The Pear Stories

Cognitive, Cultural, and Linguistic Aspects of Narrative Production

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5 Beyond Definiteness: The Trace of Identity in Discourse

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The study of narrative discourse, as exemplified in the essays in this book, treats the unfolding of narrative and the expression of this unfolding narrative in words.[1] The opening scene is set, characters and objects introduced, and events described, as the narrative shifts from scene to scene. In approaching this phenomenon, one may choose to examine the portioning of narrative content into discourse units (Chafe, Chapter 1), the selection of a prominent referent to take on the role of subject in a clause (Bernardo, Chapter 6), or the influence of the larger cultural context on the expression of events and evaluations (Tannen, Chapter 2). Or, one may focus on a phenomenon of narrower scope: the verbalization of characters and objects within the discourse. This is the domain of the essays that Downing and Clancy contributed to this book and of the present chapter.

Though apparently narrow, the topic has two distinct aspects. On the one hand, one may consider the static aspect of nominal verbalization. The speaker is confronted by an object whose semantic substance requires expression. He must draw on his cultural knowledge and his understanding of his addressee in order to decide what is salient and hence worthy of verbalization, and he employs his semantic knowledge in the expression of the appropriate categorization. Downing deals with this facet of the problem. But

the task of verbalization is not yet over when a place has been found in the semantic grid for an object. The object must be first introduced into the discourse as a discrete entity, and then traced through the evolving narrative. The continuity of the object's identity must be established. This continuity of the real object with itself runs as a continuous thread in the real world, but in discourse the continuity can be expressed only intermittently, through phrases which appear at intervals in the narration. This chapter focuses on the linguistic means by which such intermittent phrases may be used to trace continuous identity. The chapter thus includes what has usually been studied as "definiteness," but goes beyond the usual boundaries set for the topic.

Tracing objects through a narrative is not carried out in isolation from other discourse tasks. It interacts in significant fashion with the choice of semantic categorization discussed by Downing. And an integral aspect of the problem is the competition between distinct reference item types, such as full noun phrases, pronouns, and ellipsis. This topic, only touched upon in this chapter, is taken up in detail by Clancy. Further, the present study has repercussions for higher-level phenomena, since reference to an object may, under certain conditions, control the form of the following sentence.

One may state the outlook of this study from two distinct viewpoints: the functional and the formal. Functionally, we may ask how objects are introduced into and traced through a discourse. Formally, we seek to state the distribution of the English articles. This latter approach, though apparently restricted, leads ultimately to the examination of a wide variety of contrasting linguistic forms and, further, to the examination of the functional conditions which govern their distribution. In stating the distribution of the definite article, one must specify not only where it occurs but where it does not occur. The definite singular reference item *the bicycle* contrasts with the indefinite *a bicycle,* and further with the articleless *bicycle,* the possessed *his bicycle,* the plural *bicycles,* the pronominal *it,* and, in the case of subject deletion, a zero realization. The choice among these reference items is in turn governed by the choice between narrative and descriptive "discourse modes," and the choice of semantic/pragmatic features: referential or nonreferential, identifiable or nonidentifiable, generic or individual. It is further influenced by the speaker's exploitation of frames as an economical means of presenting information.

A thorough study of definiteness must give full attention to these secondary, related problems, which in fact form inseparable parts of a single theory of language in use. The literature on definiteness has often dealt only with the definite article and, for contrast, the indefinite article; at the same time it has isolated definiteness from larger considerations of discourse structure as a whole. But the range of contrasting reference items is much greater than the two article forms, and many crucial phenomena related to definiteness are either not found or not easily recognized within the domain of the one-sentence or two-sentence examples which are typically used. The

limitation is remedied through the study of whole, naturally produced narratives.

The literature on definiteness in English is quite extensive; only a few studies can be mentioned here. The most substantial work remains that of Christophersen (1939), who collected and classified a large body of important definiteness phenomena and provided numerous insightful observations, although the analysis is often diffuse. More unified but less exhaustive analyses are presented by Jespersen (1924, 1933) and, more recently, Kartunnen (1968) and Chafe (1972). Chafe (1976) defines the crucial and sometimes unrecognized distinction between the statuses of "definite" and "given," and generally provides an effective placement of definiteness in the larger context of packaging. Halliday and Hasan (1976) present a valuable discussion of "phoricity" which will be drawn on in this work. Givón (1978) offers a discussion of definiteness in several languages whch recognizes interaction with other discourse phenomena. In the philosophical literature, a useful examination of the nature of identification may be found in Searle (1969). In psychology, the work of Haviland and Clark on "bridging"(1974) is of interest, although bridging is misleadingly presented as an artifact of givenness rather than definiteness (see Chafe, 1976:41–42). Extensive bibliography may be found in Christophersen (1939) for early sources and in Krámský (1972) for more recent literature. Hawkins (1978), Hewson (1972), and Robbins (1968) illustrate some recent approaches to definiteness.

Though much has been written on definiteness, there is no analysis available which will encompass all the observations made here on the tracing of objects through discourse. Thus, before turning to the detailed analysis of the pear film narratives presented in the latter portion of this chapter, it will first be necessary for me to outline my own typology and analytical methodology. This system is sketched in the Analysis section. I will not present full arguments for each point in the system; this would be beyond the scope of the present article. Nor will I point out all innovations and restructuring of previous systems. A summary of the more important new contributions appears in the concluding pages of the chapter.

In recognition of the importance of examining whole texts, the present study has been based primarily on narrations of the plot of a brief film (the pear film) which was shown to 20 speakers of English. The preface describes the gathering of these data and their transcription and preliminary analysis. (The "repeat narratives" which were collected from several speakers on a second occasion have not been included in the data base for this chapter.)

From the collected narratives, all mentions of characters and objects in the film were isolated for analysis. By *character* is meant simply a person in the film. References by the speaker to herself(*I*) or to the interviewer (*you*) are not included under this term. *Objects* include the nonhuman animates and the objects in the film, as well as sounds, and in a few cases, events that are

bounded off and referred to nominally (*a little accident*). Basically the term *object* includes all noun phrases except idioms (*the first place* in *in the first place*), syntactically motivated noun phrases (*whether the boy was stealing pears*), and noun phrases which refer to artifacts of the experimental situation (*the movie*), or to portions of the narrative itself (*that* in *has anybody told you that before?*)

The term *mention*, as applied in this study to a particular character or object, indicates all noun phrases, whether referential or nonreferential, which may be in some way related to the object in question. It is a pretheoretical construct which is not intended to have any psychological or linguistic significance, but merely serves to gather all the data into approachable groups for explanation. I will speak of the *first mention* (*second mention*, etc.) of an object to mean its first (second, etc.) appearance, under whatever label or description, in the narrative text.

The reader will find that some familiarity with the plot of the pear film will be useful in understanding many of the examples presented in this chapter: a synopsis may be found in the Preface.

In addition to the primary source of data just described, some data will be drawn from a second experiment in which three brief isolated film segments were extracted form the original pear film and shown to 98 subjects, after which they were asked to give written descriptions of what happened in each of the three film clips.

ANALYSIS

The most basic function of the English articles is to contrast identifiable and nonidentifiable referents. In one common pattern, a person or object is introduced into discourse with the indefinite article and subsequent mentions receive the definite article:

(1)   then a boy [1st mention][2] comes by, ... on a bicycle; the man is in
       the tree, ... and the boy [2nd] gets off the bicycle, (Speaker 8)

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[2]Mentions of a particular referent are marked "1st", "2nd", and so on, in square brackets following the mention. Only the noun phrases relevant to the discussion at hand are so marked. Following each example an indication of the speaker number is given (Speaker 1, Speaker 2, etc.). Subjects in the second (brief film clip) experiment are indicated as Subject II-1, Subject II-2, and so on. Pauses are indicated by three dots (long pause) or two dots (short pause) rather than with the actual measurement of pause duration, since this is less significant for the present topic. Note that these three dots do not signify omission of material. Examples in this chapter are usually cited beginning from the first word of the clause rather than from the *um*'s, *uh*'s, and so on which may precede it. In order to distinguish the various characters in the film, a set of descriptive names will be used:

The use of *a* in *a boy* shows that the speaker does not expect the hearer to identify which boy is meant; *the* in *the boy* indicates that this identification is expected.

Although the pattern of an indefinite initial mention followed by subsequent definite mentions is quite common, there is a very large body of exceptions. Of the 613 noun phrases that occurred as the initial mention of a particular character or object in the pear film data, fully 34 percent were definite. Perhaps more significantly, a substantial number of noninitial mentions are formally indefinite (4.1 percent for characters). These exceptions to the general pattern are not random and follow several broad principles to be presented later. But in spite of the numerous deviations, it is useful to take the pattern of indefinite first mention and definite subsequent mention as a starting point.

One reason for departures from the basic pattern is that the the basic function of the articles, to mark a contrast in identifiability, is restricted to cases where the contrast is semantically possible. It is not applicable to noun phrases which do not refer and is generally restricted to mentions which are referential and specific. Historically both articles were first used in these circumstances,[3] and this continues to be their characteristic domain of use. Since the articles at an earlier stage of English appeared primarily in referential-specific mentions, many noun phrases bore no article. In Modern English, however, the article has come to be an almost constant accessory to nouns which bear no other determiner. In expanding to noun phrase uses where the identifiability contrast was no longer applicable, the articles either lost their function, becoming neutralized through predictability or interchangeability, or took on new, secondary functions. The result is that the so-called definite article in many cases no longer marks definiteness, even if one equates definiteness with identifiability. This raises the problem of what formal or functional meaning is to be attached to the term *definite*.

The *Pear Man* picks the pears and puts them in baskets.
The *Goat Man* leads the goat past the pear tree.
The *Bike Boy* rides up on a bike and steals some pears.
The *Girl* rides past the Bike Boy on a bicycle.
The *Threesome* help the Bike Boy after his fall.
The *Paddleball Boy* (a member of the Threesome) plays with a paddleball and later returns the Bike Boy's hat.
The *Rock Boy* (a member of the Threesome) removes the rock from the road.
The *Third Boy* (a member of the Threesome) doesn't do much at all.

[3]Christophersen states that the use of the Old English definite article "was at first restricted to cases in which a proper name might have been used" (1939:83, fn1). Later the indefinite article arose in "cases requiring an individualized sense" (1939:98), that is, where reference was to an individual object rather than, say, a categorizing predicative. At this early period, the function of both articles was primarily referential.

There has been much confusion in the use of the term *definite* in the literature. Different writers have equated definiteness with the features of uniqueness or specificity, or with the "packaging" status of old information. So far as these uses of the word *definite* have been intended as theories of the function of the English definite article, they have been incorrect: the best succinct statement of the function of the word *the* is that it marks identifiable referents. This statement, however, applies fully only within the domain of referential-specific mentions. In other areas, such as generic mentions, it does not adequately contrast the functions of *the* and *a*. Because of the great confusion which has existed in the past over what definiteness is, and because it is not in fact possible to specify a single function of the definite article which will apply in all areas of English grammar, it is perhaps best to divorce the question of semantic/pragmatic function from the question of formal marking. The word *definite* may serve a useful purpose in referring to a formal class of reference items which includes not only noun phrases preceded by the definite article (*the boy, the pears*), but also definite pronouns (*I, you, he, she, it*), proper names (*John, London*), and possessed noun phrases (*his bicycle, the man's pears*). Formally indefinite noun phrases include not only those preceded by the indefinite article (*a boy*), but articleless mass nouns (*water*) and plural count nouns (*pears*), plurals preceded by a numeral (*three boys*), and indefinite pronouns (*someone, something*). Use of the cited formally definite reference items marks a referent as identifiable, as long as the mention is referential-specific. Similarly, a referential-specific use of the foregoing formally indefinite reference items marks the referent as nonidentifiable. Thus a legitimate use of the terms *definite* and *indefinite* is to specify the formal classes as delineated. To state the semantic/pragmatic status of a mention, however, one is less prone to misunderstanding if the actual semantic/pragmatic features, such as identifiable, specific, or unique, are directly stated.

I will in general use *definite* and *indefinite* to refer to the formal classes just described. But in discussing referential-specific mentions, where the formal classes coincide with functional classes, the terms may be used with functional meaning where ambiguity is unlikely.

Having used the term *referential* on several occasions, it will be well to specify the particular meaning I attach to it.

> (2) A noun phrase is *referential* when it is used to speak about an object as an object, with continuous identity over time.

The *object* here may be a physical object or an objectified concept; it may be specifically known or it may be unknown; it may exist in the real world or in some hypothetical world; there may be one or more than one object. As long as a noun phrase is used to speak about such objects and the objects are

conceived of as having continuity of identity, the noun phrase is referential. In the following passage, all the noun phrases (*a boy, a bicycle, he, the pears*) are referential:

> (3) and a boy comes by riding a bicycle. . . . And he sees the pears, . . . and he stops. (Speaker 19)

These referential noun phrases may be thought of in cognitive terms as either activating a mental "file" for some object (*a boy, a bicycle*) or referring back to a previously opened file (*he, the pears*). The referential concept is bounded, and may serve as a focus for future references. This is what is meant by *continuity of identity.* Any referential use of a noun phrase may be followed by further noun phrases referring to the same referent. Of course, this opportunity is not always taken.

A noun or noun phrase which is not used to speak about an object as an object is nonreferential. Typically it is the quality defined by the noun rather than the potential of the noun for concrete meaning which is exploited. In the following example, the noun phrase *a uh.. Chicano American,* which is the third mention of the Pear Man, is nonreferential:

> (4) he looks like a uh.. Chicano American, (Speaker 9)

The speaker is talking about the Pear Man. There is no intent here to speak about a Chicano-American, not even an unspecified one. Nor is the subject speaking about generic Chicano-Americans as a whole. Rather, the attributes characteristic of being a Chicano-American are abstracted off from the potential concrete meaning, and certain of these attributes (the visual ones) are assigned to the Pear Man through the predication *look like. A Chicano American,* even though it follows a definite mention of the Pear Man, does not bear the definite article, showing that there is no continuity of identity with the Pear Man, which would exist if the noun phrase referred to the Pear Man. Nor does the noun phrase refer to some Chicano-American: one would not go on to speak about *the Chicano American.*[4]

I now present an outline of the major categories of nonreferential mentions, followed by a discussion of referential uses, broken down by the features which characterize them.

Nonreferential uses of nouns occur in compounds, within negative scope in a sentence, in certain speech acts, in predicating expressions, and in conflated objects.

In compounds such as *pear tree,* the first noun is nonreferential:

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[4]Kuno (1970) discusses grammaticality aspects of some types of nonreferential noun phrases, primarily categorizing predicate nominals.

(5) there's a—..man...picking pears, in a pear tree, (Speaker 8)

The noun phrase *a pear tree* as a whole is referential, but the word *pear* serves only to subcategorize *tree,* not to speak about a pear or pears. Other nonreferential examples include the first nominal elements in *a fruit picker* (Speaker 18), *the farm laborer* (Speaker 5), *the goatman, the goat..person, the bicycle boy, the bicycle thief,* and *the pearpicker* (Speaker 12), and *a paddle ball* (Speaker 15).

Negative pronouns and formally indefinite noun phrases occurring within the scope of negative quantifiers are typically nonreferential. In the following examples, *conversation, anything,* and *nobody* are nonreferential:

(6) there's no conversation in this movie. [...] the human beings in it don't say anything. (Speaker 6)

(7) and..nobody ever smiles in the movie; (Speaker 14)

A nonreferential mention like *nobody* establishes no mental "file" that can be referred to later, so that a humorous effect may arise when a speaker treats it as though it could be referred to, as Lewis Carroll shows:

(8) "I see nobody on the road," said Alice. "I only wish I had such eyes," the King remarked, "To be able to see nobody—and at that distance too!" (quoted in Halliday and Hasan, 1976:79)

The nonreferential uses of nouns discussed so far are readily distinguished from referential uses by their special syntactic status (in compounds, within scope of negatives) or by their membership in distinct form classes (*nobody*). But nonreferential noun phrases are formally indistinguishable from referential noun phrases in many cases. The noun phrase *a Chicano American,* used nonreferentially in (4), could in other circumstances be used referentially (e.g., *Then a Chicano American came along*). But when the text as a whole is examined, there emerge two overt means of recognizing non-referentiality:

(9) The form of a nonreferential mention is not responsive to the presence or absence of a prior mention.

(10) The form of a nonreferential mention is not responsive to the semantic distinction between singular and plural.

We have already seen an example of the first principle: *a Chicano American,* though it followed a definite reference to the Pear Man, was formally not

definite. This nonresponsiveness to prior mention occurs even where the noun phrase is identical:

(11) Mary's a forester. She's been a forester for three years now.

(12) Can you swim a mile? When you can swim a mile you'll be ready for the trip.

A forester and *a mile* are nonreferential mentions (of different types). *The forester* and *the mile,* which would ordinarily be expected after prior mentions, are not appropriate in these examples. Thus, overt evidence can be adduced to show that the "indefinite" article does not mark nonidentifiability in such cases: the identifiability contrast is simply not applicable to nonreferential uses.[5]

Also not applicable to nonreferential mentions is the semantic contrast between singular and plural. Nonreferential noun phrases represent a qualitative abstract of the noun. Since this abstract expresses no objective reality, a determination of quantity is not relevant. Nevertheless, the English language typically demands that one of the two available numbers be chosen. But this choice does not always accord with the actual facts of the situation. For example, a newly wealthy musician was discussing his interest in fine cars:

(13) I finally found out what the best is. I have a Mercedes—three of them in fact.

—(*Downbeat* 4/6/78)

Here "having a Mercedes" is seen as a unitary predicate concept (see p. 214), so that *a Mercedes* does not respond to semantic number (except as an afterthought). The reverse situation may also occur, where a singular referent may be associated with a formally plural nonreferential mention. Thus Lily Q.,[6] who is in the habit of wearing a contact lens in only one eye (her left eye), said

(14) I only wear one in my left when I'm wearing my lenses.

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[5]The same principle applies where the nonreferential mention is preceded by a referential mention, as with the nonreferential *a text* preceded by referential *a text* in the following example:

(i) The intention is...to offer an insight into what it is that makes a text a text. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:328)

[6]In each example where the source citation consists of a first name and last initial, the actual speaker's name has been replaced by a pseudonym, and the example represents an observed natural speech event, which I have recorded over the last several years. Examples for which no citation is given are constructed examples.

