

LINEARISATION: THE NEXUS OF INFORMATION AND DEFINITENESS STRUCTURES

Marie Fellbaum Korpi
The University of Western Sydney

This presentation argues that language has two separate and independent coherent, consistent, and complete systems: one for definiteness/specificity and a second for information structure using data from colloquial Sinhala. It is argued that the level of definiteness/specificity has three semantic definiteness relations: Existence, Identity, and Characterization (Fellbaum Korpi, 2008), indexed for definiteness/specificity features, deriving their features from the discourse similar to the theories of Heim (1983) and Enç (1991). Sinhala has distinct morphological coding for each of these relations as reported in Gair & Paolillo (1988) and Henadeerage (2002).

These relations are shown to be coded independently of topic and focus in Information structure (Vallduvi 1992; Lambrecht 1994). I show that the two independent systems intersect at the level of linearisation, which explains features of the system of coding the topic and focus categories (Vallduvi (1992). Lambrecht's term is 'topic creating expressions' (1994), which I argue is just an accident due to the intersection of the two non-syntactic systems of grammar at the level of linearisation.

References

- Enç, M. (1991). The semantics of specificity. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 22(1), 1-25.
- Fellbaum Korpi, M. (2008). LFG Architecture, Semantic Definiteness Structures and Nonverbal Syntactic Constructions. Online Proceedings of the LFG08 Conference, Sydney University, July 4-6, 2009. <URL csl-publications.stanford.edu/LFG/14/lfg2009.html>
- Gair, J. W. & Paolillo, J. (1988). Sinhala: non-verbal sentences and argument structure. *Cornell Working Papers in Linguistics*, No. 8, pp. 39-77. Cornell University, New York.
- Heim, I. (1983). File change semantics and the familiarity theory of definiteness. In R Bäuerle, C Schwarze, A. von Stechow (Eds.), *Meaning and interpretation of language*. W. de Gruyter, Berlin: New York.
- Henadeerage, D.K. (2002). *Topics in Sinhala syntax*. Available from Australian Digital Theses, <<http://thesis.anu.edu.au/public/adtANU20060426.142352/index.html>>
- Kariyakarawana, S.M. (1998). *Long distance dependencies in Sinhala: the syntax of focus and wh questions*, PhD Thesis, Cornell University.
- Lambrecht, K. (1994). *Information Structure and Sentence Form: topic, focus and the mental representations of discourse referents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vallduvi, E. (1992). *The Informational Component*. New York: Garland Publishing.

Keywords: topic, focus , information structure, definiteness, definiteness structures,