Problem Set 6 – Discourse

[due January 29, 2019]

Exercise 1: Centering.
Do a Centering analysis of the following two texts (specify Cf, Cb, Cp, and the transition for each utterance). Are there any theoretical arguments for why one text is better than the other? Do you agree with the prediction?

(Note: only include specific referential entities, i.e., John, the store, in your analysis)

(1) a. John went to a music store to buy a piano.
b. It was a store that John had been going to for years.
c. He was happy that he could finally buy a piano.
d. The store was just closing when John arrived.

(2) a. John went to a music store to buy a piano.
b. He had been shopping at the store for years.
c. He was happy that he could finally buy a piano.
d. When he arrived, the store was just closing.

Can you change (1d) to violate the pronominalization rule?

Exercise 2: Connectives.
Find the explicit and implicit connectives in the following text. Identify their arguments. (Remember not to posit any discourse relations across paragraph breaks.)

You can call it a Triassic titan. Or a pre-Jurassic juggernaut. Just don't call it a dinosaur. Despite its appearance, this burly behemoth was a completely different prehistoric beast: a dicynodont.

Early relatives to present-day mammals, dicynodonts dominated Earth more than 200 million years ago, living first before, and then alongside, dinosaurs. Unlike dinosaurs, these herbivorous animals had short necks and large skulls. They were stocky like rhinos, toothless and had tusks and turtle-like beaks. Many ranged in sizes from pigs to hippos, though some were small enough to burrow into the ground.

Now, scientists have uncovered a new species of dicynodont that towered over the rest, comparable in size to an elephant.

The newly discovered species, known as Lisowicia bojani, was 8.5 feet tall and about 15 feet long, and weighed 9 tons. It is both the largest and youngest dicynodont found so far and its discovery provides further evidence that these proto-mammals survived into the late Triassic Period, past the point when many scientists had previously thought they went extinct.