In this case, the culturally relevant state of "wearing one's lenses" is seen as a unitary concept. The plural form *lenses* does not refer to some (plural) objects, but rather expresses a general condition at the higher level of the verb phrase. Of course, the formal number of a nonreferential mention frequently coincides with the semantic number of the object with which it is associated, as in (11), but this does not establish that the mention is referential. One sometimes finds variation between one form which coincides with plural number and another which remains uninflected:

(15) a. He's six feet tall.
     b. He's six foot tall.

Both forms are nevertheless nonreferential.

Though most nonreferential mentions must be recognized through indirect means, one form of noun phrase is in general restricted to nonreferential mentions, and thus may serve to identify them:

(16) Nonreferential mentions of certain types are typically realized as zero-form[7] noun phrases.

Many performative uses of noun phrases are nonreferential, and these are often realized as singular zero-form mentions:

(17) I pronounce you man and wife.

More productively, vocatives usually occur in the zero-form, since their primary function is not to refer to the addressee but to attract his attention or index his social position.

(18) Buddy, could you spare a quarter?

(19) Hey, man, can't you read the sign?

A wife or *the wife, a buddy* or *the buddy* would be unacceptable in these examples.[8]

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[7]This term is adopted from Christophersen (1939). An *a*-form noun phrase is marked by *a* (*a pear*), a *the*-form noun phrase is marked by *the* (*the pear, the pears*), and a zero-form noun phrase has no article (*pear, pears*).

[8]There may be a useful sense of the word *referential* that is applicable to vocatives, but vocatives do not satisfy the requirement that they be "used to speak about an object as an object" (2).

The following types of nonreferential mention, though usually not distinctively marked in the noun phrase itself, may in general be shown to be nonreferential by one or another of the means just discussed.

Several types of attribution are nonreferential. Categorizing predicate nominals do not refer:

(20) he comes across another ... bicyclist ... bicyclist [1st]; it's a young woman [2nd], (Speaker 5)

(21) I used to play with/it/when I was a kid, (Speaker 10)

In both examples a prior mention (*another bicyclist, I*) precedes the predicate nominal mention (*a young woman, a kid*) which would thus be definite if it were referential. But their nonreferential status results in formally indefinite marking.[9]

Significantly, speakers may paraphrase a predication containing a nonreferential mention of a character with one which contains no mention at all, as in the following description of the threesome:

(22) they're [3d] little boys. ... They're ... from nine to twelve years old. (Speaker 5)

It is the quality of being a little boy which is expressed in the predication of *little boys,* and this quality can be alternatively expressed in a predication which does not mention the boys at all, but merely states their ages. The same paraphraseablity of nonreferential mentions with expressions that are not nominal at all is seen in the following example:

(23) They [the pears] were green, [...] they were green pears, (Speaker 15)

Secondary predicates (Nichols, 1978) are also nonreferential, and often occur in zero-form (*muleteer, neighbors*):

(24) the gardener of the convent, being chosen muleteer, led out the two mules. (Sterne, 1960:408)

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[9]Not all noun phrases occurring in predicate nominal position are nonreferential. Even definite, referential proper names may occur, though the reverse has often been asserted. For example:

(i) The guy with the mustache is Salvador Dali.

(25) where they lived neighbors. (Sandburg 1922:162)

Comparatives with *like* are nonreferential, and are formally indefinite even following a definite prior mention, as in example (4) and the following examples (*a Mexican-American, bullies*):

(26) Then they walk by--... the man who was picking the pears.... who looks like a Mexican-American if that's important? (Speaker 1)

(26b) they looked like bullies, (Speaker 20)

There remains one major type of nonreferential mention, which may be termed *predicate conflation*. Two examples of predicate conflation[10] have been seen in (13) and (14). The noun phrases in these examples were used in conjunction with a verb to express a unitary predicate concept rather than to refer to an actual object. *Having a Mercedes* or *wearing one's lenses* were expressed as monolithic concepts which did not allow their subsidiary components (e.g., *a Mercedes, one's lenses*) to reflect independently a sensitivity to the actual situation.

The pear film narrations abound in such verb-plus-object conflations, though they are usually recognizable through insensitivity to prior mention rather than the rarer insensitivity to number. In one case, a subject introduced both the Pear Man and the pears he is picking into the discourse with the initial mention *a guy who's picking pears,* and then went on:

(27) ... And.. um ... the guy who is picking pears, um ... um .. picks the pears and puts them in a.. in um ... these baskets that he has ... (Speaker 3)

The second mention of the pears is the formally indefinite *pears* just as it was in the first mention, while the Pear Man has shifted from indefinite (*a guy*) to definite (*the guy*). The insensitivity of *pears* to prior mention reflects its nonreferentiality, just as the sensitivity of *the guy* to prior mention reflects its referentiality. The pears are not important in themselves but are conflated into a unitary predicate concept of "pear-picking." The only purpose in mentioning this activity in the noun phrase *the guy who is picking pears* is to characterize the Pear Man, so that recognition of the pears as an objective reality independent of the pear-picking activity is not relevant. Later, when the speaker wishes to refer to the actual pears, she uses a referential and hence definite mention:

(28) [He] picks the pears and puts them in a.. in um ... these baskets that the has ...

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[10]*Conflation* is used here in a somewhat different sense than in the work of Leonard Talmy.

This particular subject seems reluctant to pronominalize on the basis of a nonreferential mention, preferring to use a full referential noun phrase first, but this is not the general rule. Speakers often make a pronominal mention based on a referential concept which has been introduced nonreferentially. More important in example (28) is that, although the first two mentions of the pears are nonreferential object conflations, the third mention is referential and definite. This might seem problematic: How can a definite, specific reference to a real object be based on a nonreferential introduction? The answer becomes clear if we look ahead to the matter of definite initial mentions which are dependent on frames. It has been pointed out that the use of the verb *sell* may make possible a subsequent definite reference to *the money* (Chafe, 1972:61). But one would hardly say that *sell refers* to money. It simply evokes a "frame" which includes, among various elements, the notion of money. Similarly, the sentence

(29) They went out pear-picking yesterday

does not refer to pears, but it nevertheless evokes a frame which includes a slot for pears. This allows a subsequent definite reference to the frame-evoked pears:

(30) But the pears were green and didn't sell.

Halliday and Hasan, pointing out that a plural noun phrase may be used to refer back to several items presented singly in the discourse, observe that this use follows from "the general nature of anaphoric reference items, that they refer to the meanings and not to the forms that have gone before" (1976:62). It can be further said that anaphoric reference items need not refer to meanings introduced through a direct reference, but may refer to meanings introduced indirectly through frames. We may state this in the form of a principle:

(31) To make a definite reference to an object, it is not necessary for there to be in previous discourse a reference to the object; it is only necessary for the idea of the object to have been evoked in some way.

This evocation commonly arises through the use of frames. And as a general rule, a verb-plus-object conflation evokes a frame which includes the object, allowing subsequent definite reference. This in fact falls under the general principle that definite reference is due to identifiability—with the added observation that the hearer has a variety of identificatory resources at hand.

In this light it is possible to resolve a puzzle posed by Christophersen, who claimed that in

(32) I knocked him on the head

"there can be no doubt that it is a purely individual term; 'the head' of course means 'his head'." He went on to say

> The strange thing is, however, that the singular form is kept even in: we knocked them on the head/they knocked everybody on the head. (1939:132)

But given an understanding of object conflation, this is not at all strange. "Knocking on the head" expresses a unitary concept, and verb and object are conflated into a single unit which does not respond to number. This unitary predicate expression evokes a frame which defines the particular head involved. True, we understand from (32) that it is "his head" that got knocked, but this does not mean that *the head* refers to his head, any more than *sold* in *he sold the cow* refers to money.[11]

Conflated objects may take almost any form. The nonreferentiality of conflated objects is sometimes marked by use of the zero-form singular (e.g., *hunting coon*[12]), but more commonly the *a*-form singular (*a Mercedes*) or zero-form plural (*pears*) are found. These uses are frequently confused with generics. Christophersen suggested that in

(33) Somebody in Dullingham Junction was playing the banjo

the banjo represents "the generic form" (1939:132). It is mistaken to label such uses *generic*, to be lumped with, for example, *the lion* in *the lion is found in Africa*. Conflated objects and generics share the property of nonspecificity and the neutralization of the identifiability contrast, but that does not make them the same thing.

Verb-plus-object conflations have a certain similarity to idioms and collocations in that their component parts do not vary with the usual degree of freedom. But the formation of verb-plus-object conflations is quite productive, and unlike idioms, their meaning is predictable from their component parts. To the extent that the choice of formal options (*a*-form vs. zero-form, for example) is not rule-governed, they may be considered collocational, but their similarity to idoms is not great.

Object conflation is not the only type of predicate conflation. There exist also instrumental conflation and indirect object conflation, among others. But object conflation is by far the most common type, and the other types are similar enough that they need not be discussed here.

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[11]Object conflation bears some affinity to noun incorporation as found in many American Indian and Asian languages; a comparison would be worthwhile.

[12]For a valuable discussion of "collectivized nouns," to which the notion of object conflation may profitably be applied, see Allan (1973).

The form of nonreferential mentions varies considerably: in the singular, the *a*-form, *the*-form, and zero-form all occur; in the plural the zero-form occurs. The conditions governing the choice are complex and range from general considerations of prototypical expressive realizations, as in *wear one's lenses*, to particular considerations of historical change. For example, either article is possible in nonreferential mentions of *day* where the meaning is paraphraseable as *per day*:

(34) a. To be popt at like pigeons for sixpence a day (in OED *A*)
     b. Bricklayers... have xv d. apeece the day (in OED *The*)

This use of *a* arose from an originally distinct preposition meaning roughly *per*. *The* in this usage arose several hundred years later, suggesting that it arose by analogy with *a* (by now reanalyzed as the indefinite article); influence from French is also possible. This is all to show that, in the domain of nonreferential mentions, quite idiosyncratic historical conditions may govern the choice of article (or, as in this case, allow the choice of either article). The reason for this flexibility is that in nonreferential mentions, *the* and *a* have no direct function. The identifiability contrast which they mark is not applicable to nonreferential mentions. Hence, there is no pressure to keep them distinct in these contexts.

Although the form of nonreferential mentions is often governed by very particular conditions, there are some general rules which apply to broad classes of cases. But a treatment of this problem must be reserved for another context.

Having looked in some detail at nonreferential mentions, we turn now to the domain of referential mentions. As has been pointed out earlier, this is the domain in which the English articles exhibit their most basic function, and in which the correlation of overt marking with function is the closest.

The features described in this section combine to characterize any particular referential mention. A referential mention may be identifiable or nonidentifiable, specific or nonspecific, generic or particular, and it may exhibit various phoricity features. Most of these feature contrasts are applicable only to referential mentions, not to nonreferential mentions. This has already been discussed with regard to the identifiability contrast. Within the domain of referential mentions there also exist certain neutralizations. For example, the contrast of identifiable vs. nonidentifiable is not applicable to generic or nonspecific mentions, and the contrast of endophoric vs. exophoric is also not applicable to nonspecific mentions.

The contrast between identifiable and nonidentifiable is commonly marked by *the* and *a*. The speaker judges identifiability with respect to the hearer: he uses *the* if he expects that the hearer can identify the referent he means, and *a* if he expects that the hearer cannot, as in example (1).

The-forms are not the only forms which presuppose identifiability. Proper names and definite pronouns also presuppose identifiability:

(35) [the pears] were green, ... so I suspect they were going to sell them to Safeway. (Speaker 15)

In this example, *Safeway, I,* and *they* all presuppose identifiability. Possessive noun phrases also presuppose identifiability, and one sometimes finds variation between a possessed form and a *the*-form noun phrase, as in the following example with *his bike* and *the bicycle:*

(36) he gets off his bike, [...] ... Anyway, so um— ... the kid on the bicycle, .. gets off the bicycle, (Speaker 1)

The choice between *the*-form and possessed form is to some extent rule-governed, and some of the rules will be discussed below in relation to frames.

Identifiability is a property of the relation between reference and referent and cannot apply to either a reference or a referent alone. If a noun phrase is said to be *identifiable,* this means simply that the hearer can establish a link between the noun phrase and the concept it refers to. It is not possible for the concept itself to be identifiable, although proper nouns have sometimes been said to represent "definite concepts" (Chafe, 1972:57). True, proper nouns are distinct from common nouns in that they presuppose identifiability without having to be marked by *the.* But even if the name of a specific individual is known to a speaker this name may mean nothing to the addressee, and in such cases we often find the proper name modified by the indefinite article, marking nonidentifiability:

(37) A Mr. Palermo [1st], who had lived up here helping his uncles in the old days and had a cabin at the foot of the trail, came by at least twice a month. (Vonnegut, 1975:55)

In the following example there is a contrast in the treatment of a familiar name (*W. C. Handy*) and an unfamiliar one (*Cora Fisher*), although both are initial mentions:

(38) ... Bessie Smith, throughout her career, shamefully neglected to acknowledge any indebtedness to her tutor, citing instead W. C. Handy and a Cora Fisher as her early inspiration (Albertson, n.d.)

Some concepts are so particular and so commonly referred to that it is useful to provide them with particular labels such as proper names. But the act of identifying always consists in relating this label to the concept. It is true for

most packaging statuses that "It is the constant idea of the individual rather than the shifting words" that may occupy a particular status (Chafe, 1976:29), but this is not true of definiteness, which involves a tracing of the constant idea (referent) through links with the shifting words (references) used to refer to the idea.

Even where the name of a person is known to both speaker and addressee, the speaker is not obliged to use the available definite reference. I once said to a friend *I made squid with someone's help once.* The person who had helped me was known by name to my addressee, so I could have named her, but since the import of the discussion was simply whether I would be able to bring off a squid dish, I did not deem the name of my fellow cook relevant. This demonstrates that speakers have facultative control over definiteness. Even where the concept is potentially identifiable through a proper name, the speaker is free to choose a noun phrase which does not identify the referent.

Nonidentifiable mentions are marked by *a* in the singular (*a kid, a bicycle*) and *some* (*some boys*) in the plural, as well as by various other reference item types including number-modfied nouns (*three boys*) and genitive phrases (*one of the boys*), and indefinite pronouns (*somebody*):

(39) ... a kid [1st] comes by on a bicycle [1st]. (Speaker 1)

(40) and— ... some boys— [1st] come out, (Speaker 8)

(41) ... Three boys [1st] came out, (Speaker 4)

(42) So one of the boys [1st] whistles to him, (Speaker 3)

(43) —uh ... somebody [1st] comes by with a ... walks by with a goat or something. (Speaker 10)

Noun phrases marked by unstressed *this* or *these* (*this little boy, these three little boys*) are specific but are unmarked for identifiability, and may occur on both initial and noninitial mentions, at least for some speakers:

(44) he c- he could possibly see this little boy [1st] coming on a bicycle.... At least .. it seems to me that ... you know he would notice this boy [2nd] if he was really ... interested, (Speaker 2)

(45) He falls over and then these three other little kids about his same age [1st] come walking by. (Speaker 6)

The speaker in (44), Speaker 2, made a total of six noninitial mentions of the Bike Boy with the determiner *this,* showing that for her *this* does not mark

nonidentifiable noun phrases. But most speakers tend to restrict unstressed *this* and *these* to initial mentions.

The absence of the zero-form plural (*kids*), which is typically considered indefinite, from the preceding list of nonidentifiable mention types is not an oversight. In all the first mentions of characters in the pear film data (excluding generics) there is not a single zero-form plural. All twenty speakers introduced the Threesome with a nondefinite mention, either one marked for nonidentifiability such as *some kids, some other little kids, three little boys* (17 speakers) or one marked with *these* (*these three little boys*), which may be considered unmarked with respect to identifiability (3 speakers). But not one of the 20 speakers chose to use the available zero-form plural (*boys* or *kids*). The same is true for the plural introductions of nongeneric characters in general: Of the 24 nondefinite initial mentions, which are those that might be considered candidates for an "indefinite" zero-form plural, not one was considered candidates for an "indefinite" zero-form plural, not one was realized as a zero-form plural. There was a single zero-form plural initial mention, but this was generic (*kids*):

(46) That look could be interpreted as a menacing grin, or a ... [ɨ] or a friendly grin, or just the way kids are, (Speaker 18)

I would suggest that, at least for humans, the zero-form plural is not used to mark nonidentifiable referents, and when it does occur it is either generic or part of a predicate conflation. In contrast with characters, initial mentions of objects as zero-form plurals are not uncommon. Of the 20 speakers who made an initial mention of pears (which in each case were the pears that the Pear Man was picking), 17 used a zero-form plural, *pears*. I suggest that the correlation of zero-from plurals with inanimates as opposed to humans occurs because inanimates commonly become part of predicate conflations, whereas humans rarely do. Humans are generally too independently salient to be conflated with a verb, and tend to take the more active case roles expressed by subject status.

Before going on to discuss the feature of specificity, it will be useful to treat an important function of nonidentifiable mentions, that of introducing new files.

ESTABLISHING NEW FILES

Although in negative terms an indefinite mention may function to mark a nonidentifiable referent, it has a further, positive, function: to establish a new "file" in the hearer's consciousness. In a sentence like

(39) ... a kid [1st] comes by on a bicycle [1st].

the indefinite articles serve both to assure the hearer that he need not look elsewhere to identify the referents (since they are nonidentifiable) and to encourage him to establish new cognitive files, one for a particular kid and one for a particular bicycle.

The opening of a new file with an *a*-form mention tends to raise the expectation that the file will continue to be used, as more information is added to it. Given this expectation, it would be useful to signal cases where little or no further use will be made of the file. There appears to be a slight tendency to use an indefinite pronoun (*someone, somebody*) rather than an *a*-form to mark the introduction of an unimportant character who will not be spoken about much. In the four cases where an indefinite pronoun was used to introduce a character, as in example (43) above, a mean of 6.3 subsequent mentions of the character were made; the 54 *a*-form initial mentions of characters were followed by a mean of 11.9 mentions. Nevertheless, the use of an *a*-form introduction for an unimportant character who is not subsequently referred to is not uncommon. More data would be needed to confirm this trend.

