The Grammar Pragmatics Interface:

Essays in Honor of Jeanette K. Gundel

edited by Nancy Hedberg and Ron Zacharski

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1. Introduction

We present this volume of papers in honor and celebration of Jeanette K. Gundel, Professor of Linguistics at the University of Minnesota. This book represents a selection of papers by people influenced by Jeanette’s work, including her colleagues and former students.

Jeanette Gundel received her Ph.D from the University of Texas at Austin in 1974 for a dissertation on “The Role of Topic and Comment in Linguistic Theory.” This dissertation, produced in the tradition of Generative Semantics, introduced to generative linguists in the United States and abroad the pragmatic notions of topic and comment that were simultaneously being introduced into Europe by Prague School linguists. Jeanette’s dissertation included an analysis of fronting of both topic and focus object NPs and left and right dislocation, along with an analysis of aspects of topic and comment in Russian such as an analysis of focus particles and the genitive of negation. In 1988, her dissertation was reintroduced in the series Outstanding Dissertations in Linguistics (Garland Press).

After holding visiting appointments at the Ohio State University and the University of Hawaii in the mid-1970s, Jeanette took up a tenure-track position at the University of Minnesota in 1980. She progressed up through the ranks at the University of Minnesota, achieving the rank of Full Professor in 1992. Since that year she has also held the position of Adjunct Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Communication Disorders at the University of Minnesota. From 1997-1999, she additionally served as Professor of English Linguistics at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway.

As well as serving as a graduate and undergraduate teacher and researcher, Jeanette continues to have a distinguished career as an administrator. We mention here three prominent examples. Since 1999, she has served as the Head of the Academic Program in Linguistics at the University of Minnesota. She has also frequently served as Director of Graduate Studies for Linguistics there, and she has long been an active member of the Governing Council of the Center for Cognitive Sciences at the University of Minnesota.

Jeanette’s research and teaching has flourished during the last thirty years, including works published by herself alone as well as works coauthored by students and colleagues, especially on topic-comment
(focus) in English and other languages, cleft sentences in English and Norwegian, and the cognitive status of referring expressions in English and other languages. Since all of her research focuses on interactions between syntax and pragmatics and between semantics and pragmatics, her research falls solidly into the area that constitutes the theme of this volume: the grammar-pragmatics interface.

1.1 Biographical sketch of volume participants

Deborah Dahl, Nancy Hedberg, Suellen Rundquist, and Ann Mulkern, all included in this volume, were Ph.D. students of Jeanette’s in the Linguistics Program at the University of Minnesota during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. Their dissertations represent the breadth of Jeanette’s expertise, ranging from linguistic and computational approaches to one-anaphora (Dahl), through the syntax, semantics and pragmatics of cleft sentences (Hedberg), the sociolinguistics of apologies (Rundquist), and elaborations on the cognitive status of referring expressions in Irish (Mulkern). In addition, Jeanette advised one of the co-editors of the present volume (Ron Zacharski) at the University of Minnesota in the area of the meaning of intonation in English from the perspective of computer science. She has also advised many students who are not represented in the present volume.

The current volume also presents papers by some colleagues of Jeanette’s at the universities in which she has taught over the past 25 years. Michael Hegarty and Hooi Ling Soh are currently or were recently close colleagues of Jeanette’s in the Linguistics Program at the University of Minnesota, and Polly Szatrowski is a colleague in East Asian Languages there. Jeanette also had an influence on students and colleagues when she taught in Norway. Represented in this volume are Kaja Borthein, who completed a Ph.D in Trondheim, and Thorstein Fretheim, who is a colleague there. Mira Ariel, Betty Birner, Francis Cornish, Lorna Fadden, Hartwell Francis, Mei Jia Gao, Jeffrey Kaplan, Laura Michaelis, Maria Polinsky, and Gregory Ward, who are also represented in this volume are colleagues in the worldwide community of linguists working in Jeanette’s primary area of specialization: the grammar-pragmatics interface.
1.2 Organization of the Volume

