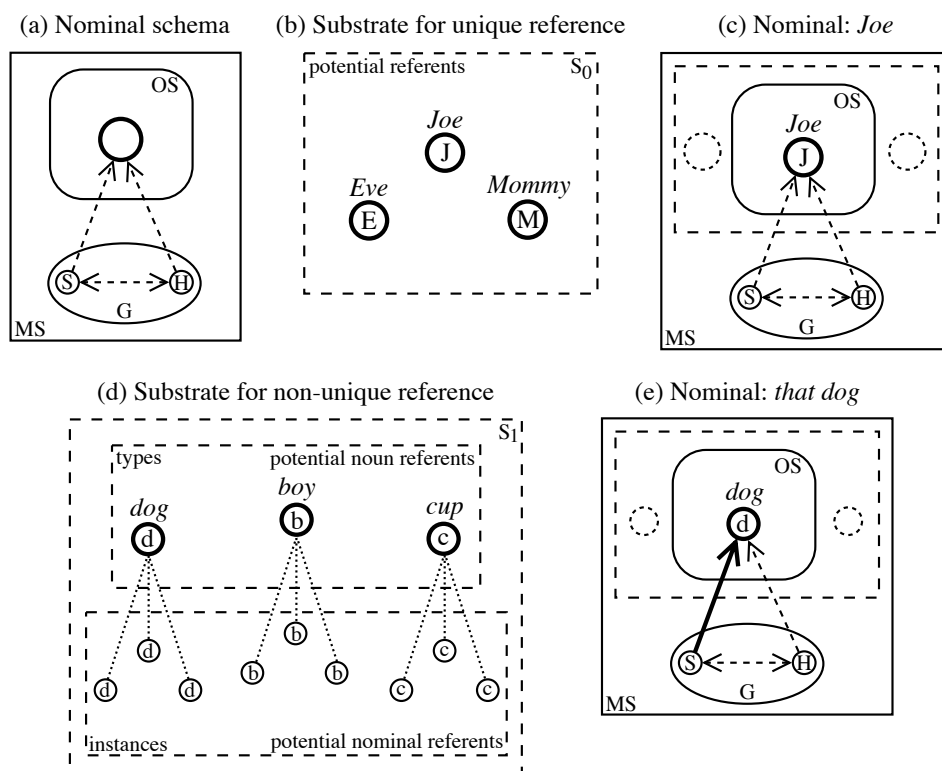


## Lecture 7 Nominals

A. Referential Strategies B. Functional Organization C. Identification D. Definite Grounding

### A. Referential Strategies

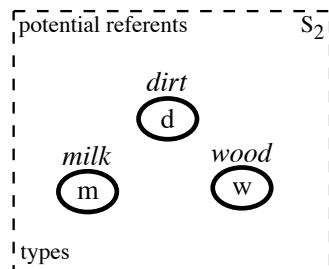
- (1)(a) An expression's **profile** is the entity it refers to. Profiling is *reference within a conception* —the focusing of attention on some facet of the content invoked.
  - (b) A **noun** profiles a *thing*; a **verb** profiles a *process*. These are fundamental and universal categories. Lexical nouns and verbs are the *baseline* for their **referential function**.
  - (c) **Nominals** and **clauses**—also fundamental and universal—are *grammatical elaborations* of this baseline, allowing an unlimited number of new expressions of any size.
  - (d) Unlike a lexical noun or verb (with a limited conceptual scope), a nominal or a clause selects its profile (referent) from the open-ended set of entities in our mental universe.
- (2)(a) The **general function** of a nominal (its schematic semantic characterization) is to direct attention to a particular thing selected from all those we are capable of conceiving.
  - (b) The **intended result** of using a nominal is that its referent—the particular thing it profiles—is established momentarily as the focus of attention for *both interlocutors*.
  - (c) The function is **interactive** and **intersubjective**, aimed at *coordinating* mental reference. Achieving this result represents one instance of the control cycle: **joint mental capture**.
  - (d) There are alternate **referential strategies**, involving different kinds of nouns and nominal structures. Requiring different **mental capacities**, these are organized in **strata**.
- (3)



