Linguistic Conventions or Open-Ended Reasoning: Some Questions for Una Stojnić

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This short paper has the character of a critical notice of Una Stojnić's book Context and Coherence: The Logic and Grammar of Prominence *(Stojnić 2021). It is mainly concerned with Stojnić's strong claim that linguistic phenomena related to prominence and coherence, in particular the interpretation of pronouns, are governed by linguistic conventions and are not pragmatic in nature. On these matters, my views are opposite to Stojnić's.*

Keywords: Coherence; convention; pragmatics; prominence; pronouns.

1. *Introduction*

This short paper has the character of a critical notice of Una Stojnić's (2021) book *Context and Coherence: The Logic and Grammar of Prominence*. It is mainly concerned with Stojnić's strong claim that linguistic phenomena related to prominence and coherence, in particular the interpretation of pronouns, are governed by linguistic *conventions* and are *not* pragmatic in nature.

Before moving into the discussion of these matters, I would like to give some brief indications of the contents of this brilliant book.
— The book contains a new formalism that can represent the semantic role of pronouns without the use of arbitrary indices. This is achieved by means of a stack algorithm that ranks individuals according to contextual salience / prominence.
— This formalism is also able to represent the changes of context that

takes place as sentences unfold, not just between sentences. This allows for temporally more fine-grained contexts than standard conceptions allow.

— The formalism implements a theory of shifts of prominence ranking that determines the interpretation of pronouns and is a driver of context change.

— The book further contains a formalism that integrates *coherence* relations in the representation of discourse.

— It contains a theory of the effects of coherence relations on the resolution of pronoun anaphora.

— It contains an application of this theory to the interpretation of *epistemic modals* as well as of *modal subordination.*

— It contains another application of this theory to handle alleged counterexamples to *modus ponens* and *modus tollens* without giving up the idea that *propositions* are the semantic values of sentences.[1]

In what follows, I shall focus on a theme in the book that runs through the various accounts of pronouns and modals, the appeal to *linguistic rules / conventions* and the opposition to pragmatic reasoning. Stojnić (2021: 8–10) calls such reasoning *open-ended*, *defeasible*, *holistic*, *abductive.*

I think all these labels are to the point. The first two emphasize the provisional nature of pragmatic considerations: they have no definitive end-point but can typically be strengthened or undermined by further considerations.

The third one, *holistic*, is also to the point because knowledge of a situation as a whole as well as general world knowledge often play a role in pragmatic interpretation.

The fourth one, *abductive*, is again to the point because it focuses on the explanatory aspects of pragmatic reasoning. Typically, the interpreter tries to come up with the interpretation that best satisfies certain conditions that derive from the standing meaning of a sentence used, often in combination with general principles of interpretation. I shall occasionally refer to such a process of interpretation as *constraint satisfaction.*

In this paper, I shall argue that constraint satisfaction plays a more central role, and linguistic convention a less central role, for some of the theories in the book. This concerns both prominence ranking and coherence relations.

2. *Pronouns*

The main idea in the book, concerning pronouns, is that they refer to the individual of the right ϕ features (gender, person, number) that is *top-ranked*, i.e. at the center of attention:

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[1] In this respect, Stojnić is on the same side of the propositionalist fence as Kathrin Glüer and myself, in our work on switcher semantics (e.g. Glüer and Pagin 2005, 2008, 2012, 2022), where we also have a goal of preserving the classical proposition as the meaning in context of a sentence.

> At any given point in a discourse, the context provides a ranking by prominence of candidate interpretations for a pronoun, tracking what's most prominent—that is, at the center of attention. The prominence ranking changes and updates, as the discourse unfolds, as a function of the meaning of linguistic items the discourse harbors, word by word. In this way, the resolution of a pronoun requires no extra-linguistic supplementation. It is linguistically determined, through and through: by its standing linguistic meaning, and the *linguistically* set up context. (Stojnić 2021: 40)

The application of this general idea provides a definition that gives the linguistic meaning of particular pronouns of English, exemplified by 'she':