When a new file is opened, the hearer expects to be provided with an adequate understanding of the nature of the file that he is expected to establish. This understanding is usually provided by the noun itself: *kid* in *a kid* makes a good starting point for opening a new file. But in some cases the noun is too vague to allow the hearer to adequately conceive the file, and special measures must be taken to provide the missing information. This is especially true where the new file is opened with a definite mention, as often happens. In the following example, the noun *thing* in *his thing* is too vague to introduce its referent satisfactorily, and so must be explained:

(47) he'd drop them into his ... thing [1st], but I don't .. he's wearing like an apron [2nd] with huge pockets. (Speaker 1)

In the example above, we find the curious situation that the first mention is definite and the second mention is indefinite. As it turns out, this pattern of recovery is quite common. For various reasons, the mention which is intended to establish a new file is deemed inadequate; this triggers a recovery process, which will be discussed further in dealing with descriptive modes.

In rare cases a hesitation by the speaker may serve the same file-establishing function as an initial indefinite mention, allowing subsequent definite mentions, and leading the hearer to expect more information in the ensuing discourse. This phenomenon tends to occur when hard-to-code objects are introduced, such as the paddleball:

(48) one of them is .. playing like with ... I don't remember, I used to play with /it/ [paddleball - 1st] when I was a kid, but ... it's like

a...wooden paddle...that..there's an elastic string attached to and there's a ball, (Speaker 10)

The definite pronoun *it* refers back, not to a file created by an indefinite mention, but to one created by the hearer's expectation of a file-establishing mention. This expectation derives not only from the pause (*playing like with...*), of course, but also from the syntactic frame (a noun phrase is expected following the preposition *with*) and the semantic expectation that playing typically involves some sort of toy. Somewhat more common is the establishing of a file through the use of a noun phrase which is begun with an indefinite article or determiner but left unfinished. Again, examples are found in attempts to introduce the low-codable paddleball:

(49) one had a uh...[1st] I don't know what you call them [2nd], but it's a paddle, and a ball—..is attached to the paddle, and you know you bounce it? (Speaker 9)

The definite *them* refers back to the file established by *a uh....* This, like the file-establishing pause, would of course be an unsatisfactory introduction and unsuitable for subsequent pronominalization if a speaker were to attempt to continue in the narrative mode. However, in each of the three paddleball cases where a pause, or a lone indefinite article or determiner followed by a pause has been made the basis for pronominalization, the speaker switches into a descriptive mode in order to provide a more satisfactory introduction. This is a good example of the importance of the descriptive modes to be described.

New files may be opened by definites as well as indefinites. One important type of such definite initial mentions consists of a definite noun phrase followed by a relative clause:

(50) and she knocks the hat that he's wearing [1st] off on the ground, (Speaker 7)

The hat alone would be an inadequate first mention here, since it presupposes identifiability. But the information needed for identification is supplied in the accompanying relative clause, making a definite initial mention possible. Hawkins (1978) analyzes such relative clauses as deriving from an underlying pair of sentences, the first of which contains an indefinite which is eventually deleted transformationally. Noting the possibility of *the woman Bill went out with last night* as an initial mention, he suggests that

(51) What's wrong with Bill? Oh, the woman he went out with last night was nasty to him

is derivable from something like the "pragmatically equivalent" sentences

(52) What's wrong with Bill? Oh, he went out with a woman last night, and she/the woman was nasty to him.

This analysis is faulty in two respects. It suggests that the sentence

(53) Bill passed a woman on the street last night, and the woman was nasty to him

should be transformable into

(54) The woman Bill passed on the street last night was nasty to him.

But in fact the latter sentence is not acceptable as an initial mention of the woman. One may pass many women on the street, so this relative clause is not sufficient to specify one particular referent. The relative clause in (51) does specify one particular referent, because in our culture one may presuppose that a man will typically date only one woman in a night. The second problem is that (51) is not pragmatically equivalent to (52). What is asserted in the latter example (that Bill went out with a woman) is simply presupposed in the former. This has significant consequences with respect to the possible content of such relative clauses. New information may be presented in the presupposed format of a restrictive relative clause, as long as it is relatively unremarkable information (for example, that a man dated a woman). But if the information is remarkable, the speaker is expected to assert it rather than presuppose it. One cannot introduce an unknown woman into a conversation with the sentence

(55) The woman Bill married last night was nasty to him

in part because the new information contained in the relative clause is too noteworthy to be presupposed. This condition may be formulated as the *principle of new information presupposition:*

(56) New information may be presented in a presupposed format (such as a restrictive relative clause) only if it is not particularly noteworthy.

This principle (essentially a conversational postulate) forms part of a general condition on the use of file-establishing relative clauses:

(57) A file-establishing relative clause may be used to allow a definite initial mention only if (1) the relative clause gives enough information to specify a particular referent or referents, and (2) the information in the relative clause, if new, does not violate the principle of new information presupposition.

Both of these requirements are met in *the hat that he's wearing* (50) because in our culture (1) only one hat is usually worn if a hat is worn at all, and (2) wearing a hat, though it cannot be assumed, is unremarkable.

It will be seen that these same principles govern the use of possessive noun phrases (*his hat*) as definite initial mentions.

A formally indefinite referential mention may be specific or nonspecific. In (39), *a kid* and *a bicycle* were both *specific,* meaning that although the hearer is not able to identify the intended referent, the speaker at least has a specific object in mind. If the speaker has no particular object in mind the mention is nonspecific, as with *a pear or two* in the following example:

(58) and you think "wow," this little boy's probably going to come and see the pears, and ... he's going to take a pear or two, (Speaker 2)

The specificity distinction is usually not overtly marked, and *a*-forms may be either specific or nonspecific. However, unstressed *this* and *these* as in (44) and (45) have only the specific meaning. In many cases nonspecific *a*-forms occur in the scope of verbs of cognition, such as *think* in the preceding example and *want* in the traditional example

(59) Susan wants to marry a Norwegian.

Because of their occurrence in such contexts it may be possible to treat so-called nonspecific mentions as being specific in a hypothetical world established by the verb of cognition. Where it is not possible to treat an *a*-form in this way, it may be that one is dealing with a case of predicate conflation rather than nonspecificity, since conflated objects are often misanalyzed as nonspecific indefinites. For example, in the most common reading of

(60) Everytime I saw him, he was wearing a hat,

a hat is best considered a conflated object rather than a nonspecific indefinite.

Generic mentions may take almost any form (see Jespersen, 1924:203-204), the most common of which are the singular *a*-form (*a fox*) and *the*-form (*the lion*) and the plural zero-form (*kids*):

(61) A fox will chew off its own leg to escape a trap.

(62) The lion is the king of beasts.

(46') That look could be interpreted as [...] just the way kids are, (Speaker 18)

The three forms are not interchangeable, but express slightly different nuances. The difference which does exist between the *a*-form and *the*-form generics, however, is not a matter of identifiability. As with nonreferential mentions, the contrast of identifiable and nonidentifiable is not applicable. Much could be said about the different functions of the various generic forms, but only one matter immediately concerns us here. A plural generic mention provides access to a concept in the interlocutor's mind which is representative of the whole class, and since there is only one such concept, any mention which is understood as generic will be "identified" with this concept. Generics are like uniques in this respect. Reference to the moon, of which there is one unique instance in the ordinary consciousness of most people, is typically accomplished through the definite noun phrase *the moon.* But if a writer chooses to speak of *A Moon for the Misbegotten,* we do not take the indefinite to mean that some other, nonidentifiable astrological body is meant, but simply think of another aspect of the one moon—perhaps a full moon, a waning moon, a yellow moon.

In the following example,

(63) A hand rules pity as a hand rules heaven;
    Hands have no tears to flow.

(Thomas, 1972:941)

a hand and *hands* both identify a single generic concept of hand. Since this concept is unique, any recognizeably generic mention provides access to it. It should be noted that generic mentions, like nonreferential mentions, do not shift to a *the*-form following a prior mention.[13] The generic initial mention *a hand* is followed by a second generic mention, also *a hand,* rather than *the hand.* The same phenomenon arises in the pear film data:

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[13]Although generic *a*-form mentions do not shift to *the*-form, they may be represented by (formally) definite pronouns: *a hand rules pity as it rules heaven.* This suggests that there is a crucial difference in the function of definite pronouns and definite *the*-form noun phrases, but the matter cannot be explored here.

(64) the goat was bahying or whatever goats [generic - 1st] do, /laugh/ ... What do goats [2nd] do? (Speaker 4)

The second mention remains the same as the first rather than shifting to *the goats*. Generic concepts are directly available in the speech situation, and noninitial generic mentions are not processed via the mediation of some prior mention, but rather, directly. In this respect they may be classed with homophoric mentions (along with proper nouns and uniques).

In addition to neutralizing the identifiability contrast, generic mentions also neutralize the semantic contrast of plurality. Both singular and plural forms are used to refer to generic concepts, but the difference in meaning is not that of one vs. many.

Though generic *a*-forms and zero-form plurals may not be morphologically distinguished from nonspecific, nonidentifiable, and nonreferential mentions, they tend to be distinguished by syntactic complementarity. Generic mentions often occur in subject position; the other types usually occur in nonsubject position.

Phoricity, as used by Halliday and Hasan (1976), refers to the need to look elsewhere to interpret a reference item. Referential mentions may have various statuses with respect to phoricity. They may be endophoric or exophoric, homophoric or nonhomophoric, anaphoric or cataphoric, or simply nonphoric.

Endophoric reference points to something in the linguistic context; *exophoric* reference points to something in the situational context. A special case of exophoric reference is *homophoric* reference, in which "The referent is identifiable on extralinguistic grounds no matter what the situation" (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:71). This includes uniques (*the moon*) and generics (*kids*). The homophoricity of generics renders the identifiability contrast inapplicable, which allows the formal apparatus of identifiability to be exploited for other purposes, as noted earlier.

Endophoric references may be anaphoric, pointing backward in the text, or cataphoric, pointing forward in the text. The absence of the latter type of reference in the pear film suggests that it is rare in informal speech.

Nonidentifiable mentions are not phoric, since they do not require the hearer to look elsewhere to interpret them. Rather, they indicate that identification with some known referent is not possible, and a new file must be established. They are, however, referential in my usage of the term, which departs from that of Halliday and Hasan. Halliday and Hasan use the term *referential* only for a noun phrase that directs the hearer to look elsewhere— what in my terms would be a *phoric* noun phrase. Thus in their usage nonidentifiable mentions are classed as nonreferential, whereas I consider them referential and nonphoric.

DISCOURSE MODES

In narrative discourse, different clauses serve to advance the story line to different degrees. In the following example, the first and last clauses advance the story line, but the second clause does not:

(65) he comes across another ... bicyclist ... bicyclist; it's a young woman, ... and ... for some reason she catches his attention, (Speaker 5)

The clauses which advance the story line are in what I term the *narrative mode*. The second clause, *it's a young woman,* does not advance the story line, and may be said to be in the *descriptive mode*. Actually, *descriptive mode* is simply a cover term that includes categorizations, descriptions of clothing, statements of relation to other discourse participants, and so on.

Descriptive mode clauses are ordinarily marked by the choice of verb, of which the prime examples are *be* (often in conjunction with *there*) and *have:*

(66) he's white. (Speaker 17)

(67) they're little boys. (Speaker 5)

(68) ... tsk There's like three baskets sitting there (Speaker 11)

(69) and he had three baskets beneath the tree, (Speaker 12)

Other verbs and prepositions that figure commonly in descriptive mode clauses include *look like, wear, have on, be dressed in,* and *with* (in the sense of "having an attribute"):

(4) he looks like a uh .. Chicano American, (Speaker 9)

(70) A—nd he's wearing a hat, (Speaker 17)

(71) he also had an apron on (Speaker 15)

(72) And this ma—n .. is— ... u—m dressed in sort of a faded, ... navy blue, ... denim top, and jeans. (Speaker 17)

(73) And there was this man with a mustache, and a hat, picking ... unripe pears, (Speaker 14)

Narrative mode verbs may include not only concrete verbs like *pick, fall,* and *scatter* but more abstract verbs like *fulfill, grow, ponder.* The narrative

and the descriptive modes together constitute the discourse modes, though it is likely that further discourse modes will ultimately have to be distinguished.

Discourse modes have considerable influence on definiteness. Mentions which occur in a narrative mode clause tend to be referential; mentions which occur in nonsubject position in a descriptive mode clause are often nonreferential, and as a result may be realized as *a*-forms or zero-forms. In example (65), *a young woman* is formally indefinite, even though it is not an initial mention. A prediction of definiteness based solely on the presence or absence of prior mentions would not be adequate in this case. But given the information that the mention occurs in a descriptive mode as a categorizing predicate nominal, the prediction is readily made.

Thus, if one knows when a particular discourse mode will be used, one can frequently predict the form of the mention. The use of discourse modes is in fact governed by discernible rules. For example, a speaker often shifts from narrative mode to descriptive mode immediatley after the introduction of a new character. This is true in example (65), where *a bicyclist* is the first mention of the Girl. In this case the choice within the descriptive mode of a categorizing predicate nominal is determined by a further factor, that of salience. The sex and age of a human referent are salient, and given that the word *bicyclist* specifies neither, the speaker feels a lack of needed information. This lack then conditions the use of a predicate nominal to remedy the situation. Discourse modes tend to be governed by such informational need triggers. Given that there is much that is salient about humans—sex, age, occupation, and so on—the informational need is high following introduction of a human character, and tends to trigger a descriptive mode. This informational need is so concrete that a speaker who cannot satisfy it may feel that he does not really know "who" the referent is. This was apparently the case in the following example. The Goat Man, a character peripheral to the film's plot, was introduced with the initial mention *someone:*

(74) A man was picking pears in ... what seemed to be his orchard, ... and— ... came along first, .. / someone/ came along first. ... ... Someone came along before the kid on the bicycle but I don't remember who it was. (Speaker 16)

One might think that the subject, rather than saying she didn't know who the person was, could simply have said *a person came along first before the kid on the bicycle,* without further elaboration. But the lack of a concrete picture of the individual, providing such salient information as age, sex, and perhaps race and occupation, leads the speaker to feel her knowledge of the referent is insufficient (*I don't remember who it was*). The indefinite pronoun *someone* is chosen over an indefinite noun phrase because the former suggests that the

speaker (as well as the hearer) is unable to fully identify the referent. This is consonant with Christophersen's observation on the contrast between *some* and *a:* "if [a man] says 'I have read it in a book', he may still remember which book it was; if he says 'I have read it in some book,' he probably cannot recall the title" (1939:188). In such cases the contrast between *some* and *a* marks identifiability by the *speaker,* which is quite distinct from the hearer identifiability contrast marked by *the* and *a.* Identification by a hearer may consist in relating a definite reference to a rather vague previous mention such as *some book,* which may in fact not be "identifiable" by the speaker himself, in the more demanding sense of, for example, knowing the book's title.

For objects, we do not have the same long list of ready-made questions as for humans, and the questions that do exist are often of a different nature. When the introduction of an object triggers a descriptive mode, the descriptive mode may provide a different class of information, often specifying location in an established scene, or ownership by a character. For example, *an apron* is introduced in a descriptive mode which serves to describe its owner rather than the apron itself, in example (71):

(71) he also had an apron [1st] on (Speaker 15)

The descriptive mode clause, once triggered, may occur in several positions with respect to the object being introduced. It may serve as the first mention of the object, as with *three baskets* in the following example:

(75) he has three baskets [1st] ... filled with ... and he's filling them with pears. (Speaker 5)

Once the baskets have been introduced with the descriptive mode verb *have,* they are available for reference in the following narrative mode clause. But speakers do not always take care to introduce an object in the descriptive mode first. Often the flow of narrative mode clauses is interrupted only *after* the object has been mentioned, as in the following example, where a string of narrative mode clauses is followed by a descriptive mode clause referring to the baskets:

(76) [The Pear Man] picks pears, ... puts them in .. his apron, ... climbs down the ladder, ... and empties the pears .. into ... big .. baskets [1st]. ... tsk There's like three baskets sitting there (Speaker 11)

Apparently a momentum has built up in the narrative mode by the time the baskets are to be mentioned. Rather than break off the verbalization of what is essentially a continuous process of pear-picking, the speaker chooses to defer a "formal introduction" until after the baskets have taken their place in

the story line. As in this example, when a deferred descriptive mode introduction is made it tends to come shortly after the initial mention, typically in the immediately following clause. Such deferred descriptive mode clauses are a primary source of indefinite noninitial mentions.

When a deferred descriptive mode is triggered by a narrative mode initial mention of an object, the result is not always a separate introducing sentence as in the example (76). Frequently the introductory information is appended to the narrative mode noun in a relative clause. Once again, the examples given are of the first mentions of the baskets:

(77) he--...was going up and down the ladder,...tsk..picking the pears...and...depositing them in...three baskets,...that were down below. (Speaker 7)

(78) the guy who is picking pears, um...um..picks the pears and puts them in a..in um...these baskets that he has (Speaker 3)

These examples of deferred descriptive mode (*that were down below, that he has*) have in each case been triggered by indefinite initial mentions in the narrative mode. Of course, if the speaker shifts to the descriptive mode before making the initial mention, there is no need for a deferred descriptive mode, as is seen in the following introduction of the Pear Man's apron:

(79) He's picking pears,...um--...he has an apron that he puts them in, (Speaker 10)

Following this descriptive mode introduction, the speaker continues on in the narrative mode in the next clause:

(80) and then he'll...he'll stuff them in that, (Speaker 10)

In such cases the pattern of an indefinite initial mention followed by subsequent definite mentions is maintained. But in a case like (76), the descriptive mode gives rise to another pattern, of an indefinite first mention followed by an indefinite second mention (with subsequent mentions usually definite). Deferred descriptive modes give rise to still a third pattern, of a definite first mention (in the narrative mode) followed by an indefinite second mention (in the descriptive mode). In the following example the initial mention of the Pear Man is definite, and triggers an indefinite descriptive mode introduction:

(81) the first...thing I noticed..was..the sound of the man [1st] picking...pears. ...And of course there was a...a man [2nd] there standing on a ladder in a pear tree, (Speaker 4)

A general understanding of discourse modes and the forces which trigger them sheds light not only on the way narratives are constructed but, secondarily, on the occurrence of indefinite mentions in places where they would otherwise not be expected. The distribution of the articles is most fruitfully examined in the larger context of narrative structure. It is pointless to catalog the myriad uses of the definite article for initial mentions if one disregards the measures which a speaker must subsequently take in order to render such mentions acceptable. If a speaker is obliged to immediately follow his definite initial mention with an indefinite mention, or to shift into a descriptive mode in order to explain that mention, this is hardly to be classed with those cases where a definite initial mention paves the way for the easy continuation of further definite mentions in the narrative mode. The concept of discourse mode, in conjunction with frame analysis, makes it possible to distinguish these two situations and leads to an advance beyond a narrow one-sentence perspective on definiteness.

