

PLIN 7306
Psycholinguistics

Term 1, 2006-07

Lecture 10: Context & Reference
Assignment II

The Complexities of a Pragmatic Reasoning

Types of information potentially admitted in assigning reference.

- Intrinsic properties of the target referent
- Properties of other referents in the discourse context
- The reliability of a speaker
- The intentions of a speaker
- Shared background assumptions
- Expectations of goals of a communicative situation
- Expectations about alternative forms
- And so on ...

- Flexible but potentially slow.
- Is it really possible we monitor so much?

When is Information About the
Speaker Integrated?

- The radical pragmatic view suggests that we are always monitoring language use in terms of the actions of the speaker. Thus, early on-line processing should be sensitive to speakers 'abilities and preferences'
- Neo-Gricean and more structured views of the role of context suggest only common pragmatic inferences are integrated early - full evaluation of utterance as act of the speaker comes later

Effects of Speaker False Belief on
Language processing

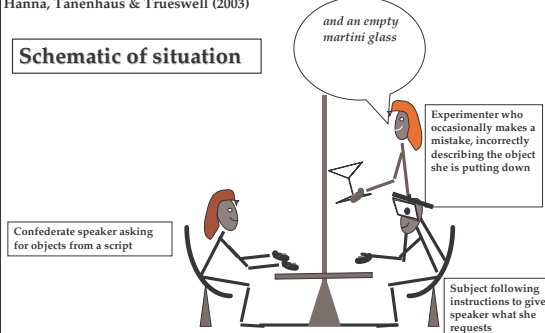
Hanna, Tanenhaus & Trueswell (2003)

- HT&T replicated Sedivy et al's study on the effect of contrastive modification using a 'common ground' set up
- Then they manipulated whether what is common ground is congruous with what subject knows to be the case

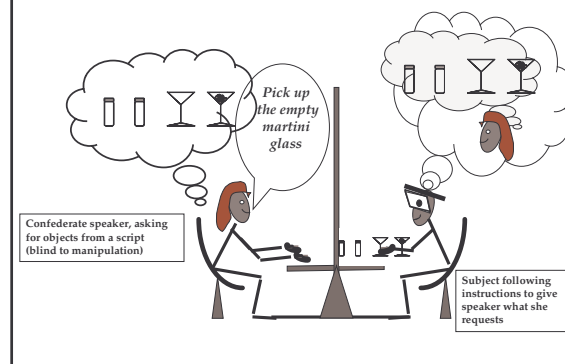
Scalar adjectives and point of disambiguation