> Definition 4.1: The standing linguistic meaning of 'she' Interpreted relative to an assignment *g* 'she' denotes *g*'s highest ranked entity that is singular, feminine, and disjoint from the speaker and addressee of the utterance, and that yields an interpretation where the occurrence of the pronoun is free in its governing category. (Stojnić 2021: 56)

This theory accounts for the interpretation of a discourse like

(1) A woman came in. She sat down. (Stojnić 2021: 33)

The idea is that the indefinite noun phrase 'a woman' introduces an indefinite woman and places her, i.e. the implied witness to the existential first sentence of (1), at the center of attention. Technically, this means placing it at the top of the stack of values to the relevant assignment function. The pronoun 'she' in the following sentence will be assigned as value by the assignment function the female individual that is highest ranking on the stack. That is, in this case, the presumed witness to 'a woman'. In Stojnić's formalism, this is represented as follows.

(1′) $\langle\alpha\rangle;[woman(@)];[came.in(@)];[sit.down(@)]$

The first element in this sequence, '$\langle\alpha\rangle$', is a dynamic existential quantifier. It changes the context by placing a new (witness) individual at the top of the stack. The semicolon represents context update. '@' is the formal variable that refers to the individual at the top of the stack. Hence, the second element, '[woman(@)]', predicates of the individual at the top of the stack that it is a woman. The following two updates predicate of the same individual that it came in and that it sat down.

Example (1) shows how an indefinite can introduce a new individual that is pushed to the top of the stack. Another linguistic means of doing that is by means of a demonstrative. Stojnić also has the alternative example

(2) A woman came in. She [pointing at a cat, Betty] sat down. (2021: 44)

Here, the pointing gesture induces another shift in attention and places the demonstrated individual at the top of the stack, demoting the indefinite woman to second place. Formally, this is handled by means of a demonstrative update operator which combines with a name of the individual pushed. As a formal representation of we then get

(2′) ⟨α⟩[*woman*(@)];[*came.in*(@)];[π*b*];[*sit.down*(@)]. (Stojnić 2021: 45)

Here '*b*' names the cat Betty. There is then a demonstrative update represented by 'π*b*', after which the last clause, stating that that the top-ranked individual sat down, now refers to Betty the cat, not the indefinite woman, since Betty is now top-ranked (and female).

These are the basic elements of the formal account and they work well for the cases they handle. The problem is that there are other cases which are not handled well by this account. These are cases where the individual referred to by a pronoun do not have prominence *before* the utterance but acquires prominence *after* the utterance. This happens in cases where a referential but non-demonstrative pronoun occurs discourse initially, that is without linguistic antecedent. We shall look at a few examples.

(3) X: I will leave him.

The utterance, as said by X to a hearer Y, can be easily understood even if the referent has not been mentioned earlier in the conversation, nor been in a salient set of individuals that *have* been mentioned. We can easily sketch a scenario where the communication nevertheless easily succeeds. There are typically few people that a particular speaker X can potentially leave, fewer still for which there is common knowledge between X and hearer Y that the X has this relation to, and typically only one that would merit the information. In particular, only one that would be the obvious referent when referred to by a pronoun without antecedent.

The referent of 'him' is the highest-ranking male (distinct from the hearer) that has these properties. It need not have been the highest-ranking male *before* the utterance but it will have become the highest-ranking male *after* the utterance.

A second example:

(4) X: How was the conference? Y: She did it again.

In the case of (4), there can easily be common knowledge between X and Y who are the potential female referents in the domain related to the contextually salient conference, and also who is the most salient referent in this sub-domain with a record of repeating a noteworthy pattern of behavior or achievement.

That referent need not have been the highest-ranking female before the utterance but will have become the highest-ranking female after the utterance. In this case, the potential for being raised to prominence is enhanced by the choice of topic—a particular conference and common knowledge between X and Y about who attended—but the referent need still not have been the highest-ranking female before the utterance.

Even in the case of

(5)   X: He is back.

there can easily be common knowledge between X and hearer Y of who is the most salient male in the category of having been *absent* and possibly having *returned* from that absence. That person need not have been the highest-ranking male before the utterance but will have become so after the utterance.