We divide the chapters into three broad sections: a section on reference (including cognitive status), a section on topic-comment (focus), subjecthood and cleft sentences, and a section on other aspects of the grammar-pragmatics interface. At the beginning of each section, we present an overview of how the chapters in the section relate to Jeanette’s research and present a brief introduction to each participant’s chapter. At the end of this introduction we present a bibliography of Jeanette’s publications. References to Jeanette’s publications in the introductions to the three sections of the book can be found in the bibliography included at the end of this introduction.

As can be seen from the bibliography and the chapters represented in this volume, Jeanette’s area of influence and inspiration ranges wide. Extensions of and reactions to her work on referring expressions is represented in the chapters by Mulkern, Borthein, Hegarty, Ariel, Cornish, Fretheim and Polinsky in the first section of this volume. Her long-standing work on topic/comment (focus) has inspired the paper by Michaelis and Francis and her work on clefts has inspired the chapters by Hedberg and Fadden and by Ward, Kaplan and Birner in the second section of this volume. Finally, Jeanette has acted as mentor and inspiring colleague with regard to other work relating to the grammar-pragmatics interface in the areas here represented of aspect in Chinese (Soh and Gao), sociolinguistics (Rundquist, Szatrowski) and computational linguistics (Dahl). These latter papers are gathered together in the third section of this volume.

1.3 Concluding Remarks

Jeanette has been and remains an extremely inspiring teacher and colleague, well known for mentoring graduate students by coauthoring papers with them, and for coauthoring also with close colleagues. To a large extent it is her ability to listen and learn from other people that we, the editors, appreciate about and have learned from Jeanette. She is open to other people’s ideas (including those of her students), and to ideas from a variety of disciplines, including not only linguistics, but also psychology, philosophy, computer science, and beyond, thus to cognitive science in general.
At the same time she is persistent in sticking with her own ideas. This steadfastness has served her well, and we have learned from her to respect our own ideas and to not give them up in the face of opposing viewpoints. It is this persistence that has resulted, for example, in the recent renaissance in the popularity of the notion of ‘topic’, which Jeanette was influential in initiating in the 1970s.

Even within linguistics, Jeanette is open to a variety of frameworks, as witnessed by the fact that she has been sought out for participation in discussions relating pragmatic factors to different syntactic frameworks, such as her contribution to the Chomsky birthday celebration on the World Wide Web in 2001 and her contribution to a recent annual conference on Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (Gundel 2003). She has also prominently published articles relating her own research to other work in discourse and pragmatics such as Relevance Theory (Gundel 1996 and Gundel and Mulkern 1997) and Centering Theory (Gundel 1998). In sum, she has worked in or inspired work by students and colleagues in a large variety of sub-areas within linguistics, including syntax, semantics, pragmatics, computational linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and prosody.

A hallmark of Jeanette’s research is that she bases her conclusions to a large extent on examples drawn from naturally occurring discourse. However, she relies equally on intuitive judgments of constructed examples in drawing her conclusions, following the mainstream methods of generative linguistics. This approach, which results in accurate empirical observation in support of sound theoretical constructs, leads to insightful conclusions. Most of the papers in this volume rely on both approaches, drawing their conclusions from intuitive judgments as well as naturally occurring data, whether collected ad hoc from everyday life, from collections of spoken and written texts, or drawn from small-scale or large-scale electronic corpora.

