the patient's, as the second-person pronoun would have done.

Not all cases are as clear as these two, however. Indeed, the category emotional deixis is something of a catch-all for uses of the deictic determiners that are neither spatio-

temporal nor discourse deictic. The taxonomy that Lakoff describes is simply not sufficiently fine-grained to account for all deictic phenomena.

This thesis is not concerned with (true) emotional deixis. However, one of the uses that Lakoff describes as emotional, indefinite *this*,¹⁴ is of interest here. It alone will be described.

2.3.1 Indefinite *This*

Indefinite *this* is most commonly used in the narrative register to introduce a new entity into the discourse, specifically an entity which is unknown to the addressee.¹⁵ Statistically speaking, it is highly likely that the entity will be referred to again, which is to say, the referent is likely to be of ongoing interest in the discourse.¹⁶ It is thus not surprising that indefinite *this* often appears in syntactic constructions that are used to present prominent individuals, such as existential *there* constructions and left dislocations. The following fragment contains two instances of indefinite *this*; the first is in an existential *there* construction, the second in a left dislocation:

[2.14]

N: There's *this scene in*, what was that movie, *The Adventurers*, *this lady* - she wanted an escort man, you know, to take her places, you know, what do they call them, not gigolos, no, no-no, uh boy..

S: Just an escort service.

N: Yeah an escort service [...]

[Frederickson Transcript 1976 #2 p. 16]

Either of these NPs would have been equally as acceptable with the indefinite article *a(n)* in place of indefinite *this*, but this is not to say that the two are freely interchangeable in general. Unlike the indefinite article, indefinite *this* is necessarily specific, which is to say,

¹⁴ Lakoff does not use the name *indefinite this*. It is borrowed from Prince [1981].

¹⁵ This will be called the *introductory* use. Maclaran [1982] calls indefinite *this* in its introductory function *presentational this*. Wald [1983] calls it *new this*. Neither Prince nor Maclaran nor Wald discuss any other uses of indefinite *this*.

¹⁶ Prince [1981] observed 209 out of 242 instances of indefinite *this* that were referred to again, implicitly or explicitly, within a few clauses.

the speaker must have a particular individual in mind in order to use it felicitously. Although *a(n)* can be used specifically, it also has a non-specific use.¹⁷

A referring expression is said to be used *specifically* if the speaker intends to refer to a particular member (or subset) of some class of entities, rather than of "any old" entity of that type. The diagnostic for specificity is as follows: if the word *particular* or *certain* can be inserted before the noun without changing the intended meaning, then the use is specific. If the word *particular* cannot be inserted before the noun without changing the meaning, then the use is non-specific. Indefinite generics, such as *A leopard has spots*, are non-specific. Indefinites in opaque contexts also have a non-specific reading. For example, there is a reading of *Johanna wants to catch a fish and eat it* in which there is no particular fish that Johanna wants to catch and eat; any fish would satisfy her desire equally well. There are other situations as well in which an indefinite is non-specific. Consider, for example, the expression *Gag me with a spoon*. Presumably any old spoon will do.

The fact that *a(n)* has a specific use provides us with a test for indefinite *this*: if an instance of *this* in a construction of the form *this N*¹⁸ is replaceable by (specific) *a(n)*, then it is a case of indefinite *this* as opposed to any other use of the demonstrative.¹⁹ But indefinite *this* is not always replaceable by *a(n)*, since, unlike *a(n)*, it can be used with a numeral, as in the following example:

¹⁷ Thus specificity is not part of lexical meaning, but rather is a matter of use.

¹⁸ Indefinite *this* does not have a pronominal form, thus the noun is not optional here. Since the entity is new to the addressee, the speaker must provide, at the very least, information on what type of entity she has in mind, information which is carried by the noun.

¹⁹ Other uses of *this* would be substitutable by some definite form.

[2.15]

The drinking fountain is across from my cell and it is really funny the way some of these guys drink water. *This one dude* sucks up the water for 2 or 3 minutes at a time! He 'bout got in a fight cause of it yesterday.

[Mailer p. 334]

Here, *this* cannot be replaced by *a(n)*; it can, however, be deleted without changing the intended meaning of the statement. The critical fact here is not the deletability itself, but the fact that the meaning is not changed by the deletion. For example, consider the following:

[2.16]

These two guys are gonna help move the piano.

[Constructed Example]

If *these* is definite, then the representation of the referent already exists, and the demonstrative provides information that helps the addressee to isolate the correct representation. If, however, *these* is indefinite, then it contributes no information needed by the addressee to identify the referent in the sense that, in both the original and the deleted version, the addressee must construct a new representation for the two guys.²⁰ When the demonstrative is deleted from a definite *this* NP containing a numeral, the NP remains grammatical, but it becomes indefinite. There is no such change in an indefinite *this* NP: it remains grammatical and indefinite when *this* is deleted.

The situation with plurals is somewhat more complex than the situation with singular NPs. The previous example suggests that plural indefinite *this* may be deletable, as, in fact, it sometimes is. In some cases the determiner can be deleted but not replaced, in other cases it can be replaced but not deleted, and in still other cases it can not only be

²⁰ Presumably the addressee records the fact that it is not just any two guys who are going to help move the piano, but two particular guys. The version of the sentence with *these* deleted has a nonspecific reading which the version with indefinite *these* lacks. Thus indefinite *this* does provide some information, although not information that aids reference resolution in the way that definite *this* does.

deleted, but also replaced by the indefinite determiner for plural (and mass) entities, *some*.

Consider the following fragment:

[2.17]

One evening in Portland, when I was about eight, we all went over to *these people's* house, and there were two or three adults there. I don't remember just what I did, giving everybody a lot of lip, fucking with everything in the house --- I don't remember what all --- but anyhow, *this one lady* finally flipped completely out. Screamed. Ranted. Raved.

[Mailer p. 773]

The first instance of indefinite *this* is replaceable by *some*, but not deletable; the second instance is deletable but not replaceable, as is always the case when it is followed by a numeral, be it singular or plural. In the following example, indefinite *this* is both deletable and replaceable by *some*:

[2.18]

K: I can't say that's an era that I really know much about. Seventeenth and eighteenth century [...]

N: That was the period we were studying (...)

K: Yeah, I know, yeah, you were studying it but also.. but in general there are *these huge -- huge areas that I know nothing about* in there.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #1 p. 22]

To summarize: the diagnostic to distinguish indefinite *this* from other uses of *this* is as follows:²¹ if *this* is deletable or replaceable by *a(n)* or *some* without affecting the intended meaning of the statement, then it is indefinite; otherwise it is definite.²² This is a special case of a general diagnostic for (in)definiteness, in which the determiner in question is replaced by other determiners whose status vis-à-vis (in)definiteness is known. If it is replaceable by at least one definite determiner without causing a meaning change; then it is definite. If it is replaceable by at least one indefinite determiner without causing a

²¹ This test is based on one developed by Prince [1981]. Prince's test does not account for plural NPs in which the determiner is replaceable by *some*, but is not deletable.

²² All this diagnostic tells us is that whatever is meant by definite and indefinite in the case in question is what is meant in other cases. The diagnostic tells us nothing about the nature of (in)definiteness.

meaning change, then it is indefinite. A determiner will never be replaceable by both a definite and an indefinite form without a meaning difference.

Since *a(n)* and *the* are taken to be the paradigmatic indefinite and definite determiners respectively, (in)definiteness is generally tested against them. *A(n)* and *the* differ in how they delimit the set of possible referents: *the* signals that the addressee can isolate a unique entity that fits the description, whereas *a(n)* signals that there may be more than one entity that fits the description, although possibly only one that will actually enter into the discourse. In the following fragment, the sentence remains grammatical when the indefinite *this* NP is replaced by *the* or *a(n)*, but there is a meaning difference between the two sentences, namely, one versus more than one guy next door:

[2.19]

Hey, *this guy next door to me* lets the goddamdest farts I've ever heard. I thot that Gibbs was a fartin motherfucker --- but he don't hold a candle to this fool! Loud, harsh, rumbling, angry sounding farts --- Never heard nothin like it. Sounds worse than starting a lawn mower.

[Mailer p. 480]

The version with *the* signals that there is a unique guy next door; the version with *a(n)* allows the possibility that there is more than one guy next door, although only one guy actually enters into the narrative. Since it is impossible to know whether G intended the addressee to infer that there is one or more than one guy next door, in this case the diagnostic fails to determine whether the use is definite or indefinite.

Cases like this one are the exception rather than the rule. In general, the addressee can deduce from other factors whether or not the speaker intends to imply that there is more than one entity that fits the description. For example, in [2.14], the addressee's knowledge that movies have more than one scene, coupled with the fact that the speaker does not (immediately) provide enough information about the scene in question to distinguish it from all the other scenes in the movie, prohibits the addressee from interpreting the NP *this scene in the Adventurers* as definite. Thus replacing *this* by *the*

brings about a meaning difference that substitution by *a* does not; hence the use is indefinite.