It seems therefore that there are many possible cases, and probably also many actual cases, where pronoun references are successfully communicated in a way that the prominence ranking theory cannot account for.

What would a successful account look like? One possibility would be to *complicate* the Stojnić attention theory into one that allows for a tree-like prominence hierarchy, with rank relations between individuals relative to different categories, properties, or relations.

It would be a very complex theory, with a prominence hierarchy for each relevant property; who is the highest-ranking male with property F, who with property $F\&G$, etc. Note that a linear ranking will not suffice: a person X may be more salient than a person Y with respect to property F, while Y still be more salient than X in relation to a property G. The theory would require, for explanatory power, a highly definite prominence structure. It would plausibly be a tree structure with no properties, or perhaps only Φ properties at the top. Such a theory is not impossible, but it is highly implausible that it would be a *linguistic* structure. Rather, the more natural idea would be that such a prominence or salience structure would be a complex feature of the non-linguistic context, and that the semantics can draw on the salience features of the context in the semantics for pronouns. Going in this direction would therefore be to move away from the linguistic convention position that Stojnić occupies.

Although this theory would not appeal to linguistic convention, it would still be a view close to the semantics-pragmatics interface. Just as the *context of use*, in the sense of Kaplan (1989), delivers values to automatic indexicals, like 'I', and to demonstratives, like 'that cat', so on the *salience tree* conception, the context would simply *provide* values to referential discourse initial pronouns.

Further out along the pragmatic road we find the position that Stojnić explicitly distances herself from. On an optional account in this position, what is going on is exactly the kind open-ended abductive reasoning that Stojnić in the book says is not normally taking place. Such an account would say that the hearer looks for the most salient individual commonly known to satisfy the conditions imposed in the exchange. The speaker, on the other hand, has an intended individual in mind, and implicitly takes the property ascribed to the individual to be identifying.

Since it is a free search on the hearer's part, however, there is in principle the possibility that the hearer fixates on an individual that satisfies the property constraint to a lower degree than the individual intended by the speaker but to a sufficiently high degree for the hearer

to stop searching. There is also the converse possibility that the speaker intends an individual that satisfies the constraint to a lower degree, but does not at the moment keep the other, more suitable referent, in mind.

Nevertheless, in many cases, communication succeeds without noticeable effort. In some cases, the intended referent might already have been salient, but in many cases, prominence changes as a result of the speaker's utterance, leading to an interpretation update, something akin to what Davidson (1986: 10) characterize as the *passing theory*, as opposed to the *prior theory*, of interpretation. This interpretation is *post hoc*, requiring a change of assignment of prominence to individuals. One version of such an account has it that this process, with an intended satisfier on the part of the speaker, and a search for a satisfier on the part of the hearer, always takes place. The cases where the intended and found referent was already prominent is just a special case, even if common, where the search is immediately successful.

The opposite view of the phenomenon is that of deeming the *post hoc* prominence cases *abnormal*, and outside the conventions of language. This is basically Stojnić's stance.

Concerning a somewhat different case of discourse initial use of pronouns ('She is happy'), Stojnić writes:

> Though admittedly, even in such cases it might sometimes be possible for the audience to eventually "figure out" what the speaker had in mind, the process by which that occurs is markedly different from the seamless interpretation of pronouns on the fly that we see in normal circumstances. The potentially open-ended reasoning about what the speaker wanted to convey kicks in precisely after one is faced with the infelicity of the utterance. The utterance cannot be properly interpreted on its own, so some kind of repair is needed in order to help guide understanding. My account would simply maintain that a part of the linguistic material in the utterance is missing, and the reasoning is about which material one would have to posit to arrive at an utterance that has a plausible interpretation in this case. (Stojnić 2021: 49–50)

Stojnić's picture is that occurrences of such referential but non-demonstrative, discourse initial pronouns are simply infelicitous, and that interpretation involves some kind of repair. If this view is wholly descriptive, i.e. without any normative verdict on appropriateness, it should be a matter of ease of interpretation, something which to some extent can be measured, e.g. by EEG studies of event-related potentials.

