



Representing Context: Focus Alternatives, Common Ground and the QUD

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Background

INTRODUCTION

- Presuppositions (PSPS) standardly viewed as what's taken for granted by interlocutors
- formally: part of *Common Ground* (CG)^[9]
- however, noted to be a heterogeneous class^[8]

CONTRIBUTION

- provide evidence for distinction between triggers based on *Focus-sensitivity*^[2,7]
- argue for difference in representations:
 - +FOCUS = CG + linguistic antecedent
 - FOCUS = CG only

DIAGNOSING FOCUS-SENSITIVITY

Context A: On Monday, Emma had a burger from Red Robin.

Context B: On Monday, Emma had a shake from Shake Shack.

(1a) A: What did Emma have on Tuesday?
B: She **also** had [A SHAKE]_F (from RR).
→ ✓ in A, # in B

(1b) A: Where did Emma get a shake on Tu?
B: She **also** had a shake [FROM RR]_F.
→ # in A, ✓ in B

(2a) A: What did Emma have on Tuesday?
B: She had [A SHAKE]_F (from RR) **again**.
→ # in both A & B

(2b) A: Where did Emma get a shake on Tu?
B: She had a shake [FROM RR]_F **again**.
→ # in both A & B

HYPOTHESIS

QUD-structure determines accessibility for +FOCUS PSPS but not -FOCUS PSPS.^[2,6]

PREDICTIONS

- Material "closer" in QUD-structure is more accessible for +FOCUS PSPS.
- Material within same QUD creates interference for +FOCUS but not -FOCUS.

Experiment 1: *even*

Sample Item (N=36)

a. SHARED LOCAL QUD + *target/control*

A: Did Anne participate in the BIKE RACE?

{ B₁: She did but she *didn't* make it to the finish line.
B₂: She did but she *didn't* win a medal. }

A: Did Beth participate in the bike race?

B: Yes. She **even** made it to the finish line.

b. SHARED GLOBAL QUD + *target/control*

A: Did Anne participate in the ROWING CONTEST?

{ B₁: She did but she *didn't* make it to the finish line.
B₂: She did but she *didn't* win a medal. }

A: Did Beth participate in the bike race?

B: Yes. She **even** made it to the finish line.

QUD-structure

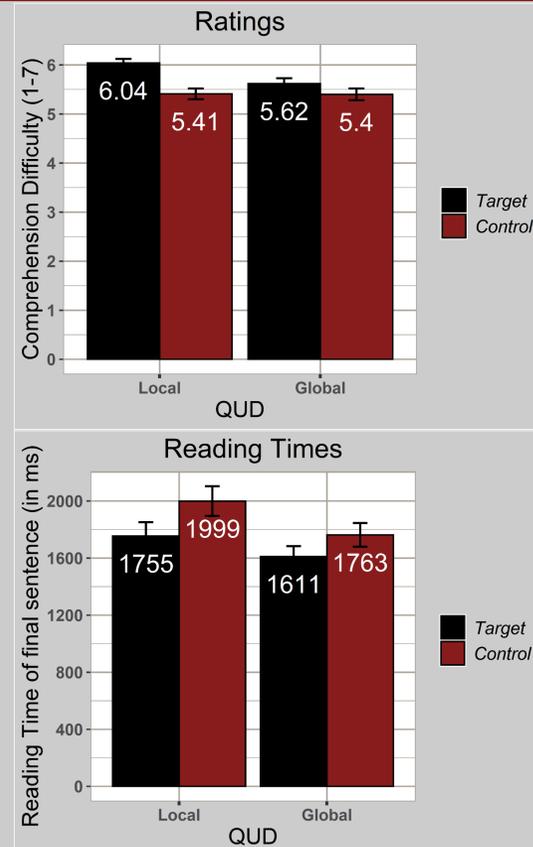
a. Who participated in the bike race?

Did Anne participate? Did Beth participate?

b. Who participated in what?

Who participated in the RC? Who participated in the BR?

Did Anne participate? Did Beth participate?



