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Seminar on Presupposition
Heinrich Heine University
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Homework 10: Presupposition as Anaphora

Read: (i) Geurts and Beaver's *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on Discourse Representation Theory, section 2 on donkey sentences and section 3.1 on the basics of DRT; (ii) van Der Sandt (1992): Presupposition Projection as Anaphora Resolution, section 2 (or the whole paper, if you're interested and have time, haha).
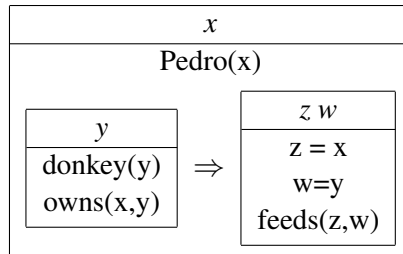
Regarding donkey sentences and DRT:

1. In the sentence *No farmer beats his donkey,* Beaver and Geurts say that *his* cannot be coreferential with *no farmer* (though it is anaphoric to it). Why can't they be coreferential?

2. Rather, the relationship between the pronoun and the antecedent is one of *binding,* in the logical sense of the word. What is the logical sense of *binding,* as they explain it?

3. (4a) *Pedro beats his donkey and Juan does too* is ambiguous in a way that (4b) *Every farmer beats his donkey and Juan does too* is not. Fill in the following blanks using either "referential" or "bound variable": (4a) has both ___ and ___ interpretations, whereas (4b) has only a ___ interpretation.

4. Dialogues like "Pedro owns a donkey. It is grey." pose a problem. On one hand, we want to say that *it* is referential because ___. But on the other hand, we want to say that it is a bound variable because ___.

5. The same dilemma arises in sentences like *If Pedro owns a donkey, he beats it.* Do your best to explain why this is.

6. Here is a DRS:

i u
like(i,u)

   What is the universe of this DRS? What is the condition set?

7. Say the embedding function f maps i to John and u to Mary, and in model M, John likes Mary. Then does f verify the DRS in the previous question?

8. In the text, "A farmer chased a donkey. He caught it." the pronouns *he* and *it* are anaphoric to *a farmer* and *a donkey,* respectively. How is this represented at DRS level?

9. In a text like "Pedro doesn't have a donkey. It is grey." the pronoun *it* cannot refer back to *a donkey* because the discourse referent associated with *a donkey* is introduced in a DRS that is not ___ to the DRS in which the discourse referent in which *it* is introduced.

10. Conditional sentences like *If Pedro owns a donkey, he beats it* are represented with DRSs like this:

$$
\boxed{
\begin{array}{c}
x \\ \hline
\text{Pedro}(x) \\
\boxed{\begin{array}{c} y \\ \hline \text{donkey}(y) \\ \text{owns}(x,y) \end{array}} \Rightarrow \boxed{\begin{array}{c} z\ w \\ \hline z = x \\ w = y \\ \text{feeds}(z,w) \end{array}}
\end{array}
}
$$

Is the DRS corresponding to the antecedent of the conditional accessible to the DRS corresponding to the consequent?

11. Extra credit: DRT provides a solution to the dilemma posed by donkey sentences because: ___.

Regarding van der Sandt:

1. van der Sandt claims that presuppositions are just ___.

2. While talking about previous authors who have recognized the fact that definite descriptions can be used anaphorically, van der Sandt says (p. 342): "The closest to the position defended here is the view put forward in Heim's thesis (1982). Her statement of the novelty/familiarity condition simply comes down to the claim that definiteness is anaphoricity." What he's talking about is Heim's idea that indefinites like *a farmer* introduce a *new* ("novel") discourse referent, while definites like *the farmer* use an *old* ("familiar") discourse referent. In DRT, what it means to be new is that the DRS that forms the background against which a sentence is uttered does not already contain the discourse referent. If the background DRS has the discourse referent already, then the discourse referent is old. (You can also think of novelty as we did in the previous assignment; this is more hardcore.) If definites use old discourse referents, then they are anaphors – **Why?** (Hence definiteness is anaphoricity.)

3. van Der Sandt points to a parallel between (14-16a) on the one hand and (14-16b) on the other hand. What is the relationship between the (a) sentences and the (b) sentences?

4. So, van der Sandt says, instead of talking about suspending, cancelling, or neutralizing presuppositions, we should rather talk about ___ them.

5. As van der Sandt says (p. 345), "In case a pronoun cannot be linked with a suitable antecedent, the whole sentence will not get an interpretation. However, under the same conditions presuppositional sentences may get a determinate value. There is an obvious explanation for this." What is his explanation?

6. What is the difference between local and global accommodation? Give an example of both.

7. van Der Sandt says that his theory makes a different prediction from the Karttunen/Heim account regarding sentence (27). What do Karttunen/Heim predict? What does van Der Sandt predict?

8. Extra credit: How does van Der Sandt account for the absence of the presupposition in (48) *If John has a child, his child is happy*?