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ABSTRACT

Although the nature of topicalization is complex and cannot be easily separated from considerations of syntactic structure and sentence focus, analysis of language usage has indicated that topicalization is more a stylistic than a syntactic process. Topicalization refers to moving a noun phrase (NP) into the initial position of a sentence. Examples of language use demonstrate that speakers and writers often use passive constructions as part of their rhetorical strategies because the passive allows movement of NPs into virtually any position within the sentence. The apparent ease with which NPs can be topicalized seems to have less to do with the distinctions between old and new information than with packaging the information so that it is processed and interpreted by the audience in ways that favor the motivations of the speaker/writer. Even the syntactic configurations characteristic of "objective" prose enable simple transformations of NPs that systematically suppress agency, which is another way of manipulating audience response. What this evidence indicates is that syntactic rules exist because they favor certain descriptions of the world over others; thus, any attempt to construct a grammar based on "case" relations as somehow inherent in the construction of sentences is not only doomed to failure but abdicates the responsibility of discovering how sentences come to be produced and interpreted. (RL)

Topicalization: A Stylistic Process

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In recent years, linguists have begun to expand their analyses of syntactic rules and to explore the ways in which these rules operate to structure, or "package," the information content of sentences. To date, most of the work done has been concentrated on the various potential roles that noun phrases (NPs) are assigned in a sentence and the interaction between their surface structure position and the interpretation processes of the hearer. It is now generally agreed that the label "subject," as a term referring to an NP function in a sentence, is not descriptively adequate. Instead, we find a proliferation of terms used to designate the various, complex roles of the initial NP of a sentence: topic, theme, agent, surface subject, and logical subject. In this paper I will refer to the first NP in a sentence or clause as the <u>topic</u>, and to the syntactic process that moves an NP into initial position as <u>topicalization</u>.

It is my purpose here to examine examples of language use which challenge the assumption that underlies most of the work done in the area of topicalization, namely, that a speaker makes choices in the structuring of a message <u>only</u> in the "best interests" of the hearer. This description naively casts the speaker in a discourse context as a "benevolent dictator" who seeks only to accommodate the message to what s/he imagines to be "temporary states of the addressee's mind" (Chafe, 1976: 28), and assumes that it is always the speaker's purpose to provide maximum information structured in such a way that the hearer can interpret the message with maximum ease. Furthermore, my data suggest that topicalization is not a grammatical process, as many suppose, but a stylistic process, a choice that is based more on the rhetorical purposes of the speaker than it is on consideration for the listener.

The observation that the syntactic rules of Enlgish produce both ambiguous and/or uninterpretable sentences that are fully grammatical is a

commonplace in discussions of linguistic structure (Stanley, 1979). We also have adequate evidence that specific syntactic rules produce sentences that contain little or no information for the hearer, such as the truncated passive (Stanley, 1975; Stanley and Robbins, 1978). Is topicalization merely a "meaning-preserving" syntactic rule that moves "old" information into sentence-initial position, or is it a rhetorically-motivated stylistic rule that enables composers to move <u>any</u> NP to the beginning of a sentence so that the addressee is encouraged to accept whatever information the NP carries as "old" or "given"? It is, in fact, the passive construction that has served to emphasize to us the importance of topicalization because it permits us to topicalize the object of the verb and to "demote" the agent NP to sentence focus position or delete it entirely. The generally-accepted description of the "rhetorical" purpose of the NP-shift executed by the passive rule proposes that the object of the verb is fronted because it is "old" information, while the agent is moved into focus position because it is "new" information. The rhetorical potentials of the passive construction are, however, much richer than the literature admits. The quotations in Part I illustrate some of the more common syntactic variations permitted by the passive construction, and their different effects suggest that the numerous NP positions made possible by the passive transformation have little or nothing to do with simplistic notions about "old" and "new" information.

I. a. <u>By their teachers</u>, girls are rated higher in language development than boys.

b. <u>By them</u>, Gilles de Paris was declared guilty of Satanism, sorcery, and apostasy, and there and then handed over to the civil arm. . .

(Montague Summers, "Introduction" to the 1928 edition of <u>The Malleus Maleficarum</u>, xvii.)

e. By the world around me I am pressured to give up my children.