The students and colleagues represented in this volume can here with our papers and editing work only offer a token of appreciation for Jeanette’s teaching and research and for her personal inspiration. We all present this collection of papers as a joyful celebration of her life and work, and gratefully dedicate this volume to her.
Part I  Reference

This first section presents papers on reference. Jeanette Gundel is well known for her work in this area. In Gundel 1978 and Gundel 1985, 1988, she began distinguishing activated from familiar and identifiable information, distinctions elaborated in the Givenness Hierarchy of Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski (1993) and previous conference papers by this same team of authors (Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1988, 1989, 1990). Six ‘cognitive statuses’ are currently distinguished. These authors have also published within the same framework later articles on indirect anaphora (c.f. Erkö and Gundel 1987) and on the non-necessity that the referents of definite article phrases be familiar (Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 2000, 2001, respectively). In a series of articles coauthored variously with Borthen, Fretheim, Hedberg, Hegarty and Zacharski, Jeanette has extended this work to explore reference by *it* versus *this/that* in referring to higher-order entities (e.g., Hegarty, Gundel and Borthen 2002, Gundel, Hegarty and Borthen 2003 and Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 2005). Hegarty builds on this work in his paper for this volume, as discussed below.

In this volume, Ann Mulkern applies the Givenness Hierarchy theory to Irish, focusing on explicating differences between three types of human-referring pronouns that have the same cognitive status—activated. She bases her conclusions on a collection of naturally occurring Irish data. She makes a valuable distinction between ‘inherent salience’, having to do with the centrality of the entity already in the discourse, and ‘imposed salience’, having to do with signaling how the entity should be ranked relative to other discourse entities in subsequent discourse. She also carefully defines two motivations for imposing salience: ‘contrast’, which establishes a partition between members of a salient semantically appropriate set, with the salience of the two parts remaining equal; and ‘emphasis’, which promotes one discourse entity as the most important (salient) relative to others. With regard to the activated Irish pronominals, the suffixed form is used to signal that the salience of its referent is equal to or less than another entity in the discourse, e.g., in contexts where the speaker establishes a contrast, parallel relationship, reciprocal relationship, or comparison between two sets of discourse entities with respect to the applicability of some property. Pronouns suffixed with *féin* (‘lexically free reflexives’), on the other hand, signal the promotion of their referent to the most salient position relative to other discourse entities, or signal that the entity remains the most salient activated entity, e.g. to establish
the entity as the discourse topic or to signal a perspective shift to the referent of that pronoun. Finally, third-person pronominal forms augmented with a demonstrative element function like the suffixed pronominals, with an additional deictic dimension of time or location added.

Kaja Borthein extends the Givenness Hierarchy framework from individual entity references to generic references in English and Norwegian. Generic reference was outside the scope of the original Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1993 paper. Borthein shows how the correspondence between NP forms and cognitive statuses can explain why kind-referring NPs achieve different interpretations depending on their form. Amongst other things, the tendency for kind-referring definite singular NPs to refer to so-called ‘well-established’ kinds and for indefinite singular NPs to typically trigger a so-called ‘taxonomic’ interpretation (Krifka, et al. 1995) are explained as resulting from an interaction between the Givenness Hierarchy and general pragmatic meaning.

Michael Hegarty also extends the original focus of Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski (1993), this time to focus more on semantics and on the semantics/pragmatics of reference to higher-order entities. He first explicates the notion of a higher-order situation by considering it to consist of the basic state or event along with its ramifications in the context, and also explicates the notion of a fact in terms of a situation exemplifying a proposition, in this latter consideration following Kratzer (2002). Then he uses diagnostics from the literature, including facts about the possibility of pronominal as compared to demonstrative reference to higher order entities investigated by Hegarty et al. (2002) and Gundel et al. (2003), inter alia, to show that the denotation of a situation-introducing clause is a set of situations consisting of a base event or state recovered directly from the predicate-argument and quantificational structure of the clause, together with its ramifications, defined in terms of a partial linear part-whole relation on situations. In light of evidence that events and states are of type e, this yields the higher type <e, t> for clausally introduced situations. This is distinct from the semantic type of events in natural language semantics, since events, on Davidsonian grounds, are consistently first order. Putting this result together with Kratzer’s analysis of facts, and proposals from Hegarty (2003), regarding the semantic type of clausally introduced propositions, this means that clauses introducing facts exhibit referential duality between a situation of type <e, t> and a proposition of type <<s, t>, t>. Thus the standard inventory of abstract entities denoted by clauses, including propositions, facts, and events, can be expanded to include situations, with fine-grained articulation of
differences among these entities in terms of semantic type. Hegarty’s paper focuses primarily on the area of semantics, but relates to the semantics-pragmatics interface in discussing examples where references to events simpliciter are made with personal pronouns while references to the higher-order situations or propositions are made with demonstrative pronouns. For data, he relies mostly on examples drawn from everyday discourse and variants constructed on that basis.