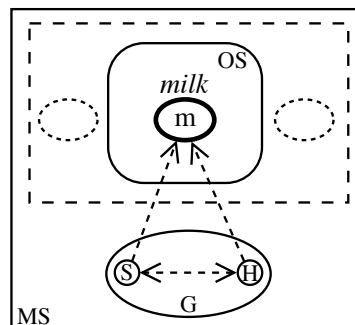
- (4)(a) The baseline strategy, at  $S_0$ , is **unique reference** via **proper names**.  
 (b) It relies on the fundamental *capacity* to distinguish and recognize individuals.  
 (c) The *conceptual substrate* is a set of known individuals, each with a different name. They constitute the *field*: an array of *potential* referents.  
 (d) Using the name is sufficient to direct attention to the intended referent (joint mental capture). A proper name can thus stand alone as a nominal with referential function.
- (5)(a) The strategy at  $S_1$  is **non-unique reference** via **count nouns** and **grounding**.  
 (b) It reflects the *capacity* for abstracting a **type** comprising what is common to its **instances**.  
 (c) The *substrate* includes both symbolized object types and the instances they subsume:  
 (i) The types constitute the *field* for the noun: the range of potential **noun referents**.  
 (ii) Their instances constitute the nominal field: the range of potential **nominal referents**.  
 (d) Non-unique reference has **type specification** and **grounding** as *component subfunctions*.  
 (e) The baseline grounding strategy is **pointing**. Demonstratives often incorporate a physical pointing gesture: *I like that [↗]dog*. Their meanings consist in *abstract pointing*.
- (6)(a) **Mass nouns** refer to **substances**. They can employ the strategy of either *unique* or *non-unique reference*, making them analogous to either proper names or count nouns.  
 (b) When it names a substance as an **undifferentiated whole**, so that its referent is **maximally inclusive**, a mass noun stands alone as a nominal: *Eve dislikes milk*; *Milk is good for you*.  
 (c) A substance occurs in space but it is characterized by **quality**. When viewed in qualitative terms (abstracting away from spatial manifestation), a mass noun referent is *unique*.  
 (d) The **totality** of the substance (e.g. all milk) is called its **maximal extension** (ME). This is an imagined entity (mentally constructed)—not something actually found in the world.

(7)

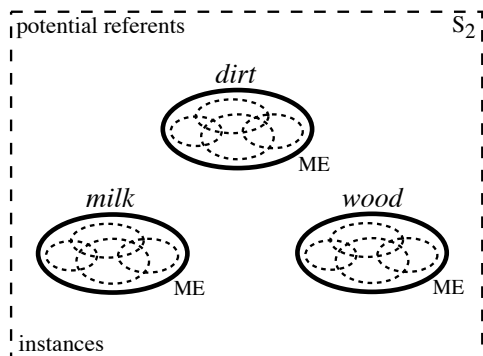
(a) Substrate for unique mass reference



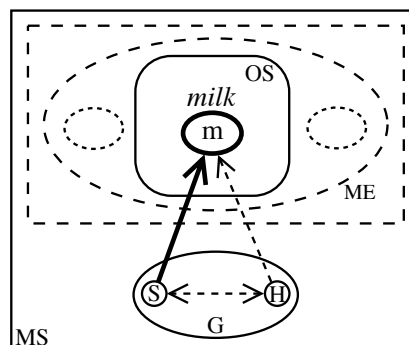
(b) Nominal: *milk*



(c) Substrate for non-unique mass reference

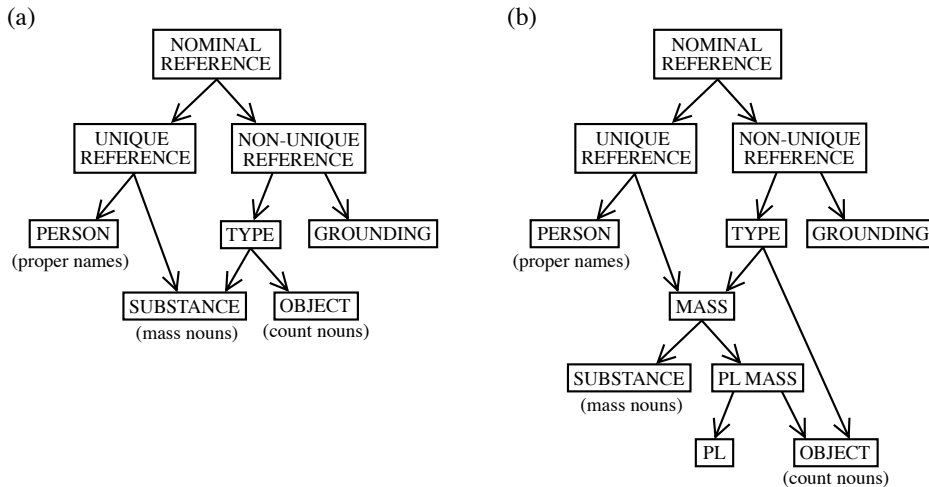


(d) Nominal: *this milk*



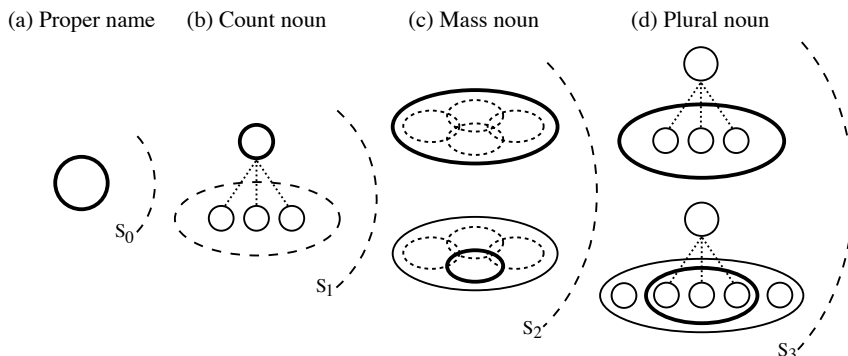
- (8)(a) Mass nouns are analogous to count nouns when they designate **limited quantities** of a substance. In this case they occur with grounding elements: *this milk*; *my milk*.
- (b) The qualitative characterization is then a **type specification**, with any portion of the substance constituting an **instance** of the type. Hence the strategy of *non-unique reference*.
- (c) Instances arise through **delimitation** of the maximal extension, some portion being singled out for individual attention. Grounding elements are a basic means of doing this.
- (d) Additional resources at this stratum ( $S_2$ ) are the capacity to conceptualize a nominal referent in purely qualitative terms, to delimit a substance which lacks inherent bounding, and to conceive of its maximal extension (a mental construction).