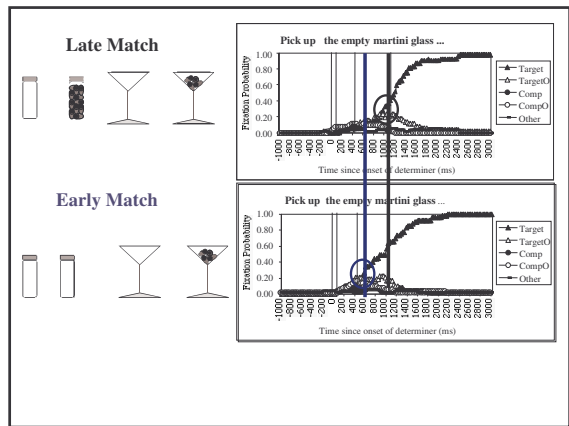
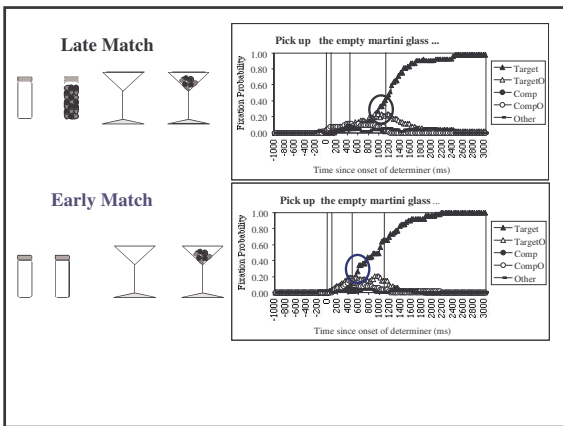
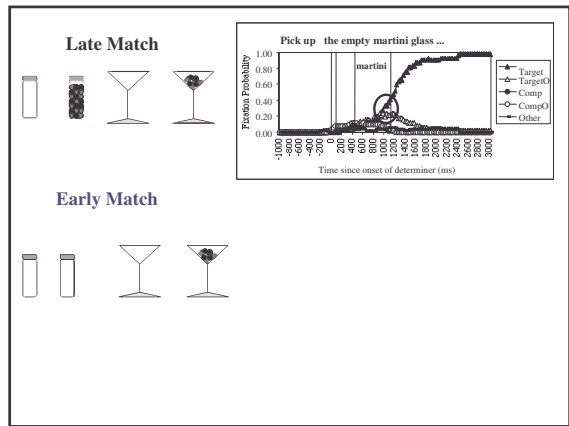
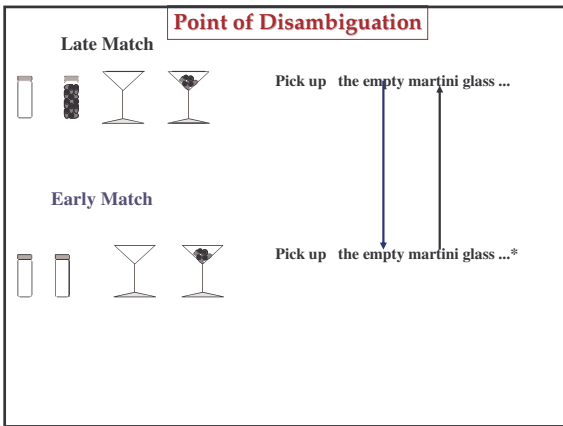
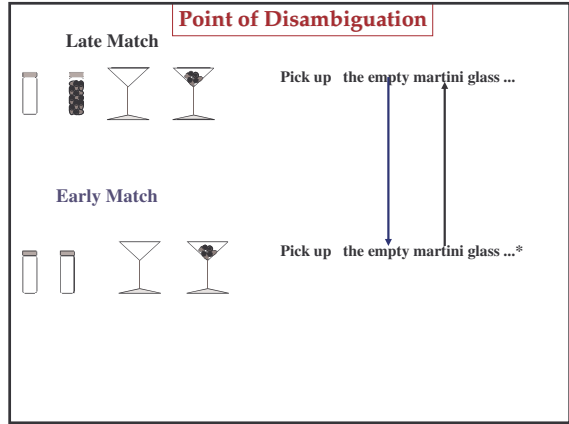
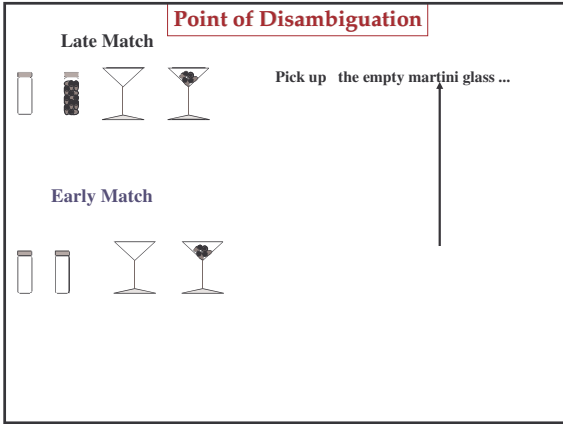
Hanna, Tanenhaus & Trueswell (2003)