Experiment 2: *also* vs *again*

Sample Item (N=35)

a. NO INTERVENING Q-A + **also/again**

A: Where did Amber stay when she was in LA?

B: She stayed at a motel.

A: Where did she stay when she was in Boston?

{ B₁: She **also** stayed at a motel in Boston.
B₂: She stayed at a motel **again** in Boston. }

b. INTERVENING Q-A + **also/again**

A: Where did Amber stay when she was in LA?

B: She stayed at a motel.

A: WHERE DID SHE STAY WHEN SHE WAS IN CHICAGO?

B: SHE CRASHED AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE.

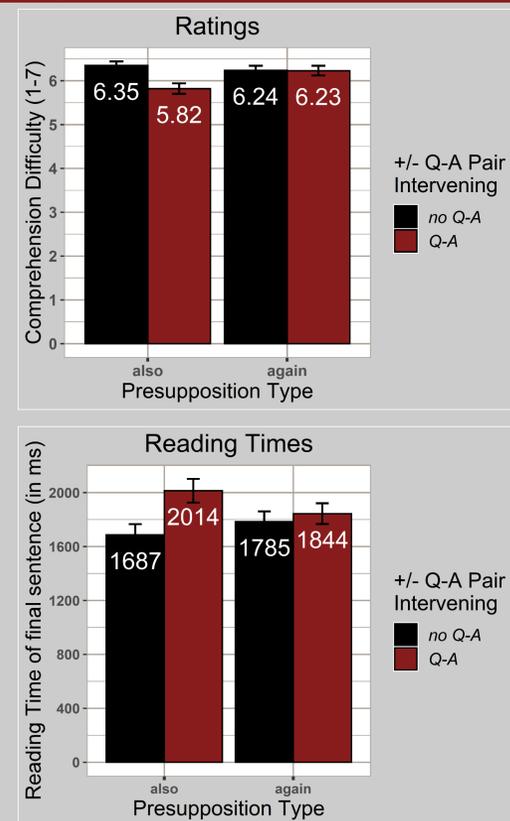
A: Where did she stay when she was in Boston?

{ B₁: She **also** stayed at a motel in Boston.
B₂: She stayed at a motel **again** in Boston. }

QUD-structure

Where did Amber stay when she was where?

In LA? IN CHICAGO? In Boston?



Discussion

- evidence that accessibility of Focus-antecedents is mediated by QUD-structure:
 - ratings increased more when licensing material is closer in QUD-structure (Exp1)
 - intervening material caused lower ratings & slower RTs for *also* but not *again* (Exp2)^[3]
- also* not limited to close antecedent – structure matters, not linear recency^[4]:
 - You know, before I came here, I had been in a cage. It was a nice cage; I can't complain. Being in Russia in the 1970s and 1980s was great. But of course I wanted to breathe the air of the free world. Everything I recorded up to Radio Silence was basically a bridge between Russia and the West. When I got to the West, I felt the need to build a bridge back. A lot of people are arguing right now that contemporary Russia is also a cage, comparing it to the Soviet times. (COCA)

- evidence for distinction btw triggers previously grouped together^[1]
 - additionally supported in experiment testing accommodation difficulty^[vs 5]:

(4) A: Who is having dinner in NYC tonight?
B: Saul is having dinner in NY (**too/again**).

- evidence for relevance of CG for +FOCUS PSPS from "acceptance" experiment:

(5a) A: Randall paid \$50,000 for a new car.
B₁: Yes, that's right. Katy **only** paid \$30,000.
B₂: Maybe that's right. Katy **only** paid \$30,000.

(5b) A: At 10am, Henry started cleaning.
B₁: Yes, that's right. At noon, he **stopped** cleaning.
B₂: Maybe that's right. At noon, he **stopped** cleaning.

References

- [1] ABUSCH 2010; [2] BEAVER & CLARK 2008; [3] CHEN & HUSBAND 2018; [4] KIM 2015; [5] KRIPKE 2009; [6] ROBERTS 2012; [7] ROTH 1992; [8] SCHWARZ 2015; [9] STALNAKER 1999.

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