(9)



- (10)(a) **Plural nouns** represent a higher stratum,  $S_3$ , because they **blend** the properties of objects and substances, conceiving of multiple objects as a substance-like mass.
- (b) The result is a **higher-order type**: DOG is a type of object, DOGS is a type of mass.
- (c) Although many substances have discernible **particles** (*dirt, sand, grass, gravel, spaghetti*), mass nouns construe them as being homogeneous and effectively continuous.
- (d) The “particles” are more salient with plurals because they derive from count nouns which name them individually: *a little gravel* [small volume] vs. *a few pebbles* [small number].
- (e) Accordingly, plurals behave grammatically like other mass nouns in some respects (*a lot of {milk / dogs}*), but differently in others (*this milk* vs. *these dogs*).
- (f) Like other mass nouns, plurals refer to either the maximal extension (like a proper name) or a delimited portion (instance of a type): *She likes dogs* vs. *Those dogs look dangerous*.

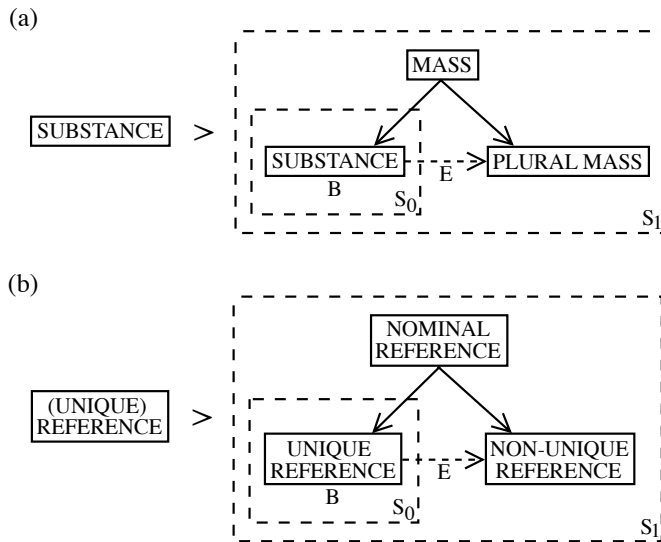
(11)



- (12)(a) With unique reference, a noun itself fulfills the function of nominal reference. With non-unique reference, additional specifications are needed: either *further description* or *separate grounding*. These *elaborate* a **head noun** to form a nominal.
- (b) Descriptive elaboration is effected by **modifiers** and **complex head nouns**.
- (c) Basic strategies for grounding are **deixis** (starting from the baseline of physical pointing) and **quantification** (relevant in dealing with masses).
- (d) Description and grounding overlap. *Possessives* are descriptive but also serve a grounding function. *Quantifiers* have both descriptive and grounding import.

## B. Functional Organization

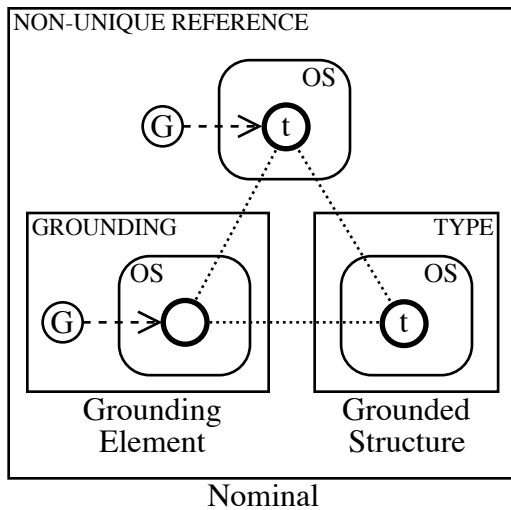
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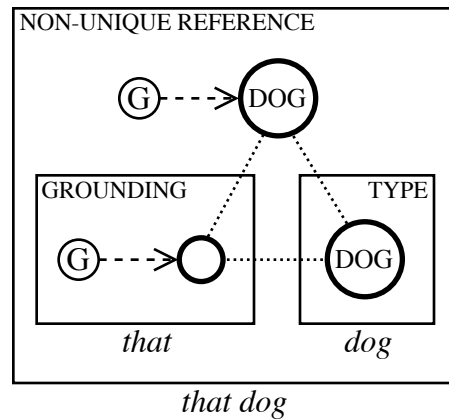
- (14)(a) In *global* terms, person names are the baseline for NOMINAL REFERENCE: they require minimal conceptual resources and directly fulfill the referential function.
- (b) *Locally*, they are the baseline for UNIQUE REFERENCE. Also instantiating this subfunction are labels for substances (*wine*), places (*Beijing*), colors (*blue*), and numbers (*seven*).
- (c) These differ in concreteness (*Joe* > *blue* > *seven* > *justice*), symbolic complexity (*Joe* vs. *Barack Obama*; *seven* vs. *thirty seven*), and specificity (*meat* > *pork* > *ham*).
- (d) Still, they all incorporate the supposition that they name a **specific unique thing** in our mental universe: *unique* in that only one thing bears the label (which is thus sufficient to evoke it); and *specific* in having conceptual content distinguishing it from others.
- (15) Uniqueness represents an idealization that may or may not conform to reality. When it does not, the noun is construed as describing a type with multiple instances:
- (a) Multiple people in the relevant social group happen to have the same name:  
*There were four Davids on the soccer team I coached.*
- (b) A substance term is used for a particular (non-unique) variety:  
*That wine is very cheap but suitable for teenage parties.*
- (c) A color term is used for a particular shade of the basic color:  
*This blue would be perfect for our bedroom.*
- (d) Multiple visual instantiations of the symbol for a number:  
*All the sevens in this book are colored red.*