There is one discourse mode which serves a very specialized function, and may profitably be examined at this point. It may be termed the *defining mode*. Defining the meaning of a word is usually thought of as something that occurs in a dictionary, or as an isolated act in a classroom situation. But actually definitions are found dispersed through ordinary discourse, where they play an important, if occasional, role. When a cooperative speaker uses a word that he thinks his addressee will not understand, he usually defines it. This definition may precede a meaningful use, and be set off in its own sentence, as in the following example:

(82) When the moon has a green rim with red meat inside and black seeds on the red meat, then in the Rootabaga Country they call it a Watermelon Moon and look for anything to happen.
It was a night when a Watermelon Moon was shining (Sandburg, 1922:53)

But frequently the definition is given only after a narrative mode use of the word, and is not set off in a separate sentence. In the following example both a proper noun (*Kutchin*) and a common noun (*phoneme*) are defined in appositional phrases:

(83) Kutchin, an Athabaskan language of Alaska, possesses no less than 55 consonantal "phonemes," distinct consonantal elements of the total phonetic pattern (Sapir, 1929:140).

In both cases the apposition is an indefinite noninitial mention, due to predicate nominal status. Without this indefinite definition, the hearer would not be able to identify the referent of the definite reference *Kutchin*.

The pear film speakers had little occasion to use the defining mode except in mentions of the low-codable paddleball, where a definition of an exotic initial mention, such as *pongo,* was sometimes deemed necessary:

(84) one's playing with this .. pongo, . . . a little . . . paddle, . . . and a ball with it on /the/ end of the elastic? (Speaker 14)

A mid-sentence definition may be given for a verb as well as a noun, as in the following example where a rare use of the verb *salute* triggered a paraphrase:

(85) I can't remember whether they saluted him or not, . . . you know . . . gave him a any kind of a salutation, (Speaker 15)

The indefinite *a salutation* would ordinarily be definite due to the frame evoked by the verb *salute,* but since it is understood as part of a paraphrase definition of *salute* it remains indefinite.

The defining mode is a clear case of a discourse mode that is triggered under well-defined circumstances, and whose implementation governs the occurrence of indefinite mentions in noninitial position. It is remarkable in that it allows an addressee's linguistic competence to be expanded in the middle of a sentence.

CURIOSITY AND IDENTIFICATION

The definite article is said to mark identifiability, but what is meant by identification? This is a complex question, of which only a few aspects will be considered here.

Identification ordinarily involves singling out the particular referent intended by the speaker, as when a reference to *the boy* is associated with a particular boy in the environment, or with a particular boy who has been introduced verbally. But this precise identification is not always demanded for an object. In the sentence

(86) The boy scribbled on the living-room wall

the definite noun phrase *the boy* presupposes that the addressee can identify one particular boy. But *the living-room wall* may be used whether or not the addressee is able to identify precisely which wall is meant. It is expected that the addressee be able to identify the particular living room in question, and thus to narrow down the range of possible referents to one of four walls, but beyond this he need not identify the particular wall. Identification of the

precise wall is not considered salient under such circumstances. If the hearer is able to identify the referent as some unspecified wall in a specified room, that is considered sufficient to justify marking the noun phrase as identifiable. If the speaker were to specify exactly which wall, as in

(87) He scribbled on the north living-room wall

he would be violating the Gricean maxim of relevance by giving more information than people care to know. On the other hand, since a speaker ordinarily would choose not to identify the particular wall, it might seem that the logical step would be to mark the wall as nonidentifiable:

(88) He scribbled on a living-room wall.

But, curiously, this sentence still gives the impression of being unnaturally precise. To indicate, by the use of the indefinite article, that the wall will not be exactly identifiable seems to violate the admonishment to be relevant from the other direction. It presupposes an excessive curiosity about walls on the part of the hearer. This suggests the formulation of what may be called the *curiosity principle:*

(89) A reference is counted as identifiable if it identifies an object close enough to satisfy the curiosity of the hearer.

The identification need not be one to satisfy a philosopher or a Sherlock Holmes, who may of course be led to demand "Which wall?" In special circumstances even an ordinary speaker might desire more precise identification. But in everyday speech such partial identification is quite common.

Referents that are treated in this manner are often those which come in small symmetrical sets as part of a well-defined frame. Walls come in sets of four and are part of the "room" frame. Corners, sides, and edges also come in sets and usually receive a definite initial mention due to association with an evoked frame. In each case the reference (*the wall, the corner, the side, the edge*) is partly identifiable due to association with a specific object, while complete identifiability is considered superfluous due to the lack of salient distinctions within the small set of possible referents. This analysis explains a usage that puzzled Christophersen:

Still more strange is the sentence: *towards evening we came to the bank of a river.* Every river on earth inevitably has two banks. Here, however, only *the* is possible . . . (1939:140)

Christophersen's tentative explanation is that if one knows the direction of travel toward the river one can identify which bank is meant. But this explanation is not possible in

(90) We floated downstream awhile, and then paddled over to the bank.

The key lies in Christophersen's own observation that "Every river on earth inevitably has two banks." River banks come in small symmetrical sets as part of a well-defined frame (the "river" frame), and under ordinary circumstances the difference between the two set members is nonsalient. Hence the curiosity principle allows definite treatment with only partial identifiability.

The curiosity principle figures prominently in the pear film data because of its application to a major class of referents that come in well-defined frame-related sets: paired body parts. Hands, ears, legs, and so on, are parallel to river banks in that definite reference is allowed with only partial identifiability once a specific frame has been evoked (that is, once a specific person has been mentioned).[14] In the following example the definite initial mentions *my hand* and *the arm* both presuppose identifiability:

(91) I offered her my hand
    She took me by the arm   (Dylan, n.d.)

The identification is made possible only because of the relaxed standard of the curiosity principle. Identification of a hand as belonging to a particular person is ordinarily sufficient to satisfy curiosity. Of course the precise body part is sometimes relevant, as in the case of the jeweler referred to in the following example:

(92) she tumbled down a flight of stairs and broke her right (working) wrist (San Francisco *Chronicle, 6/2/78).*

But more commonly the precise body part is left unspecified, and a definite mention is used anyway. In the pear film data five speakers made an initial mention of a single paired body part (*his leg, his knee*) but not one specified mention whether the right or left member was intended, although all mentions presupposed identifiability. The definite initial mention *his leg* in

(93) he falls over, ... spills his pears, .. hurts his leg. (Speaker 19)

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[14]A distinction between frame type and frame token is implicit here. The *frame type* for "human," available in *langue*, includes slots for two arms, a head, and so on; mention of John Smith evokes a *frame token* with slots filled by John's two arms, head, and so on. This distinction allows the observation that a mention of two people evokes two frame tokens, both founded on a single frame type.

is possible only because the curiosity principle allows a relaxed standard of identification.

Human beings, although they occasionally come in small well-defined sets related to a frame, are not subject to the curiosity principle. The differences between two humans are considered too salient to neglect in this way. After speaking of a double violin concerto, one cannot go on to initiate a reference to one of the two soloists as *the violinist.* In general, curiosity about human referents leads to an expectation of full identification. There is, however, a similar phenomenon whereby humans who are members of a crowd may be marked as partially identifiable; this will be dealt with later (p. 265ff).

Having provided a framework with which to view the introduction of objects into discourse and their subsequent tracing through it, it is now possible to take a broader look at the 20 pear film narratives. In the remainder of this chapter, an understanding will be sought of how the speaker's communicative needs and expressive strategies underlie departures from the prevailing pattern of article use.

FRAMES AND THE CRITICAL INTRODUCTION PERIOD

The identifiability-marking function of the articles produces the typical pattern, noted earlier, of an indefinite initial mention followed by definite mentions in noninitial position. Deviations are of two types. Definite mentions may occur in initial position and indefinite mentions may occur in noninitial position; the following discussion tries to show why.

Most definite initial mentions are based on identifiability due to situational context or to frames, as has long been recognized. The result is a rather large proportion of definite initial mentions. In the pear film data 34 percent of the 613 initial mentions of characters and objects are formally definite. When objects alone are considered the proportion is even higher (41 percent of the 467 initial mentions). Since the speakers in question had never met the addressee (the interviewer) and thought she had not seen the film of which they spoke, these definite initial mentions are not due to any special shared knowledge peculiar to the interlocutors. Also, references to discourse participants (*I, you*), which are almost always definite on first mention, are not included in the foregoing figures. In everyday speech, the occurrence of discourse participant references, proper names (almost entirely absent from the pear film data), and other situation-based definites may raise the actual proportion of initial definites to a substantially higher level (though it becomes difficult to decide which mentions are initial in the conversation of long acquaintances).

A striking fact about the pear film narratives is that the tendency to definiteness is not distributed evenly across the various semantic classes.

Rather, certain semantic types have a consistently greater likelihood of being definite on initial mention. Body parts have the highest proportion of definite initial mentions (75 percent), whereas humans are lowest, with 12 percent definite (Figure 1). In general, things which are part of something else (body parts, 75 percent; parts of inanimate objects, 70 percent) or geographically fixed (locations, 73 percent; terrain, 71 percent) have the highest proportion of definite initial mentions; things which can move or be moved independently—the things which are the least predictable—have the lowest proportions (human beings, 12 percent; nonhuman animates, 12 percent; movable objects, not part of something else, 27 percent). In sum, the more independent an object, the less likely it is to be definite on initial mention.

We see that knowing the semantic class of a referent can give an approximate idea of whether it will be definite on first mention. But this crude prediction can be sharpened considerably by asking some more sophisticated questions. The most important are, whether a relevant frame has been evoked by something in previous discourse, and whether the initial mention is made in the narrative mode or the descriptive mode.

Frames may be classed as object-based or event-based. The first were well described by Christophersen; the latter he touched on in passing, under the rubric of "implicit contextual basis" (1939:34). This type of frame has recently begun to receive much attention, in the work of Fillmore (1976) and Chafe among others.

Speaking of the object-based frame *bicycle,* Chafe observed that, "once *bicycle* has been mentioned, *frame, seat,* and the like are as eligible to be treated as *definite* as is *bicycle* itself" (1972:62). As an illustration of this, the following speaker makes a mention of the Bike Boy's bicycle (*a bicycle*) which is followed by a definite initial mention of the front fender:

(94) he picks up a...the whole basket of pears,...and puts it on the handle..no on the...front..fender of his bike [1st]. (Speaker 6)

Of the 14 such initial mentions of bicycle parts, 79 percent were definite, with indefinites occurring mostly in mentions of optional bike parts.[15]

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[15]There was a single case of an obligatory bike frame element which was referred to with a formally indefinite mention(*wheels*):

(i) You could hear the bicycle,...wheels going round. (Speaker 4)

Such mentions tend to apply to frame-dependent objects occupying adverbial phrases:

(ii) He walked slowly up the stairs, head held high.

Possibly these should be considered some sort of "adverbial conflation," akin to predicate conflation.
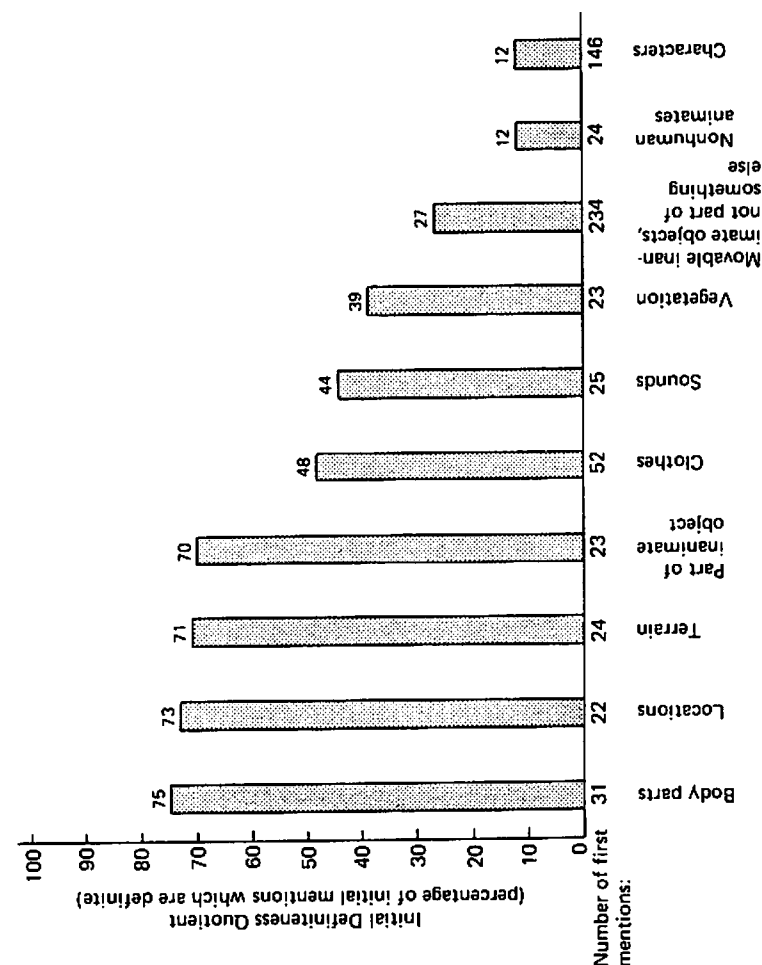

FIG. 1. Definiteness of Initial Mentions, by Semantic Class (for classes receiving at least 20 mentions)

It should be clear that the crude percentages cited here and in Figure 1 neglect one crucial consideration—whether the appropriate frame has been evoked in previous discourse. As it happens, all initial mentions of bicycle parts (definite or indefinite) were preceded by a mention of the bicycle. Indeed, the high definiteness proportion for parts in the pear film data depends on the fact that wholes are almost always mentioned before their parts.

A full understanding of the phenomenon of initial definiteness is possible only when the influence of the discourse modes is considered. With this in mind, I examine in some detail two semantic classes which are closely linked to the "human" frame—body parts and clothes. There are 27 initial mentions of human body parts in the pear film data, of which 82 percent are definite.[16] Since every body part mention is preceded by a mention of the part's owner, the numerous definite initial mentions are easy to explain. Once a mention has been made of, for example, the Bike Boy, a definite reference to his head is understandable:

(95) and he's [Bike Boy - 7th]...turning his head [1st]..behind him looking at her (Speaker 5)

We have seen that in other cases a definite initial mention may force the speaker to shift to the descriptive mode, as in example (81) where a definite initial mention (*the man*) triggered a descriptive mode clause containing an indefinite second mention (*a man*). But this never occurred with body parts. These mentions are not anomalous, and as a result not one of the 22 definite initial mentions of body parts triggered a subsequent indefinite mention.[17]

But we are left with the question: Why are not *all* initial mentions of body parts definite? Must we simply say that the human frame sometimes triggers definite body part mentions and sometimes does not, in accordance with some variable rule? In fact the triggering is not simply variable, but is governed by the choice of discourse mode. Mentions of body parts were divided into descriptive mode occurences—objects of the verbs *have, have on, wear,* or objects of the prepositions *in* (in the sense "wearing") or *with* ("having attribute X")—and narrative mode occurrences—subjects, objects of verbs other than *have, have on,* and *wear,* indirect objects, objects of prepositions (except *in* and *with* in their descriptive senses). The following examples illustrate the prevailing pattern that emerges. Initial mentions are indefinite in the descriptive mode (*a moustache* as object of *with*) and definite in the narrative mode (*his knee* as object of *skin*):

[16]The percentage cited in Figure 1 differs because it includes four initial mentions of body parts of nonhumans (to wit, the Goat), of which three are indefinite.

[17]Nor were there any indefinite noninitial mentions following the five indefinite initial mentions.

(96) And there was this man with a moustache [1st], (Speaker 14)

(96b) and he falls down and he skins his knee [1st] or something. (Speaker 7)

All other body part mentions follow this pattern. The 22 narrative mode initial mentions have an *initial definiteness quotient* (defined as the percentage of initial mentions which are definite) of 100; the 5 descriptive mode initial mentions have a quotient of 0. Thus, once the discourse modes are considered, predictability of definiteness is no longer variable but absolute (for this small corpus).

It is worth considering whether discourse modes themselves can be predicted. It appears that they can be (at least for body parts), as Table 1 shows. The first column lists human body parts which appear in the descriptive mode; the second, those which appear in the narrative mode. All five mentions for which the speakers felt obliged to use the descriptive mode are optional parts of the human frame: a moustache, which men may have or may not have, and pigtails, which women may or may not have. The body parts which are dropped into the stream of the narrative without special comment are those which can be presupposed, the obligatory elements of the human frame—head, neck, hands, and so on. There is a clear split along the lines of obligatory and optional frame elements, as distinguished by Chafe (1972:62).

Of course, it is possible for someone to make a descriptive mode mention of an obligatory body part, or a narrative mode mention of an optional body part, but the fact that this never occurs in the pear film data suggests that it is rare in spoken language. (In literary English liberties are often taken with this rule, it seems.) But where a leg, say, does receive a descriptive mode mention, this is most likely because it has some remarkable characteristic:

TABLE 1.
Frequency of Occurrence of Initial Body Part Mentions, by Discourse Mode

Descriptive	Narrative
moustache (2)	—
pigtails (3)	—
—	head (10)
—	face (2)
—	neck (2)
—	hands (1)
—	fingers (1)
—	leg (3)
—	knee (2)
—	feet (1)

If there is something unusual about the body part or about its condition we may...have perfectly natural sentences of the following sort: *Tom has a wooden leg, Tom has a broken leg, Tom has a long head.* (Longacre, 1976:247)

Each of the descriptive mode mentions contains an adjective, and indeed the pear film data on body parts suggest this pattern is general: three of the five descriptive mode initial mentions contain adjectives. For example:

(97) and it's another little white girl. ... with long.. braids,... brown hair [1st]. (Speaker 17)

(98) this other little girl in pigtails,... black pigtails [1st],... rode by, (Speaker 14)

The correlation in the other direction is even stronger. No adjectives occur with any of the 22 narrative mode initial mentions. Although the narratives contain many sentences like *And he sort of... /visually/ ... counts them with his fingers* (Speaker 6), sentences of the type *he counts them with his stubby fingers*, so common in the literary language, never occur in the spoken English of the pear film data. Apparently, if a speaker wishes to attribute a special quality to a referent, he tends to shift his full attention to the matter by using the descriptive mode—rather than overloading the limited resources of consciousness (Chafe, Chapter 1) by trying to subcategorize an object adjectivally while advancing the story line. It has long been recognized that attributive adjectives are less frequent in speaking than in writing—Drieman (1962) and O'Donnell (1974)—but it is now possible to be more precise about the restrictions on adjectives in speaking: they are used, but usually only in the descriptive mode (which, it should be noted, may contain attributive as well as predicate adjectives). In writing, the possibility for longer reflection allows adjectives to be used in the narrative mode as well, thus producing a greater overall frequency.