2.4 Summary

A general description of deixis has been given, including several uses of the deictic determiner *this*. As well as the "core" uses of *this*, the spatio-temporal and discourse deictic uses, a "problematical" use, indefinite *this*, has been described. What distinguishes indefinite *this* from its core uses is that, as the name suggests, it functions indefinitely, whereas all the other uses of *this* described function definitely. Whatever may lie behind the notion of (in)definiteness, it is consistently true that some occurrences of *this* in an NP of the form *this N* are replaceable (without bringing about a meaning change) by indefinite forms, but not definite forms, whereas other occurrences of *this* are replaceable by definite forms (without bringing about a meaning change), but not indefinite forms. Substitutability by indefinite forms is the distinguishing criterion of indefinite *this*.

The next chapter is devoted to describing a (partial) theory of reference that is notable for attempting to account for indefinite *this*.

Chapter 3

The Givenness Hierarchy

In describing the categories of deixis, a number of examples have been given. Most of the referring expressions in these examples are of the form *this (N)*. There are, as well, other forms that a referring expression can take, in particular: *that (N)*, *the N* and *a(n) N*, and various pronominal forms. One question that naturally arises regarding these various forms is *How does the speaker know which form to use?* Related to this is a question phrased from the addressee's point of view: *How do the different forms help the addressee resolve the reference?*

The first step to answering these questions is to recognize that, assuming the communicative participants are cooperating to have a successful exchange, there are two forces at work. On the one hand, the speaker must fulfill certain obligations if successful communication is to take place; she cannot use a form for which the addressee is unable to resolve the reference. On the other hand, the speaker may still have options for which form to use, all of which would enable the addressee to resolve the reference. The task, then, is to provide an explanation of the principles that guide the speaker in selecting one form from among the many available.

This chapter is devoted to describing one particular device that has been developed to partially explain referential options, the Givenness Hierarchy. Developed by Gundel, Hedberg, and Zacharski [1993],²³ it provides guidelines for selection of a referential form based on the cognitive status the referent has for the addressee. The Hierarchy provides the taxonomy of cognitive statuses with the corresponding forms and the relations among

²³ Based on previous work published by Gundel, Hedberg, and Zacharski [1988, 1989, 1990]. Unless otherwise stated, quotes and examples attributed to them are from their 1993 paper. The authors will henceforth be referred to as GHZ.

the different statuses and forms. The Givenness Hierarchy will be described in Section 3.1, and the cognitive statuses in Section 3.2. Section 3.3 is devoted to relating cognitive status to newly introduced entities.

3.1 Givenness Hierarchy Relations

The Givenness Hierarchy²⁴ is a hierarchically organized classification of cognitive statuses of entities. Associated with each status are the forms that a speaker can appropriately use to refer to an entity having that status;²⁵ in other words, each status represents necessary and sufficient conditions for the use of the form(s) associated with it.²⁶ For example, an entity that has the status in focus can be referred to using the form *it*, since being in focus constitutes necessary and sufficient conditions for use of that form. In discourse, when the speaker wants to refer to an entity, she selects a form that corresponds to the status that she assumes the entity to have for the addressee. So, for example, if she judges the entity to be in focus for the addressee, she may use the form *it* to refer to it.

The Givenness Hierarchy has six statuses. Ordered from highest to lowest, they are as follows:

²⁴ The term *givenness* has been used different ways in the linguistics literature; see, for example, Gundel [1988] and Prince [1981]. The term is used here to indicate how well acquainted, in a cognitive sense, a communicative participant is with an entity.

²⁵ The cognitive status of an entity is relative to a communicative participant. Unless otherwise stated, it is the status an entity has relative to the addressee that is at issue.

²⁶ As far as cognitive status is concerned. There are constraints beyond cognitive status that affect the form that a referring expression can take.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1. In Focus, | (Highest) |
| 2. Activated, | ↓ |
| 3. Familiar, | ↓ |
| 4. Uniquely Identifiable, | ↓ |
| 5. Referential, | ↓ |
| 6. Type Identifiable. | (Lowest) |

The statuses are ordered in such a way that an entailment relation holds between adjacent statuses. For example, being in focus entails that the entity is also activated, being activated entails that the entity is also familiar, and so on. Since entailment is a transitive relation, having a particular status entails that the entity also has all lower statuses. Thus being in focus entails that the entity is activated, familiar, uniquely identifiable, referential, and type identifiable; likewise, being activated entails that the entity is familiar, uniquely identifiable, referential, and type identifiable; and so on. Otherwise stated, each status is sufficient for all lower statuses, and conversely, each status is necessary for all higher statuses. For example, familiarity is sufficient for unique identifiability, referentiality, and type identifiability, and is necessary for activation and being in focus.

Table 3.1 shows how cognitive statuses and referential forms are related in the Givenness Hierarchy:

<u>Statuses</u>		<u>Forms</u> ²⁷
In Focus	→	<i>it</i> , unstressed personal pronouns
↓		
Activated	→	<i>this, that, this N</i> , stressed personal pronouns
↓		
Familiar	→	<i>that N</i>
↓		
Uniquely Identifiable	→	<i>the N</i>
↓		
Referential	→	indefinite <i>this N</i>
↓		
Type Identifiable	→	<i>a(n) N</i>

Table 3.1. Givenness Hierarchy relations.

The Hierarchy encodes two types of relation: the first is the relation between statuses, and the second is the relation between statuses and forms. First, an entity that has status X also has all statuses lower than X; and second, an entity that has status X can be referred to using (one of) the form(s) corresponding directly to X. From the speaker's point of view, this latter fact serves as a guide in selecting a referential form to use. From the addressee's point of view, this same fact serves as a processing signal that aids resolution; that is, assuming an appropriate form was chosen by the speaker, the addressee knows that the referent has the status associated with that form. For example, if the speaker uses the form, say, *that N*, then the addressee knows that the referent is at least familiar, and may also have some higher status(es).²⁸

²⁷ Only the singular forms are listed. The plural forms *these (N)*, *those (N)*, and *some (N)* should be understood to be included in the same category as their singular counterparts. Recall that the arrow represents entailment.

²⁸ The knowledge that conversational participants have about cognitive status and language in general is tacit knowledge. Whenever mention is made of a conversational participants' knowledge of language, it should be taken to be tacit knowledge.

Since the statuses are related by entailment, and each status is necessary and sufficient for the appropriate use of its associated form(s), each status is sufficient not only for use of its associated form(s), but also for use of any form corresponding to a lower status. Accordingly, we might reason as follows:

1. Suppose that an entity is, say, in focus.
2. Then by the implicational relatedness of the statuses, the entity is also activated, familiar, uniquely identifiable, and so on.
3. Having uniquely identifiable status constitutes necessary and sufficient conditions for use of the form *the N*.
4. ∴ The entity can appropriately be referred to using the form *the N*.

We have already seen an example of appropriate use of the form *the N* when the referent is in focus, reproduced below:

[3.1]

This fuckin guard sittin out here just got done blowin his nose. Took him 5 minutes. Musta really had something lodged up there.

A harsh grating ungodly sound.

When he finally got done I told him: "Well, your horn works. Now try your lites." He gave me a bleery-eyed red-nosed look.

Now the guard is pacing. Clopping back and forth in about a size 13EEE shoe that looks too tite. *The boorish fucker* is bored stiff.

[Mailer p. 763]

GHZ appeal to Grice's [1967] maxim of quantity, quoted below, to explain the use of lower forms²⁹ like the one in [3.1].

Grice's Maxim of Quantity

Q1: Make your contribution as informative as required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

Q2: Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

[p. 26]

Use of the lower form *the boorish fucker* is licensed by Q2, whereby "use of a weaker (entailed) form implicates a stronger (entailing) form" [GHZ p. 295], or in the terminology

²⁹ The term *lower form* is short for *form that directly corresponds to a status that is lower than the referent's highest status*.

of this thesis, use of a lower form implicates a higher form. This is somewhat **misleading**, in that it is not a higher *form* that is implicated, but rather a higher *status*. Furthermore, it is important to understand in what sense a higher form is more informative than a lower form. As far as cognitive status is concerned, the higher the status, the more informative its associated forms are, in the sense that the forms corresponding to high statuses more narrowly delimit the set of possible referents than do the forms corresponding to low statuses. In other words, a form corresponding to a high status provides the addressee with more information regarding the identity of the referent than does a form corresponding to a low status. Since the form *the boorish fucker* is sufficiently informative to enable the addressee to resolve the reference, Q2 is being observed.

In another sense of *informative*, however, the inverse relation holds. In this sense, a form is more informative than another form if it carries more predicational information than does the other form. Cognitive status tends to be inversely related to semantic content of associated forms. The pronominal forms do not take modifiers, so cannot bear additional predicational information. The forms that comprise a determiner and noun can carry additional predicational information via pre- and post-nominal modifiers. Thus, in this sense of *informative*, the forms corresponding to the low statuses are more informative, not less informative, than the forms corresponding to the high statuses.

In example [3.1], the guard is in focus, so could be referred to using the semantically sparse pronominal *he* instead of the richer form *the boorish fucker*. Use of the longer form is unnecessary as far as reference resolution is concerned, and use of the pronoun would have been more economical from the point of view of production time. However, since pronouns cannot be modified, the speaker's desire to express his attitude toward the guard, namely, that he is a boorish fucker, requires him to use a form that can carry such additional information while still enabling the addressee to resolve the reference, hence his selection of the uniquely identifiable form.