Francis Cornish examines the interpretation of zero or ‘implicit’ objects in English and French. His major claim is that there is an interaction between lexical-semantic structure (including the lexical host predicate’s Actionsart as well as semantic selectional restrictions) and various discourse-contextual factors (notably, the existence of a stereotypical socio-cultural type of denotation available from the context). This interaction is relevant both in licensing the non-realization of the argument and in giving rise to the interpretation. There are two main types of interpretation, each involving two subtypes: a non-referential type (generic or indeterminate) and a referential one (the introduction of a discourse-new referent, or the anaphoric retrieval of a salient discourse referent). Cornish concludes that the various interpretations of the English zero complements can be insightfully understood in terms of four Givenness Hierarchy positions: the referential-anaphoric value is ‘in focus’, the inferrable discourse-old value is ‘familiar’, the referential pure discourse-new value is ‘uniquely identifiable’, and the non-referential ‘absolute’ value is ‘type identifiable’. He relies for much of his data on natural examples drawn from everyday discourse.

Mira Ariel, who works in Accessibility Theory, a theory related to the Givenness Hierarchy framework, addresses forms of referring expressions in different registers. Specifically she asks the question of whether cases where given registers or genres exhibit statistically significant differences in the distribution of referring expressions mean that register-specific or genre-specific grammatical conventions need to be posited. Looking at definite descriptions in particular, she argues that for the most part the answer is negative. The connection between genre and referring expressions is indirectly mediated by extralinguistic motivations: different registers prototypically call for different types of discourse entities. While the discourse function of definite descriptions remains constant across all registers (indicating a low degree of accessibility for the mental representation of the entity referred to on her theory), its implementation naturally varies according to the discourse entities involved. In other words, the same grammatical rule, used to encode different entities, will naturally yield different surface realizations in different pragmatic contexts. To give just one example, assuming that
definite descriptions code various degrees of low accessibility, it is only to
be expected that definite descriptions should be more frequent in registers
which call for the use of many low accessibility discourse referents. This
paper thus directly discusses the grammar-pragmatics interface in arguing
that a common grammar of definite descriptions can result in different
pragmatic distributions of uses. In arriving at her conclusions Ariel cites a
number of studies of definite descriptions in natural discourse, including
that of Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski (2001).

