Structures and Procedures: Procedures Encoded by the Structure of the Linguistic Expressions

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In the development of a relevance-theoretic procedural framework, it is accepted that linguistic expressions and structures can encode information about the computations involved in the interpretation of the utterances that contain them (Blakemore (2002: 98)). However, it has not been fully investigated how the structure of the linguistic expressions is involved in the interpretation of the utterance including them and what procedure they can encode. This paper examines procedural information encoded by the structure of linguistic expressions, especially focusing on the linguistic expressions such as verbal anaphora, ellipses, deictic expressions and those that include hidden constituents. What these linguistic expressions have in common is that they encode an underdetermined meaning and that the interpretation of the utterance that contains them needs the maximization of pragmatic inference. These expressions are also assumed to contribute to the explicit side of communication.

These minimally linguistically-encoded expressions provide some linguistic clues for guiding us to the precise interpretation including them for the minimum possible processing effort. In this respect, the presumption of relevance is satisfied to some extent among the use of these expressions. But they contribute to utterance interpretation in quite a different procedural way.

Comparing verbal anaphora such as *do it* with elliptical expressions such as verb phrase ellipsis, both anaphoric devices encode a procedure instructing the addressee to access their referent within the representation of a representation accessed as the source of anaphoric resolution. This is a matter of metarepresentation. The only difference between the two is that the resolution of verbal anaphora depends on the resemblance in content with its intended referent, whereas that of syntactic ellipsis depends upon the resemblance in form. The comprehension processes of these expressions are operated by saturation in that the interpretation of the utterance including them resorts to the recognition of explicit linguistic clues. In this respect, anaphoric devices provide distinctive instructions from the minimally linguistically-encoded expressions whose interpretation is gone through free enrichment. Moreover, anaphoric devices have a different cognitive status from deictic expressions because the referent of anaphoric expressions has a high degree of cognitive salience and focus level, instead of deictic elements whose referent is activated in the process of communication on the move (cf. Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1993). These two linguistic expressions seem to manipulate an addressee's attention focus in quite a different manner. Anaphoric expressions signal the addressee to sustain the existing attention focus as it was established earlier in his or her mind. Deictic expressions, on the other hand, instruct the addressee to alter his or her attention focus from an existing object of discourse towards a specific object derived via the situational context of utterance.

Procedural framework is designed to offer a fine-grained account of how the structure of linguistic expressions makes a different contribution to the interpretation of the utterance in which they occur and reflect the subtle distinctions between the procedures they encode.