(16)

(a)

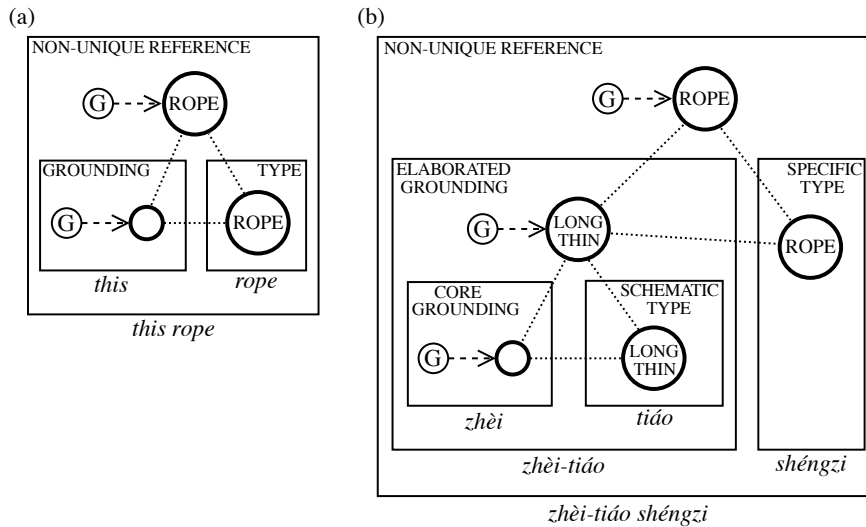


(b)



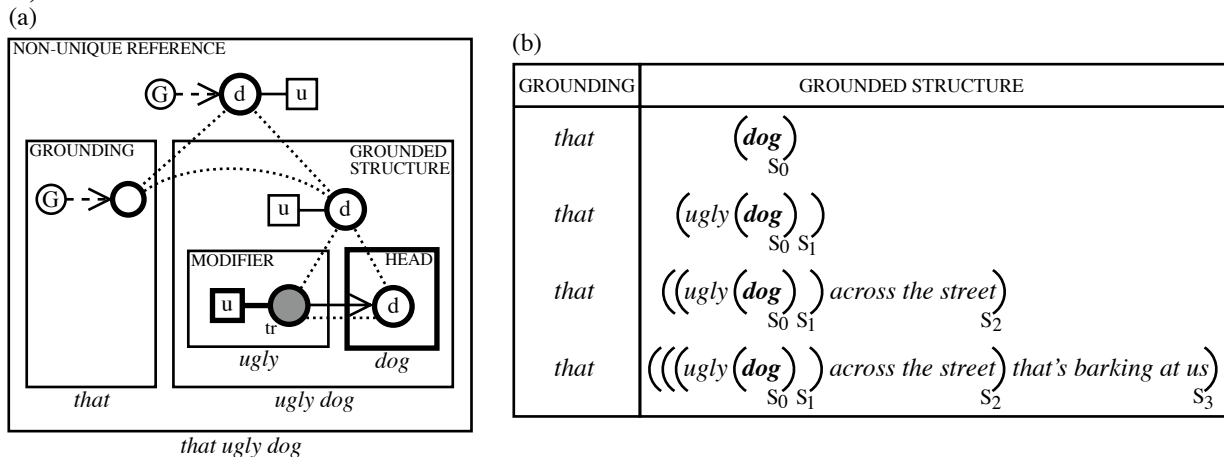
- (17)(a) Expressions like *that dog* represent the **baseline** for the pattern GROUNDING ELEMENT + GROUNDED STRUCTURE. However, each component (demonstrative and count noun) is part of a vast system whose exponents vary in their nature and degree of complexity.
- (b) For **grounding**, alternatives include articles (*the dog, a cup, sm milk*), various sorts of quantifiers (*all wine, many dogs, seven cups*), and possessives (*Helen's cat*).
- (c) Possessives and numbers provide an unlimited range of complex options: *my wife's cousin's mother's neighbor's cat*; *With 9 lives each, 832 cats have 7488 lives in total*.
- (d) We also find a variety of quantifying constructions (*a pint of milk, all those cats, many of his friends*), and certain core quantifiers are internally complex (*a few, a little, a lot of*).
- (18)(a) **Core grounding elements** have only minimal descriptive content, e.g. OBJECT (*a*), MASS (*sm*), PLURAL MASS (*few*), SUBSTANCE (*little*), or just THING (*the*).
- (b) Even with a highly schematic type description, they can function as nominals (without a separate grounded structure) to the extent that they single out a particular instance.
- (c) For demonstratives, even a schematic type (like PLURAL MASS) is enough for pointing to single out the intended referent: *I want those* [☛].
- (d) A number of other grounding elements can stand alone as nominals when a type has already been established in the prior discourse: *Do you like cats? {Most / Some} are lazy. {Several / Three / A few} are sleeping on the porch. Joe's are sleeping on the bed*.
- (19)(a) **Classifiers** (*yi-běn shū; zhèi-tiáo shéngzi*) are part of an **elaborated grounding system**.
- (b) Across languages, they occur with grounding elements, such as demonstratives, numbers, and possessives. They are more tightly bound to these elements than to the lexical noun.
- (c) These elaborated grounding elements can often be used anaphorically [cf. (18)(d)].
- (d) While elaborated grounding assumes more of the descriptive burden, the specified types are still quite schematic, requiring further specification by the grounded structure.