The restriction of adjectives to the descriptive mode seems clear at least for body parts and for clothes, but a full correlation of adjective use with discourse mode has not yet been tabulated for all semantic classes. It is clear, however, that the restriction is not an absolute, but a tendency. In addition, post-nominal modifying phrases are not restricted in the same way as prenominal modifiers. Such phrases do in fact occur with narrative mode initial mentions:

(99) and /he/ sort of...[breath] holds onto his leg[1st],.. which is hurt, (Speaker 11)[18]

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[18]Restrictive as well as nonrestrictive relative clauses may occur in this context, at least for clothes: *the hat that he's wearing* (50).

It is possible to go beyond the observation that narrative mode initial mentions of body parts are always formally definite to specify which form from among the various definite types will be chosen. In the pear film data, in every case it is the possessed form (*his head, his fingers, their hands*) and never the *the*-form which is chosen; in other words, *the head* is not attested. (Descriptive mode mentions of body parts, in contrast, never appear as possessed noun phrases.)

There is a notable clustering of correllated properties in the case of initial body part mentions—definiteness, possessive adjective, lack of (other) adjectives, and narrative mode on the one hand—and indefiniteness, adjective, lack of possessive adjective, and descriptive mode—on the other. We shall see that time also enters into this clustering, in the form of the "critical introduction period."

The mentions of body parts discussed so far have in every case followed the mention of their owner. This in itself is of interest: apparently it is extremely uncommon to mention a part before its whole. But it is worth considering cases where this does happen, if only to confirm that the high initial definiteness quotient for body parts indeed depends on the prior evocation of the human frame.

A second experiment was conducted in which a brief film clip extracted from the main film was shown to subjects. The clip began with a close-up of the Pear Man's hands picking pears (rather than a long-distance shot of the Pear Man in the pear tree, which is what first appeared in the full pear film). The subjects were then asked to write what they saw. Nine of the subjects[19] mentioned the hands—seven before mentioning the Pear Man, and two after. The latter two fit the pattern we have already seen: one, in the narrative mode, was definite (*his hands* Subject II-8); the other was indefinite due to the descriptive mode verb *have* (*He*[...] *had soft looking hands* Subject II-210). But of the seven subjects who mentioned the body part before the whole man, six used indefinite noun phrases: *a hand* (3), *hands* (2), and *a pair of hands* (1) (all in the narrative mode).[20] The low initial definiteness quotient contrasts markedly with the very high quotient for body parts which are mentioned after their owners.[21] The data confirm the common-sense observation that definite mentions of body parts are dependent on a prior mention of the person they belong to. If body parts are so frequently introduced with definite noun phrases, this is, unsurprisingly, because their owners are almost always mentioned before them. In the rare case where the

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[19]Out of the 98 qualified subjects responding. (A number of further subjects had to be excluded because they were not native speakers of English.)

[20]The seventh subject wrote with telegraphic speech (without most articles), thus neutralizing the definite/indefinite contrast and rendering the result uninterpretable.

[21]Of course other variables are involved here—spoken vs. written response, length of film—making the results simply suggestive.

frame part is mentioned before evocation of the frame whole, it will typically be indefinite.

But this experiment, while confirming a common-sense observation about frames, also reveals a curious asymmetry in their functioning. Mention of a human evokes a frame which allows (indeed, demands) a definite initial narrative mode mention of the person's body parts, but the reverse does not hold. When a body part is mentioned first, no doubt a hearer immediately thinks of the human being who comes with it; nevertheless, this does not always lead to a definite initial mention. Three of the six subjects under discussion followed their mention of the hand with an indefinite initial mention of the man (two of them in the narrative mode). For example:

(100) a hand [1st] came out through some green leaves, and was carefully picking fruit. Then a man with a straw hat [1st] came to view; he was picking the fruit...(Subject II-33)

The three subjects who did use a definite article (all in the narrative mode) all gave a relative clause specifying ownership of the hands:

(101) We see hands [1st] picking pears, then the man whose hands they are [1st] (Subject II-23)

It seems that all is not equal in a frame like the human frame. In the stereotypical, normal circumstances that frames are supposed to represent, a hand implies a person, just as the reverse holds true. But the whole is more than the part—even if a part is introduced first, the whole may not be introduced with a definite noun phrase, unless an explanatory relative clause is included.[22]

Clothes show a pattern similar to, but less extreme than, that shown by body parts. The 52 initial mentions of clothes have a somewhat lower initial definiteness quotient of 48. The correlation of definiteness with discourse mode, though strong, is not perfect. The 22 descriptive mode initial mentions have an initial definiteness quotient of 0; the 30 narrative mode mentions have a quotient of 83. Illustrations are seen in examples (102) (descriptive mode), (103) (narrative mode, definite), and 104 (narrative mode, indefinite):

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[22]But contrast the following example from literary English, in which prior mention of *a daughter* triggers a definite mention of her family:

(i) ...if a daughter [1st] asks
      (8) Can I have the car?
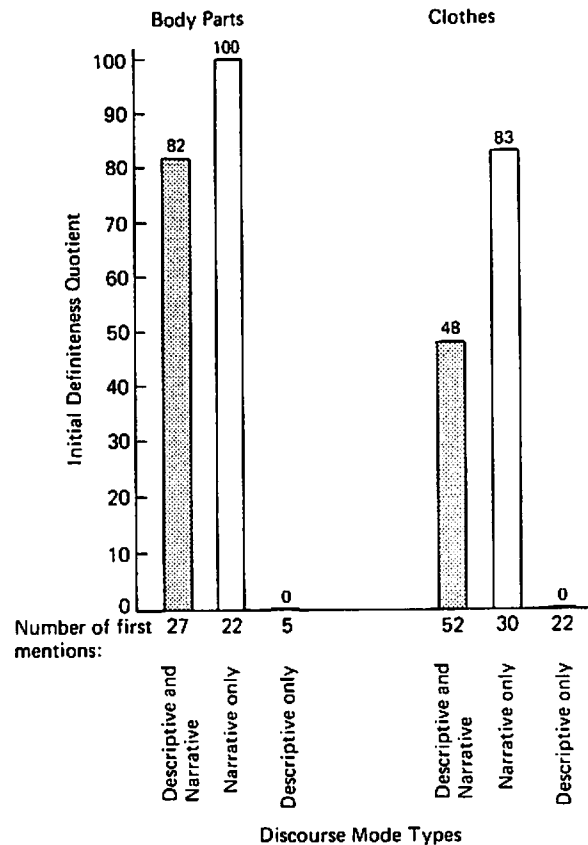homophoric reference is entailed if the family [1st] has only one car. (Rochester and Martin, 1977:264)

(102) A--nd you see a middle-aged..u--m..Chicano man,...who's wearing..a—..navy blue shirt [1st],...and a bright red..kerchief [1st] around his neck,...and a white apron [1st]. (Speaker 17)

(103) and-- his hat [1st] falls off (Speaker 8)

(104) and he put them in an apron /that he had/ [1st] (Speaker 12)

The definite initial mentions are not anomalous; in only one case (4 percent) was a subsequent indefinite mention triggered, probably for independent reasons—see example (47).

Figure 2 demonstrates graphically the value of distinguishing between the discourse modes. When descriptive and narrative mentions are not distinguished (shaded columns) the predictability of definiteness is not nearly so great as when they are distinguished (white columns).

Definite narrative mode mentions of clothes, as in example (103), exhibit a propensity, reminiscent of body parts, for possessed forms: all but one (96 percent) bear the preposed possessive adjective *his*. The one departure from the prevailing pattern (*the hat that he's wearing*) is seen in example (50), where it illustrates the conditions on definite initial mentions due to file-establishing relative clauses. These same conditions, it seems, govern the use of possessive adjectives for definite initial mentions. The definite *his hat* in

(105) when he turns around his hat [1st] flies off. (Speaker 1)

is possible because *his* makes a contribution to identification in the same way that the relative clause *that he's wearing* does. *His* is similar to *the* in that it demands (presupposes) identifiability, but different in that it supplies some extra information that may help make the identification possible (see Haliday and Hasan, 1976:70–71). This semantic contribution is what allows it to be used so frequently in initial mentions. Once this file-establishing function of *his* has been exploited, the speaker may choose to use *the* subsequently—as in the case of one speaker who followed a definite initial narrative mode mention (*so that his... his hat [1st] flies off* Speaker 18) with four subsequent mentions, three with *the* and one with *his*.

Since *his* presupposes identifiability and possession as well, it is presumably subject to the principles of new information presupposition (56). In spoken English, new information on possession tends not to be presented via a preposed possessive adjective unless the possession involved is not particularly noteworthy. Among body parts, those introduced by *his* include the Pear Man's head, face, neck, and fingers, but not his moustache. Clothing items introduced with *his* include the Bike Boy's pants and hat. The Pear

Body Parts   Clothes

FIG. 2. Influence of Discourse Mode on Initial Definiteness Quotient: Body Parts and Clothes

indicate possession in the noun phrase. In virtually all cases possession is already expressed (*have*) or implied (*have on,* etc.) in the verb or preposition. In other words, when a "human" frame element (a body part or item of clothing) is mentioned, possession will ordinarily be expressed in one way or another. If the descriptive mode is selected, the verb serves to express possession, but if the narrative mode is selected, possession must be expressed in the noun phrase.

Clothes part company from body parts in one respect: there is no clear correlation between the optionality of the frame element and the choice of discourse mode, like that seen in Table 1.

As with body parts, adjectives that modify initial mentions of clothes are almost entirely restricted to indefinite descriptive mode mentions. Of the 16 initial mentions of clothes which contain prenominal modifiers, 100 percent were indefinite mentions, and 81 percent were descriptive mode mentions. Distinct discourse mode treatments of *a white apron* are illustrated in example (106) (descriptive mode) and the less common (107) (narrative mode):

(106) he looks ... like your uh .. typical .. farmer or .. whatever, kind of plump and ... moustache and he wears a white apron [1st], (Speaker 8)

(107) you see him taking ... picking the pears out of the leaves and putting them in a ... white apron [1st], (Speaker 6)

The strong tendency for adjectives to be restricted to the descriptive mode supports the notion that in English, speakers (as opposed to writers) usually avoid mixing prenominal modification with the business of advancing the story line.

Whereas object-based frames are relatively tangible, being made up of a whole with a set of more or less unvarying parts, event-based frames (or one might say, "scene-based" frames) are less straightforward. They are composed of a network of related actions, along with the people and objects involved in those actions. But as we shall see, it is often difficult to decide on the limits of a particular event-based frame, and questions arise concerning the status ("dummy" vs. substantive) of frame-related identifications.

When linguists have investigated frames, they have often used definiteness to decide what elements make up a particular frame. For example, the definiteness of *the money* following the verbs *sell* or *buy* is evidence that they are all part of a larger "commercial act" frame, which becomes activated when some portion of it is mentioned. In the pear film data, definite initial mentions of the ladder used in picking the pears support a similar analysis. Fifteen speakers mention the ladder; seven of them do so with the expected indefinite

Man's apron (which is at the fringes of what one might consider clothing) was introduced by eight subjects with the indefinite article—but by five subjects with *his.* Perhaps this occurs because *his* is only weakly governed by the principle of new information presupposition, or perhaps possession (wearing) of an apron is not particularly noteworthy. The goat, which appeared as an undoubtedly noteworthy (for Americans, at least) possession of the Goat Man, was introduced by all 17 speakers who mentioned it with the indefinite article, and never with *his.* In any case, one would wish to examine more instances of noteworthy possession, without added variables such as animacy.

For clothes as for body parts, no descriptive mode initial mentions bear possessive adjectives—that is, *a shirt of his* does not occur—or otherwise

initial mention (*a ladder*, example 108), and eight use a definite initial mention (*the ladder*, example 109). The relevant portion of previous discourse is provided for these examples:

(108) the basic action,...i--s that there's--..a man...uh..on a ladder [1st],...uh picking pears from a pear tree. (Speaker 18)

(109) It opens with um--...I guess a farm worker,...picking pears,...in a tree. ...And--um--...you see him taking...picking the pears out of the leaves and putting them in a...white apron,...and he walks down the...ladder [1st], and dumps the pears into a basket. (Speaker 6)

None of the definite initial mentions triggered a subsequent indefinite mention; however, three were followed (after a pause) by modifying phrases—two of which were explanatory relative clauses apparently added as an afterthought:

(110) [The Pear Man] climbs up the ladder [1st],...uh⌐ that's leaning against a tree, (Speaker 11)

There remain five "uneventful" definite initial mentions like that in (109). Is there something in previous discourse that allows (or requires) these definite mentions? If so, does its absence automatically result in an indefinite mention? There are several candidates, exemplified in (109), that might trigger a frame which includes the ladder: the pear tree (*a tree*) or the Pear Man (*a farm worker*) among objects, and pear-picking (*picking the pears*) or going up or down the tree (*walks down the ladder*) among events. Only one of the definite initial mentions was preceded by mention of the pear tree, so this is apparently not a strong frame trigger. And although all the initial definites were preceded by a prior mention of the Pear Man, so were six of the seven indefinites. Mention of the Pear Man, apparently, does not necessarily cause speakers to activate a frame allowing *the ladder*. A better candidate is the verbal mention of pear-picking, which precedes (in a separate earlier clause) all of the definite initial mentions of the ladder, but only three of the seven indefinites. The frame analysis would suggest that once the speaker mentions pear-picking, a frame token is activated which includes a ladder. When the speaker first comes to speak about the ladder, he usually takes advantage of the hearer's awareness of the frame token and treats the ladder as already identifiable (and hence definite).

One might think that a stronger trigger of definiteness for the ladder is "going up or down (the ladder)," since all definite initial mentions are preceded by this, while only one indefinite initial mention is. But mentions of

"going up or down" and mentions of the ladder always appear in the same clause (when both occur) and can hardly be considered independent. By the time a speaker says *he walks down...the ladder* [1st] (Speaker 6), he has already shifted to the narrative mode and is thus most likely to make a definite initial mention, rather than shift to the descriptive mode for a "proper" indefinite introduction. Use of the narrative mode is an important factor in this problem. Eight of the nine narrative mode initial mentions were definite, while all six of the descriptive mode mentions were indefinite. Thus the crucial choice of discourse mode is once again the "proximate cause" of initial definiteness. The ladder's membership in the pear-picking frame may, however, still be necessary for a speaker to feel justified in skipping the descriptive mode introduction.

Figure 3 compares the initial definiteness quotient for the ladder with that for the other "movable inanimate objects" for which no relevant frame was evoked. Most objects have a much lower incidence of initial definites, including some like the baskets (25 percent definite) for which the pear-picking frame may be relevant. The girl's bicycle, with an initial definiteness quotient of 0, does not seem to have benefited from the activation of any frame. The choice of indefinite mentions is not due to the descriptive mode (all mentions were in the narrative mode) but to the fact that the bicycle was in every case introduced on its first appearance in the film, during its critical introduction period (see next paragraph):
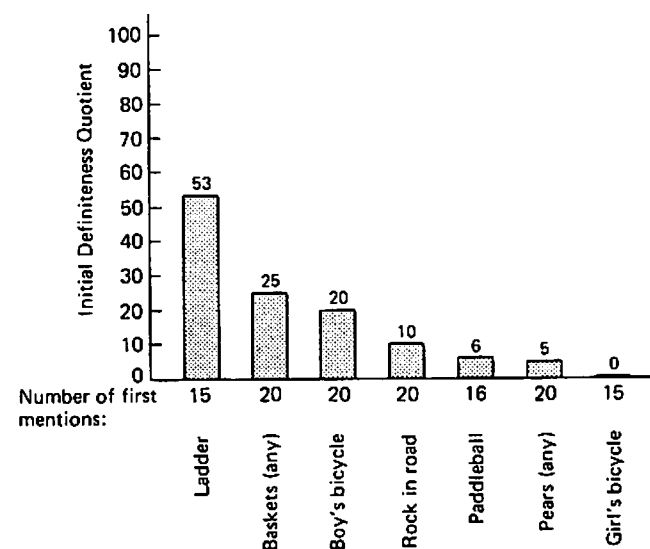

FIG. 3. Initial Definiteness Quotients: Movable Inanimate Objects, Not Part of Something Else (objects receiving 10 or more mentions)

(111) and— he looks at .. a girl, that was coming the other way, riding a
    bicycle [1st], (Speaker 3)

Thus the narrative mode may be used for a proper indefinite introduction, as
long as the appropriate time has not passed.

Time is clearly a crucial factor. If a speaker mentions the ladder soon after it
comes into view in the film, as in (108), she usually makes a descriptive mode
introduction, which is indefinite. But if, as in (109), the speaker has let a lot of
time go by without introducing the ladder, she usually uses a (definite)
narrative mode initial mention. The mean number of words which elapsed
between the beginning of the pear-picking scene and the first mention of the
ladder was 27 for indefinites and 83 for definites. Thus, it appears that three
main factors are involved in making a definite initial mention of the ladder:
the prior occurrence of a frame trigger (or triggers); the choice of discourse
mode; and the amount of time elapsed since the ladder first comes into view.
The way these three factors bear on the problem is, I suggest, as follows.
When a speaker focusses his attention on the pear-picking scene in order to
tell what happens, he sees a variety of objects before him—the Pear Man, the
tree, the pears, the ladder, and so on. During this period he directs his
attention to "getting the scene across" to the hearer, taking care to introduce
the salient objects in the descriptive mode. As long as the speaker is in this
period—which we may label the *criticial introduction period*—he is well
aware of what objects he has or has not introduced to his addressee. Then,
having conveyed the salient elements of the scene, he shifts his attention to
advancing the story line, for which he adopts the narrative mode. Once he is in
the narrative mode, he usually fails to make indefinite introductions for
objects whose critical introduction period has passed.