No doubt there are cases where uses of pronouns *are* infelicitous. Some speakers are prone to egocentric speech, in the sense of not taking the perspective of the hearer into account when using indexicals or ambiguous expressions. In such cases, the hearer can easily be at a loss of trying to figure out what the speaker is trying to say.

But there are also frequent examples of such discourse-initial pronouns where little or no additional effort of interpretation is noticed. The speaker's intended referent pops up immediately in the mind of

the hearer. That such cases are infelicitous is subject to debate. What is hardly subject to debate is that such cases occur and are not overly rare. They seem to be within the range of ordinary language use. As such, we should try to understand what makes them successful. Moreover, there are also cases, as we shall see next, of pronouns *with* discourse antecedents where there *are* ambiguities and difficulties of interpretation. The view that we have a clear separation between the convention-governed felicitous use of pronouns on the one and the aberrant and infelicitous pragmatics-needed use on the other, is at least controversial.

3. Coherence

Another main tenet of the book is that *coherence* relations (*discourse* relations), i.e. relations between propositions expressed in a sentence or discourse, determine the resolution of anaphora. Jerry Hobbs was one of the leading pioneers in discourse relations theory, and his theory is succinctly presented in Hobbs 1985. Andrew Kehler (2002) later followed and developed Hobbs's theory. After a suggestion by Hobbs, Kehler uses the categories of *connections between ideas* of David Hume (1748) as his basic categories of discourse relations: *Resemblance*, *Cause-Effect*, and *Contiguity*.

Kehler's *Resemblance* relations are *Parallel*, *Contrast*, *Exemplification*, *Generalization*, *Exception*, and *Elaboration*. As an example, *Parallel* is exemplified by (2002: 16):

(6)   Dick Gephardt organized rallies for Gore, and Tom Daschle distributed pamphlets for him.

Here there is a relation of *doing something in support of*, a relation which subsumes both *organize rallies for* and *distribute pamphlets for*. So, the relation of *doing something in support of* holds both between Gephardt and Gore and between Daschle and Gore. In addition, Gephardt and Daschle have the shared property of being high-ranking democratic politicians.

This background of ideas in the theory coherence relations is employed by Stojnić as providing tools for the interpretation of pronouns. A central example of this phenomenon is the following (Stojnić 2021: 61):

(7)   John was disappointed with Tim.
            a. He fired him.
            b. He disobeyed him.

How do we resolve anaphora in these examples? The suggestion is that in (7a), the coherence relation is that of *Result*: John fired Tim as a *result* of being disappointed with him. The anaphora resolution that follows from this coherence relation is that 'he' is resolved to John and 'him' to Tim.

In (7b), the coherence relation is that of *Explanation*: that Tim had disobeyed John *explains* why John fired Tim. The anaphora resolution

that follows from this coherence relation is that 'he' is resolved to Tim and 'him' to John. As this example shows, our interpretation how a discourse hangs together can be closely related to the interpretation of context sensitive elements in the discourse.

Prima facie, this appeal to discourse relations does not sit well with the emphasis on linguistic conventions over pragmatics, as coherence relations have typically been taken to belong to pragmatics. However, it is also a central tenet of the book (esp. 68–71) that coherence relations are instantiated in discourse precisely as a matter of linguistic convention.

Stojnić herself stresses that hers is a minority view. On this view, speakers do not infer the obtaining of coherence relations as a result of open-ended abductive reasoning. It is a feature of language itself. Central to the view is that in the determination of meaning of a sentence or discourse, the obtaining of coherence relations are established *first*. The resolution of anaphora follows. The view comes out clearly in her discussion of example (8) (Stojnić 2021: 64):

(8)   Phil tickled Stanley. Liz poked him.