Returning to the above argument that seemingly justifies use of the lower form *the N*, this form of argument does not hold for the use of lower forms in general. It is valid *only so far as cognitive status is concerned*. The problem with it is that it is incomplete. There are constraints beyond cognitive status that must be met in order for a form to be used appropriately. The Givenness Hierarchy makes no claim to completely explain reference.³⁰ Rather, it focuses on one aspect of reference, viz., cognitive status, which interacts with constraints beyond those encoded in the Hierarchy to guide referential acts. It is thus not surprising that in the following example, substitution of an in focus form by a type identifiable form is unacceptable:

[3.2]

But this guy was talking to us and.. and I didn't know where he was from but he quickly said he was from Australia, he'd, he'd travelled across the.. Asia and all that stuff, he came that way, you know, stopping along. So.. and then after we had talked to him about half an hour *he* [#*a guy*]³¹ asked, What part of England are you from? He thought we were English!

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #2 p. 29]

Here, the Australian man is in focus, as evidenced by the repeated use of the (unstressed) form *he*. Replacement of the pronoun by *a guy* is inappropriate, as it would be taken to introduce a new entity, prohibiting coreference with the Australian. GHZ would explain this using the first part of Grice's quantity maxim. By Q1, use of a particular form implicates that no higher status holds, so the addressee would not take *a guy* to refer to the in focus Australian man.

³⁰ Nor does it make the claim that whenever a particular status holds, a form (directly) corresponding to that status may appropriately be used, *independent of other constraints*; outside constraints are always a factor.

³¹ The octothorpe indicates unacceptability.

3.2 The Cognitive Statuses

The individual statuses are defined in terms of the addressee's knowledge and attention states. Table 3.2 shows how characteristics of the referent are related to the different statuses. If an entity is, for example, activated but not in focus, then it is not in the addressee's focus of attention, the addressee has a representation of it in (short-term, and possibly also long-term) memory, it is uniquely identifiable and specific, and the addressee has a representation of the class of entity to which the referent belongs.

In Focus	Referent is in focus of attention
↓	
Activated	Representation of referent is in short-term memory
↓	
Familiar	Representation of referent is in memory
↓	
Uniquely Identifiable	Referent is uniquely identifiable
↓	
Referential	Referent is specific
↓	
Type Identifiable	Representation of type of referent exists

Table 3.2. Definition of the cognitive statuses.

A description of each status follows, starting with the lowest status, type identifiability. GHZ describe type identifiability as follows:

The addressee is able to access a representation of the type of object described by the expression. This status is necessary for appropriate use of any nominal expression, and it is sufficient for use of the indefinite article *a* in English. [p. 276]

Thus in the following example, the speaker assumes that the addressee knows what a weather report is, which is to say, she has a representation of that type of entity:

[3.3]

M: Was it really hot, then?

N: It was quite hot and everybody was just dying in the heat, y'know and...

K: Well you'd think you'd be able to get *a weather report*--

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #2 p. 11]

Having an existing representation of the type of entity denoted by *weather report* enables the addressee to construct a representation with which to associate any further information about the referent.

Since some referring expressions carry predicational information beyond the type of entity, the addressee may need to not only construct a representation, but also record the other information associated with that representation, as in the following example:

[3.4]

I have something I want you to do. If you will do this and do it right I believe that I will soon take you away --- to Canada, perhaps [...] Here is what I want: *a carbon steel high quality hacksaw blade*. They sell them in hardware stores.

[Mailer p. 363]

Here, the addressee must first construct a representation for an entity of type *hacksaw blade*, and then³² must associate the predicational information *carbon steel* and *high quality* with the representation.

Note that in both these examples, the referent is type identifiable but not referential, which is to say, it is non-specific. In neither case does the speaker have a particular individual in mind. This is not to say that the set of possible referents is bounded only by the set of entities denoted by *hacksaw blade*. There may be implicit constraints, as is the case with the weather report: presumably the referent is a current weather report for the region in question. Or explicit predicational information may subsequently be provided

³² Assuming she is being fully attentive and remembering everything the speaker says. The process described here is idealized, in that it makes such an assumption.

by the speaker, as, for example, when the speaker continues to talk about the hacksaw blade he wants:

[3.5]

I need a pair of shoes size 11. Sterling can put the hacksaw blade inside the sole of the shoes.

[Mailer p. 363]

It is not "any old" carbon steel high quality hacksaw blade that the speaker wants, but one that fits inside the sole of a size 11 shoe. The use is nonetheless non-specific: there are many entities that fit the description *carbon steel high quality hacksaw blade that fits inside the sole of a size 11 shoe*, any one of which would satisfy the speaker's needs equally well. In fact, even if the speaker described the hacksaw blade in such detail that there were only one that fit the full description, and even if the speaker was aware of that fact and acquainted with the referent, he could still use the description non-specifically, since specificity is a matter of intention.

The second-lowest status, referential status, is described by GHZ as follows:

The speaker intends to refer to a particular object or objects. To understand such an expression, the addressee not only needs to access an appropriate type-representation, he must either retrieve an existing representation of the speaker's intended referent or construct a new representation by the time the sentence has been processed. The status 'referential' is necessary for appropriate use of all definite expressions, and it is both necessary and sufficient for indefinite *this* in colloquial English.

[p. 276]

The following discourse fragment contains two referring expressions that are referential but not uniquely identifiable. They are both introductory uses of indefinite *this* of the sort described in Chapter 2:

[3.6]

[...] well I'll give you an example what kind of guy Willy is, he said that, he had *this love affair* with *this Ukrainian girl*, and, he was so much in love with her and everything, really identified with her and so on like that. And I said, Well where does she come from, what kind of family was she from, he said, I don't know, she didn't speak English and I didn't speak Russian, or Ukrainian.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #2 p. 35]

Here, the speaker intends to refer to a particular love affair that Willy had with a particular Ukrainian girl, in other words, the two NPs are being used specifically, as is required for appropriate use of indefinite *this*. The addressee must retrieve type representations for love affairs and girls and construct representations for each in order to process the sentence.

Unique identifiability is described by GHZ as follows:

The addressee can identify the speaker's intended referent on the basis of the nominal alone. This status is a necessary condition for all definite reference, and it is both necessary and sufficient for appropriate use of the definite article *the*. [p. 277]

In the following example, the addressee can infer the identity of the eraser in virtue of there being an in focus representation of a pencil and the knowledge that pencils sometimes have an eraser.

[3.7]

A posse member's supervising me because I have a pencil --- they broke it in half then tore *the eraser* out --- I asked them what the fuck that was for and they told me so I wouldn't stab anybody. Unbelievable!

[Mailer, p. 333]

Since inference is involved in resolving the reference, the referent is said to be an *inferable*. Inference is one way an entity may acquire a cognitive status, analogous to being spatio-temporally manifest or being mentioned. An entity might also acquire some other status besides unique identifiability through inference. Examples of activated and in focus inferables will be given later in this section.

GHZ describe familiar status as follows:

The addressee is able to uniquely identify the intended referent because he already has a representation of it in memory (in long-term memory if it has not been recently mentioned or perceived, or in short-term memory if it has). This status is necessary for all personal pronouns and definite demonstratives, and it is sufficient for appropriate use of the demonstrative determiner *that*. [p. 278]

In the following fragment, N uses the form *that teeshirt* with the assumption that M already has a representation of the shirt, presumably because it has previously (although probably not recently) been mentioned:

[3.8]

N: It was quite hot and everybody was just dyin in the heat, y'know and...

[...]

M: Was that with you and Gary or was it when you were w- .. over at Oxford.

N: Oxford, '84. [...] That was when I bought *that teeshirt, that real light, real light shirt*, y'know.

M: Yeah.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #2 p. 11]

The determiner *that*, in such cases, functions to trigger the addressee's long-term memory of the referent.

Activated status is described by GHZ as follows:

The referent is represented in current short-term memory. Activated representations may have been retrieved from long-term memory, or they may arise from the immediate linguistic or extralinguistic context. [...] Activation is necessary for appropriate use of all pronominal forms, and it is sufficient for the demonstrative pronoun *that* as well as for stressed personal pronouns. [...] It] is also necessary for appropriate use of the definite demonstrative determiner *this*. [p. 278]

In the following example, the referent of *this request* is activated in virtue of having just been described:

[3.9]

Now, as to the decision as to what should be done with my dead body --- I ask that it be cremated. And with the consent of Mrs. Bessie Gilmore I would have my ashes mixed with those of her son --- Gary Mark Gilmore [...] If my own mother and father --- Charles R. Baker and Katheryne N. Baker are not agreeable to *this request* --- so be it. Let them decide as they choose.

[Mailer p. 557]

Often an entity is (or becomes) activated in virtue of being spatio-temporally manifest and in the addressee's awareness. In [2.1], for example, the house is activated in virtue of the conversational participants being in the house when the conversation takes place. As well, an entity may become activated through inference. In the following example, the referent of *this author* is an activated inferable, which is to say, it is activated in virtue of being strongly inferable³³ from *this book on literature*:

[3.10]

K: I mean... people think they're so, they're being so smart and...

