

Sentence Recognition:
A Theoretical Analysis

ICS Technical Report #89-7

by

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Abstract

How sentences from a discourse are recognized can be explained by combining models of item recognition derived from list-learning experiments with notions about the representation of text in memory within the framework of the construction-integration model of discourse comprehension. The implications of such a model of sentence recognition are worked out for two experimental situations. In the first experiment, subjects read brief scriptal texts and were then tested for recognition with verbatim old sentences, paraphrases, inferences, and two types of new distractor sentences after delays from 0 to 4 days. Differential decay rates for the wording and meaning of the text and for scriptal information were observed. The model provides a good quantitative account of the data. In the second experiment, the speed-accuracy trade-off in sentence verification was studied for old verbatim sentences, and correct and false inferences. Qualitative predictions derived from the model based on the parameter estimates from the first study were in agreement with the data. Readers without an adequate situation model were found to make quick judgments based on surface and textbase characteristics of the test sentences, while experts are initially more cautious because they rely more on the situation model.

A large number of experiments on recognition memory exist in which the material used consists of lists of words or pictures. Several models of recognition memory are available today which account very well for most of the phenomena observed in these experiments. Can these theories also account for experimental data when the materials used are not lists of items, but coherent discourse? By combining the essential features of current models of recognition memory developed in the context of list learning studies with a model of discourse comprehension and assumptions about the representation of discourse in memory, a model of sentence recognition can be obtained that accounts for the major features of sentence recognition data. Thus, we do not propose developing a new model for sentence recognition. Instead, we shall combine existing models of list learning and text comprehension processes to derive a theoretical analysis of sentence recognition.

We begin by comparing three current models of item recognition (Gillund & Shiffrin, 1984; Hintzman, 1984; Murdock, 1982) to determine their common features, which we take over in developing a model of sentence recognition. We then introduce some notions about the representation of discourse in memory from van Dijk & Kintsch (1983) and briefly sketch the construction-integration model of discourse comprehension (Kintsch, 1988). Finally, we show how these elements in combination provide an account of sentence recognition data. We demonstrate that our model can be made to match a set of sentence recognition data in which old verbatim sentences, paraphrases, inferences and new sentences are used as test items for retention intervals varying between an immediate test and a four-day delay (Experiment I). The model is further evaluated by testing some of its qualitative implications with respect to the speed-accuracy trade-off in sentence recognition judgments (Experiment II).

1. Models of Item Recognition

Three models of recognition memory will be considered here. those of Hintzman (1984), Murdock (1982), and Gillund & Shiffrin (1984). All three models are formulated rigorously so that quantitative predictions are possible, and all appear to be empirically adequate in the domains to which they have been applied.

At first glance, the three models appear to be about as different as they could be in their basic make-up: Murdock's is a distributed memory model; Hintzman postulates multiple episodic traces; Gillund & Shiffrin conceive of memory as a network of interassociated nodes, while the other two models employ feature vectors. However, these models share some essential similarities when they are expressed formally, and it is these that we shall use as a basis for a model of sentence recognition.

Hintzman (1984): This model is a multi-trace model, in which each experience leaves its own memory trace. Memory traces, as well as test items, are represented as feature vectors, the values of the features being 1, -1, or 0. The similarity of a memory trace to some probe is the (weighted) dot product of their corresponding feature vectors. The total activation of a probe, its Intensity I , is given by the sum of the similarity values of the probe with all traces in memory. $E(I) = 0$ if the probe does not resemble any traces and increases as the quality of the match improves. Under reasonable conditions $\text{Var}(I)$ can be treated as constant. For recognition judgments, the I distribution is fed into a TSD-like (signal detection) decision mechanism.

Murdock (1982): Murdock also represents memory traces as well as test items as feature vectors. However, a single vector now represents the memory trace of a whole list of items with which the feature vectors of the test items are compared on a recognition test. Once again, a dot product is taken and the resulting values are

summed to obtain a retrieval strength value, which is then used in a TSD-like decision system. There are other versions of distributed memory models for item recognition which differ from Murdock in their mathematical formulation, but these differences are irrelevant at this general level of analysis.

Gillund & Shiffrin (1984): Unlike the previous two models, items in this model are represented as nodes related to each other by associate links in a retrieval structure. Suppose that there is a set of items [I], a test node T, and a context node C, with the similarity between a test node and an item I being $S(T,I)$, and the similarity between the context node and item I being $S(C,I)$. For recognition, the memory probe is assumed to consist of T and C, and the activation resulting from comparing the memory probe with item I is given by the product $S(T,I)*S(C,I)$. The total activation of T is just the sum of the activations for each of the items in memory, and, as in the previous models, serves as a test statistic for a TSD decision system.

Obviously, this brief description does not do justice to the three models considered here. Nevertheless, it suffices to make a few important points. The discrepancy in their verbal formulation notwithstanding, they agree on some crucial mathematical properties. First, in all models the target is compared to all memory traces, and the sum of these comparisons provides the relevant test statistic. This sets these models apart from the previous generation of recognition models, where a recognition decision was thought to be dependent only upon the similarity of the target item to its corresponding memory trace. This is a crucial feature of item recognition. However, it does not appear to matter much exactly how this comparison between the set of memory traces and the target item is performed: whether the traces are summed first, and then the comparison is made (as in Murdock), or whether the comparisons are made first and their outcomes are then summed (as in Hintzman and Gillund & Shiffrin) makes no difference for present purposes.

Similarity between trace and target in the Hintzman and Murdock models is computed by the dot product of the corresponding feature vectors. In Gillund & Shiffrin the links in the associative network represent familiarity values directly. The discourse comprehension theory as formulated in Kintsch (1988) lends itself most naturally to the latter approach, though a more molecular analysis would be possible in principle.