This discourse can be understood as exemplifying the *Result* relation: Liz poked *Phil*, and this action was prompted by the action described in the first sentence. 'him' is then resolved to Phil. It can also be understood as exemplifying the *Parallel* relation: Liz's action is *similar* to Phil's. 'him' is then resolved to Stanley. Concerning this case, Stojnić says:

> Note that general reasoning can still have a role to play, but this role, again, is not one of assigning content to the form, but rather one of disambiguating which form has been uttered to begin with. So, for instance, [(8)] is ambiguous between a form containing Result and one featuring Parallel. Some general reasoning might be invoked in disambiguating between these, much as it might be involved in figuring out whether a speaker means a financial institution or a river bank, with a use of 'bank,' or which quantifier scope is intended with a use of 'Every boy kissed a girl' or who they named when they uttered 'Betty,' or, as we have seen before, in disambiguating a particular form of a gesture. To interpret, a hearer must first settle disambiguations. (2021: 70)

One might think that disambiguation itself is a pragmatic operation but this is not so for Stojnić:

> But *disambiguation* is pre-semantic, in Kaplan's sense: it involves the interpretive work needed to settle *the linguistic form* of an utterance, not to assign content to the form (Kaplan 1989a). Disambiguation is distinct from semantic interpretation: it is only once the form is disambiguated that it can be semantically interpreted. Semantics determines what an expression means, but not which expression was uttered. And, while general pragmatic reasoning about the speaker's intentions and available epistemic cues plays no role in semantic interpretation, it *can* play a role in guiding the audience to recognize *which form* of a pointing gesture was performed. But this is the role they can play in the disambiguation of any ambiguity, for example, in

> the disambiguation of a use of the word 'bank,' or a name, 'Betty.' And, as with other ambiguities, conventions governing demonstrative actions constrain possible disambiguations. A flat hand shape with the palm up, fingers toward the audience, allows for a certain range of interpretations, but not others; similarly, for an extended index finger, or the word 'bank,' or the name 'Betty'. (Stojnić 2021: 55)

Of course, part of the general view of the book is that coherence relations belong to the *form* of an utterance. In the formalism, clauses like 'Explanation(x_0,x_1)' occur in the representation of logical form. Thus, from this perspective, determination of coherence relations in a discourse is a determination of logical form and this, in turn, is strictly speaking syntactic disambiguation.

However, this view of settling coherence strikes me as implausible: the interpretation of a discourse that involves settling coherence relations typically involves a hypothesis about the *propositions* that the coherence relations relate. In interpreting, we do not first settle on *Parallel* and then resolve the anaphoric relation. Coherence relates propositions, not propositional functions. Rather, we compare the package of *Parallel*+$him_{Stanley}$ with the package *Result*+him_{Phil}.

This means that determining coherence already includes the resolution of anaphora. It is not clear what would even be the *basis* for settling the coherence relation prior to considering the anaphoric relation. In some respects, it seems Stojnić agrees with this. The quoted passage ending with 'disambiguation' (2021: 70–1) continues:

> This may involve assessing the plausibility of possible coherence relations that could be operative in a given context. It may involve evaluating whether a particular disambiguation of coherence relations delivers a plausible resolution of pronouns.

This remark strikes me absolutely spot on. And it is not unique to coherence. We have similar phenomena in relation to implicature. Consider

(9)   A: Are you coming to Martha's party on Saturday? B: My mother will be visiting.

We try to find a suitable overall interpretation of the answer, and we get this by interpreting B's answer as expressing the proposition that B's mother will be visiting *on Saturday*. This supports the relevance of the answer, via the implicature that B cannot come to the party.

This exemplifies what Stephen Levinson (2000: 186) has called "Grice's Circle": disambiguation and other determinations of *what is said* may depend on processes that "look indistinguishable" from implicature.

Nevertheless, Stojnić is adamant that settling the coherence relation has priority over the interpretation of pronouns. The quoted passage continues:

> In short, it can serve in recognizing which form of the available ones that grammar delivers was uttered, but not in determining which meaning a

particular form takes on. Once a coherence relation is established, pronoun resolution is determined by grammar, not by general reasoning. And, as I have been arguing throughout, any extra-linguistic parameters such interpretive reasoning may invoke do not serve to *determine* meaning. (Stojnić 2021: 71)

Why this view? What supports it? Some of the motivation seems to come from a particularly striking example of coherence relations and anaphora, to be considered next.

