

# **Discourse Coherence and Attention: A theory of pronouns**

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Centering Theories hypothesize a notion of the entity 'in the center of attention' in a discourse. Coherence Theories hypothesize an implicit organization of discourse that establishes inferential connections among successive utterances. The mechanisms of these two sorts of theories, we argue, can be developed into a general meta-semantics according to which the resolution of a pronoun is determined by what is at the center of attention in a coherent discourse (where both 'attention' and 'coherence' can be made formally precise). These mechanisms, contrary to the processes of intention recognition emphasized in the broadly *Kaplanian* meta-semantics tradition, are peculiarly linguistic. That is, our theory, the Attention-Coherence Theory, defends the existence of certain linguistic mechanisms that are typically confused with pragmatic processes, *i.e.* psychological processes, about intention recognition, while rejecting the usually posited ambiguity between bound and demonstrative readings of pronouns, as, for example, in the case of the English third person pronoun 'he'.