N: Yeah, it's really remarkable, I -- one of the things in this book on literature that I read... uh, the conclusion of *this author* was that [...] what people construe as being extremely rev-revolutionary, and modern about writing let's say in the 50s 60s and 70s, [...] there was writing like that in the 1890s.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #2 p. 4]

³³ As GHZ point out, "the boundaries between statuses involving attention state [in focus, activated, and familiar statuses] are not discrete, even though they map onto discrete forms" [p. 291]. It thus makes sense to speak of the strength of activation of an entity.

The highest status, in focus status, is described by GHZ as follows:

The referent is not only in short-term memory, but it is also at the current center of attention. This status is necessary for appropriate use of zero and unstressed pronominals. [p. 279]

Most commonly, an entity will come to be in focus through having been mentioned in the discourse. For example, introduction of the guard in [2.7] brings him into focus so that he can subsequently be referred to using in focus forms. As was mentioned, it is also possible for an entity to be in focus in virtue of being strongly inferable from other information in the discourse. In the following example, no mention is made of any people before reference is made using the in focus form *they*:

[3.11]

My favorite.. one that I've seen.. I've never seen it written about but it's the one about the.. army plane from World War II I think that went down in the desert and *they* had survived there and, anyway you thought that they survived. You realize when people find the plane, you realize that they're dead.

[Frederickson Transcript 1976 #2 p. 2]

The reference succeeds nonetheless, since mention of a crashed plane is sufficient to bring the occupants of the plane into focus.

3.3 The Cognitive Status of New Entities

Recall that there are factors beyond cognitive status that affect selection of a referential form. Several such factors come into play when an entity is being introduced into the discourse. Once an entity has been mentioned, it has a cognitive status for the addressee, namely activated or in focus, and this can be seen as the speaker's starting point in selecting a referential form. When an entity is first being introduced, however, the process the speaker goes through in selecting a referential form may be slightly different. In this case, the speaker must consider whether the entity is spatio-temporally manifest or

inferable, and whether it has been mentioned in a previous discourse or has otherwise come to the addressee's attention.

There are three senses in which an entity could be new to the discourse that will be discussed here.³⁴ In the weakest sense, an entity is new if it has not been mentioned in the current discourse, but it is in (or can be brought into) the addressee's awareness in virtue of being spatio-temporally manifest. In the second sense, an entity is new if it has not been mentioned in the current discourse, but is in the addressee's long-term memory in virtue of having previously been in her awareness. Finally, in the strongest sense, an entity is new if it has not been mentioned in the current discourse and the addressee has never before been aware of the entity; that is, it is completely unknown to the addressee. In terms of cognitive status, these three senses of *new* correspond to being (or becoming) currently activated, previously having been activated, and never before having been activated.

Each of these senses of *new* licenses introduction of an entity to the discourse in particular ways. The sense of *new* in which an entity has not been mentioned in the discourse but is in the addressee's awareness in virtue of being spatio-temporally manifest licenses introduction via an in focus, activated, or familiar form. For example, consider the following scenario: imagine that A holds up a pen for B to see, then, once she sees that B's attention has been focused on the pen, comments:

³⁴ Inferability will not be discussed in this section.

[3.12]

A: *It* doesn't work worth shit. I paid \$4.50 for the bloody thing, and it leaks like crazy!

B: What a rip!

[Constructed Example]

Here, A confidently assumes that the pen is in focus for B, since she held it up for him to see and waited for his attention to be focused on it before speaking. It is thus appropriate for her to use an in focus form to refer to the entity.³⁵

Now imagine that A did not draw B's attention to the pen by holding it out for him to see, but while writing with the pen in B's presence comments:

[3.13]

A: *This pen* doesn't work worth shit. I paid \$4.50 for the bloody thing, and it leaks like crazy!

B: What a rip!

[Constructed Example]

A's assumption here is that the pen is activated for B in virtue of being spatio-temporally manifest, thus licensing use of the activated form *this pen*. She could also have used the activated pronominal form *this*, as in *This doesn't work...it leaks*, with the expectation that B would resolve the reference with the help of additional contextual information and world knowledge, namely the fact that the referent is something that leaks, A is using a pen while verbalizing her complaint, and pens sometimes leak.

The third activated form, pronominal *that*, can also be used in a related context. Imagine that it is B who picks up the pen to write with, rather than A, so that the use of the distal form is justified, and A comments *That doesn't work...it leaks*.³⁶ As with the

³⁵ I will not enumerate all the possible forms that could be used. For example, in this case, the speaker could also have used the form *this pen*. As is always the case, there may be lower forms that would also be acceptable.

³⁶ When a pronominal form is used to introduce a new entity, it is likely to be stressed, as in [2.3]. The forms *this N* and *that N* are generally preferred over their pronominal counterparts when the entity is new to the discourse, perhaps because the explicit type information carried by the head noun aids resolution.

proximal pronominal, there is enough information in A's utterance to enable B to resolve the reference.

Now consider another situation in which the referent is brought into the addressee's awareness through ostension. If the object is at some distance from the speaker, or closer to the addressee than the speaker, then the speaker may point to the object, making it activated for the addressee, but the non-proximity of the referent requires use of the familiar (distal) form *that N* rather than the activated (proximal) form *this N*. Thus proximity principles may take precedence over cognitive status when a referential form is selected.

The second sense of *new* is that in which the entity is not spatio-temporally manifest has not been mentioned in the current discourse, but is in the addressee's long-term memory in virtue of having previously been in her awareness.³⁷ In this case, the entity is familiar, so can be referred to using the form *that N*. In the following example, the NP *that thing about the plumbing supplies* serves to trigger N's memory of the thing in question, thereby enabling him to resolve the reference:

³⁷ One might think of this as being temporally distal. Entities that have recently been mentioned are more likely to be referred to using the proximal form *this N*.

[3.14]

N: Well I've got a good memory, it's just so short. (laughs)

K: Well, it's short or it -- it makes things up. Or, not exactly -- it embellishes things to make them better stories, and

N: Usually what it is is, it, it, it, uh, distills the whole point of the story and then builds on the point.

K: But -- except that this, *that thing about the plumbing supplies...* you twisted that to make me seem prudish and shocked, and that was not the point at all. (N laughs sheepishly.) I thought it was hilarious.

N: Ohh, ok.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #2 pp. 3-4]

Apparently the thing about the plumbing supplies is mutual knowledge, in the sense that K and N's experience with it occurred together; presumably they had a conversation about it.

An entity might also be familiar to the addressee in virtue of world knowledge.

A referent that is new in the third sense, the sense in which the entity is completely unknown to the addressee and is not spatio-temporally manifest, can be introduced into the discourse using a uniquely identifiable form, a referential form, or a type identifiable form. Since the entity has no cognitive status for the addressee prior to the referential act and the referential act doesn't involve the referent being spatio-temporally manifest, the speaker controls the entity's cognitive status by providing more or less information about it. For example, she may decide to provide enough information to make the referent uniquely identifiable, or she may decide to provide only enough information to make it type identifiable.

Consider the following scenario: suppose a conversational participant was kept awake last night by the dog next door, and is now complaining about it to a colleague. She might formulate her complaint in any of the following three ways:

[3.15]

I couldn't sleep last night. *The dog next door* / *This dog* / *A dog* kept me awake.

[Based on GHZ (2, 3, 4) pp. 276-277]

The speaker has a choice of how much information she wants to provide about the dog, and this choice determines the cognitive status the dog will have for the addressee. In the first case, the choice the speaker makes is to use the uniquely identifiable form *the dog next door*. Since the definite determiner *the* signals to the addressee that the referent can be identified on the basis of the nominal alone, it is incumbent upon the speaker to provide enough information in the nominal to make the referent uniquely identifiable; the information that the dog lives next door fulfills this requirement.

If the speaker had not provided the information that the dog lives next door, and had simply said *The dog kept me awake*, the use of the determiner *the* would still have resulted in the addressee taking the referent to be uniquely identifiable. But because the NP *the dog* is not alone sufficient to isolate a unique dog, the addressee would have had to construct some context that would make the dog uniquely identifiable. The most likely way to do this is to assume that the speaker is referring to her own dog.

In the second case, the speaker uses the form indefinite *this dog*. Since she doesn't provide any additional information that would make the dog uniquely identifiable, the dog's cognitive status is determined by the determiner *this*. Indefinite *this* signals to the addressee that the speaker intends to refer to a particular entity, thus the referent is referential.

Finally, the speaker might have chosen to provide only enough information to make the referent type identifiable. The form *a dog* signals to the addressee that he is able to access a representation of the type of object described by the noun. Although there is a specific reading of *a dog*, there is also a non-specific reading, and it is this reading that differentiates the referential *this dog* from the type identifiable *a dog*. Since there are no

contextual clues that determine whether the speaker had a particular dog in mind or not, it is impossible for the addressee to conclusively decide on the referential reading.

Note that for the speaker to have the full range of choices represented in [3.15], the referent must be potentially uniquely identifiable. That is, there must be a specific entity that fits the purposes of the discourse, and the speaker must herself have sufficient information about the referent to make it uniquely identifiable. In the absence of a specific entity that fits the purposes of the discourse, the speaker would be constrained to use a type identifiable form. For example, in [3.4], there really is no particular hacksaw blade that the speaker wants, and for the speaker to suggest otherwise would be to interfere with his escape plans.