(20)



- (21)(a) In a baseline nominal (e.g. *that dog*), the noun functions as both the **grounded structure** —the one that grounding applies to—and the **head noun** (or **lexical head**).
- (b) The head is the *main element* in the sense of providing most of the *descriptive content* —conceptually it is the **substantive** element (the baseline for describing the referent in OS).
- (c) In regard to constructions, the term *head* also indicates the component structure whose profile is profiled as well by the composite structure—the **profile determinant**.
- (d) In a grounding construction, both elements are heads since their profiles correspond.

(22)



- (23)(a) The term **lexical head** is inappropriate given the CG definition of **lexicon** as the set of *fixed expressions* in a language (lexical **units**).
- (b) Instead of a unit, the head noun can be a new expression: *that ugly **floop** across the street*.
- (c) Instead of a simple noun, it can be a complex expression of any size: *spaghetti > spaghetti factory > spaghetti factory site > spaghetti factory site selection > spaghetti factory site selection committee > spaghetti factory site selection committee chair*.
- (d) An entire complex structure of this sort can function as head noun: *that ugly **spaghetti factory site selection committee chair** from Chicago that we just elected*.

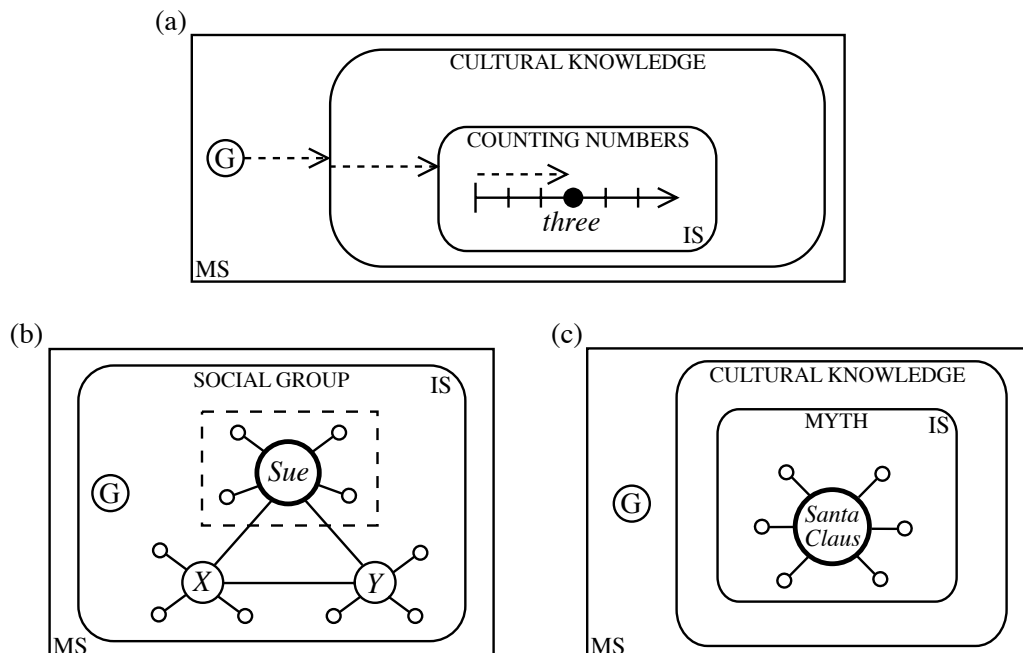
- (24)(a) In English, the head noun has two dimensions of elaboration: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*.
- (b) **Extrinsic elaboration** is done by modifiers, so the profile is the same at each stratum. Modifiers *supplement* the head noun's descriptive content, but the referent of the full expression is still an instance of the basic type it specifies.
- (c) **Intrinsic elaboration** pertains to the head noun's *internal structure*: it **creates** the basic type. It does so through *compounding* and *morphological derivation* (rather than modifiers). Each step along the elaborative path results in a **change of profile**.
- (d) The profile established at the **highest stratum** through *intrinsic* elaboration functions as the **baseline** for describing the nominal referent through *extrinsic* elaboration.
- (25)(a) A compound exhibits B/E layering. The first element is a **reference point**: a baseline for interpreting the second element, which imposes its profile on the composite whole.
- (b) *spaghetti* > (*spaghetti*) **factory** > ((*spaghetti*) *factory*) **site** > (((*spaghetti*) *factory*) *site*) **selection** > ((((*spaghetti*) *factory*) *site*) *selection*) **committee** > ((((((*spaghetti*) *factory*) *site*) *selection*) *committee*) **chair**
- (c) Morphological derivation is also a case of B/E layering. The stem is the baseline: the substantive point of departure for deriving another category by imposing another profile.
- (d) *teach* [V] > (*teach*)**er** [N]      *forget* [V] > (*forget*)**ful** [ADJ] > ((*forget*)**ful**)**ness** [N]
- (e) Pluralization is a special case of morphological derivation: *dog* [COUNT N] > (*dog*)**s** [PLURAL MASS NOUN]. *Those dogs* profiles an instance of *dogs* (not instances of *dog*).

