Coding Protocol for Statuses on the Givenness Hierarchy
(Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1993)[1]

Previous revision, July, 2004; most recent update, May 2006.

<u>USING THE CODING PROTOCOL</u>[2]

The terms IN FOCUS, ACTIVATED, FAMILIAR , UNIQUELY IDENTIFIABLE, REFERENTIAL, AND TYPE IDENTIFIABLE each describe a cognitive status on the Givenness Hierarchy (Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1993). Cognitive statuses are properties of cognitive entities/mental representations. When determining cognitive status using the protocol, imagine you are the speaker/writer and ask yourself what you can assume about the cognitive status of the intended interpretation/referent for the addressee at the point just before the form is encountered. Check the criteria for each status in the order they are listed below. That is, start with the cognitive status IN FOCUS. If none of the criteria apply, try ACTIVATED. If none of the criteria apply, try FAMILIAR, and so on. Stop when you find a criterion that applies. This is the highest cognitive status for the referent/interpretation you are checking.

(Note: the criteria in this coding protocol are sufficient, not necessary conditions for assigning a particular cognitive status; they have never been published and are being revised as research progresses; revisions include making the criteria more precise, as well as adding or amending criteria, where appropriate).

A referent is IN FOCUS if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. It is the interpretation of the main clause subject or the syntactic topic in the immediately preceding sentence/clause (syntactic topics include topicalized or dislocated phrases, including topic marked phrases, e.g. the *wa* phrase in Japanese).

    (1)   Midge pushed thick, wiry black hair back from her square forehead with a sturdy brown arm. Nothing unsubstantial or fairylike about <u>her</u>. (From *Murder after Hours*, Agatha Christie)

    (2)   John Kerry lost in Ohio. This cost <u>the Senator</u> the election.

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2. It is part of the interpretation of a previous part of the same sentence.

     (3)   You can wear my scarf if you can find <u>it.</u>

     (4)   If you stand on this chair, <u>the chair</u> will break.

3. It is the interpretation of the syntactic focus of the immediately preceding clause (i.e., postcopular position of a cleft or existential sentence).

     (5)   There was a mouse on the table. <u>It</u> was very large.

     (6)   It was the dog that Bill was afraid of. <u>He</u> was very large.

4. It is a higher level topic that is part of the interpretation of the preceding clause (whether it is overtly mentioned there or not).

     (7)   The kitchen has a new countertops and a beautiful tile floor. There's also a big walk-through closet. Would you like to take a look at <u>it</u>?   Both the kitchen (criterion 4) and the closet (criterion 3) are in focus.

5. It is part of the interpretation of each of the two immediately preceding clauses.

     (8)   It was the dog that Bill was afraid of. Small animals didn't usually frighten Bill. <u>He</u> was very large. (*him* most likely to be interpreted as Bill, not the dog)

     (9)   A: She will be nice to Gerda and she will amuse Henry, and she'll keep John in a good temper and I'm sure she'll be most helpful with David –

                B: David Angkatell?

                A: Yes. <u>He</u>'s just down from Oxford. (From *Murder after Hours*, Agatha Christie)

6. It is the event denoted by the immediately preceding sentence.

     (10) John fell off his bike. <u>This/it</u> happened yesterday.

A referent is ACTIVATED if it meets one of the following criteria.

1. It is part of the interpretation of one of the immediately preceding two sentences.

> (11) Central to the case was a Lewinsky-Tripp conversation that Mrs. Tripp taped on Dec. 22, 1997. This was the last talk between <u>the two women</u> that Mrs. Tripp recorded.

2. It is something in the immediate spatio-temporal context that is activated by means of a simultaneous gesture or eye gaze.

> (12) (looking at the wrench) Please hand me <u>that (wrench</u> (over there))

3. It is a proposition, fact, or speech act associated with the eventuality (event or state) denoted by the immediately preceding sentence(s).

> (13) A. John fell off his bike.
>
>   B. <u>That's</u> not true.
>
> (14) A. John fell off his bike.
>
>   B. Can you say <u>that</u> again?

A referent is FAMILIAR if it meets one of the following criteria.

1. It was mentioned at any time previously in the discourse.

> (15) A Phillipine Airlines jet with 290 people aboard was hijacked today by a man who took everyone's money and then parachuted to the ground outside Manila's airport and the passengers were let off safely. The jetliner left Davao City, in the southern Phillipines, for the 90-minute flight to Manila with 278 passengers and 12 crew aboard, PAL said. <u>The hijacker</u>, wearing a blue ski mask and carrying a handgun…

2. It can be assumed to be known by the hearer through cultural/encyclopedic knowledge or shared personal experience with the speaker.

> (16) If one takes a step back and looks at the rest of this week's music-group news, the situation looks bad for ugly, unpredictable rock 'n' roll: one of the most popular American rock bands of <u>the 90's.</u>

A referent is UNIQUELY IDENTIFIABLE if it meets one of the following criteria:

1. The referring form contains adequate descriptive/conceptual content to create a unique referent.

      (17)   s: hello can I help you
                u: yeah I want t- I want to determine <u>the maximum number of boxcars of oranges that I can get to Bath by 7 a.m. tomorrow morning</u> so hm so I guess all the boxcars will have to go through oran- through Corning because that's where the orange juice factory is   [Trains Corpus. Heeman & Allen 1995]

2. A unique referent can be created via a 'bridging inference' by association with an already activated referent.(e.g. A house….the front door)

      (18)   She got into bed, laid her head on <u>the pillow</u>, and in two minutes was sleeping like a child. (From *Murder after Hours*, Agatha Christie)

      (19)   (Looking at a box) I think <u>the bottom</u> fell out.

A referent exists, is REFERENTIAL, if it meets one of the following criteria.

1. It is mentioned subsequently in the discourse.

      (20)   When my youngest child was 3 or so, we were at <u>a friend's</u> house visiting and my friend was babysitting her infant nephew.

2. It is evident from the context that the speaker intends to refer to some specific entity.

      (21)   I want to tell you about <u>this strange guy I saw today</u>.

An interpretation is TYPE IDENTIFIABLE if the sense of the phrase (the descriptive/conceptual content it encodes) is understandable.

      (22)   I don't have <u>a VCR</u> and neither does my neighbor.

      (23)   Whenever Mary passes that store, she always picks up <u>a newspaper</u>.