Maria Polinsky examines one type of wh-expression in English and
other languages, especially Russian, namely the ‘agressively non-
discourse-linked wh-expressions’ (NDLs), which correspond to such
English expressions as what on earth or what the hell. These expressions
differ from the other two types of interrogatives (discourse-linked wh-
expressions, which resemble definite noun phrases, and regular wh-
expressions, which resemble pronominals) in a systematic way. The paper
lists several relevant differences between NDLs and other wh-expressions
with regard to the way they are represented in syntax. The main point of
the paper is that NDLs differ from interrogative pronominals and
discourse-linked expressions both in referentiality and activation. With
respect to referentiality, Russian NDLs only have intensional reference,
encoding properties, not objects in the world. The referential status of
these expressions is used to account for all of their grammatical behaviors;
many of the apparent syntactic restrictions on NDLs are presented as mere
side effects of their semantic status, which has direct implications for their
inability to be maintained in working memory. The paper compares NDLs
to universally quantified expressions with ‘any’, which seem to offer the
closest parallel. The implications of the paper are threefold. First, it offers
a three-way distinction of wh-expressions which finds parallels to the
distinctions found in noun phrases between definite noun phrases (d-
discourse-linked wh-expressions), pronouns (regular wh-expressions), and
universally quantified expressions/polarity items (NDLs). Second, the
paper proposes that information-structural inquiries should adopt a more
fine-grained approach to wh-expressions. As a result, this would allow
researchers to move beyond the traditional association between focus and
wh-expressions. The paper argues that the contribution made by wh-
expressions to information structure is richer and more diverse than that.
Third, the paper addresses the need to conduct more cross-linguistic work
on NDLs. Little is known about the referential properties of NDLs in other
languages, but the very fact that the Russian NDLs resemble their
counterparts in Italian and English with respect to syntactic properties
makes for a testable prediction that such NDLs are intensionally-
referential expressions in other languages as well.
Thorstein Fretheim extends the analysis of anaphoric NP referring expressions to anaphoric adverbials, namely Norwegian *ellers* and English *else* and *otherwise*, which have propositions as indirect antecedents (see Erkü and Gundel 1987 for indirect NP anaphors). He develops an account of the counterfactual semantics and pragmatics of these ‘switch polarity anaphors’ within Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995). He proposes that these items are semantically empty but contain pragmatic procedural meaning. In addition to working directly on the cusp of semantics and pragmatics, Fretheim’s paper relates to Jeanette’s published work in Relevance Theory (e.g. Gundel 1996, Gundel and Mulkern 1998). Furthermore most of his examples come from an English-Norwegian/Norwegian-English translation corpus (the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus), and the direct and indirect translations shed light on the meaning of switch-polarity anaphors in both languages. His work thus also relates methodologically to some of Jeanette’s recent work in comparative English-Norwegian/Norwegian-English translations of cleft sentences (Gundel 2002, in press).


Part II

Topic-Comment (Focus), Subjexthood and Cleft Sentences

Throughout her career Jeanette Gundel has been concerned with the relation between the pragmatic notions of topic and comment (or focus) and syntax, starting with her dissertation. In the mid 1980s, she published two very influential articles on the relation of topic-comment to aspects of grammar in English (Gundel 1985) and cross-linguistically (Gundel 1988). In the 1990s and 2000s, she has elaborated on this work in articles such as Gundel 1999 on different types of focus, Gundel 2003 on the relation between grammar and pragmatic categories, and Gundel and Fretheim 2004 on topic and focus, to name just some of the most prominent works.

In relating Jeanette’s work on topic and comment (focus) to her work on reference, it must be pointed out that one very important contribution she has made to the field of discourse pragmatics at large is the fundamental distinction between these two types of phenomena. Topic-comment status involves ‘relational givenness’ — the topic is given in relation to the comment; whereas cognitive status involves the ‘referential givenness’ of the discourse entities under discussion. The two types of givenness are related in that topics (which are relationally given) must have some degree of referential givenness (prototypically familiarity), but the two types of givenness status are crucially distinct.

In this volume, the paper by Laura Michaelis and Hartwell S. Francis relates closely to the topic-comment distinction since subjects are there considered to be the grammatical relation that most typically encodes topics. This paper is based on a large-scale analysis of the Switchboard Corpus, examining more than 31,000 subjects. Only 9% of the subjects in this conversational corpus were lexical as opposed to pronominal. These examples represent violations of Lambrecht’s (1994) ‘principle of separation of reference and role’: i.e., do not introduce an entity and talk about it in the same clause. The authors examine the ‘conflation strategy’ represented in this small percentage of sentences and suggest that whereas the more common strategy favors the hearer, this strategy favors the speaker for effort conservation, introducing the new topic entity as a subject. The authors examine the cognitive status of the lexical subjects and find that they are at least uniquely identifiable on the Givenness Hierarchy and that they tend to contain anchors to activated entities. This behavior supports Jeanette’s predictions about the referential givenness
cognitive status of relationally given topics (e.g., Gundel 1985). The authors propose that the lexical subjects strike a balance between Q-based transparency (‘be as clear as you can about what your communicative intentions are’) and R-based effort conservation (‘say as little as you can’), using Horn’s (1984) pragmatic principles of communication. This reliance on communicative principles for explanation also relates to Jeanette’s reliance on Grice’s Quantity Maxim (e.g., in Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1993) and on the Principle of Relevance (e.g., in Gundel 1996, and Gundel and Mulkern 1998).