(Article in Lesbian Connection IV (May 1978), p. 1.)

d. Dialects can by linguists be classified and divided.

e. I wants get hold of some real language that's by kids used.

f. In 1315, during the brief reign of Louis X, the oldest son of Philip IV, was hanged Enguerrand de Marigny, Chamberlain, privy counsellor, and chief favourite of Philip, whom, it was alleged, he had bewitched to gain the royal favour.

(Montague Summers, Malleus Maleficarum, 1948 edition, p. vi.)

g. Connected now with my nagging anxiety about what the Baffins were going to think of me was the huge problem of Christian.

(Iris Murdoch, The Black Prince, p. 31.)

h. To London even more generally than to Oxford were drawn people from different parts of the country.

i. It's something to be done by not me.

j. Was she [Chris] cut by the cruel injustice. . .? Was she struck by the amusing irony. . .? Was she despaired by the world's rejoicing. . .?

(Chris Costner Sizemore, I'm Eve, p. 353.)

The variety of positions available for all of the NPs in these examples suggest that both topicalization and focus are less connected with any putative "hierarchy of accessibility" (Keenan and Comrie, 1972) or interpretability criterion than they are with the speaker's rhetorical purposes. Sentences a-e, for example, are usually said to illustrate "contrastive sentence focus" (Chafe, 1976); that is, the agent demoted to focus position by the operation of the passive rule is moved later into sentence-initial position and thus brought into contrastive focus with the object of the verb, which has become the topic. In g., it is the entire VP, usually regarded as the "comment," that has been topicalized; in h. it is the complex adverb of place that has been fronted. In sentence i. we see the passive

agent in focus position, but the insertion of not serves to place it in contrastive focus to some other unnamed individual. In j., we have an intransitive verb passivized, was despaired, something regarded as an "impossibility" in linguistics. It is this last sequence in j. and the complicated sentence in f. that may shed some light on the importance of the speaker's motivations or the "packaging" of information for the hearer.

We must ask, for example, why an "unacceptable" sentence like the question, "Was she despaired by the world's rejoicing?," should not only come into existence but, probably, go unremarked upon by a majority of the readers of the book from which it was taken? The answer, I would suggest, lies in the structure of the preceding material in the quotation, in which we find two fully grammatical passivized questions, "Was she cut" and "Was she struck." What we have is a series of rhetorical questions directed to the reader of the book in which she is the topic of the discourse context. The "correct," active version of the question, "Did she despair at the world's rejoicing?," retains she as the topic, and "the world's rejoicing" remains in sentence focus position. It is not, as Chafe (1972, 1976) maintains, that she is given or "old" information in the context, because the active version would have served just as well to keep she in topic position. It is, clearly, the rhetorical sequence of parallel questions and the necessity to keep their structures identical that creates the possibility of a passivized intransitive verb. Here, one might invoke the criterion of "ease of interpretability" as a motivation for the "unacceptable" construction, but it would still be necessary to account for the specific interpretation forced by the use of the passivized intransitive, i.e., that the woman [Chris] referred to by she is cast as a

victim by the constructions, a being more acted upon than acting.

In the long quotation from Montague Summers, in I.f., however, we will have to admit the possibility of different rhetorical strategies in operation; it is clear that "ease of interpretation" on the part of the reader is not Summers' primary motivation. Nor are these relative clauses the result of what Susumu Kuno (1976) has called "speaker empathy." Summers' structuring of the message in this passage reflects only his point of view, his bias. Consider, for example, the fact that the sentence itself opens with a long adverb of time, not a topicalized object or agent NP! In fact, the object NP, which should have been the topic of the sentence, turns up in the position in which it would occur in the active version of the sentence, after the verb, was hanged. There can be only one reason for its position in this sentence: It sets up the appositive clause which contains the name of Philip, who becomes the object, whom, of the last clause in the sentence, he (referring back to Enguerrand de [illegible]igny) had bewitched to gain the royal favor. Notice that this last clause is also the only active construction in the sentence, and its overt agentive NP is the "guilty party," suddenly foregrounded for the reader. The only way that Summers could have managed an active clause at this point in the sentence was to place the antecedent in a truncated passive after the verb, which then set up the relative clause in which Philip is topicalized as the object of the verb bewitched. The additional embedded passivized relative, it was alleged, although doubtless intended as a caveat, with its dummy topic it and deleted agent(s), should serve to warn us that we are reading an extremely convoluted sentence constructed, not to give us maximum information or to make our interpretive process easier, but to present us with the information Summers wants us to have in the order

in which he wants us to process it.

