

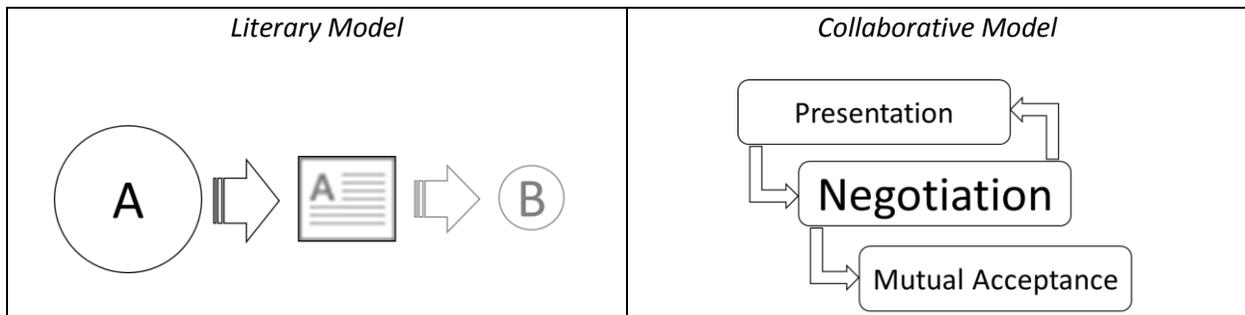
Background

<p>Philosophical tradition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Doing things with words” (cf. Austin, 1975) • Causal theories of reference (Kripke and others) 	<p>Sociological tradition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of conversational behavior (turn-taking etc.) • Conversation Analysis as a descriptive/analytical method
<p>Speaker reference vs semantic reference</p>	

Structure of the paper

1. A priori reasons for a collaborative model (pp. 1-10)
2. Experimental evidence (pp. 10-16)
3. Refinement of model in light of empirical evidence (pp. 16-33)
4. [Speaking generally]

The ‘literary model’ vs the ‘conversational model’



Main idealization of the *literary model*:

The course of the referring process is controlled by the speaker alone. (4 on p. 3)

The *collaborative model*: Interlocutors are **jointly responsible** for **negotiating** the adequacy of a referring expression until they achieve **mutual acceptance**. Mutually accepted referring expressions are placed in common ground and can be recycled in subsequent referential acts.

The notion of ‘common ground’ is typically attributed to Robert Stalnaker, and is captured by Clark’s (1992, p. 17) recursive definition of mutual belief:

A and B mutually believe P iff (Q) they believe P and Q.

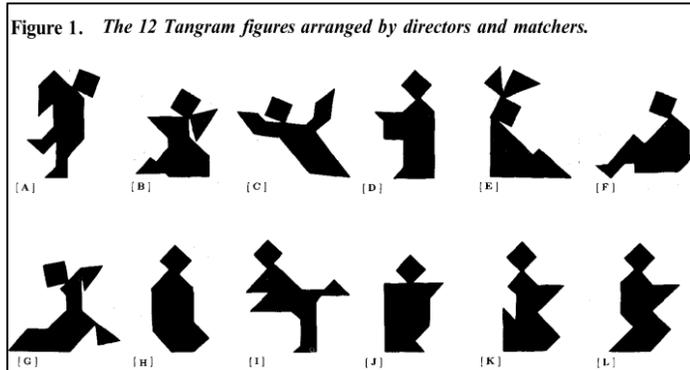
A reference is successful iff *A* and *B* mutually believe that *A* referred to the intended referent by using a particular referring expression.

8 explananda beyond the literary model: (1) Self-corrected NPs; (2) Expanded NPs; (3) Episodic NPs; (4) Other-corrected NPs; (5) Trial NPs; (6) Installment NPs; (7) Dummy NPs; (8) Proxy NPs.

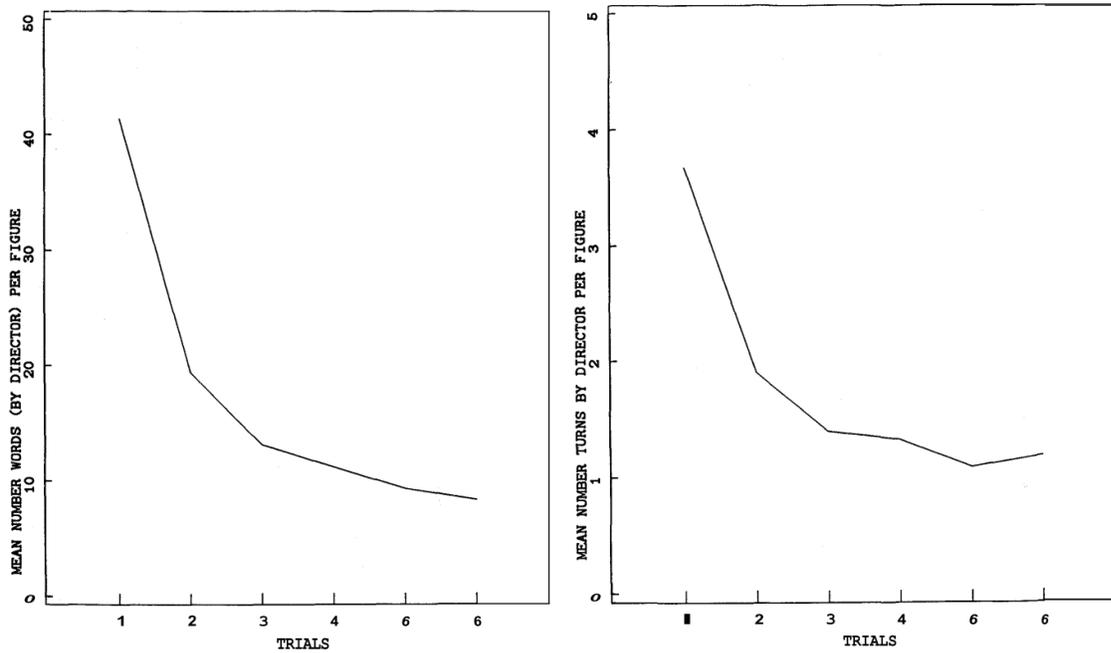
Discussion prompt 1: “[O]nce we look at actual conversations, we find that the four idealizations of the literary model are very wide of the mark.” – Every model is based on idealizations; to what extent do the idealizations of the literary model preclude explanations of phenomena that we care about?