This failure may occur for several reasons. After leaving the critical
introduction period he may not attempt to maintain a memory of which
objects he has or has not introduced. He may simply assume that he has
already taken care of introducing all the salient objects he will need to refer to,
forgetting that a particular object has not actually received a proper
introduction. In the narrative mode, the full resources of consciousness
(Chafe, Chapter 1) would be deployed for the advancement of the story line.
Alternatively, he may simply chose not to shift his attention back to the
descriptive mode, or he may wish to keep up the momentum of a rapid-
ly advancing story line. Of course, these possibilities are not mutually
exclusive.

To this picture we must add a distinction between intrinsic salience and plot
salience. The goat had great intrinsic salience, and was mentioned by 18
subjects even though it did not fit well into the plot of the movie. All but one
speaker introduced it during its critical introduction period (all with

indefinite mentions).[23] On the other hand, the Bike Boy's hat apparently had
low intrinsic salience. During its critical introduction period, when the Bike
Boy first appeared, only one of the speakers (Speaker 17) mentioned it (with
an indefinite descriptive mode mention, as one would expect). Later in the
plot, however, the hat began to figure prominently. It fell off his head during
his fall and was found and returned by the Paddleball Boy, who received some
pears in exchange. All 20 speakers mentioned the hat at some point during
this sequence. Of the 19 who had not mentioned it before, 89 percent made a
definite initial mention in the narrative mode. The significance of the two
types of salience for definiteness should be clear. If an object has high intrinsic
salience, it is likely to be mentioned when it first appears, during its critical
introduction period. If it has high plot salience but low intrinsic salience it is
likely to be first mentioned wherever it fits into the plot. If this happens to
come early, during its critical introduction period, it will be indefinite; if not,
it will usually be definite.

The importance of the critical introduction period in influencing the use of
the discourse modes can be clearly seen in initial mentions of body parts and
clothes. Figure 4 tabulates the points at which narrative mode mentions of
body parts occur, and contrasts these with when descriptive mode mentions
occur. As a measure of "when" a mention of a body part occurred, it was
decided to count how many times its owner had been mentioned in prior
discourse.[24] For example, Speaker 10 mentioned the Bike Boy's leg only after
he had fallen from his bicycle:

(112) and he ... checks his leg [1st] to make sure ... to see if he's got
    any ... bruises or anything. (Speaker 10)

This is after she had been speaking about the Bike Boy for some time, having
mentioned him 16 times previously. This mention of the leg, being in the
narrative mode, is tabulated in Figure 4(a); descriptive mode mentions are
tabulated in Figure 4(b). The difference in distribution is apparent at a glance.
Narrative mode mentions of body parts may occur at any point in the
narrative after their owner is mentioned. But descriptive mode mentions are
limited to the period shortly following the owner's introduction. The same

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[23]The one speaker (Speaker 14) may not be a genuine exception, perhaps having
misremembered the actual moment of the goat's appearance.

[24]The decision to use the number of previous mentions of the frame trigger as a measure for
calibrating the critical introduction period is somewhat arbitrary. Alternatively one might
investigate words (as in the earlier discussion of *the ladder*), seconds in real time, idea units
(Chafe, Chapter 1), or clauses elapsed. Probably more sophisticated issues are also involved, such
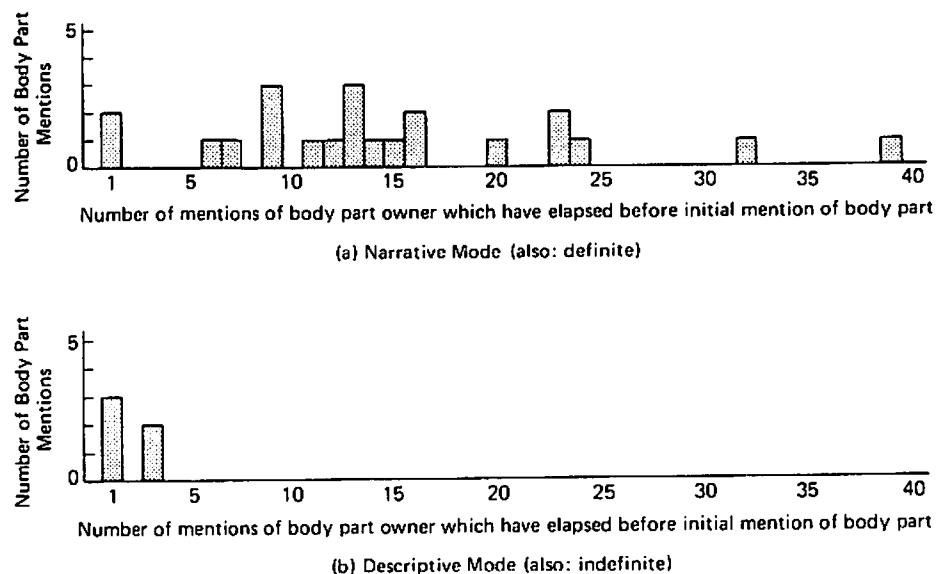as crossing the boundary from descriptive mode to narrative mode.

(a) Narrative Mode (also: definite)

Number of mentions of body part owner which have elapsed before initial mention of body part

(b) Descriptive Mode (also: indefinite)

Number of mentions of body part owner which have elapsed before initial mention of body part

FIG. 4. Comparison of When Narrative and Descriptive Mode Initial Mentions Occur: Body Parts

Number of mentions of clothing item owner which have elapsed before initial mention of clothing item

(a) Narrative Mode

Number of mentions of clothing item owner which have elapsed before initial mention of clothing item

(b) Descriptive Mode

FIG. 5. Comparison of When Narrative and Descriptive Mode Initial Mentions Occur: Clothes

Number of mentions of clothing item owner which have elapsed before initial mention of clothing item

(a) Definite Initial Mentions

Number of mentions of clothing item owner which have elapsed before initial mention of clothing item

(b) Indefinite Initial Mentions

FIG. 6. Comparison of When Definite and Indefinite Initial Mentions Occur: Clothes

pattern holds for clothes, though it is less extreme (Figure 5). Here too, narrative mode mentions are more or less evenly distributed through the narrative, while descriptive mode mentions tend to occur soon after the introduction of the clothing item's owner.

If we look at the effect on definiteness of the critical introduction period, instead of the discourse modes, the picture, as we would expect, is virtually the same. Figure 6 contrasts definites with indefinites for initial mentions of clothes. Definite mentions are distributed throughout the narrative; indefinite mentions tend to occur shortly after mention of their owner. The similarity to Figure 5 is of course due to the high correlation between discourse mode and definiteness. For body parts, a chart contrasting definite with indefinite would look exactly like Figure 4, since there is a perfect correlation (for this small corpus) between definiteness and discourse mode.

As noted earlier, adjectives tend to occur in the descriptive mode but not the narrative mode. Figure 7 illustrates the effect of this: adjectives applied to clothing are usually used shortly after the owner of the clothing item has been introduced. The picture for body parts seems the same—the three preposed adjectives all occur within the first three mentions of their owner.

It is interesting to speculate whether any link could be established between the two stages of eye movements discussed by Chafe (p. 15) and the two stages I have been discussing (the critical introduction period and the
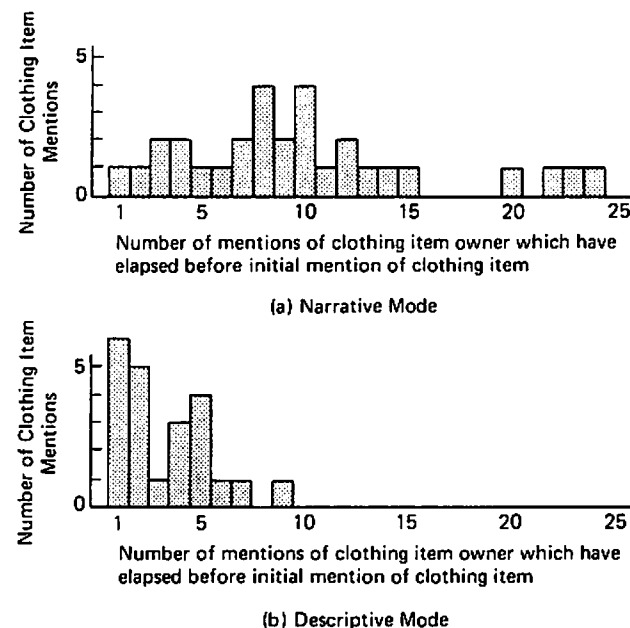
(a) No Preposed Adjective
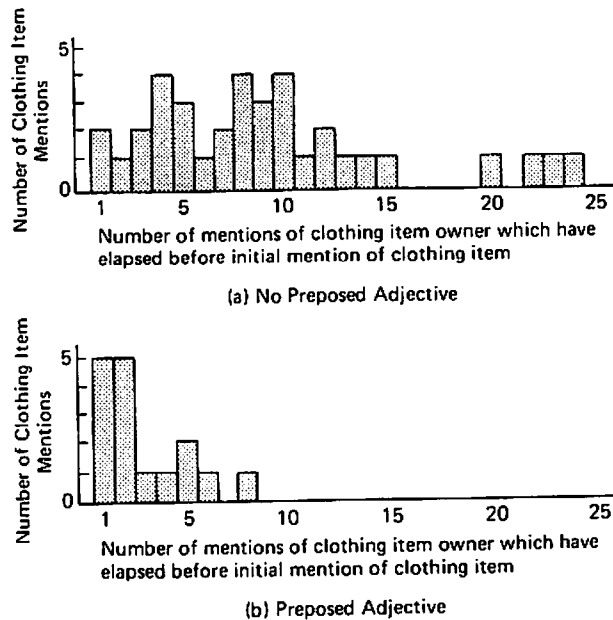

(b) Preposed Adjective

FIG. 7. Comparison of When Adjective-Modified and Non-Adjective-Modified Initial Mentions Occur: Clothes

narrative mode period following it). In the verbalization Chafe cites in his example (4), idea units corresponding to the first period of eye fixations (a–e) are primarily in the descriptive mode; those corresponding to the second period (f–i) are largely (but not entirely) in the narrative mode. Further investigation would, of course, be required in order to establish whether a connection exists.

I have spoken only about the effects of the critical introduction period on elements in frames—the ladder in the pear-picking frame, body parts and clothes in the human frame. Things which are not part of a frame may not be so often affected by the "accidental" passing of the critical introduction period. Since they are independent of other objects, they are likely to be mentioned on first appearance in consciousness or, if nonsalient, not at all. Frames, though they structure the world and allow the speaker to convey information economically, may make it harder to keep track of what one has overtly introduced. In addition, of course, they make it less important to keep track, since the hearer is aided in making an identification by his knowledge of frames.

The percentage of definite initial mentions of persons which was cited in Figure 1 is 12 percent, but this rather mechanically includes initial mentions

of, for example, the Bike Boy and Girl as *they*. Excluding such group mentions, identifiable on the basis of earlier individual mentions, we find that of the 139 remaining initial mentions, 8 (or 5.8 percent) are definite. That even these few definite initial mentions are problematic for speakers is shown by the fact that all but one (88 percent) triggered a subsequent indefinite mention.[25] This contrasts sharply with the recovery-triggering figures of 12 percent for clothes and 0 percent for body parts and for the ladder, and shows that when a human is introduced with a definite mention, a patch-up strategy of some sort will almost always be implemented. There are two questions to be answered: Why do the definite initial mentions occur, and what do speakers do about them?

Theoretical discussions of frames so frequently feature examples like *the buyer* as a definite initial mention (made possible by a previous mention of, e.g., *sell*) that one might expect that some of the definite mentions of humans would be of this type. But in the standard example, *the buyer* does not trigger a subsequent indefinite, unlike most of the mentions being discussed. As it turns out there are no examples of the *buyer* type in the pear film narratives (although a similar type does occur and will be discussed).

Some of the definite character mentions were cases where characters were apparently verbalized before their time had come. In the following example, the speaker is trying to remember more about the Goat Man. While concentrating on her recollection of the Goat Man, she inadvertently (it seems) mentions the Bike Boy and his bicycle:

(113) Someone [Goat Man] came along before the kid on the bicycle [1st] but I don't remember who it was. ... Then a kid [2nd] came along on a bicycle [2nd], (Speaker 16)

This is an example of what I characterize as *premature introduction*. The plot line supplies a natural place for the Bike Boy to be introduced—the critical introduction period. If the speaker reaches this natural place for introduction, and does not let is pass by, the initial mention will be carried out normally, with an indefinite noun phrase. But if the speaker happens to utter a mention of the Bike Boy before reaching this point, while she still has her attention directed to expressing other matters, she may fail to mark the noun phrase as nonidentifiable. On doing so she ordinarily becomes aware of her mistake, which she then rectifies.

Two other instances of premature introduction are found in the narratives, both in initial mentions of the Pear Man. In the first case the speaker seems to be focusing on the film sounds, in the second, on the setting:

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[25]I have no explanation for the single exception. Perhaps it was simply an unnoticed mistake.

(114) And--...the first...thing I noticed..was..the sound of the man
[1st] picking...pears. ...And of course there was a...a man
[2nd] there standing on a ladder in a pear tree, (Speaker 4)

(115) the setting looks like it's a place...maybe--...in California, the
Santa Barbara area,...or something like that. ...uh-- there
was ...this orchard's around him [1st]. ...I guess what he's [2nd]
picking is pears. ...There's a..uh...farm laborer, [3rd] a
Mexican farm laborer [4th] picking pears (Speaker 5)

In both cases the speakers were apparently directing their attention to other matters; but after the definite initial mention they became aware that a proper introduction was called for, which was then supplied via *there is*. We saw earlier that an object may be mentioned after its critical introduction period has passed. It is remarkable that it is also possible to mention an object before its own critical introduction period has begun.

In either such case (premature introduction or late introduction), the initial mention receives the definite article instead of the expected indefinite article. This suggests that the definite article is the unmarked member of the pair. When consciousness is not focussed on the task of introducing characters, it is the unmarked *the* which is uttered, whether or not the initial mention is in fact identifiable. There are other reasons to consider *the* unmarked, among them sheer frequency. In a corpus of one million words of written English, the definite article was by far the most common word, with 69,971 occurrences; whereas the indefinite article (*a ~ an*) had only 26,984 occurrences (Kučera and Francis, 1967:5).

It is noteworthy that in all three cases of premature introduction, the character is first mentioned in a prepositional phrase (as the object of *before, of, around*), rather than in the far more common subject slot. Of 139 initial mentions of characters, 57 percent are introduced as subjects, 18 percent as *there*-introductions (*there's a--..man...picking pears* Speaker 8), 16 percent as objects, 6 percent as *obliques* (here defined negatively—neither subject, object, *there*-introduction, nor the others), 2 percent as predicate nominals, and 1 percent (one instance) as a topic. As long as a speaker uses one of the three most common introductory syntactic slots (subject, object, or *there*-introduction) for his initial mention, she is likely to make an uneventful indefinite introduction. This can be seen in Figure 8, where these three syntactic slots have low initial definiteness quotients.[26] But if her first mention of a character occurs in an oblique noun phrase, the likelihood that she will fail to use an indefinite is considerably higher. Perhaps the peripheral

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[26]Predicate nominals (three, all indefinite) and the topic (one, definite) were excluded from Figure 8 as having too few mentions.
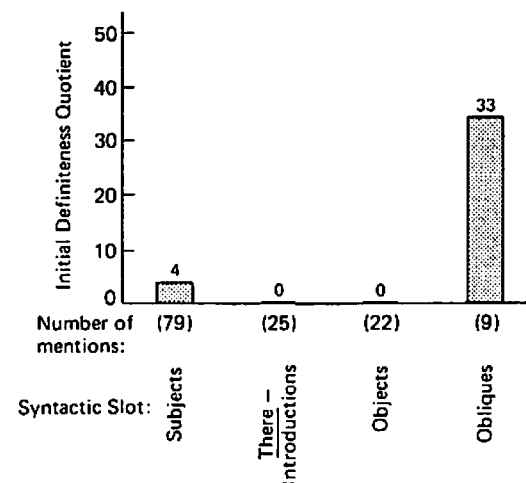

FIG. 8. Initial Definiteness Quotient by Syntactic Slot: Characters

syntactic (and semantic) status of the noun phrase is accompanied by a peripheral degree of attention.

When subjects corrected their faulty introduction of a character with a subsequent indefinite, they usually chose a *there*-introduction, as in (114) above (four of seven cases).

It is worth pointing out that when speakers introduce a character in the object slot, the verb is usually (68 percent of 11) a "verb of perception or cognition"—*see* (13), *look at* (1), *associate* (1). A typical example is the following introduction of the Goat Man as the object of *you see:*

(116) and..you see a guy [1st] leading a goat..past the tree where he's picking the pears. (Speaker 6)

Characters may, however, be introduced as objects of other verbs as well, as with the Girl in the following example:

(117) and he passes a girl on a bicycle [1st], (Speaker 19)

Before looking at the second major type of definite character introduction it will be useful to recall an apparent failure of frames to allow definite mentions, in the earlier discussion of *the ladder.* How is it that prior mention of the Pear Man does not trigger the pear-picking frame in the way that mention of the pear-picking action itself does? Although the pear-picker seems as much a part of such a frame (if one exists) as pear-picking is, we find that in the pear film narratives he is almost always introduced in ways that do

not convey his role in this frame. The most common initial mention is simply *a man* (nine speakers), which does not indicate a role in any particular event-based frame. In the one case where the initial mention did specify his role in the pear-picking via a relative clause (*a guy who's picking pears* Speaker 3) the subsequent initial mention of the ladder was indeed definite. But ordinarily speakers do not express a character's frame role through noun phrases, they express it through verb phrases (*he picks the pears*). Thus the examples which constantly turn up in discussions of frames—*the buyer*, and so on—are rather rare and special cases. It is no accident that the nouns are so often derived from verbs. It should be clear by now that mention of a human member of a frame in no way activates that frame—except when the speaker specifies his frame role in the course of mentioning him. This leads to the matter of *dummy identification*—identifying a functional slot in a frame rather than an actual person—which I shall now discuss.