The sentences in Part I demonstrate that speakers and writers use the passive construction to further different rhetorical strategies because the passive makes it possible to move all of the NPs in a given sentence into virtually any position within the sentence. The first example of Part II illustrates a mid-speech shift that detopicalizes the passivized object only because of rhetorical considerations.

II. a. It appeared that the tigers were reacting to a drug they had been injected with. . .[pause]. . .that had been injected in them.

In this particular sentence, the zookeeper who made the statement had at least three ways of explaining what had happened to the tigers, and he tried two of them. There are three candidates for topicalization among the NPs in the sentence, they (referring to the tigers), a drug, and we or I (depending on the actual responsibility for administering the drug). In the first version of the sentence tried out by the zookeeper, they does appear as the topic of the relative clause, but after a thoughtful pause, the zookeeper decided to make the drug the topic and moved the pronoun referring to the dead tigers to focus position. How does this shift in topic serve specific rhetorical strategies of the zookeeper? In order to answer this question fully, we must first consider the third option for topicalization, the one that the zookeeper rejected from the beginning, because the third choice made by the speaker isn't at all obvious from the surface structure of the utterance. If we return to the beginning of the sentence, we notice first that the topic of the matrix sentence is it, the dummy topic left behind by the extra-position transformation. Second, the predicate of the matrix sentence is appear, which requires an experiencer NP at some stage

in its derivation. It is the deleted experiencer of the verb appear, which could have been either to us or to me, that could have become the overt agent in the third version of the utterance available to the speaker, e.g., It appeared to me/us that the tigers were reacting to a drug I/we had injected them with. Notice, however, that, had the experiencer surfaced in the matrix sentence, the speaker would have made overt the human agency behind the death of the tigers, and the truncated passive relative clause, with its agent deleted, would have been less successful because the experiencer of the matrix and the agent of the embedded clause are undoubtedly coreferential. We can now return to the question regarding the efficacy of the topic selected for the relative clause. The truncated passive construction, which remains stable in both of the speaker's versions of the sentence, suppresses the third candidate for topicalization, the agent/experiencer, thus leaving only two remaining candidates for topicalization, the inanimate instrument, the drug, or the dead tigers themselves. Given these two choices, it becomes clear why the zookeeper chose to topicalize the instrument rather than the dead tigers. Also of interest in this example though, is the pronoun that in the second version, which has been substituted for its antecedent, a drug, which apparently need not be rementioned in the revised version of the sentence. If a listener missed the overt reference to the drug that killed the tigers in the initial version of the sentence, s/he would learn little from the revision.

The apparent ease with which virtually any NP can be topicalized, depending upon the rhetorical requirements of the speaker's situation, seems to have less to do with Chafe's suggested distinction between "old" and "new" information than it does with "packaging" information so that it is processed and interpreted by the hearer in ways that favor the speaker's

motivations over those of the listener. In II.a., for example, the topic shift has nothing to do with what is "old" or "new" information to the listener, and a great deal to do with what the zookeeper is trying to hide from the listening audience. In fact, it is easier to maneuver such shifts in topic during speech, because the hearers must process and interpret speech much more quickly than they do written language and they may lose what was said previously when the discourse takes an unexpected turn. In written discourse, however, shifts in topic can still be managed unobtrusively as long as the shifts are carefully structured. Consider, for example, the sequence of sentences in II.b.

II. b. Middle East harems are inherited. . .Not every potentate's son is glad of that. The youth bequeathed a houseful of heavyweights, did not always admire his father's choices. In bygone years, the harem women were fed oils. Fat was the fashion.