4. *Parallel*

Stojnić uses an example from Andrew Kehler (2002: 159) which she takes to show that the attention-shifting operations prompted by coherence relations are grammatically encoded.

> They privilege linguistic ones, over the broader constraints of background knowledge and rational inference that they might potentially consider. (2021: 68)

The example is:

(10)   Margaret Thatcher admires Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush absolutely worships her.

The point of the example is that (Kehler's) informants judge (10) *infelicitous* despite the availability of a gender-matching antecedent to the pronoun. It is judged infelicitous since the pronoun is gender incongruous with its expected antecedent, 'Ronald Reagan'. And the idea is that 'Ronald Reagan' is the expected antecedent because the sentence exemplifies *Parallel*. Hence, the argument goes, the coherence relation seems to be established *before* the anaphora resolution, and even trumps the grammatical incongruence. And this is so *despite* the fact that general reasoning can produce a reading that satisfies the congruence requirement.

This seems to speak in favor the pre-semantic status of establishing coherence. However, there is reason to suspect that the effect is not wholly, and not even predominantly, due to the *Parallel* relation. The adverb 'absolutely' functions as an intensifier in (10). It induces a certain expected stress contour:

(10′)   Margaret Thatcher admires Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush absolutely WORSHIPS her.

The stress peak on 'worships' has the further effect that the pronoun 'her' is *deaccentuated*. Deaccentuation is often represented by underlining:

(10″)   Margaret Thatcher admires Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush absolutely WORSHIPS her.

Deaccentuation is associated with avoidance of either of two features (Shapiro and Anttila 2021). One is semantic, the other phonological. It is, on the one hand, associated with avoidance of stress on expressions

with given, entailed, coreferential, or contextually accessible meanings. It is, on the other hand, also associated with avoidance of stress on the second of two segmentally identical strings.

Deaccentuation of an expression that is coreferential with an expression already given is coupled with contrastive stress on an immediately preceding expression. An example would be exactly

(11)   Margaret Thatcher admires Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush WORSHIPS him.

without the adverb 'absolutely'. The explanation for this is phonological/semantic. In (10"), we have the same stress contour of the VP 'worships' + pronoun as in (11), but the source is different. The similarity in stress contour leads to a conflation: the hearer/reader expects a similarity of meaning between the pronoun and its antecedent. That is, the deaccentuation itself *indicates* that there is a similarity, correctly in (11), incorrectly in (10"). Shapiro and Anttila say:

> What is fundamentally a phonological alternation has acquired a semiotic function. Deaccentuation is a signal that invites the hearer to establish a similarity between two strings. (Shapiro and Anttila 2021: 8)

I do not claim that the apparent instantiation of *Parallel* has nothing at all to do with the reported infelicity reactions to (10). The availability of an alternative explanation does not by itself license that conclusion. As Stojnić says (2021: 68), the *Parallel* instantiation requires that the antecedent of the pronoun in object position has an antecedent in object position. 'him' should corefer with 'Ronald Reagan' to instantiate it. Thus, if *Parallel* is *perceived* as instantiated, the expected antecedent should be 'Ronald Reagan'. But the availability of an alternative explanation that relies on phonology + semantics instead does undercut some of the explanatory force of the appeal to *Parallel*. Also, as indicated in the preceding section, why should the reader settle on *Parallel* in the first place, before the reference of the pronoun is determined, as there are then not yet two propositions to relate.

Furthermore, if we remove 'absolutely' from (10), we get

(12)   Margaret Thatcher admires Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush worships her.

(12) is much more felicitous than (10), despite instantiating *Parallel* as much as (10) itself. A stress on the pronoun is here to be expected.[2] Stojnić herself (2021: 68n) does acknowledge that stress does play a role: a stress on 'her' in *itself* would make if felicitous:

(10*)   Margaret Thatcher admires Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush absolutely worships HER.