Jeanette is also well known for her work on cleft sentences, including a paper in Language in 1977, which argued on pragmatic and syntactic grounds that it-cleft sentences are derived from right-dislocated wh-clefts. She further discussed the pragmatics of clefting in Gundel 1985, 1988. Recently, Jeanette has returned to her study of clefts in comparing the use of clefts in English-Norwegian and Norwegian-English translations (Gundel 2002 and Gundel In Press).

In this volume, Nancy Hedberg and Lorna Fadden present a paper on the function of wh-clefts, reverse wh-clefts and it-clefts in English discourse. They propose that wh-clefts have the topic-comment organization that would be expected given that cleft clauses present presuppositions, which can readily be associated with topics. However, they also claim that it-clefts and reverse wh-clefts can have either the comment-topic organization that would be expected under the above assumptions, or, more frequently even, a topic-comment organization. They thus propose that a distinction must be recognized between the referential givenness status of the two parts of the cleft, which always results in at least a uniquely identifiable status to the cleft clause, and the relational givenness status, which is relatively free. They also propose that the condition on wh-cleft clauses, that they be relationally given (i.e., topics) better explains the data presented in Prince (1978) that led to her conclusion that wh-cleft clauses compared to it-cleft clauses must be ‘in the consciousness of the hearer’ or ‘Chafe-given’ (i.e., activated in Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski terms). Unactivated but familiar or uniquely identifiable wh-cleft clauses that present relevant new topics support this conclusion. The authors rely on a corpus of clefts drawn from a television political discussion program as well as examples drawn from a variety of spoken and written sources. They consider a number of syntactic and pragmatic subtypes of clefts in arriving at their conclusions of how the different parts of clefts map onto topic or comment status.

Gregory Ward, Jeffrey P. Kaplan and Betty J. Birner consider a cleft analysis for their work on one type of epistemic would construction in English—e.g., That would be me—in which the subject NP is anaphoric
to the variable in a salient Open Proposition (OP) in the context. They show that such constructions are epistemically stronger than counterpart constructions with epistemic must, and suggest that they might be analyzed as truncated clefts (Hedberg 2000): That would be me that you are talking about. They show that these constructions share many pragmatic properties with clefts: Both permit apparent number disagreement, convey exhaustiveness of the postcopular constituent, and support a systematic ambiguity with respect to the referent of the subject. However, because epistemic would requires an OP independently, i.e., even in cases where there is no truncated cleft analysis available, the authors end up proposing that the overlap in properties with clefts is due to a shared OP requirement in combination with equative syntax and a demonstrative subject NP. That is, the shared properties may derive from the fact that both constructions are cases of a more general category of OP-requiring constructions, including preposings and contrastive accent (c.f. Prince 1986, inter alia). In arriving at their conclusions, the authors rely on examples collected from natural conversation or text.

Grice, H. Paul

Hedberg, Nancy

Horn, Laurence R.

Prince, Ellen F.

Prince, Ellen F.
Part III

Other Aspects of the Grammar-Pragmatics Interface

Jeanette Gundel has had influence in areas outside of her specialized areas of research into topic-comment structure and cognitive status. She has multiple publications in the areas of second language acquisition and typological markedness theory, for example. She has also served on the committees of graduate students who work in related areas such as sociolinguistics, philosophy of language and communication disorders, to give just a few examples, and has maintained close ties with faculty in related disciplines such as computer science and foreign language teaching and with faculty in other areas of linguistics such as syntax, semantics, and psycholinguistics. Several of these related areas are represented by chapters in this volume.