## C. Identification

- (26)(a) A *nominal* serves a **referential function**: it allows the interlocutors to focus their attention on a *particular thing* out of all those we are capable of conceiving.
- (b) That thing is the nominal's **profile** and also its **referent**:
- (i) The term *profile* indicates its status as the momentary focus of attention (the target of *joint attentional capture*).
- (ii) The term *referent* indicates that it has some place in our mental universe—something external to the nominal, which *refers* to it (achieving *coordinated mental reference*).
- (c) The referential function is **intersubjective**: the speaker and hearer direct their attention to the *same referent* and *realize* (via mental simulation) that it is the same for both of them.
- (d) For joint attentional capture, the interlocutors must apprehend some *relationship* connecting them with the referent; this constitutes **grounding** (in a broad sense).
- (27)(a) As defined in CG, every nominal has a referent: a particular thing in our mental universe.
- (b) With a narrow definition of *referent*, limited to actual real-world entities, many nominals are commonly said to be **non-referential**: (i) *A tiger has stripes*. (ii) *Nobody will ever admit that he is wrong*. (iii) *He is hoping to find a new job*. (iv) *Any woman wants a diamond ring*. (v) *If I had a pet snake, I would try to catch mice to feed it*.
- (c) This narrow definition is inappropriate for linguistic purposes. The real world is only *one* facet of our vast mental universe; we can and do talk about *any* facet of it.
- (d) Even with negation, we conceive of the profiled thing and establish it as a referent in the discourse. It can then be referred to with a pronoun (used for specific, identified things).

- (28)(a) Besides what we call the “real world”, our **mental universe** includes an immense inventory of *mental constructions* (e.g. metaphors, blends, generalizations, projections, hypothetical situations), as well as the imagined worlds of stories, films, myths, etc.
- (b) While we each have our own mental universe, there is enough *overlap* to serve as a “common ground” for communication. It provides a **shared conceptual substrate**.
- (c) This substrate is an immensely complex **structure**, much of which is basically **stable**. It serves as a framework for apprehending and interpreting additional phenomena.
- (29)(a) Nominal reference depends on the substrate. Without it there is no basis for talking about a **particular** thing or saying that the interlocutors direct attention to the **same** thing.
- (b) A referent is **identified**—distinguished from others—by its **place** in the substrate. It is embedded in a vast web of **connections** defining its place and allowing it to be accessed.
- (c) The basis for identification is a **path**—a series of connections—leading from the conceptualizer (the *origin*) to the referent (the *goal* or *target*). Metaphorically, the conceptualizer “follows” this **connecting path** and “reaches” the target.
- (d) In terms of the control cycle, reaching it constitutes **mental capture**. So for linguistic purposes, identification consists in *joint mental capture* by the *interlocutors*.
- (30)(a) All nominals invoke a connecting path (*grounding* in the broad sense), but the details vary greatly, involving different facets of the substrate stable on different time scales.
- (b) **Unique reference** is usually based on facets of the substrate that are stable over a long period of time for all members of the speech community (e.g. cultural models).
- (c) In such cases, it cannot be presumed that the connecting path is followed step by step through processing time—the defining structure is accessed **holistically**, as a unit.
- (d) There is however a **relationship** connecting the referent to the ground. The referent is **identified** in the sense of having an *established identity* (a *known place* in the substrate).