In premature introductions the speaker does not deliberately use a definite initial mention, he falls into it. But there is a type of definite initial mention in the pear film narratives which is deliberate. This type is based on the availability of an appropriate frame, but unlike the *buyer* case just described, it does not usually allow one to go on with subsequent definite mentions. Rather, a pattern of definite initial mention followed by indefinite second mention arises. This is due to the speaker's use of what may be called the *slot-and-fill* strategy. First a "dummy" definite is given which sets the stage for the upcoming indefinite mention. Often this dummy serves only to define as the topic a particular slot in an available (activated) frame token. The frame slot is then filled with contentful material in an indefinite second mention. In the following example, *the landscape* is used in this way:

> (118)   Well, first thing you see, is—.. uh—.. the landscape [1st] is—.. u—m...?.. sort of an agricultural.. area [2nd], (Speaker 17)

The definite phrase *the landscape* serves to pinpoint a particular portion of the available "outdoor event" frame, and the particular quality to be attributed to this frame element is then specified by the indefinite predicate nominal *sort of an agriculatural area.*

This raises the issue of what varieties of identification may be distinguished. Christophersen has observed that

> Talking of a certain book, it is perfectly correct to say "The author is unknown"; this is not a contradiction in terms. ... As it is a common experience that every book has one (and usually only one) author, the knowledge of the book automatically entails the knowledge that there is an author. (1939:73)

What has been identified is a slot in the "book" frame, rather than an actual individual; but this is sufficient to justify use of the definite article. In the

following example, a definite *the winner* is allowed on the basis of prior activation of a "raffle" frame token:

> (119)   the caul was put up in a raffle to fifty members at half-a-crown a head, the winner to spend five shillings (Dickens, quoted in Jespersen 1924:120)

Since no actual person has yet been chosen winner, it is clear that *the winner* identifies only a role in a frame and not an individual. Similarly, activation of the "commercial act" frame may allow a definite mention of *the buyer* based on identification of the slot rather than of an actual individual:

> (120)   If the buyer wants to know the condition of the property, he has to have another survey carried out on his own behalf (*The Legal Side of Buying a House,* Consumer's Association, quoted in Halliday and Hasan, 1976:47)

This use of *the buyer* is quite different from the often cited example where mention of *the buyer* follows a mention of an actual sale as in *I just sold my house.* Bertrand Russell's discussion of descriptions illustrates the difference between the two varieties of identification:

> It is possible to have much knowledge concerning a term described, *i.e.* to know many propositions concerning "the so-and-so," without actually knowing what the so-and-so is, *i.e.* without knowing any proposition of the form "x is the so-and-so," where "*x*" is a name. In a detective story propositions about "the man who did the deed" are accumulated, in the hope that ultimately they will suffice to demonstrate that it was A who did the deed (Russell, 1971:174)

Once again, the distinction that must be made in discourse analysis is between identification of a slot in a frame and identification of an individual. These identifications may behave the same in their use of the definite article, but they differ in how they are employed in discourse.

Returning to mentions of characters in the pear film narratives, we find further examples of the slot-and-fill strategy in which a definite initial mention identifies a slot, but then triggers a subsequent indefinite which fills the slot with contentful material. This strategy is not always limited to well-defined frame slots. One speaker introduced the Bike Boy into her narrative according to his order of appearance in the plot:

> (121)   Then the third person that comes in the scene [1st] is a little boy about...ten years old [2nd]. (Speaker 17)

The reference to *the third person that comes in the scene* is definite simply because it specifies a unique slot, whose referent is identifiable only in the

limited sense that one knows there is some person (the "dummy") that came into the scene. The quality of this dummy must be specified in an immediately following mention, often a predicate nominal (which is formally indefinite). This use of a definite dummy is quite distinct from the other, *ladder* type of frame-dependent definites. The *ladder* types, which are "substantive" identifications, are usually followed by definite mentions; the dummy type are often (sometimes obligatorily) followed by explanatory indefinite mentions.

Having discussed the various reasons why speakers sometimes make their first mention of an object definite, the issue arises of why they sometimes make later mentions indefinite. A suggestion of one answer has already appeared in the discussion about various types of initial definites which trigger subsequent indefinites. Further sources of noninitial indefinites will now be discussed.

REASONS FOR LATE INDEFINITES

Though definite initial mentions have occasioned a great deal of discussion in the literature, almost no attention has been directed to the other side of the coin—indefinites which occur after the first mention. This situation has apparently arisen because past investigators have thought of the definite article as the one which required explanation (since the task was, after all, to explain "definiteness"), with the indefinite article often being treated as though it were unmarked. Also, past investigators have not examined texts as wholes but have considered only the phenomena, admittedly more striking, which occur when an object is first introduced into discourse. As a result they missed a great deal.

The one issue that has been raised with regard to noninitial indefinites is how long definiteness can last—whether through the simple passing of time a referent may lose its definite status and become once again indefinite. Chafe pointed out that in an Arthur Koestler novel definiteness was preserved over 105 pages (1976:40). He concludes that

> ...it would appear...that definiteness can be preserved indefinitely if the eventual context in which the referent is reintroduced is narrow enough to make the referent identifiable. (1976:41)

Indeed, it seems that the simple passing of time is very unlikely to cause a referent to return to indefinite status (see p. 266). But Chafe raises an apparent exception:

> Nevertheless, there are also cases where something established earlier as definite is later reintroduced in an indefinite way: *I bought a car yesterday. It's the one I*

> *told you about.* Presumably the car was treated as definite during my earlier conversation with you, but in this later reference its reintroduction was again treated as indefinite. (1976:41)

But this usage is readily understood in the light of the analysis of example (13):

(13′) I have a Mercedes—three of them in fact.

As with "having a Mercedes," a speaker may treat "buying a car" as a unitary predicate concept—an object conflation. Thus the indefinite article in the *I bought a car* example is not being used to mark nonidentifiability, but nonreferentiality. Object conflation is one of the main sources of indefinite noninitial mentions for objects, as discussed for example (27), but humans are not often made part of object conflations. They are, however, subject to a variety of other influences, which results in a small but significant portion of indefinite noninitial mentions. Of the 1229 noninitial mentions of characters, 53, or 4.1 percent, are indefinite. The different types are listed in Table 2, with the number of occurrences of each. Although it would be of considerable interest to compare the figures for characters with those for objects, a full tabulation for objects is not yet available. In the following pages I try to show how each type influences definiteness.

Often an indefinite will occur on second mention because of recovery from some sort of false start, as when a speaker breaks off and then simply starts over:

TABLE 2.
Types of Indefinite Noninitial Mentions: Characters

		Number of Occurrences
Repetitions and mistakes		13
Correction	5	
Semi-correction	3	
Digression and repeat	2	
Premature introduction	3	
Nonreferential		15
Predicate nominal	9	
Comparative	4	
Appositive	2	
Other		25
Miscellaneous	3	
Unexplained	2	
Point of view	3	
Member-of-crowd phenomenon	17	

(122) and—.. someone [1st]... let's see... someone [2nd] came by on a
bicycle. (Speaker 4)

In such cases it is usually easy for the hearer to recognize that the second
indefinite is a replacement for the first. In other cases, to which I have given
the somewhat loose label *semicorrection,* the speaker does not simply
correct or repeat, but makes a slight amplification in meaning:

(123) there's some kids [1st], there are three other boys [2nd],.. who are
there. (Speaker 3)

In other cases, the speaker may make a proper introduction, but then go off
on a digression of some length before returning to make the introduction over
again. A *digression-and-repeat,* as I have labeled this phenomenon,
ordinarily involves "postponement of the expression of a center of interest"
(Chafe, Chapter 1). In the following example, the Bike Boy and his bicycle are
introduced uneventfully with indefinite mentions (*a kid, a bicycle*) which are
even followed by definite mentions as expected. But then the speaker goes off
on a long digression, and when she comes back to the story line she takes up
where she left off—she repeats her introductory clause exactly, down to the
indefinite articles:

(124) ... a kid [1st] comes by on a bicycle [1st]. ... from the direction
where the goat man left, okay?... And—... uh—... the bicycle's
[2nd] way too big for the kid [2nd]. ... I'm giving you all these
details. I don't know if you want them. ... um—... the .. the
reason I'm giving you the details is cause I don't know what the
point of the movie was. ... Okay? So maybe you can see
something that I didn't. ... Okay? um—... g-a kid [3rd] comes by
on a bicycle [3rd], ... he [4th] stops, (Speaker 1)

From this example it might seem that the speaker retains an exact memory of
her words which she later repeats. The indefinite article would then simply be
due to a verbatim repetition of a linguistic memory. But this does not always
hold true. In another case, the sentence

(125) ... A man with a goat [1st]... was in the distance and walked by.
(Speaker 12)

was followed, after definite mentions of the Goat Man and the goat, by a
digression about how the characters looked. The return to the story line was
marked by a slightly different verbalization:

(126) ... so a man with a goat [3rd]... went by,

Apparently a new verbalization (including a new character introduction) is
involved rather than a mere repetition of words.

The next unintentional source of noninitial indefinites is one already
examined from the point of view of initial definiteness: premature
introductions. As in example (113), the inadvertant utterance of a definite
mention prompts a belated indefinite introduction.

All these indefinites due to correction and repetition occur during the first
few mentions of the character—never after he has already been talked about
for a long time. Figure 9 shows the effect of time on the various types of
indefinite noninitial mentions. Each indefinite mention of a character which
occurs later than the first mention is tabulated according to whether it occurs
on the second mention, third mention, or whatever. All "repetition and
mistake" indefinites fall within three mentions after the first. Apparently the
pressure to rectify an error is immediate.

A look at the rest of Figure 9 shows that other types also show a tendency to
occur within a few mentions of the first—though most other types may
occasionally occur later as well. This is made clearer in Figure 10, which
shows the total number of indefinites at each mention after the first. On
second mentions alone, speakers made 27 indefinite mentions, but by the
time they reached the fifth and later mentions they rarely made indefinite
mentions. Actually, this may be in part due to not reaching the fifth mention
at all, since characters are often mentioned only two or three times. To offset
this, Figure 11 tabulates noninitial indefinites for only those characters which
speakers mentioned many times.[27] Though less extreme, the tendency for
noninitial indefinites to occur soon after the first mention is still clear. The
time for indefiniteness is when the character first appears upon the scene—on
the first mention or soon after. Thus indefiniteness, rather than being limited
to a single precise point, spills over a little into later mentions.

Returning to Figure 9, several types of initial mentions use formal
indefiniteness to mark not nonidentifiability—they do not direct the hearer to
establish a new file—but nonreferentiality. Predicate nominals often occur
shortly after the first initial mention, as with *a young woman* in (20):

(20) he comes across another... bicyclist... bicyclist [1st]; it's a young
woman [2nd], (Speaker 5)

This occurs because the introduction of a new character has triggered the
descriptive mode. Another source of predicate nominals on second mention is
the slot-and-fill strategy seen in example (121). Although speakers ordinarily

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[27]Tabulations are for the Bike Boy, Pear Man, and Threesome. The percentage of subjects
who gave the character 10 or more mentions is: Bike Boy, 100 percent; Pear Man, 90 percent;
Threesome, 75 percent. The mean mentions per subject for each character is: Bike Boy, 23.2; Pear
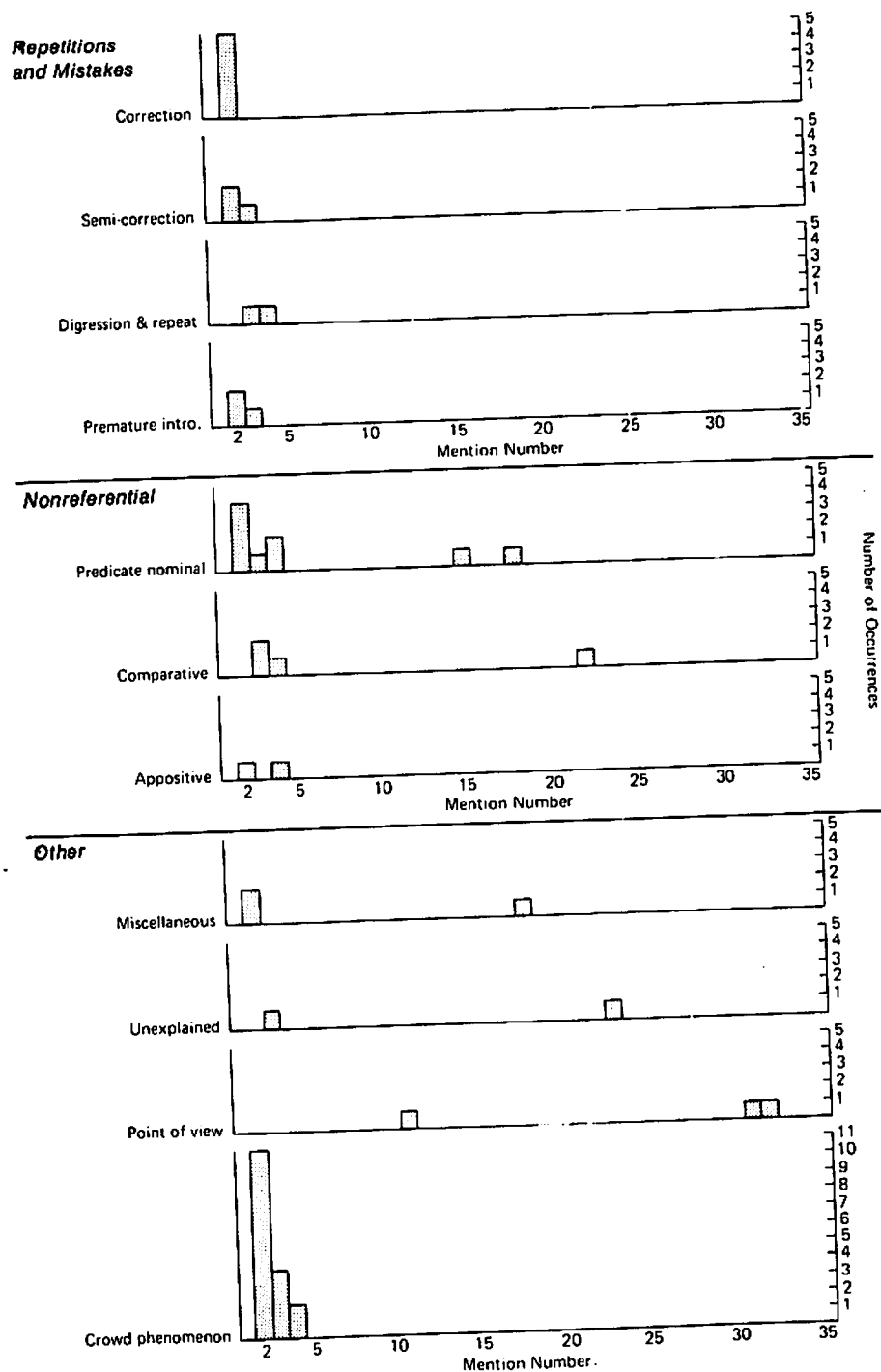man, 19.2; Threesome, 14.1.

FIG. 9. When Do Indefinite Noninitial Mentions of Characters Occur?
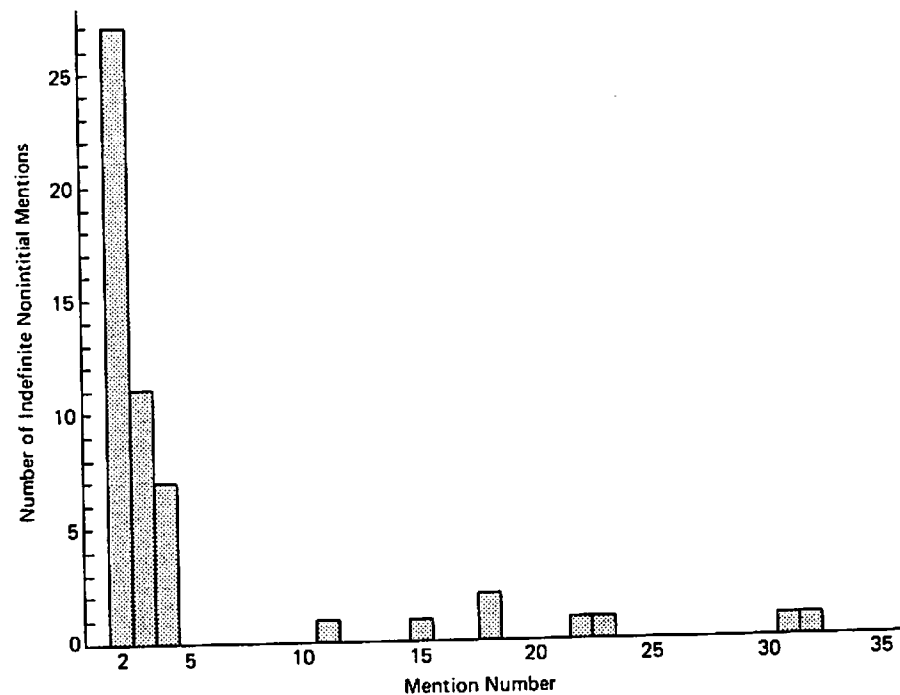Distribution of Sub-Types by Mention Number

FIG. 10. When Do Indefinite Noninitial Mentions of Characters Occur?
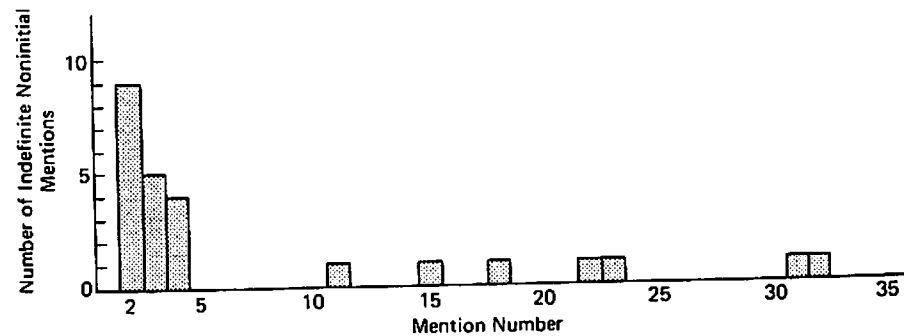Overall Frequency by Mention Number

FIG. 11. When Do Indefinite Noninitial Mentions of Characters Occur?
Frequently Mentioned Characters Only

use predicate nominals shortly after a character has been introduced, they are free to do so later, especially if new plot conditions raise the need for a new predication. In the following example, the Threesome have long since left the predication. In the following example, the Threesome have long since left the descriptive mode when the Pear Man's suspicion occasions their return, in the indefinite predicate nominal *like.. Good Samaritans:*

(127) and I thought[...] he's going to accuse the little boys [13th] who'd [14th] actually been like.. Good Samaritans [15th], (Speaker 17)

Comparatives (e.g., *look like*) are essentially like predicate nominals and tend to occur when a character's appearance is still recent (4 and 128), though they may occur later (129):

(128) there's a--.. man [1st] ... picking pears, in a pear tree, out.. somewhere in the country, ... uh--he [2nd] looks ... like your uh.. typical.. farmer or... whatever [3rd], (Speaker 8)

(129) Then they walk by--...the man who was picking the pears [20th]. ...who [21st] looks like a Mexican-American [22nd] if that's important? (Speaker 1)

Example (130) shows an appositive, which in this case has an amplifying function similar to that of example (123):

(130) There's a .. uh ... farm laborer [3rd], a Mexican farm laborer [4th] picking pears (Speaker 5)

It is somewhat arbitrary to consider this as two mentions rather than one, but the choice does not greatly affect the overall picture.