Similarly, in the absence of sufficient knowledge about the referent, the speaker cannot provide the information needed to make the entity uniquely identifiable to the addressee, and so would be constrained to use a referential or type identifiable form. In [2.16], for example, the speaker would be hard-pressed to provide enough information to the addressee to isolate one particular inmate from among the hundreds of inmates he was incarcerated with.

To summarize: an entity's newness to the discourse maps onto the Givenness Hierarchy as follows: being spatio-temporally manifest gives the entity in focus or activated status, although, as was shown, an activated form cannot necessarily be used. Being in long-term memory either because the referent was mentioned in the past or because it is culturally known gives the entity familiar status. Being completely unknown to the addressee and not spatio-temporally manifest licenses introduction using a uniquely identifiable, referential, or type identifiable form, although there may be constraints pertaining to specificity and speaker knowledge that force use of one form over another.

Chapter 4

Indefinite *This* and the Givenness Hierarchy

As was mentioned in Section 2.3.1, indefinite *this* is most commonly used to introduce a new entity into the discourse. Recall that three senses in which an entity might be new were discussed. It is the third sense, in which the entity is both new to the discourse and completely unknown to the addressee, that corresponds to the paradigmatic use of indefinite *this*. Indeed, all the examples of indefinite *this* given so far introduce an entity that is new in the third sense.

This chapter is devoted to an examination of how the Givenness Hierarchy accounts for indefinite *this*. In Section 4.1, I present an example of an inappropriate use of indefinite *this* and attempt to explain it in terms of Grice's quantity maxim. This raises questions about the adequacy of the quantity maxim as an explanatory device for referential options. In Section 4.2, I present data that illustrates that indefinite *this* has a second, rarely discussed, function in addition to its introductory function, and I show that this second function is compatible with the Givenness Hierarchy.

4.1 Indefinite *This* and Scalar Quantity Implicatures

Indefinite *this* is most commonly used to introduce an entity that is completely unknown to the addressee into the discourse. To use indefinite *this* when the entity is not unknown to the addressee may bring about a break in the flow of the discourse, as the following fragment attests:

[4.1]

K: There is actually a dog collar museum in Leeds Castle, I thought it was a joke. [...] And you know I saw that in *this book called Dogue, this magazine Dogue*, D-o-g-u-e, it was a take-off on Vogue? I thought it was a joke.

N: Yeah, I saw that.

K: At first I didn't and then I thought, right.

N: I was with you when you bought it, y'know?

K: Right. Yeah.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #3 p. 3]

Here, K incorrectly assumes that N is not acquainted with the magazine *Dogue*, and so chooses to use indefinite *this* to introduce it into the discourse. This results in N not acknowledging anything that K has to say about the magazine until K has conceded her error by acknowledging N's familiarity with the magazine.

K's assumption that N is unfamiliar with the magazine is made obvious by her continued description of the magazine, which is clearly an attempt to inform. No cooperative speaker would attempt to inform an already informed audience. We don't need a theory of cognitive status to explain why an addressee might object to being told something he already knows. However, K's assumption is an assumption about cognitive status, so it is reasonable to expect an explanatory device such as the Givenness Hierarchy to explain such incorrect assumptions. As we have seen, Grice's quantity maxim is used to explain the use of lower forms, so presumably it should explain example [4.1]. Unlike my previous appeals to the quantity maxim, this time I will attempt a detailed account of the explanation.

GHZ [p. 295] claim that "the statuses in the Givenness Hierarchy form an implicational scale" of the sort described by Horn [1972] and Hirschberg [1985].³⁸ An implicational scale is composed of an ordered set of linguistic alternates $\langle f_1, f_2, f_3, \dots, f_n \rangle$, such that, when they are substituted into a sentence frame, S, the propositions expressed

³⁸ Also see Levinson [1983].

by those sentences are related as follows: $P_S(f_1)$ entails $P_S(f_2)$ but not vice versa, $P_S(f_2)$ entails $P_S(f_3)$ but not vice versa, and so on.³⁹ For example, the following English quantifiers form an implicational scale: *<all, most, some>*. Substituting the quantifiers into the sentence frame *---dogs like chasing sticks*⁴⁰ yields the following set of propositions related by entailment⁴¹ as shown:

All dogs like chasing sticks
 ↓
Most dogs like chasing sticks
 ↓
Some dogs like chasing sticks

The converses do not hold, that is, *Some dogs like chasing sticks* does not entail *Most dogs like chasing sticks*, which in turn does not entail *All dogs like chasing sticks*.

Quantity implicatures are derivable from the scale as follows: a speaker who utters $S(f_i)$ thereby implicates that she is not in a position to make any claim stronger than $P_S(f_i)$ i.e., she cannot (cooperatively) utter $S(f_{i-1})$, $S(f_{i-2})$, etc., since she is not in a position to claim $P_S(f_{i-1})$, $P_S(f_{i-2})$, etc.⁴² There are two reasons why a speaker may not be in a position to make a stronger claim: she may not know that the stronger claim holds, or she may know that the stronger claim does not hold. For example, a speaker who asserts *Some dogs like chasing sticks* thereby implicates that she is not in a position to assert *Most dogs like chasing sticks* or *All dogs like chasing sticks*, either because she doesn't know that most dogs like chasing sticks, or she knows that most dogs dislike chasing sticks.

³⁹ $P_S(f_i)$ represents the proposition expressed by the sentence frame S with the linguistic form f_i substituted in. To avoid notational clutter, I use italicized strings like *All dogs like chasing sticks* to represent both propositions and sentences; the intended interpretation of such a string is contextually determined.

⁴⁰ The dash "---" indicates the position into which the linguistic form is to be substituted.

⁴¹ This assumes a non-empty universe of discourse. If there were no dogs, then *All dogs like chasing sticks* and *Most dogs like chasing sticks* would be true, but *Some dogs like chasing sticks* would be false, thus the entailment relation would fail.

⁴² $S(f_i)$ represents the sentence frame S with the linguistic form f_i substituted in.

Implicature being non-necessary inference, the truth of the lower proposition is compatible with the truth of the higher propositions. To assert *Most dogs like chasing sticks* doesn't mean (in the truth-functional sense) that not all dogs like chasing sticks; it merely implicates it. Implicatures are therefore *defeasible*, that is, they can be canceled by additional information provided by the speaker. For example, there is nothing anomalous in uttering *Some dogs like chasing sticks. In fact, most dogs like chasing sticks. It's rare for a dog not to like chasing sticks.* Here, the speaker explicitly cancels the implicature of *Some dogs like chasing sticks* by asserting the higher proposition *Most dogs like chasing sticks* and the rarity of non-stick-chasing dogs.

Now, how can example [4.1] be explained in terms of such scalar quantity implicatures? As was mentioned, an implicational scale is composed of an ordered set of linguistic alternates, adjacent pairs of which are related by entailment when substituted into some sentence frame. If we take the scale to be *<it, this dog, that dog, the dog, indefinite this dog, a dog>* and substitute into the sentence frame *---likes chasing sticks*, we should get the following paradigm of propositions related by entailment as shown:

It likes chasing sticks.
↓
This dog likes chasing sticks.
↓
That dog likes chasing sticks.
↓
The dog likes chasing sticks.
↓
Indefinite This dog likes chasing sticks.
↓
A dog likes chasing sticks.

Let us see if this does in fact hold. In order to determine whether the entailment relation holds between two propositions, we must determine if there is any context in which the first proposition is true and the second proposition false; if there is no such context, then entailment holds. Trivially, we can construct such a context if we take the

referring expressions to refer to different individuals. For example, *This dog likes chasing sticks* does not entail *That dog likes chasing sticks* if we take *this dog* to refer to one dog and *that dog* to refer to some other dog. However, taking the referents of *this dog* and *that dog* to refer to different entities won't help us to explain referential options. The central task in the problem of referential options is this: given that a speaker wants to refer to a particular entity, the task is to explain the principles that guide the speaker in selecting one form from among the many available. That is, in the problem of referential options, reference is fixed, and so we must hold the reference fixed in order to evaluate whether the entailment relation holds.⁴³

But if *this dog* and *that dog* must be taken to be coreferential in order to evaluate the propositions for entailment, then whenever the first proposition is true, the second one must also be true. In fact, they are the same proposition, since they differ only in the form of the referring expression: the sentence frame is identical and the referring expressions are coreferential.

Furthermore, if they are the same proposition, then the converse is also true: whenever the second proposition is true, the first will also be true. That is, *This dog likes chasing sticks* entails *That dog likes chasing sticks*, and *That dog likes chasing sticks* entails *This dog likes chasing sticks*.⁴⁴ But this is inconsistent with the theory of scalar implicature, since in order for an implicational scale to hold, the entailment relation must obtain unidirectionally between adjacent pairs in accordance with how the scale is ordered.

⁴³ This amounts to saying that entailment is a relation between propositions rather than sentences, a fact which I have built into the definition of scalar implicatures. Although some linguists (e.g. Levinson [1983], Chierchia, McConnell-Ginet [1990]) speak of sentences as being true or false, so that truth-functional relations like entailment hold between sentences, they also note that the deictic elements must be held fixed in order to do so, which amounts to working with what I am calling *propositions*.