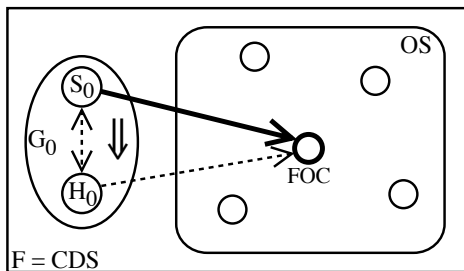
(31)





- (32)(a) With **non-unique reference**, the noun designates a type with multiple instances, all *candidates* to be selected as the nominal referent.
- (b) The intended referent has to be **identified**: distinguished from other candidates by indicating its place in the shared conceptual substrate.
- (c) Basic means of identification are **further description** (elaboration of the grounded structure) and explicit **grounding elements** (*grounding* in the narrow sense).
- (d) Grounding elements specify the referent's **epistemic status** in relation to the ground, i.e. they pertain to the interlocutors' *knowledge* of the referent's identity.
- (33)(a) Unique reference depends on **global** aspects of the substrate: stable and universal in the speech community. By contrast, the baseline for grounding (pointing and demonstratives) is **local**, depending on the **immediate discourse context**.
- (b) Local aspects of the substrate constitute the **current discourse space** (CDS): everything intersubjectively accessible to the interlocutors as the basis for communication at a given moment in the flow of discourse. Its elements have varying degrees of *centrality*.
- (c) For **onstage content**: *current focus of attention* (profile) > *immediate scope* (general locus of attention) > other portions of the *objective scene* (overall situation being talked about).
- (d) For **offstage elements**: the *interlocutors* and their *current interaction* > salient aspects of the *immediate context* > *background assumptions*, interlocutors' *previous interactions*.
- (34)(a) With *unique reference*, the ground is invoked in **generalized** fashion. The referent's identity does not depend on any particular interlocutors or speech event.
- (b) With *non-unique reference*, **baseline grounding** is anchored in the CDS: the ground comprises the *current speech event* and its participants (the *actual speaker and hearer*).
- (c) Moreover, the ground and the CDS are themselves the **basis for identification** of the nominal referent. It is *locally* identified in terms of the speaker-hearer interaction.

- (35) Pointing gesture: [➡]

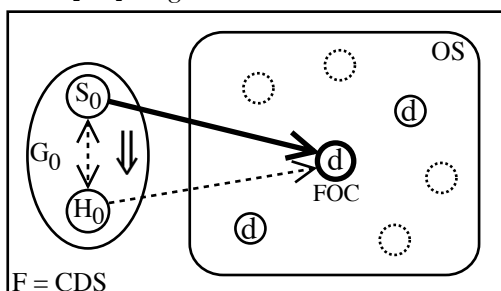


- (36) Being conventional in nature, an **act of pointing** [➡] is a kind of linguistic symbol.
- (a) S<sub>0</sub> and H<sub>0</sub> are the **actors** in this gestural “speech” event. G<sub>0</sub> is the ground.
- (b) The **field** (F) is what is **jointly accessible** to the actors at the current moment. [F = CDS]
- (c) OS is the range of potential referents **currently onstage** (hence identifiable by pointing). Already within the actors' *scope of awareness*, they have *immediate accessibility*.
- (d) FOC is the **focus of attention**. Successful reference consists in *joint attentional capture*. The referent's role as **target** constitutes its **identification** (place in the local substrate).
- (e) The pointing gesture (bold arrow) has **directive force** (double arrow): it induces the observer to direct attention to the proper target.

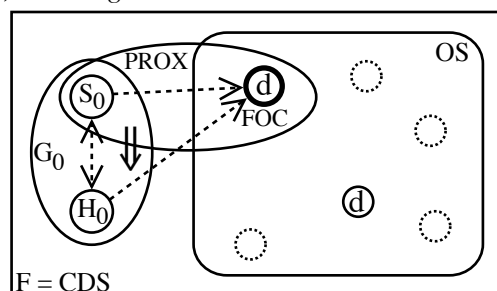
## D. Definite Grounding

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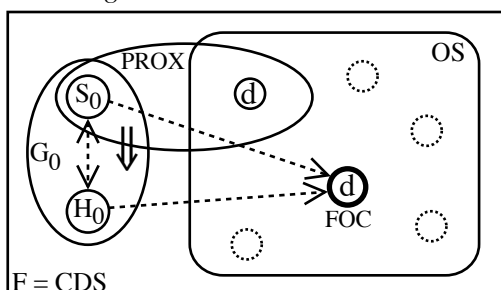
(a) *that* [↗] dog



