Research question: Sluices with who show bias towards the object (e.g., Carlson et al, 2009). Is this bias sensitive to the d-linking requirement of who-phrases? If so, when?

Object bias (OB)

Object bias: Resolve restrictor in sluice remnant to object of a SVO main clause under default focus.

(3) The captain talked with the co-pilot, but we couldn’t find out who else.

Bias to resolve remnant to object unless subject marked as contrastive with either L+H accent or syntactic cleft. Carlson et al, 2009

Alternatives on demand (AD)

Alternatives on demand: When interpreting a d-linked phrase, favor discourse alternatives overtly given by previous discourse.

Experiment 1c: Completion

36 AMT subjects; items from E1b, replacing disjunction or with blank.

(6) a. A guest talked to Bill Sue [78%], but I don’t remember which (one).
   b. Bill Sue [65%] talked to a guest, but I don’t remember which (one).

Effect of Position replicated: Disjunct more likely when blank in object than in subject position, $z = 3.78$

Proposition & Predictions

Proposal: Assume a cue-based content-addressable retrieval mechanism (e.g., Lewis & Vasishth, 2005), in which (a) potential antecedents are accessed in parallel, but (b) linguistic focus strengthens memory representations, facilitating availability (e.g., Foraker & McElree, 2007).

Predictions

P1 Position: If preference for interpretations satisfying OB and AD in judgment data, and the effect cannot be attributed solely to the anaphoric properties of the pronoun.

P2 Online: Advantage for disjunction antecedent in object position appears online.

P3 Cue-strength: Time-course of the effect in P2 depends on strength of retrieval cue in who-phrase.

P4 Invariance: Cue-poor retrieval will be delayed regardless of contextual support.

Thanks & Selected references

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Experiment 2: Self-paced reading

48 Claremont College students; each trial followed by a forced-choice interpretation question. 30 sexed in a 2 x 3 design, crossing Position of the disjunction (Subject vs. Object) and Continuation (Singular (one) vs. Plural (of them) vs. Indefinite (guest)).

Effect of position: Object increased disjunct preference for pronouns, but not the indefinite.

Effect of position: Object increased disjunct preference for pronouns, but not the indefinite.

Conclusion

Results from E1–E3 support a processing model in which

Retrieval seeks antecedents for d-linked anaphors in default focus position (OB); this process may be sensitive to discourse-economy considerations (AD).

Generating new discourse alternatives is costly when given ones are already present.

Resolution may be delayed for cue-poor probes with multiple possible antecedents, despite contextual bias.