(Sioux City Journal, 7/8/79, A13)

Briefly, note that the topic of the first sentence is "Middle East harems," while the topic of the last sentence is "fat." In order to trace the development of the discourse that makes this change in subject seem "inevitable," consider the underlined NPs and their relationships. First, the writer presents us with a truncated passive; the agent here, undoubtedly either potentate or father, has been deleted, although it will surface in the next two sentences as a possessive. The topicalized object of the passive, "Middle East harems," is not "old" or "given" information as far as the readers of the newspaper are concerned; it is, in its own way, the major subject of the discourse itself, reappearing as the direct object of a passive in the third sentence, "a houseful of heavyweights," as the

object choices in the matrix of the third sentence, and, finally, as "the harem women," the topic of the fourth sentence, again by means of a passive construction, again with the agent deleted. It is important to note in this example that the agents have been deleted, not because they are unknown, or "irrelevant," or "old" information. The agents have been deleted because the writer wants the reader to internalize only the information that is made available. The transition from focus to topic in the last two sentences makes this strategic use of structure very clear. The direct object of the fourth sentence, oils, which is in "focus" position, provides the tie-in to fat, the topic of the last sentence, and the "idea" with which the reader is left at the end of the discourse. The discourse precedent for both oils and fat occurs in the embedded relative clause mentioned previously as "heavyweights." Of interest here is the condescending male tone that pervades the discourse for, of course, this passage is written as a "male interest" piece. Although we know that harems consist largely, if not entirely of wimmin, the fact that the writer is talking about wimmin doesn't surface until the next-to-the-last sentence. Although the subject of the discourse is specifically the heaviness of harem wimmin, male-specific nouns dominate in sentences two and three, and are the deleted agents of all three truncated passive constructions. This sentence is not bizarre or strange or atypical; it is standard, journalistic prose of the sort churned out for consumption by its male readers (and most of those who have access to the production end of the media assume that their audiences are male). This discourse was structured, not in accordance with some "hierarchy of accessibility" that requires an elaborate grammatical explanation, but to satisfy the writer's superiority and to share his smugness with his male readers. In order to read this passage without wincing, one must, of course, already agree with

the writer's point of view.

Such shifts in topic don't always require truncated passives for their structure. Active constructions will do just as well, as II.c. demonstrates.

II. c. If you tell people Portugal is Paraguay, and you don't mislead them, they'll believe you.

The syntactic structure of these three clauses is relatively simple, two if-clauses conjoined, followed by the requisite then-clause. The topic of both conditional clauses is you and the d.o. of both is people, replaced by the pronoun them in its second occurrence. But in the third clause, the then-clause, the structural relationship between you and people is reversed; they, referring back to people, has become the topic, and you is now in focus position. Neither NP, however, can be said to be either "old" or "new" information. The pronoun you is not in sentence focus position because it's new information in the third clause, any more than it was in topic position in the first clause because it was old information. The sentence itself is about telling lies, and the speaker produced a sentence that perfectly illustrates the process of lying: If you want people to believe what you're saying, move your NPs around; shift the topic and the focus, interchange them. Anyone fast enough to notice will only become confused and lose the thread of discourse altogether.

Although, as the preceding discussion suggests, the nature of topicalization is complex and cannot be easily separated from considerations of syntactic structure and sentence focus, I hope that my analysis has indicated that topicalization is a stylistic, not a syntactic, process. I would like to suggest that we are dealing, not with isolated phenomena that occur with or without design in specific stretches of discourse, but with the principle of vanishing agency, a process made possible because the syntactic rules of the language have evolved in order to make it possible for writers/speakers to

construct entire sentences in which there is no agency for the actions described. In this way, we have created, and continue to use, a language in which it is possible to utter (or write) a great many words, giving the appearance of substance, but without saying anything worthwhile at all. The sentences in Part III illustrate the many different kinds of syntactic structure that erase agency in contexts in which no one really wants to say or hear who, exactly, is responsible for the actions, feelings, knowledge described in the discourse.

III. a. I am woman, hear me roar,
In numbers too big to ignore.

(Helen Reddy, "I am Woman")

b. Waste containers and tray holders have now been provided at the exit. Your cooperation is appreciated.

(Sign posted in Andy's Quik-Serve, Lincoln, Nebraska)

c. Luckily for normal behavior, there are limits on the extent to which discrimination and generalization occur.

(Psychology Today)

d. The great difficulty, of course, is in deciding how much information need be protected, and in setting standards to define what may be kept secret and for how long.

(David Wise, The Politics of Lying)

e. It is also of interest to note that the greatest changes take place in the first few years in the new environment.

(B. S. Bloom, "Intelligence," Chap. 3 of Stability and Change in Human Characteristics)

f. It has been decisioned that some form of unit rotation may be a desireable objective. . .Recent CMC decisions have alleviated the major inhibitors allowing a fresh approach and revaluation of alternative methods of unit replacement...