From the perspective of syntax and semantics within linguistics, Hooi Ling Soh and Mei Jia Gao write about the semantics and pragmatics of the verbal particle -le in Mandarin Chinese. They explore sentences of different situation types (Smith 1997) in determining the semantics/pragmatics of le, carefully distinguishing semantic entailments from pragmatic implicatures, thereby simplifying the grammatical analysis of the verbal particle-le by characterizing it simply as a perfective aspect marker. For example, purported continuative readings of verbal –le in achievement sentences are analyzed as implicatures deriving from the fact that a state continues after the achievement is obtained. This paper shows that consideration of whether semantic or pragmatic explanations of different facets of the data lead to more illuminating conclusions about that data can result in considerable ground to be gained, and thereby explores the grammar-pragmatic interface.

Suellen Rundquist examines the form and use of apologies in casual conversations between families and close friends in American English. She finds that speakers often make direct apologies, expressing different aspects of the full form that apologies have been analyzed to take, e.g. the apology itself, an explanation, and an acknowledgement of responsibility. However, speakers sometimes apologize indirectly, without using conventionalized apology formulae, and sometimes the apology
form is used for purposes other than to make an apology, e.g. for purposes of making a joke. Men more often than women are found to apologize indirectly and to pretend to make an apology. Her research relates to the grammar-pragmatics interface in the sense that the conventional forms of apologies can be seen as part of discourse grammar, which may or may not be directly reflected in the use or pragmatics of these forms.

Polly Szatrowski also presents a sociolinguistic study, analyzing subjectivity, perspective and footing in 50 co-constructions taken from spontaneous Japanese conversations. A co-construction takes place when a second speaker finishes a first speaker’s utterance. Phenomena such as person restriction and perspective in deictic verbs in Japanese, which have been accounted for traditionally in grammatical terms, can be overridden by pragmatics in spontaneous speech. For example, speakers can violate person restrictions as well as the empathy hierarchy (Kuno 1987) in their use of the verb *iku* ‘go’ in conversational interaction because they can speak on another participant’s footing (Goffman 1981) and take the other speaker’s perspective while speaking from their own footing when completing a co-construction. Many co-constructed sentences can only be grammatically pronounced in their entirety by the first or the second speaker and in some cases by neither of the speakers. Also it is necessary to refer to the psychological position of the speaker vis-à-vis the addressee or referent and the participant status (information presenter vs. supporting participant), utterance function, and whether or not the utterance is addressed to another participant in the interaction to account for how co-constructions are used in actual interactions. The grammar-pragmatics interface is addressed in examining how different grammatical forms are manipulated in actual interactive speech situations.

Deborah Dahl’s paper is written solidly from the perspective of computational linguistics. Her goal is to review the progress made in the last thirty years of Natural Language Processing research, concluding that not a lot of progress has been made with regard to achieving scalable and portable natural language processing systems. Scalability refers to the ability of a specialized system to ‘scale up’ to a more general domain, and portability refers to the ability of a system to be transported to a domain that it wasn’t originally designed to cover. She advises that any approach to solving such problems will have to distinguish between general linguistic abilities and domain-specific information. For portability, she generally advises creating modular systems, such as distinguishing syntactic knowledge from semantic knowledge, and distinguishing but relating syntax/semantics and pragmatics. For example, domain-independent focusing systems can help resolve anaphora across domains, and might incorporate insights developed in the Givenness Hierarchy
(Gundel, et. al 1993). Dahl’s review thus includes discussion of the grammar-pragmatics interface.

Goffman, Erving

Kuno, Susumo

Smith, Carlota