

## Givenness and Locality

**The Problem.** Contextually given material is often deaccented. Recent proposals (Reinhart (1995, et seq.), Williams (1997), Schwarzschild (1999), Büring (to appear), Sauerland (2005)) can account for deaccenting in examples like (2). A problem that has gone unnoticed is that they fail to account for the lack of deaccenting in examples like (3). This paper proposes a notion of *relative givenness* that solves this problem and makes a number of new predictions.

**The Solution.** A commonality of earlier proposals is that for the deaccenting in (2, 3), it is sufficient for the noun to be given (or the noun with any adjective in the case of Schwarzschild). I propose a stronger requirement: In order to be deaccented, a constituent has to be *given relative to its sister*. Marking a constituent B as given by deaccentuation introduces the presupposition that there is alternative A' to its sister A such that the constituent [ A' B ] is given ('given' as in Williams (1980); Schwarzschild (1999)). Givenness-marking is obligatory when possible due to the principle 'maximize presupposition' (Heim (1991), cf. Sauerland (2005) for a similar point). This notion of *relative givenness* is defined based on alternative semantics (Rooth, 1992).

### (1) Relative Givenness

If A and B are sisters, then marking B as given triggers the following presupposition:  
 $\exists A' \in \text{Alt}(A)$  such that [ A' B ] is given.

In (3), there is no alternative for 'red' (e.g. 'blue') such that [blue convertible] is given. 'High-end' does not qualify as an alternative to 'red', as is also evidenced by the fact that sentence (4) does not exclude that Mary might like high-end convertibles. Alternative sets form partitions or scales that are either natural or provided by the context. 'New' and 'old' are standardly alternatives, but 'high-end' and 'red' are not (although given the appropriate context they can be). *Relative Givenness* makes explicit the notion of *salience* discussed in Schwarzschild (1999) and makes additional predictions:

**1. All Given Contexts.** There are two types of all-given contexts. The context in (5) does not license givenness marking since it does not provide an alternative subject; (6) does, and consequently the VP is deaccented. Earlier proposals fail to distinguish these two types of all-given cases.

**2. Locality and Movement.** In coordinate structures, givenness is evaluated very locally relative to sister nodes, just as predicted in (1). Deaccenting a proper name relative to the coordinator is only felicitous when the presupposition of relative givenness is satisfied as in (7); the same holds true for deaccenting the entire second conjunct including the coordinator (8). But merely making the referent given does not license deaccentuation (9). This is different when marking a direct object given. Here, it is sufficient that the referent is given, not alternative to the predicate has to be in the salient in the context. The explanation for the contrast with coordinate structures is that the direct object moves (11). The presupposition of givenness is then evaluated relative to the new sister, the property  $\lambda x.[\text{he arrested } x]$ . It is thus sufficient if there is any other proposition including the referent in the context (12). This movement is impossible out of coordinate structures, and obeys the same constraints as right-node raising (13). (cf. a related proposal in Steedman (2000)). 'Relative Givenness' thus rationalizes why there is givenness-movement of pronouns and other given DPs (object shift)—cross-linguistically a widely attested phenomenon: *it facilitates givenness marking*.

**3. 'Unstressed' Items.** Bolinger (1972) argues that accents fall on 'newsworthy' constituents, and claims 'something' is generally not accented because it is not newsworthy (14). But what is more newsworthy about 'some food' compared to 'something' in (15)? The present proposal explains the difference in accent placement. The direct object can move, and the presuppositions that are derived then are in (16). Presupposition (16a) is trivially satisfied, so 'something' can always be marked as given; presupposition (16b) is only satisfied when there was talk about food, which is only the case in the appropriate context. The fact that 'something' is an 'unstressed' item is explained by the same mechanism that explains deaccenting more generally. A further prediction is then that in languages that lack givenness deaccentuation (e.g. Spanish, Italian), the equivalent of 'something' should not be deaccented. This prediction is also borne out by the facts (cf. Ladd (1996)).

**Conclusion.** *Relative Givenness* solves some old and new puzzles in givenness marking, and explains locality effects and their interaction with movement constraints.

[ For presentational reasons I only mark the LAST accent with capitalization here. ]

- (2) Mary's old convertible is no longer available. What is John going to do?
  - a. He'll [ [ rent [ her NEW convertible. ] ]
  - b. # He'll [ [ rent [ her new CONVERTIBLE. ] ]
- (3) Mary's uncle, who produces high-end convertibles, is coming to her wedding. I wonder what he brought as a present.
  - a. # He brought [a RED convertible].
  - b. He brought [a red CONVERTIBLE ]
- (4) Mary only likes RED convertibles.
- (5) Last week the newspaper wrongly reported that after the game all that happened was that the coach praised John. I wonder what happened after this week's game.
  - a. [ The coach [ praised JOHN ] ].
  - b. # [ The COACH [ praised John ] ].
- (6) Last week the newspaper wrongly reported that after the game all that happened was that the coach or the manager—I forget which—praised John. I wonder what happened after this week's game. [cf. Sauerland (2005) for a related example, which is a problem for the theory presented therein].
  - a. # [ The coach [ praised JOHN ] ].
  - b. [ The COACH [ praised John ] ].
- (7) Did they arrest only Mary?  
No, they arrested JOHN AND Mary. (Alternative: 'only'; Given Constituent: 'only Mary')
- (8) Did they arrest Bill and Mary?  
No, they arrested JOHN and Mary. (Alternative: Bill; Given Constituent: 'Bill and Mary')
- (9) Do you think Mary had anything to do with the burglary?
  - a. Yes. [ They [ arrested John and MARY. ] ]
  - b. ?? Yes. [ They [ arrested John AND Mary. ] ]
  - c. # Yes. [ They arrested JOHN and Mary. ]
- (10) After the Sheriff found Mary, what happened next?
  - a. He ARRESTED Mary.
  - b. # He arrested MARY.
- (11) [ [ [ he arrested x ]  $\lambda x$ . ] Mary ]
- (12) Presupposition: There is alternative property p such that p(Mary) is given.
- (13)
  - a. The Sheriff arrested—, but the Judge acquitted— Mary.
  - b. \* They arrested John and— but convicted Bill and— Mary.
- (14)
  - a. Helen had WRITTEN something.
  - b. Helen had written a BOOK.
- (15) Ad Neeleman (p.c.):
  - a. She ate some FOOD.
  - b. She ATE something
- (16)
  - a. There is an alternative proposition in the context about something.
  - b. There is an alternative proposition in the context about some food.