(From Public Doublespeak Newsletter)

g. To accommodate needs for overtime which are identified as a result of the initiation of the procedures contained herein during the period of time necessary to institute alternative

procedures to meet the identified need.

(From Public Doublespeak Newsletter)

h. It shouldn't depend on how the person was buried to determine how they will be remembered.

(Student essay)

i. Some things have become 'good' during the evolutionary history of the species, and they may be used to induce people to behave for 'the good of others.'

(B. F. Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity, p. 125)

j. The value is to be found in the social contingencies maintained for purposes of control. It is an ethical or moral judgment in the sense that ethos and mores refer to the customary practices of a group.

(B. F. Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity, pp. 112-3)

k. It is not difficult to see what is wrong in most educational environments, and much has already been done to design materials which make learning as easy as possible and to construct contingencies, in the classroom and elsewhere, which give students powerful reasons for getting an education.

(B. F. Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity, pp. 156-7)

l. Racial prejudice is the most obvious prejudice in today's world.

(Student essay)

m. It is a desire so that he may come back.

(Student essay)

n. Helping the child, during discussions of music and practice sessions, to understand the importance of music in her life is important.

(Student essay)

Ignoring for a moment the examples in a., b., h., and l.-n., the majority of the sentences quoted in this section typify what most loosely label as "objective" style. I say "loosely" because, in spite of the fact that other researchers have observed that this type of prose is characterized by passive constructions and nominalizations of various kinds,

to the best of my knowledge no one has pointed out that such syntactic constructions share one important structural property: They remove agency. In d., for example, we have no idea who has decided that something is "difficult," who decides what someone will protect, who will set standards who will keep which secrets from whom, while in g. we never discover whose "needs" have anonymously been "identified," who will "accommodate" them, who initiated the procedures, who determined the exact extent of time "necessary" before some unnamed individual could "institute" the procedures that would meet the, once again, anonymously identified needs of unspecified persons.

Without dwelling excessively on the specific ways in which agency is syntactically suppressed by the grammatical rules of English, I would like to emphasize that what we generally call "the objective style" is not objective at all; it is clearly biased, and it serves the interests of those who persist in writing it. More importantly, it is the "target style" for most of our students, who aspire to write someday as they have been taught to believe they should. In III. a., for example, hardly anyone would willingly describe Helen Reddy's lyrics as "objective," yet there is no difference, syntactically, between her use of the imperative and the infinitive constructions. It is her "feminist" content that many listeners find objectionable, but she is actually trying to be "objective." She does not tell us WHO she is implicitly addressing with the imperative "hear me," nor do we know from the syntax WHO will be unable "to ignore" our numbers. Reddy, in an attempt not to sound inflammatory, has resorted to the silence imposed by invisible agency; she has surrendered, by refusing to name the enemy of wimmin she addresses: men and the wimmin allied with them. The admonition of example b., taken as it is from a restaurant sign, illustrates how our minds make leaps across the informational gaps left by the "impersonal,"

"objective" style. In the first sentence, we are told that the owners have thoughtfully placed garbage cans and tray holders next to the exit. We are then gallantly thanked for our "cooperation." Between the two statements, we have inferred that the owners expect us to put our garbage in the cans, our trays on the appropriate holder, as we leave the restaurant. The owners thank us in advance for supplying the appropriate inferences as well as for compliance with their unspoken orders. Our students aspire to the syntactic sterility of "objective" prose without having acquired adequate mastery of its complexities to execute it convincingly. Their lack of control of the syntactic maneuvers required for maintaining the "impersonal" style is evidenced in examples h. and l.-n. in which we find an ill-fated attempt at it-extraposition, several hapless repetitions, and garble, in which the original intention of the sentence has been lost.

That the syntactic configurations characteristic of "objective" prose are simply those transformations that systematically suppress agency in sentences can be seen clearly in the examples provided in Part IV below.

IV. a. The incest frequently is precipitated by the wife by sexually frustrating her spouse or recoiling in disgust at his behaviors and excesses (i.e., alcoholism, infidelity, pedophilia).

(From Ms. "No Comment," 7/79, p. 100)

b. Probably the next prejudice was towards wimmin. Early humans learned that wimmin were not as physically strong as men and therefore couldn't possibly be the equals of men. . .Therefore they started treating wimmin like any other possession.