⁴⁴ The same will also be true of other pairs of propositions in the paradigm. Since demonstrating that one pair of propositions in the paradigm is mutually entailing is sufficient to show that the unilateral entailment relation does not hold, I will not consider any other pairs.

Perhaps, then, in order to make sense of the application of the theory of scalar implicature to matters of cognitive status, we must take the scale to be formed of statuses rather than linguistic forms. Indeed, the claim that GHZ make is that it is the *statuses* that form the scale, not the forms. This extension of the theory of scalar implicature, if it works, will provide not only an explanatory device for the Givenness Hierarchy, but will also expand the domain of the theory of scalar implicature.

Now the scale is composed of cognitive statuses, $\langle s_1, s_2, s_3, s_4, s_5, s_6 \rangle$, specifically $\langle \text{in focus, activated, familiar, uniquely identifiable, referential, type identifiable} \rangle$. But how are the quantity implicatures derived from this scale? If they were to be derived in a manner parallel to implicatures based on a scale of linguistic alternates, then they would be derived as follows: a speaker who utters $S(f_i)$ thereby implicates that she is not in a position to make any claim stronger than $P_s(f_i)$, i.e., she cannot utter $S(f_{i-1})$, $S(f_{i-2})$, etc., since she is not in a position to claim $P_s(f_{i-1})$, $P_s(f_{i-2})$, etc.

But this cannot be right, since, as before, *This dog likes chasing sticks* and *That dog likes chasing sticks* express the same proposition. Furthermore, it does not capture the intuition behind cognitive status. What prohibits the speaker from uttering $S(f_{i-1})$ is not her unwillingness to commit herself to $P_s(f_{i-1})$, but rather her judgement that the addressee will not be able to resolve the reference if she uses the higher form. In choosing to utter $S(f_i)$ over $S(f_{i-1})$, the speaker is not trying to make a different assertion, but make a given assertion in a different way, specifically, in a way that will enable the addressee to resolve the reference. For example, the speaker may want to communicate the fact that a particular dog likes chasing sticks; then her task is not to express some proposition other than that particular dog likes to chase sticks, but to choose a referring expression that enables the addressee to identify the intended dog and predicate something of that dog.

So taking the implicational scale to be composed of statuses rather than forms has made no real difference in how the theory accounts for (or fails to account for) referential

options. The problem of coreferentiality remains: in order to evaluate for entailment to see if the scalar paradigm obtains for the problem of referential options, the referring expressions must be coreferential, in which case there will be mutual entailment between pairs of propositions, which is inconsistent with the theory of scalar implicature. Thus we must conclude that, whatever the scale formed by the statuses in the Givenness Hierarchy may be, it is not a quantity implicature scale.

Note that this reasoning is semantic in that it takes the NPs to be coreferential as long as the descriptions they embody actually apply to the entity. The forms *it*, *this dog*, *that dog*, etc. all apply equally well to an entity that is a dog, from the semantic point of view. Recall, however, that it is pragmatic reference rather than semantic reference that is of concern in this thesis. Pragmatically speaking, two expressions can only be said to be coreferential if they succeed in isolating the same entity for the addressee. An NP that fails⁴⁵ as a referring expression cannot be said to be coreferential with any other NP. Herein lies a clue to how we can characterize the derivation of "implicatures" (if such they be) from the cognitive status scale.⁴⁶ Perhaps what is needed is a definition of implicatures that depends on successful coreference, rather than correct coreference.

With the spirit of cognitive status in mind, let us characterize the derivation of implicatures as follows: a speaker who utters $S(f_i)$, where f_i is a referential form that corresponds directly to the status s_i , thereby implicates that she is not in a position to utter $S(f_{i-1})$, $S(f_{i-2})$, etc. for fear of infelicity. There is only one relevant way in which an utterance may be infelicitous, and that is when it fails to enable the addressee to successfully resolve the reference; this is the core intuition behind Givenness Hierarchy

⁴⁵ From the point of view of pragmatic reference, there are two ways a referential act can fail: first, the addressee may isolate some entity other than the intended one, and second, the addressee may fail to isolate any entity whatsoever. In order to be successfully coreferential, two referring expressions would have to isolate a unique intended referent.

⁴⁶ Since not all implicatures are scalar quantity implicatures, I will assume that these are some other type of implicature, and continue to refer to them as implicatures.

With the spirit of cognitive status in mind, let us characterize the derivation of implicatures as follows: a speaker who utters $S(f_i)$, where f_i is a referential form that corresponds directly to the status s_i , thereby implicates that she is not in a position to utter $S(f_{i-1})$, $S(f_{i-2})$, etc. for fear of infelicity. There is only one relevant way in which an utterance may be infelicitous, and that is when it fails to enable the addressee to successfully resolve the reference; this is the core intuition behind Givenness Hierarchy implicatures. However, there are many reasons why a speaker may judge herself to not be in a position to make an assertion in a particular way, two of which pertain directly to cognitive status: she may not know that the necessary status holds, or she may know that the necessary status doesn't hold. In addition to these two reasons, there are reasons pertaining to constraints not encoded by the Givenness Hierarchy. For example, in Section 3.3 we saw an example of a situation in which the distance of the referent from the speaker made use of the activated form *this N* unacceptable in spite of the referent being activated.

Now let us see if the amended version of how implicatures are derived from the cognitive status scale can explain example [4.1]. Recall that a speaker who utters $S(f_i)$ thereby implicates that she is not in a position to utter $S(f_{i-1})$, $S(f_{i-2})$, etc. for fear of infelicity due to reference failure. By this characterization, K uses the referential form indefinite *this N* rather than some higher form because she judges that N might not be able to resolve the reference if she used a higher form. N draws the inference, which is wrong, and proceeds to point out that it is wrong.

At first glance, this may seem to be a satisfactory, if incomplete, explanation.⁴⁷ Consider, however, what the cognitive status of the referent actually is. The fact that K provides the name of the magazine within the indefinite *this* NP makes the referent uniquely identifiable as well as referential. Thus a status higher than referential does in fact

⁴⁷ Lower forms are often appropriately used. Explanations in terms of the quantity maxim provide no clue as to why the lower form is unacceptable to the addressee in this case, but acceptable in other cases.

obtain. This is borne out by the fact that the uniquely identifiable form *the book called Dogue* would have been equally as (un)acceptable as *this book called Dogue*. In either case, N would have been able to resolve the reference, but would still have been faced with being provided with information that he already has about the magazine.

So it cannot be the case that K is implicating that no status higher than referential holds, since she is providing information that makes the referent uniquely identifiable. This is not incompatible with the theory of scalar implicature: implicature being non-necessary inference, the inference need not be made. But the fact remains that the addressee infers, correctly, that the speaker has assumed, incorrectly, that the referent is unfamiliar. Since the theory of scalar implicature fails to capture this fact, it remains to be explained.

Let us consider some related scenarios before attempting an explanation. First, consider how the discourse might have differed if K had at least entertained the possibility that the referent was familiar to N. She could have avoided committing herself to an assumption of unfamiliarity by, say, tagging *did you see that?* to her introduction of the magazine, thereby providing N with the opportunity to claim familiarity without first subjecting him to information about the magazine that he already had. In this case, use of the referential form would have been acceptable, as would use of the uniquely and type identifiable forms, *the book called Dogue* and *a book called Dogue*.

Now imagine that N had not been familiar with the magazine. Use of the referential form for the uniquely identifiable referent would have been acceptable, and K's monologue could have proceeded without interruption. Use of the uniquely and type identifiable forms would have been equally as acceptable for the uniquely identifiable referent. Now suppose that K did not provide the name of the magazine. Then the referential and type identifiable forms would have been acceptable, but the uniquely identifiable form would not have been.

To recapitulate, use of indefinite *this* for an unfamiliar referent is acceptable, but use of indefinite *this* for a familiar referent is unacceptable unless the speaker somehow communicates her uncertainty about the referent's status. In either case, it is the assumption of unfamiliarity that is unacceptable, particularly when it is underscored by the provision of additional information about the referent. As noted, the theory of scalar implicature predicts that, in using the referential form, the speaker implicates that no higher status holds. But this is clearly wrong, since, in [4.1], the speaker is providing information that makes the referent uniquely identifiable. Neither is it the case that the implicature has been canceled: there does seem to be an implicature, namely, that familiar status doesn't hold, and this fact remains to be explained.

In fact, we already have the means to account for example [4.1]. This account is not in terms of implicature, however; rather, it is in terms of discourse function and constraints, namely, the senses of *new* described in Section 3.3. The first sense of *new* includes entities that are spatio-temporally manifest. The second sense excludes entities that are spatio-temporally manifest, but includes entities that are in the addressee's long-term memory in virtue of having previously been in her awareness. The third sense excludes spatio-temporally manifest entities, as well as those that are in the addressee's long-term memory; in other words, this third category is composed of entities that can be brought into the addressee's awareness only through mention.

Since an entity that is familiar is new in the second sense, the implication that familiar status does not hold amounts to an implication that the referent is not new in the second sense. This falls straight out of the definition of the three senses of *new*. The three senses are disjoint, which is to say, an entity cannot be new in more than one sense simultaneously; therefore, there is always an implication that when an entity is new in one sense, it is not new in either of the other two senses. Note that this is not an implicature: it

is a necessary inference, in that an entity's being new in one sense entails that it is not new in either of the other two senses.