Experiment

- 2 interlocutors – “director” and “matcher” – without eye contact
- Each had access to 12 cards showing the tangram figures on the right
- The director described the order of his cards, which the matcher replicated with her cards
- The declared goal was speed and accuracy
- There were 6 trials, each using a randomized sequence of the same cards



Results & Interpretation:



Main results:

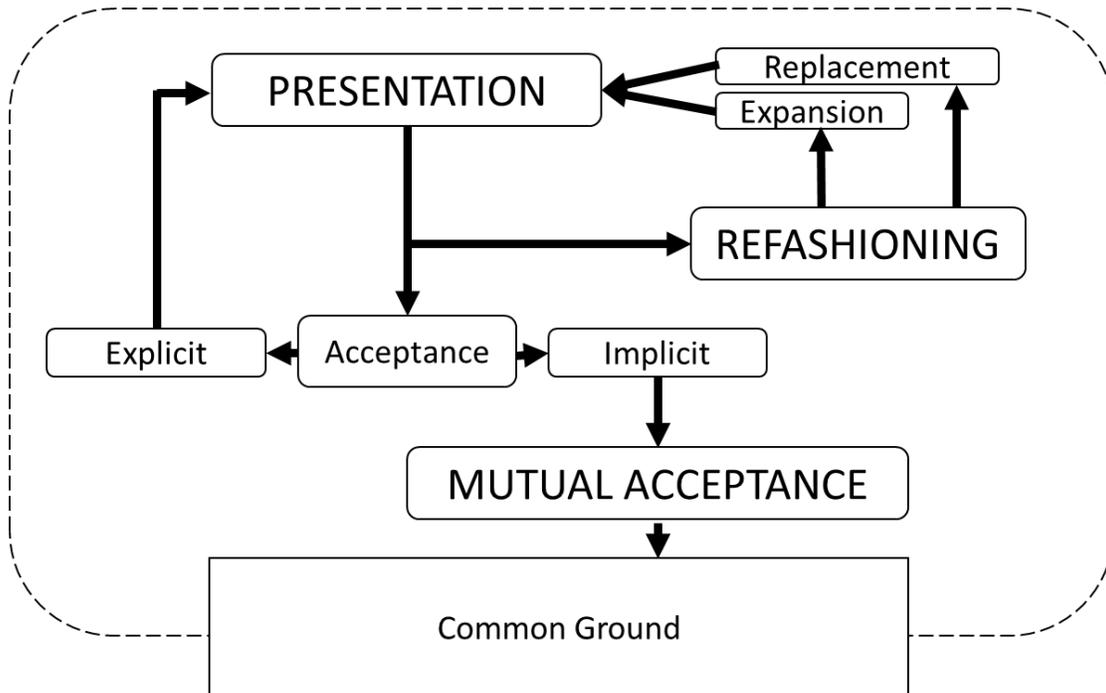
- Decline in number of words and turns used to describe figures
- Qualitative evidence for taxonomy of NPs

Interpretation:

- Interlocutors become increasingly efficient, converging towards “optimal descriptions”
- Interlocutors use several types NPs strategically
- Interlocutors take joint responsibility for the success of referring expressions

Discussion prompt 2: “By information theory, in contrast, going from one position to the next should reduce the array size **as much on trial 6 as on trial 1**, hence the slopes should remain the same.” (p. 16)
 – How can role of common ground be captured formally to account for the finding that later the position of a referent figure mattered less on later trials?

The “acceptance cycle”: the refined collaborative model of reference



Discussion prompt 3: The authors emphasize that mutually accepted references become part of the interlocutors’ common ground. Do previous processing stages (e.g. initial presentations) also alter common ground? Where exactly does mutually known information affect the acceptance cycle?

Discussion prompt 4: “The collaborative model [...] must do more than list the devices used – trial noun phrases, interruptions, continuers, and the like. It must spell out how the process of mutual acceptance gets initiated, carried through, and completed.” Despite the author’s declared goal, the model seems primarily descriptive. Does it have predictive or explanatory value?

Discussion prompt 5: Does the process of achieving mutual acceptance, modeled here for two interlocutors, extend to communities of multiple language users.

References

Clark, H. H. (1992). *Arenas of language use*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 Austin, J. L. (1975). *How to do things with words* (Vol. 1955). Oxford university press.