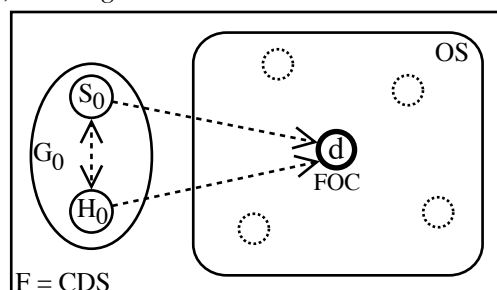
(b) *this* dog



(c) *that* dog



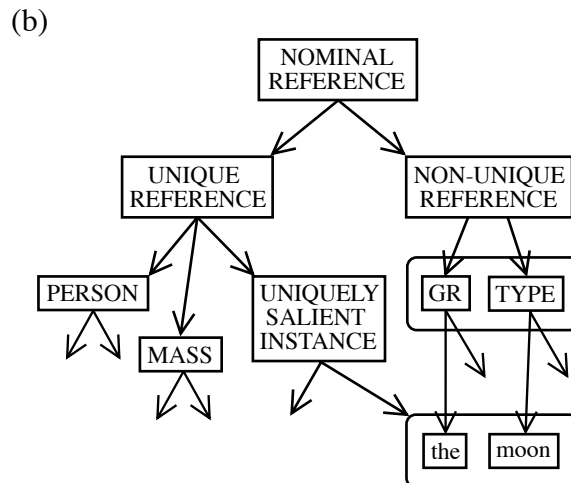
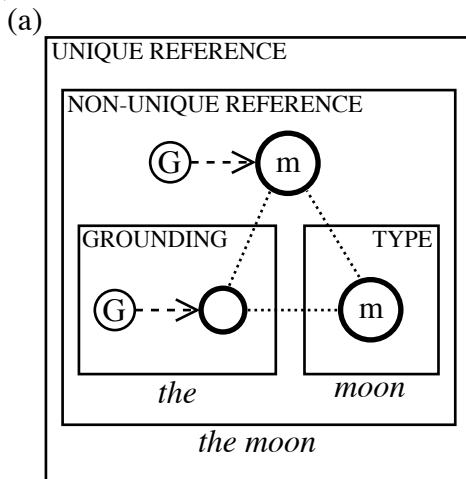
(d) *the* dog



- (38)(a) Pointing is more precise when combined with verbal expression: *that* [↗] dog. The demonstrative symbolizes the referential action. The noun limits the range of candidates to (onstage) instances of its type.
- (b) If there is only one demonstrative, it adds little to the pointing gesture. Languages always have more than one, the minimal system being a PROXIMAL vs. DISTAL contrast. By default, this distinction pertains to distance from the speaker.
- (c) Whether minimal or elaborated, the demonstrative system contributes to identification by **partitioning** the set of candidates, thereby limiting the search to a subset.
- (d) In context, this partitioning may be enough to identify the referent. Pointing is then not needed. Since many referents cannot be pointed to, the absence of pointing is the norm.
- (e) ***This*** dog [the one I'm petting] *is friendly*. ***That*** dog [the one over there] *is vicious*.
- (39)(a) ***This*** chair is comfortable. [proximity to S] Is ***that*** chair OK? [proximity to H]
- (b) ***This*** table is too close to the door. ***That*** one would be better. [proximity to S and H]
- (c) Jill was starting to think that she would have to move—***this*** chair was just too uncomfortable. [shifted perspective; proximity to Jill]
- (40)(a) She's very busy ***this*** week. She's getting married ***this*** Saturday. [proximity in time]
- (b) Is ***this*** tooth the one that hurts? [locus of interest; immediate concern]
- (c) ***That*** is {true / important / interesting}. [normal response to a statement]
- (d) ***This*** is {true / important / interesting}. [speaker intends to consider the statement further]

- (41)(a) The directive force is normally aimed at getting H to select the referent from the range of onstage candidates. Alternatively, it is aimed at putting a single candidate onstage.  
 (b) S and H are both looking at a dog: **The** dog is ugly.  
 (c) A dog is visible to S and H, but only S is aware of it: **That** dog is ugly.  
 (d) *In the bar I met a man named Felix. **This** Felix was an interesting character ...*  
 [focus of interest, no directive force]  
 (e) **That** Obama is really {amazing / hurting the economy}.  
 [distancing, reflecting either a positive attitude (he is awesome, he stands apart) or a negative one (I don't want to be associated with him)]
- (42)(a) The **definite article** indicates that just *one instance* of the specified type is *immediately accessible* in the CDS: already *onstage* for both S and H (in their *scope of awareness*).  
 (b) With just one candidate, the nominal's *type description* is enough to identify the referent.  
 (c) Unlike demonstratives, the definite article **lacks directive force**. It does not *select* the referent from a set of alternatives, but simply registers its **contextual uniqueness**.  
 (d) An **indefinite article** also lacks directive force, but indicates that the nominal's type description is **not** enough to identify the intended referent—either because there are *multiple candidates* (onstage instances of the specified type) or because there are *none*.
- (43)(a) *In the yard I saw a dog and three cats. Jill was petting **the dog** and **a cat** (\*the cat).*  
 (b) *Jill was petting a black cat and a white one. **The white cat** was purring.*  
 (c) ***The rare vase you bought at the auction** looks good on your desk.*  
 (d) ***the first man** to have walked on the moon*  
 (e) ***the only man** to have hit a golf ball on the moon*  
 (f) ***the tallest man** to have played center for the Houston Rockets*
- (44)(a) *Our basketball team keeps losing. **The center** (\*the forward) isn't tall enough.*  
 (b) *Are you **the** Hillary Clinton?*  
 (c) *the sun, the moon, the atmosphere, the pope, the president, the government, the party*

(45)



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