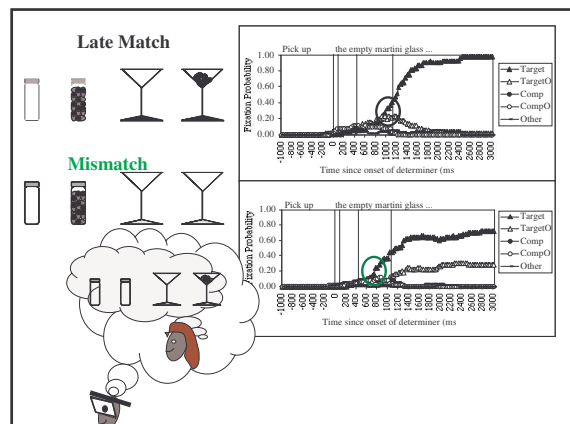
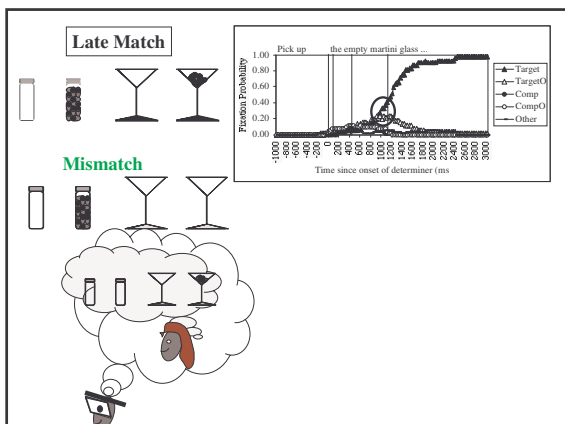
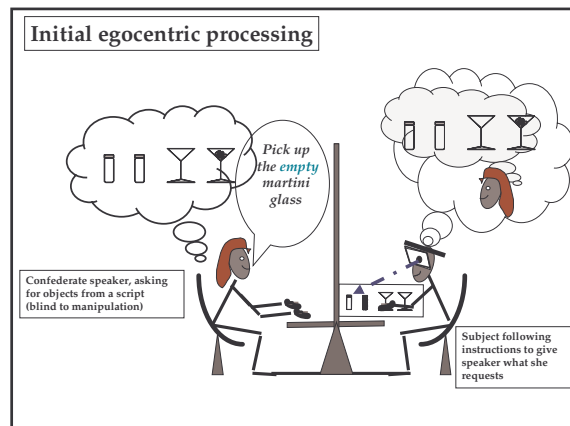
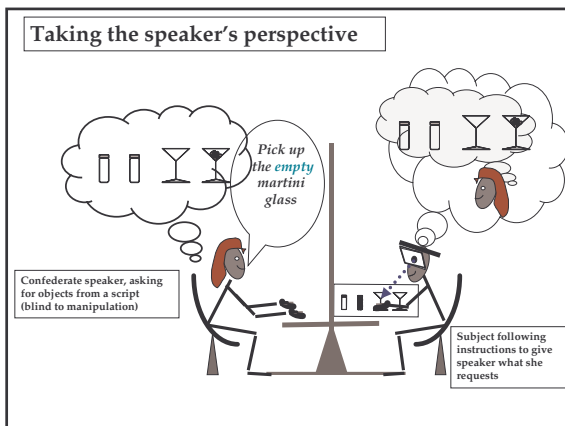
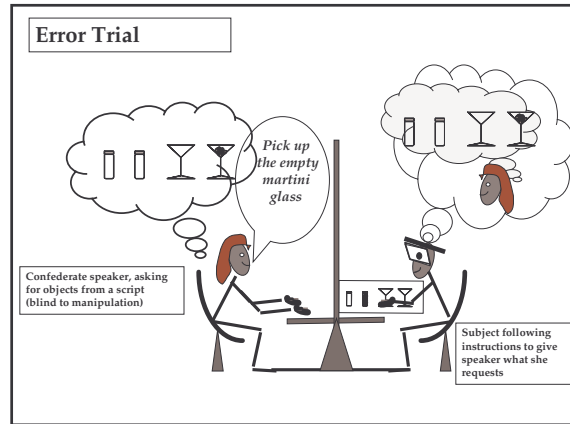
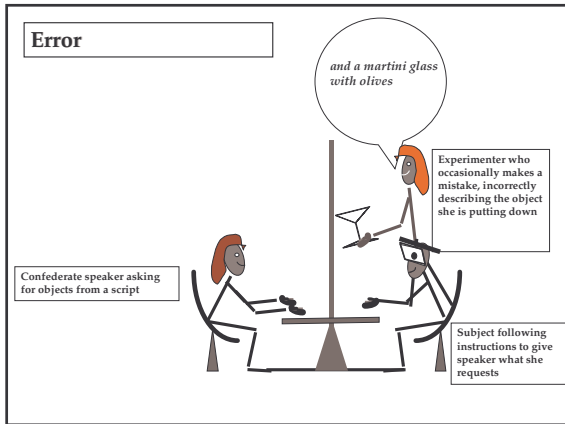
Schematic of situation

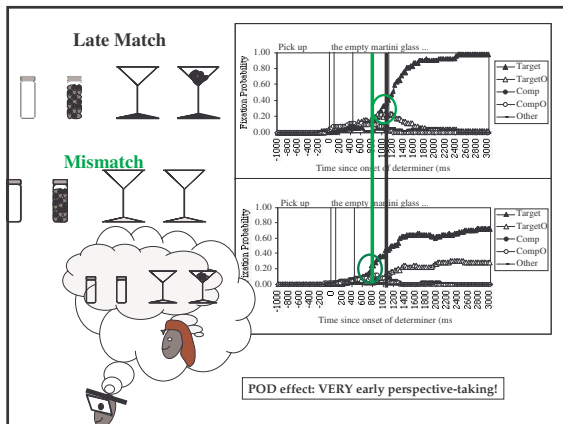


Typical trial









Hanna et al 2003: Conclusions

- Interlocutors keep track of the common ground and can modify their behaviour by taking their interlocutors' perspective from the very first stages of sentence comprehension.
- Consistent with RT view where pragmatic principle is conditionalised on speaker's *abilities* and preferences

Conclusions and Future Directions

- The prerequisites for the use of fully pragmatic reasoning in early sentence processing (speaker abilities and preferences) are psychologically plausible
 - Why should interlocutors engage in such elaborate processes?
 - Relevance Theory: Because the point of utterance processing is to derive communicative benefits from others

Homework

- How might stereotypes about utterance situations from long-term memory be used to pragmatic processing become more efficient?
- Is there any difference between a Neo-Gricean default rule based on linguistic forms and RT reasoning based on stereotypes?
- Do you think hearers represent the 'speaker' for written texts?

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