(Student essay)

c. The rule of grammar you speak of, which is to use the masculine pronoun when it applies to both male and female, was NOT devised to put down women. And it is not likely to be changed in the interest of women's rights.

("Dear Abby" column)

d. Women are here to stay so let's make the best of them.

(Outdoor sign in Sioux City, Iowa, 1975)

e. Marriage Pillow assures greater marital joy and fulfillment! Tested and modified according to suggestions of marriage counselors, religious and medical. Affords resiliency & adjustable elevation for more sensitive alignment.

(Ad in Spencer's catalog, 1979)

f. Written and directed by Abby Mann. . ., the miniseries could stir controversy over its unflattering depiction of the FBI and the Kennedy Administration. But there's no doubting Paul Winfield's excellent performance in the title role, . . .

("The Screening Room," TV Guide)

g. A March Against Rape will be held on Monday, June 18, 1979. Join us for the March to make Lincoln's streets safe from assault.

(Ad for Take Back the Night March)

The examples in Part IV make clear the relationship between the suppression of agency achieved by English syntactic rules and the process of topicalization, the subject with which I began this paper. Most, if not all, of the sentences in this section illustrate the construction of bias: The use of syntactic constructions to create syntactic euphemisms. In IV. a., for example, the writer selected incest as the topic of the sentence, and the passive has moved the wife to sentence focus position along with her "crimes": "frustrating" her husband and "recoiling" from his criminal behaviors. The effect of the sentence, thus constructed, is to make the wife responsible for whatever ugly deeds her husband engages in. However heinous his crimes, hers is the worst: She drove him to it! The next sequence of sentences begins with prejudice as the topic of the initial sentence, then humans becomes the second topic, while women is the object of the pseudo-predicate towards in the first sentence, and the topic of the embedded clause in the second. Although the they that is the topic of the

last sentence is potentially ambiguous, it can only have humans as its antecedent, since women have been distinguished from "early humans" and have become the object of the verb treat. The process of topicalization becomes a means of setting wimmin apart, as "other." Syntactic euphemism at its best (or worst) is exemplified in IV.g., in which everything specific about a Take Back the Night March has been suppressed. We are exhorted "to make Lincoln's streets safe from sexual assault," but everyone knows that it is men who are the agents of sexual assaults against wimmin. The place in which some sexual assaults occur has become the object to be protected. Wimmin, the victims of sexual assault, are as invisible as the men who are guilty of the crime of rape. There are no names named here—we protect the guilty and erase the victims.

As brief as my examination of these examples has been, I have tried to indicate that topicalization, and the related processes of creating "subjects" and "objects," are not "grammatical" phenomena. Syntactic rules are not neutral. The rules of English syntax exist because they make particular descriptions of events and people possible. While some might wish to maintain that the rules themselves are "neutral," that it is people who use language in order to promote their own interests, their own biases, the evidence indicates that the rules exist because they favor certain descriptions of the world over others. In the process of presenting these examples, I have questioned the almost universal assumption that speakers use syntactic rules in order to package information for ease of interpretation on the part of the hearer, indicated that Chafe's hypothesis concerning the placement of NPs as being based on the distinction between "old" and "new" information simply does not explain the construction of specific examples, and that any attempt to construct a grammar based on "case" relations as somehow inherent

in the construction of sentences is not only doomed to failure but abdicates the responsibility of discovering how sentences come to be produced and interpreted. On the basis of my analysis, I would like to suggest three tentative hypotheses for further investigation: (1) Speakers construct sentences as much to minimize interpretation as to maximize it for the hearer/reader; (2) Syntactic roles of specific NPs are assigned, not on the basis of functions that inhere in sentences, but on the basis of rhetorical strategies known only to the speaker/writer; (3) That many of the phenomena being classified as "purely grammatical" are, in fact, stylistic, and represent ways in which rules are used rather than grammatical phenomena per se, for example, topicalization. While I don't have time here to characterize more fully the implications of this research, I hope that this paper has at least provided a starting point for further investigations and indicated some of the directions we might fruitfully pursue. Minimally, we must cast aside the "objective" blinders that have made it seem desirable to assume that linguistic rules operate in order to maximize the interpretation of information. Those aspects of language use most often disguised as "context variables," "packaging," or "states of mind" are, instead, descriptions of the world that we are expected to accept.

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