Finally, however, Stojnić defends the conventionality of coherence relations by claiming that although (10*) is felicitous, it cannot exemplify

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[2] During the Q&A after the talk in Dubrovnik, Stojnić denied that there is much difference in felicity between and (12) and (10).

Parallel. But this is far from obvious. As far as I can see, we could have a *different Parallel* instantiation:

(13)   Conservative leaders tend to like conservative leaders. Margaret Thatcher admires Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush absolutely <u>worships</u> HER.

(10*) occurs as the second sentence of (13), and is naturally read as instantiating the relation expressed in its first sentence, in two parallel examples. What is needed is just *some* available basis for *Parallel*.[3]

In conclusion, I deny that the Kehler example, (10), shows that coherence relations are established before the interpretation of pronouns, and that it shows that they can trump certain pronoun interpretations. The case for the conventionality of coherence relations remains to be made.

5. *Conventionality*

I have tried to make a case for the prevalence of constraint satisfaction in interpretation, both when it comes to the prominence ranking of pronouns and when it comes to the settling of coherence relations. My stance is that when constraint satisfaction is employed, it does determine everything that gets settled by means of it. Thus, when constraint satisfaction is employed in selecting a pair of a coherence relation and a pronoun resolution, they do get determined together, in a general pragmatic way.

By contrast, Stojnić's strategy is to separate core conventional parts of interpretation—that are strictly linguistic—from the general pragmatic ones. In the case of pronoun prominence, on her view, there are simply two distinct kinds of interpretation; the core linguistic one, based on prominence ranking, and the open-ended pragmatic one, which only kicks in when the first one fails.

In the coherence case, her view is that coherence relations *may* be established by open-ended reasoning, which can even involve considering the resulting resolution of anaphora, but coherence is nonetheless determined *first*, and anaphora determined as a consequence.

Stojnić tends to contrast open-ended reasoning with the demands of linguistic conventions: there can be a conflict with what convention *requires* and open-ended reasoning *allows*. This is taken to be especially exemplified with (10).

But an opposing view, that I myself have put forward in work on coherence (Pagin 2014, 2017, 2019), is that some pragmatic forces are in conflict with others. In particular, I have claimed that the demands

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[3] During the Q&A Stojnić objected by saying that the coherence relation instantiated here is rather that of *Exemplification*: both conjuncts of the second sentence express propositions that exemplify the proposition expressed by the first sentence. This is correct, but the relation between the conjuncts themselves is still that of *Parallel*.

of *coherence* conflict with the demands of *charity* (maximizing truth potential): requiring an interpretation where propositions hang together makes it more difficult for them to be true. Many cases of pragmatic enrichment testify to this, for instance the following example from Robin Carston (2002: 71):

(14)

   a. He handed her the key and she opened the door.
   b. He handed her the key and she opened the door [*with the key that he had handed her*].

A normal and typical interpretation of (14a) associates with it a content that is more completely articulated in (14b), which includes additional linguistic material in brackets. Clearly, (14a) itself is true in more situations than (14b). Hence, the enrichment runs counter to charity but makes the two conjuncts cohere better. Linguistic convention seems not to be involved.

 We can also get a similar example where charity trumps coherence:[4]

(15)

  a. He handed her the key and she wiped the table.

  b. He handed her the key and she wiped the table [*with the key that he had handed her*].

Since, by world knowledge, we can reject the possibility that one wipes a table with a key, the proposed enrichment is in conflict with the demands of *charity*, and indeed strikes one as odd. It will not easily be made. Thus, we do not need to appeal to *convention* to see that pragmatic considerations can be overridden. Pragmatic considerations can be in conflict with and override each other.

 I do not claim to have refuted Stojnić's position. It seems perfectly viable. One can suspect that the two approaches are empirically equivalent, when it comes to the results of interpretation. One may hold that the more pragmatic view is simpler in respect of being more uniform when it comes to prominence, and in respect of saving a step in the case of coherence and anaphora. One may then wonder whether there are other considerations of interpretation that actually require or at least support the linguistic convention view. I leave this as a question for future research.

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[4] Thanks to Fabrizio Cariani for requesting such an example.

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