It seems reasonable to suppose that conversational participants know, in the sense that native speakers know, how the different referential forms can be used and how constraints such as those considered here affect the referential act and reference resolution. Accordingly, a native speaker of English can reasonably be expected to know that indefinite *this* can be used to introduce an entity that is not spatio-temporally manifest and has never before been in the addressee's awareness into the discourse. From the addressee's point of view, use of indefinite *this* signals that the referent is completely unknown to him. In the case of example [4.1], use of indefinite *this* amounts to an assumption on the speaker's part that the addressee is ignorant of a fashionable cultural artifact, namely, the magazine *Dogue*. The assumption of ignorance may be mildly insulting in and of itself, but is exacerbated by the speaker's having forgotten that the addressee was actually with her when she first saw the magazine.

Example [4.1] remains unexplained in terms of implicatures. It is quite possible that such an explanation exists, but no further exploration of this question will be undertaken here.⁴⁸ Rather, the reader will have to be content with a non-theoretical account in terms of native speaker knowledge of the discourse conditions on appropriate use of indefinite *this*.

⁴⁸ They are certainly not conventional implicatures, since, as I show in the next section, unlike conventional implicatures they are defeasible. It may be that they are quantity implicatures that arise from a scale that has a different pattern of logical relations than do traditional quantity implicature scales. Or they may be manner implicatures, obeying the first sub-maxim: avoid obscurity.

4.2 Predicative Uses of Indefinite *This*

As was mentioned, all the examples of indefinite *this* we have seen so far involved introduction of an entity that was completely unknown to the addressee into the discourse. However, indefinite *this* is not always used for new entities. For example, consider the following fragment:

[4.2]

It was too crowded to have our own table, so we had to share it with a man, an uh... we asked him if we could sit with him. [...] And we, and we started talking, about the play we had seen the night before, Richard the Third. [...] And all the time I was talking about this play, [...] this guy was becoming more animated, I mean he was eating but he was kind of listening to what we were saying, and he was squirming around like he wanted to say something. And then finally he jumped into our conversation and it turned out he was not English, but was from a college in Florida somewhere and he taught drama. And so here I am babbling about all my fancy theories about drama and Richard the Third and Stratford on Avon and here was *this dráma teacher* sitting there.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #3 p. 13]

According to the diagnostic for (in)definiteness, if the determiner is replaceable by the indefinite article without a concomitant meaning change, then the use is indefinite. Since *this* is indeed replaceable by *a*, the use is indefinite.⁴⁹ Yet unlike the other examples of indefinite *this* we have seen, in this case the referent is not unknown to the addressee. In fact, the referent has already been introduced and is in focus when the form indefinite *this* *N* is used.

The following fragment is similar:

⁴⁹ Or it may be that diagnostic is weak or indeterminate.

[4.3]

I once saw a picture of Christ by a Russian artist that really haunted me for a long time. Christ didn't look anything like the popular beaming Western Christian version of the kindly shepherd we're used to. He looked like a man, with a gaunt, lean, sort of haunted face with deep set large dark eyes. You could tell he was pretty tall, angular, rangy, a man alone and I guess that was the most striking thing about the picture. No halo, no radiant beam from heaven above. Just *this extraordinary man --- this ordinary human being who made himself extraordinary* and tried to tell us all that it was nothing more than any of us could do. Loneliness and a hint of doubt seemed to fill the picture. I would like to have known the man in that picture.

[Mailer p. 386]

Here again, the referent of the two indefinite *this* NPs is in focus.

The question, then, is *What is it about these "exceptional" cases that makes them acceptable?* Why does use of indefinite *this* constitute an error in [4.1] when the referent is familiar to the addressee, while it is perfectly acceptable in [4.2] and [4.3] when the referent is in focus (and therefore also familiar)?

Perhaps, like example [3.1], these are simply cases of use of a lower form. If so, GHZ would justify them in terms of Grice's quantity maxim as follows: by Q2, use of the form indefinite *this N* implicates that the referent has some higher status.⁵⁰ Disregarding for the moment the doubts concerning the quantity maxim raised in Section 4.1, we are still no further ahead in explaining why indefinite *this* is sometimes used when the referent has a higher status, and sometimes not. What is it about these contexts that makes it acceptable for the referent to have the highest status in the Hierarchy?

A clue is to be found in the indefinite article, *a(n)*. Of all the English determiners, indefinite *this* functions in discourse most like *a(n)*. Like *a(n)*, it is used to introduce new entities into the discourse, specifically, entities which are completely unknown to the

⁵⁰ Or we could argue that the Q1-based implicature that no higher status holds is contextually canceled. Grice's quantity maxim gives us no clue as to why use of indefinite *this* sometimes implicates that no higher status holds and sometimes implicates that a higher status does hold.

addressee. Within the Givenness Hierarchy, indefinite *this* corresponds to referential status, which is to say, the referent of an indefinite *this* NP is necessarily type identifiable and specific, but need not be uniquely identifiable. This is similar to *a(n)*, differing only in the necessity for specificity. But, as has been pointed out, *a(n)* does have a specific use, and it is this use that most clearly parallels how indefinite *this* is used.

The form *a(n) N* has another use which has not yet been mentioned: its predicative use. In addition to its referential function, the form *a(n) N* can be used to predicate something of an entity. For example, in [4.4] the NPs *a great big fucker*, *a purty good man*, and *a guard* are being used to predicate the qualities of being a great big fucker and a purty good man, and the property of being a guard, of the Indian:

[4.4]

I met an Indian today who I've known for years. [...] He's *a great big fucker*. 300 pounds or so, *a purty good man*, even if he is *a guard*.

[Mailer p. 507]

A(n) N in its predicative use appears in constructions of the form *X is a(n) N*; Lyons [1977] calls this construction the *ascriptive construction*, since the predicational content carried by *a(n) N* is ascribed to the referent of the NP in subject position, here denoted *X*. The verb here is the copular *be*, which serves to link the complement to the subject. Certain other verbs, like *become* and *consider* among others, also take an argument that functions predicatively, as in *Jana became a member in August* and *Martha considers Sally an authority on Langer*. Note that in the case of *consider*, the attribute of being an authority on Langer is not being ascribed to the referent of the subject NP, Sally, but to the referent of the complement, Martha.

Lyons [p. 438] further remarks that predicative NPs have "no underlying referring expression", which is to say, in using a predicative NP of the form *a(n) N*, the speaker does not intend to refer and the addressee does not attempt to resolve reference. Since it is always the referent of the subject NP that is ascribed the quality described by the

predicational NP, the latter functions solely to modify the former. It is thus not surprising that predicative NPs can sometimes be replaced with an adjective, as in *Petra is a fool* / *Petra is foolish*. However, this is not always possible, since not all nouns have a corresponding adjective like *fool* does. For example, **He is guardish*⁵¹ is ungrammatical.

Although none of the italicized NPs in [4.4] can be replaced by an adjective without loss of meaning, they are nonetheless identifiable as predicative in virtue of being the complement of the copula *be* in the ascriptive construction. They can, as well, be identified as predicative through their discourse function. We shall say that an NP is being used predicatively if the speaker is using it to communicate its predicational content. This contrasts with referential uses of NPs, whose function is communication of the NP's referential content to enable the addressee to resolve the reference. To determine whether an NP is being used predicatively or referentially, one must consider why the speaker is making the utterance. Is she using the NP primarily to enable the addressee to identify the referent, or is she using it to communicate some property or quality of the referent?

What distinguishes examples [4.2] and [4.3] from the other examples of indefinite *this* that we have seen, then, is that it is the predicational content, rather than the referential content, of the NP that is of primary importance to the discourse in both cases. In [4.2], it is the property of being a drama teacher that is being emphasized and in [4.3] the quality of being extraordinary. In example [4.2], the NP's predicativity is evident from the fact that the noun is stressed: *this drama teacher*.⁵² But note that in this case, the NP is not in an ascriptive construction; rather, it is in an existential *here* construction. This suggests that the syntactic characterization of predicativity given above is insufficient to explain all occurrences of predicative NPs.

⁵¹ The asterisk indicates ungrammaticality.

⁵² In compound nouns like *drama teacher*, the first noun is generally stressed. The stress I'm describing here, however, is not this compound noun stress, but a stronger emphatic stress.

Of examples [4.2] and [4.3], the latter is perhaps the more clearly predicative of the two, since it can be paraphrased quite easily as an ascriptive construction with an adjectival complement: *He was just extraordinary*. But why would the speaker choose the longer form using indefinite *this* over the more economical adjectival construction?

The answer is that the prolix form is used for emphasis. Since it is longer, it takes longer to produce, thus forcing the addressee's attention to be focused on it for longer. As well, NPs can be modified both pre- and post-nominally, which makes them a better vehicle for emphatic commentary, both from the point of view of content and intonation. The speaker can say more about the referent, and concomitantly, stress more linguistic items. For example, compare *He was just extraordinary* to *He was just this extraordinary man*. The version with indefinite *this* has two more words in it than the construction with the adverb, and one more stressed item. Additionally, since the NP can take modifiers, the emphasis is heightened by having the contrastive qualities of ordinariness and extraordinariness expressed within the same NP: *this ordinary man who made himself extraordinary*.