Besides some miscellaneous and unexplained occurrences of late indefinites, there remain two types of some interest. In the first type the point of view is shifted from the speaker to one of the characters in the story. Then, this character's knowledge rather than that of the speaker becomes what determines whether the other characters are identifiable or not, specific or not. In the following example, the speaker knows that the Bike Boy stole the Pear Man's pears, but the noun phrase *somebody* expresses the Pear Man's knowledge rather than her own:

(131) Anyway, ...then finally he [Pear Man] figured out .. something ... you know somebody's [Bike Boy—21st] stolen the pears. (Speaker 2)

The verb of cognition (*figure out*) is, of course, what marks the shift in point of view. Point-of-view indefinites, unlike all other noninitial indefinites, show no tendency to occur soon after the introduction of a character.

The final type of noninitial indefinite which is attested for characters is the most common, with 17 occurrences. Of these, 14 apply to a single character, the Paddleball Boy—who by himself accounts for 28 percent of all noninitial indefinites. This is due to his particular position in the plot, as one member of the Threesome. It was pointed out earlier (p. 235) that persons, unlike walls, river banks, and so on, are too individually salient to become definite on first mention through application of the curiosity principle. But it is possible for a lack of salient distinctions within a group of humans to cause a partial identification—which is marked as such—even though a full identification would be possible. One speaker began with an unremarkable indefinite introduction of the Paddleball Boy (*one*):

(132) one thing that struck me about the—.. three little boys that were there is that one [1st] had a uh ... I don't know what you call them, but it's a paddle, (Speaker 9)

But the second mention, which should ordinarily be definite, is not. After several intervening events in which the Paddleball Boy is not mentioned (the Threesome pick up the pears; then they and the Bike Boy depart), he is again referred to—with another indefinite noun phrase:

(133) ... one of them [Paddleball Boy—2nd] ... whistles back to the guy on the bicycle, "Here's your hat."

Speaker 9 could have made the reference to the Paddleball Boy fully definite by referring to his paddleball, as Speaker 12 did:

(134) ... The o--ne boy with a ping-pong paddle [3rd], notices .. a hat,

But Speaker 9, like most speakers, apparently thought it was not relevant that "the boy who returned the hat" and "the boy with the paddleball" were the same. What was relevant was that the Paddleball Boy was a member of a salient group, the Threesome. All noninitial indefinite mentions of the Paddleball Boy (and all but two of the initial indefinite mentions, for that matter) specify his membership in the Threesome, using the indefinite replacive *one: one, one of the boys, one of them,* and so on. No speaker used an *a*-form noun phrase (*a boy*), which would have indicated he was not identifiable at all. His status as a member of the Threesome was considered

salient, but his precise identity within it was not. This may be termed the *member-of-the-crowd* phenomenon.

It might be thought that "evaporation" of definiteness through the passing of time (p. 258) is responsible for the Paddleball Boy's indefiniteness, rather than the member-of-the-crowd phenomenon. But a comparison with mentions of the Pear Man shows this is not so. As one example, Speaker 1 made 66 references to 6 different characters between the time of her last mention of the Pear Man in the opening scenes of the film and her first mention of him on his reappearance in the closing scenes. Despite the long lapse, the mention was definite:

(135) Then they walk by—...the man who was picking the pears.

The same pattern of a long lapse followed by a definite mention holds for all 20 speakers: a mean of 39.2 mentions of the various other characters were made between the two Pear Man mentions, but in every case the latter mention was definite. If the passing of time or the distraction of other events was never responsible for an indefinite mention of the Pear Man, it can hardly be the cause of the indefinite Paddleball Boy mentions. There were a mean of only 7.2 mentions of other characters between each such mention and the preceding Paddleball Boy mention.

On the other hand, it might still appear that this phenomenon is due to overloaded memory or perception rather than lack of salience—that the difficulty in keeping track of the actions of three characters at the same time has caused speakers to resort to partial identification. True, some speakers may have been unsure of their memory (*I think it was...*):

(136) And the one kid, I think it was the kid who was playing with the uh...with..the whatever it was,...stops and picks it up and whistles. (Speaker 10)

Although memory may to some extent be involved in the member-of-the-crowd phenomenon, evidence from a related phenomenon suggests that speakers often know more than they bother to say. In the relevant cases from the pear film narratives, actions that were in reality performed by one group member (the Paddleball Boy) were attributed to the group as a whole (the Threesome). In the actual film it is the Paddleball Boy alone who picks up the Bike Boy's hat, whistles to him, then brings him the hat, receiving pears in exchange. Of the 20 speakers who mentioned the return of the Bike Boy's hat, 17 correctly attributed this action to a single individual (136 and 137).

(137) So one of the boys whistles to him, and ... stops him, and ... gives him his hat back. (Speaker 3)

But 3 speakers attributed the action to the group of which the Paddleball Boy is a member:

(138) and they [Threesome] gave him his hat, (Speaker 14)

It might be thought that Speaker 14, due to faulty perception or faulty memory, actually believes this. But in another case it becomes clear, thanks to evidence from a partial repetition, that the speaker is willing to attribute the hat return to the Threesome even though she knows it was the Paddleball Boy:

(139) The three boys find the hat down the road, ...and he [Paddleball Boy] gives him [Bike Boy] the hat, ...and ..th-..they whistle for /him/. There's no dialogue in the whole movie. ...They whistle for him. ...And he comes back. ..And he /w-/ ...and he stops. ..And the guys walk up and give him the hat. (Speaker 15)

At first the speaker attributes the hat return to the Paddleball boy (*he gives him the hat*). After the digression on the lack of dialogue in the movie, she redescribes the same event, this time attributing the return to the Threesome (*the guys walk up and give him the hat*). The speaker apparently chooses to do this because she views the Paddleball Boy's actions as representative of the Threesome as a whole. The difference between an action performed by the Paddleball Boy and one performed by the Threesome is not very salient. This may be expressed as the *principle of group attribution:*

(140) If the actions of a character are seen as representative tokens of the actions of a group to which the character belongs, speakers may attribute his individual actions to the group.

This tendency seems especially strong where the speaker has built up a "topic-chain" of several references to group actions. In the following case, the speaker related a whole series of actions performed by the Threesome (which indeed were performed by the group): walking by the Pear Man, ignoring him, eating their pears. But the final action in the series, playing with the paddleball, is attributable to the group only by virtue of the "poetic license" provided by the group attribution principle:

(141) and I thought maybe that [...] he's going to accuse the little boys who'd actually been like..Good Samaritans, of stealing his pears. ...But he just sort of watches them, ...as they walk by and they don't pay any attention to them ...to him, he's..they're just

eating their pears, and .. you know playing with their ... paddle and everything. ... And that's how it ends. (Speaker 17)

The speaker has built up a long chain of clauses referring to group actions. Rather than break out of it at the very end of her narrative, she simply continues the chain one link further—expressing as a group action the playing, which in any case seems characteristic of the group. She knows that only one person and not the whole group is playing the paddleball, as can be seen from her having earlier taken care to state that there was one player:

(142) ... One boy [Paddleball Boy—1st] .. is .. um ... hitting one of those bounce-back things, [...] He's playing with that. (Speaker 17)

In addition, even though she later attributes the playing action to the three boys, she leaves the paddleball singular (they're ... playing with their ... paddle and everything).

The tendency to make a series of attributions internally consistent is apparently general. Table 3 shows how a chain of three linked actions performed by the Paddleball Boy was expressed by speakers. As noted earlier, the Paddleball Boy whistles, returns the hat, and receives pears in exchange.

TABLE 3.
Consistency of Attribution of Paddleball Boy's Actions

Subject No.	Paddleball Boy whistles	Paddleball Boy returns hat	Paddleball Boy is given pears
1	1	1	3 – 1
2	—	3	3
3	1	1	1
4	1	1	1
5	—	1	1
6	1	1	1
7	1	1	1
8	—	1	1
9	1	1	1
10	1	1	1
11	3 – 1	1	1
12	1	1	1
13	1	1	1
14	3	3	1 – 3
15	3	1 – 3	3
16	—	1	1
17	1	1	3
18	—	1	1
19	—	1	1
20	3	1	1

A "1" in the table indicates that the action was attributed to one individual; a "3" indicates that the action was attributed to the group of three boys. An arrow indicates a change in attribution; for example, "3—1"indicates that the speaker first attributed the action to the group but then switched the attribution to one individual. It can be seen that most speakers are consistent with themselves, and self-corrections are in the direction of greater consistency, not less. It is perhaps not surprising that Speaker 1 changed a group attribution to an individual attribution, since this is what appeared in the film. More noteworthy, Speaker 15 changed an individual attribution to a group attribution (139)—apparently for the sake of making the series of attributions consistent, whether or not this corresponded to actual events.

In the light of attribution of individual actions to a group, it is easy to see how the member-of-the-crowd phenomenon arises. Although it is salient that a certain action is representative of a group, the precise identity of the individual is often not salient. It is not important to establish the continuity of identity of the group member who returned the hat with the group member who was playing with the paddleball—one of the boys is sufficient.

The nonsalience of identity continuity may result in partial (but referential) identification of a human, but it often results in a nonreferential mention of an object. Predicate conflations (which are indefinite and nonreferential) do not establish continuity of identity. We may use the term prop to refer to an object whose continuity of identity is ignored, as opposed to a participant—a human, animal, or object whose continuity of identity is salient enough to be maintained.[28] An object may be treated now as a prop and now as a participant, depending on whether attention is being focused on it at the moment. In the following example both the Bike Boy and his bicycle are introduced with indefinite mentions, but in the next sentence only the Bike Boy becomes definite (he):

(143) ... a boy probably about ... I don't know, .. eight or nine [1st] ... comes up on a bicycle [1st]. ... He's [2nd] going by on a bicycle [2nd] on this dirt road, (Speaker 10)

The bicycle, which has none of the properties of animacy, agency, or subjecthood which contribute to the Bike Boy's prominence, is conflated into a unitary concept of "going on a bicycle" in a nonreferential mention—see example (27).

Props are often found in phrases which modify participants. In such cases they are mentioned not for their intrinsic interest but for their contribution to identifying or characterizing a participant, usually a human. In the following

example the speaker mentions both the Paddleball Boy and his paddleball with indefinite mentions:

> (144) and one has a ping-pong p- paddle. .. those bouncy ball things with a great big...[29] (Speaker 12)

But in the next mention the paddleball remains indefinite (*a ping-pong paddle*), while the Paddleball Boy becomes definite (*the one boy with a ping-pong paddle*):

> (145) ...The o--ne boy with a ping-pong paddle, notices.. a hat,

Probably the only reason the paddleball is mentioned here at all is because it serves as a useful prop with which to identify a participant. But its continuity of identity with the earlier mention is deemed nonsalient, so that the indefinite article (marking nonreferentiality, which entails nonphoricity) is used rather than the definite article.[30]

I have said that the positive function of an initial indefinite is to open a cognitive file for its referent (p.220). But if a speaker recognizes that a particular initial mention is only a prop, he may not bother to open a file for it as he would for a participant. If a writer suddenly treats such a file-less prop as a participant, a startling effect may be produced. In the following example, Lawrence Sterne, ever one to toy with his readers, has us blithely tossing away a whole string of props without bothering to keep track of them, since it seems so obvious that they have been dragged in by the heels only for their dazzle. We expect we shall never see them again, so why open a file?

> (146) "for what hindrance, hurt, or harm doth the laudable desire for knowledge bring to any man, if even from a sot, a pot, a fool, a stool, a winter mittain, a track for a pulley, the lid of a goldsmith's crucible, an oil bottle, an old slipper, or a cane chair?"—I am this moment sitting upon one (Sterne, 1960:161).

A speaker has some choice in whether he treats an object as a prop or a participant. When the pears that the Pear Man was picking were mentioned in a relative clause modifying the Pear Man, some speakers chose to make the pears definite (147); others, describing the same scene, made them indefinite (148):

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[29]Here the speaker goes off on a digression about gestures in the film, and fails to return to her paddleball description.

[30]The mention of the Paddleball Boy in (144) is actually the second mention; its indefiniteness is due to the member-of-the-crowd phenomenon. This confirms that continuity of identity may be deemed salient at one time but not salient at another.

TABLE 4.
Object Conflation and Tense/Aspect: Noninitial Mentions of Pears Occurring Within Mentions of Pear Man

	Indefinite (pears)	Definite (the/his pears)
is ___-ing	4	—
was ___-ing	2	3
has been ___-ing	—	2

> (147) So that eventually they would go pas--t the ... the man, .. who's been picking... the pears, (Speaker 18)

> (148) And on the way back they pass... the guy who's up in the tree, ... collecting pears, (Speaker 11)

Of the 11 such noninitial mentions of pears occurring in relative clauses that modify the Pear Man, 5 are definite and 6 indefinite. It is noteworthy that there appears to be a connection between the choice of article and the choice of tense/aspect in the verb. Table 4 illustrates the correlation between definiteness and verb form for the pear mentions under discussion.[31] Whenever the perfect progressive is used, as in (147), the pear mention is definite (and referential). Whenever the present progressive is used, as in (148), the pear mention is indefinite (and nonreferential). When the past progressive is used, as in (149) and (150), either definite or indefinite may occur:

> (149) Then they walk by--...the man who was picking the pears. (Speaker 1)

> (150) They were walking back in the direction, ... uh... toward the man... who was picking pears in the pear tree, (Speaker 16)

It seems that the present progressive is associated with conflated object mentions—which have often been mislabeled *generic* mentions—and that the verb-plus-object combination expresses a general concept of the activity rather than a concrete action. It may be that such a predicate phrase indexes

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[31]The 11 noninitial mentions were distributed across 9 different speakers. There was one case, not included in Table 4, of a Pear-Man-modifying pear mention which was an initial mention. (Speaker 3)

neither a concrete time nor concrete objects. The perfect progressive phrase, on the other hand, indexes both a concrete time and concrete objects.

Although indefinite mentions are probably not caused by "evaporation" of definite status over a long span of time, they may arise for other reasons of cognitive and linguistic import, and within a comparatively brief time. In some cases formal indefiniteness is due to the speaker's reverbalization of an introduction (with or without a digression between the two verbalizations); in other cases it simply represents a nonreferential use, such as a predicate nominal. Such predicate nominals may be part of a deliberate slot-and-fill strategy, in which the speaker defines a frame slot using a definite "dummy" as an initial mention and then gives the dummy substance through a predication. Other intentional uses of indefinites occur when the speaker decides to project his verbalization from the point of view of someone other than himself, or when he decides that the continuity of an object's identity with earlier mentions is not salient. The reason for mentioning an object in spite of its intrinsic nonsalience may be that it serves as a prop in characterizing a full participant, or that it is needed in combination with a verb to fully express a particular activity. In either case it is the quality abstracted from the noun which is employed, without regard for the noun's capacity to refer back to an available, identified, individual.

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to go beyond a simple investigation of the English articles to consider how speakers introduce objects into a discourse, and how they trace them through the discourse. An analytical framework was first built up which reflects the fact that the articles are governed by other parameters beyond the primary one of identifiability. In particular, noun phrases frequently fail to receive definite marking, not because they do not refer to an identifiable object, but because they simply do not refer. Nonreferential mentions are frequently employed because the speaker decides that an object is not important in its own right, but serves only as a prop to specify an individual or subcategorize a general activity.

One conclusion that emerges clearly from this study is that a speaker's use of definiteness is not a merely automatic reaction to prior mention or to presence of a referent in the discourse situation. Speakers exert a considerable degree of control over their choice of alternatives. With the curiosity of the addressee in mind, the speaker makes judgments as to the salience of tracing an object's identity. He may decide that continuity of identification with an object's identity. He may decide that continuity of identification with an earlier mention is not salient, in which case one or another type of indefinite mention may be used—either a nonreferential mention as in object conflation or a partially identifiable mention as in the member-of-the-crowd phenomenon. Or he may decide to mark a first mention as identifiable even

though in a strict sense it is not, if the referent is part of a small frame-defined set of objects between which distinctions are not salient.

The influence of frames on the way objects are introduced is of course considerable. Since parts are typically mentioned after wholes, objects like bicycle parts and body parts (and clothes as well) can be treated as identifiable on first mention—unless the mention is simply nonreferential, as if often true when the descriptive mode is employed. Possessive adjectives not only presuppose identifiabiity but contribute to identification, usually by indexing the frame with which a reference is to be associated. Because of their contribution to identification, both possessive adjectives and relative clauses may allow an object to be marked as identifiable on first mention. However, this is constrained by the conversational postulate which, for nonliterary English, limits the information presented in such presupposed formats to old information, or to new information which is not particularly noteworthy.

The distinct tasks of introducing an object into a discourse and tracing it through the discourse are performed separately, and there is an appropriate time for each task. When an important object first appears in the story line, the speaker often shifts into the descriptive mode to introduce it and provide background information, subsequently returning to advance the story line in the narrative mode. If this critical introduction period has elapsed—or if it has not yet begun—the speaker will usually fail to indicate that the referent is being newly introduced. This, plus evidence from the distribution of adjectives and of narrative or descriptive verbs, suggests that speakers direct their attention either to the task of introducing or to the task of advancing the story line, but not to both at once.

The overall intent has been to describe how a speaker uses his cognitive capacities in conjunction with a variety of available grammatical resources in order to fulfill the expressive need of conveying his thoughts to an addressee. The study may be viewed as a chapter in the ecology of grammar.

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