Predicative uses of indefinite *this* seem always to have this emphatic quality, and this is one point on which indefinite *this* and the indefinite article diverge. Although *a(n) N* in its predicative function can be used emphatically, it need not be. Herein may lie a clue as to what the apparent "vividness" of indefinite *this* may be, at least in some instances.

As mentioned above, not all ascriptive constructions contain the copula *be*; other verbs besides *be* take predicative complements. One such verb is *have*, as in *He has a big nose*, which ascribes the attribute of being big-nosed to the referent of the subject NP. In the following example, *puts on* functions very much like *have* in this respect:

[4.5]

N: He was tryin to make his voice, like he was trying to sound more... oh hearty, and... you know it's like when people want to, want to speak deeply they tighten their diaphragm and they speak with gréat résonance-- Bill Davis does that all the time. [...] He tightens his diaphragm and it sounds ridiculous. He he sounds hearty, he has a héarty tone of voice.

K: Ho-ho-ho.

N: Yeah. It's maddening, cuz the guy is so camp, you can't believe it, anyway. (pause) He puts on *this fake hearty voice*.

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #3 p. 19]

Here, the attribute of being fake-hearty-voiced is being ascribed to the referent of the subject NP.

Recall that predicative NPs that occur in the ascriptive construction *X is a(n) N* are not considered referring expressions. But is this also true of predicative indefinite *this* NPs? In particular, is it true of predicative indefinite *this* NPs that occur in constructions other than the ascriptive construction? The following datum may provide an answer:

[4.6]

N: Why is it always thát way, I mean, I get *this hot letter* and it's from someone who's married.=

K: =Right.

N: Just stránge. I got óne letter from someone by the name of Cheryl Lódl, L-o-d-l. She's from Detroit Lakes, she, she doesn't sound too interesting, sh-- [...]

[Frederickson Transcript 1987 #1 pp. 31-32]

The letter in question was previously in focus, then the conversation ranged over several other topics before being brought up again. Although it was mentioned recently enough to still be activated for K, its activation is weak due to the elapsed time and the fact that there were intervening topics. It seems that N is using indefinite *this* in part to steer the conversation back to the letters he received in response to his personals advertisement. This is similar to the introductory use of indefinite *this*, which is often used when the topic of the conversation is being changed. However, it differs from the introductory use in that the referent is not new to the discourse.

Now, let us consider whether *this hot letter* is being used referentially or predicatively. First of all, it does seem that it is being used referentially. There are two distinct entities referred to in the sentence: the speaker (the recipient of the letter) and the letter. Since the letter was not in the focus of attention when the utterance was made, it was essential that the speaker provide some referential information, or resolution would have been impossible. At the same time, it seems that the NP is being used predicatively. Although the speaker has a particular letter in mind, it is the letter's "hot" quality that is at issue. It is this attribute that made the letter a worthy topic in the first place, and if it were not for the hotness, the fact that the letter was from someone who is married would be irrelevant. Thus it seems that an indefinite *this* NP can be used at once referentially and predicatively. Indeed, there is no reason in principle why an indefinite *this* NP should not be used to both ends simultaneously. Recall, however, that although the NP is being used to refer, it is not being used introductorily; that is, the referent is not new in the sense of being completely unknown to the addressee.

The characterization of what makes a particular use of an indefinite *this* NP predicative given here is rather nebulous. It has been shown that the syntactic characterization adopted from *a(n) N* is insufficient to account for all predicative uses of indefinite *this*. Furthermore, it has been shown that predicative indefinite *this* can be used simultaneously to refer. However, I have no datum that shows that indefinite *this* can be used at once predicatively and to refer to an entity that is new to the discourse in the sense of being completely unknown to the addressee. In other words, no datum has been found that demonstrates that a particular token of an indefinite *this* NP is functioning both predicatively and introductorily.

The data collected for this thesis suggests that there are two distinct functions of indefinite *this*: the predicative function and the introductory function. The predicative function corresponds to uses in which the referent is in focus or activated prior to the

referential act. The introductory function corresponds to the referent having no cognitive status for the addressee prior to the utterance, and becoming at most uniquely identifiable or referential in virtue of the referential act. Since the predicative and introductory uses are associated with different cognitive statuses, the Givenness Hierarchy provides a principled account of these two functions: if the referent is in focus or activated, then the use is predicative; if the referent is at most uniquely identifiable or referential, then the use is introductory.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis is concerned with how the Givenness Hierarchy accounts for indefinite uses of the determiner *this*. Indefinite *this* can be distinguished from definite *this* through a substitution diagnostic: if *this* is deletable or replaceable by *a(n)* or *some* without affecting the intended meaning of the statement, then it is indefinite; otherwise it is definite.

Indefinite *this* is typically used to introduce an entity that is unfamiliar to the addressee into the discourse. Unlike the indefinite article *a(n)*, which is also used to introduce new entities, indefinite *this* is necessarily specific, which is to say, the speaker must have a particular individual in mind as the referent in order to use the form appropriately.

Two major points have been made about indefinite *this* and the Givenness Hierarchy in this thesis, the first concerning the application of the theory of scalar implicature to the problem of referential options, and the second concerning non-introductory uses of indefinite *this*.

The first major point arises as a result of attempting to account for an inappropriate use of indefinite *this* using the theory of scalar implicature. The theory of scalar implicature in its traditional semantic formulation does not apply to cognitive status. Although the Givenness Hierarchy forms a scale of some sort, it is not an implicational scale of the sort based on Grice's quantity maxim. This is perhaps not surprising, given the nature of the entailment relation and the enterprise undertaken in the Givenness Hierarchy, viz., referential options. Entailment is concerned with what must necessarily hold,

independent of expression. The problem of referential options, on the other hand, is concerned with varying means of expressing a particular thing. So whereas entailment is independent of expression, the problem of referential options is centrally concerned with expression.

There is nonetheless a similarity between the inferences that an addressee may draw based on the referential form the speaker has chosen to use and the sorts of inferences accounted for by Gricean implicatures, and so an attempt was made to amend the theory of scalar implicature to accommodate cognitive status. When so amended, the theory of scalar implicature predicts that use of the referential form indefinite *this* *N* implicates that no higher status holds. It has been shown that, contrary to this prediction, use of indefinite *this* for a uniquely identifiable referent is acceptable.

This fact, which the theory of scalar implicature fails to explain, and the fact that indefinite *this* is unacceptable when the referent is familiar, can be explained by appeal to conventions concerning the introduction of new entities into the discourse. In particular, an entity that is new in the sense that it has never before been activated for the addressee and is not spatio-temporally manifest at the time of utterance, can appropriately be introduced using indefinite *this*.

The second major point made in this thesis is that indefinite *this* has a little-studied use, the predicative use, that is similar to use of the indefinite article in complement position of the ascriptive construction *X is a(n) N*. However, this syntactic characterization of the predicative function is not broad enough to account for all predicative uses of indefinite *this*, and so an account based on discourse function is provided. As well as explaining the data given, this account suggests a possible reason for the apparent vividness of indefinite *this*, at least in its predicative use.

Ascriptive constructions can sometimes be paraphrased using an adjective in place of the NP *a(n) N*, and the same is true for predicative uses of indefinite *this*. A possible explanation for why a speaker might choose the relatively prolix form *this N* over a more economical version with an adjective is motivated by the observation that predicative uses of indefinite *this* are emphatic. Since the form *this N* is longer and takes modifiers, it provides the speaker with more items to stress; as well, it takes longer to produce, thus keeping it in the addressee's awareness for longer.

In using a predicative NP of the form *a(n) N*, the speaker does not intend to refer and the addressee does not attempt to resolve reference. This is not true of indefinite *this*, however, since it can be used at once predicatively and to refer. However, no data was found that suggests that indefinite *this* can be used predicatively and introductorily at the same time, which suggests that the predicative and introductory functions of indefinite *this* are distinct. Since the predicative function corresponds to the referent being in focus or activated and the introductory function corresponds to the referent being at most uniquely identifiable or referential, the Givenness Hierarchy provides a principled account of the two functions: if the referent is in focus or activated, then the use is predicative, and if the referent is at most uniquely identifiable or referential, then the use is introductory.

Note, however, that there is no reason in principle why indefinite *this* cannot be used at once predicatively and introductorily. Since predicative indefinite *this* can be used to refer to an activated entity, we may well ask ourselves whether it can't also be used to refer to a new entity, specifically one that is completely unknown to the addressee. In fact, it's not hard to construct an example that is both introductory and predicative. For instance, imagine that someone enters the room and exclaims:

[5.1]

I just saw *this humúngous dog* on Sherbrooke Street!

[Constructed Example]

Here, the speaker's purpose in making the exclamation is to communicate and emphasize a particular quality of the referent of the indefinite *this* NP, namely, its size. At the same time, since the addressee is unfamiliar with the referent and the referent is not spatio-temporally manifest at the time of utterance, the NP is being used introductorily.

If a token of indefinite *this* can be both introductory and predicative, then the account given above in terms of the Givenness Hierarchy must be amended as follows: if the referent is in focus or activated, then the use is predicative, and if the referent is at most uniquely identifiable or referential, then the use is introductory, and possibly also predicative.

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