Finally, all three models use a TSD decision mechanism to turn strength measures (Intensity, Familiarity) into yes-no decisions.

These three elements sufficiently specify the recognition mechanism for the model to be proposed here. The idiosyncratic features of the three models will be neglected in favor of these formal communalities. The fact that all three models fit recognition data about equally well implies that the features common to these models are responsible for the fit to the data. The rest represents either differences in theoretical metaphors and verbal interpretations of the common formal substance of the model, or, if it is to be taken more seriously, requires for resolution a broader framework than just laboratory studies of item recognition.¹

2. Levels of Representation

According to van Dijk & Kintsch (1983), three levels must be distinguished in the memory representation of discourse. At one level, a text is characterized by the exact words and phrases used. This is the surface level of representation. Linguistic theory provides the tools for the description and analysis of this level of representation. At another level, not the exact wording but the semantic content of the text must be represented. Both the local (microstructure) and global (macrostructure) characteristics of the text play a role here (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978). Several representational schemes have been developed within linguistics, semantics, artificial intelligence, and psychology for this purpose. We

shall use here the propositional representation first introduced in Kintsch (1974). The situation model is the third level of representation important for text comprehension (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). What is represented at this level is not the text itself, but the situation described by the text, detached from the text structure proper and embedded in pre-established fields of knowledge. The principle of organization at this level may not be the text's macrostructure, but the knowledge schema (e.g., an appropriate script or frame) used to assimilate it.

In a number of experimental studies it has been shown that these three levels of representation can be distinguished in sentence recognition experiments (e.g., Schmalhofer & Glavanov, 1986; Fletcher & Chrysler, in press). Old verbatim sentences are represented at all three levels of representation: the surface structure, the textbase, and the situation model. Paraphrases of old sentences, on the other hand, differ in terms of the surface structure from what is stored in memory, but not at the textbase and situation model level. Inference statements that were not directly expressed in the text differ from the memory representation both in terms of their surface structure and propositional content, but they are part of the same situation model. Finally, contextually related, but not inferable test sentences differ from the memory representation at all three levels. Thus, by looking at the differences among these types of test sentences, estimates of the memory strength at each level of representation may be obtained in sentence recognition experiments.

3. The Construction-Integration Model

The construction-integration model of Kintsch (1988) describes how texts are represented in memory in the process of understanding and how they are integrated into the comprehender's knowledge base.

The crucial features of the model are as follows. Comprehension is simulated as a production system, the rules of which operate at

various levels: some build propositions from the linguistic information provided by the text; some generate macropropositions; some retrieve knowledge from the comprehender's long-term memory that is related to the text, thus serving as mechanisms for elaboration and inference. All these rules share one general characteristic: they are weak, "dumb" rules that don't always achieve the desired results. In addition to what should have been constructed, these rules generate redundant, useless, and even contradictory material. In contrast, most other models of comprehension attempt to specify strong, "smart" rules, which, guided by schemata, arrive at just the right interpretations, activate just the right knowledge, and generate just the right inferences.

Smart rules necessarily must be quite complex, and it is very hard to make smart rules work right in ever-changing contexts. Weak rules, as they are used here, are obviously much more robust - but, left to themselves, they do not generate acceptable representations of the text. Irrelevant or contradictory items that have been generated by weak rules, however, can be rejected, if we consider not just the set of items generated by the rules, but also the pattern of interrelationships among them. Items which are irrelevant to the text as a whole which were produced by the indiscriminate firing of some production rule will be related only to one or a few other items, while contradictory items will be negatively connected to some of the other items in the network of items produced by the model. Relevant items, on the other hand, will tend to be strongly interrelated - be it because they are derived from the same phrase in the text, or because they are close together in the textbase, or because they are related semantically or experientially in the comprehender's knowledge base. Thus, if activation is spread around the network of items, an integrated representation can be obtained. The construction-integration model achieves with weak rules followed by an integration process what other models of text comprehension try to achieve with smart rules.

Kintsch (1988) not only describes the relevant details of this model, but also reports some results that (a) suggest that this kind of a model may capture some features of human comprehension processes better than "smart" comprehension models, and (b) demonstrates that the model is computationally adequate in some reasonably complex domains.

The construction-integration model provides a natural account of sentence recognition. First, comprehension of a paragraph is simulated in the way just outlined, resulting in a memory representation consisting of text propositions, plus whatever knowledge elaborations and inferences were generated that survived the integration process. These items have some sort of activation value - central, important propositions being more highly activated than peripheral ones - and they are related to each other in the ways specified by the model. Formally, this means we have an activation vector A , specifying for each element that was constructed its final activation value, and a coherence matrix C , specifying the relations among these elements. The two characterize in the model the memory representation achieved as a result of comprehending this paragraph.

The model is then given the to-be-recognized test sentence to comprehend, for which it will construct the same kind of representation. In recognition, the representation of the test sentence is compared with the representation of the whole paragraph. This is done by joining the two coherence matrices and observing how much activation flows from the original paragraph to the test sentence. If the test sentence fits in well with the original text (e.g., it is actually a part of it), it will become strongly activated. If it has no connections at all to the original material, it will not be activated at all. The more similar it is to the original, the more connections there will be, and the more highly activated the test sentence will become. Thus, we can use the amount of activation that flows from the original paragraph to the test sentence as a measure of its familiarity or

strength, and use a decision rule to derive a binary recognition response.

The proposed model of sentence recognition is based on three components: a recognition mechanism from the list-learning literature, the notion that discourse is represented at different levels, and the processing mechanisms of the construction-integration model. The test item - the test sentence - is compared, at each level of representation, against all items in memory - the whole text. The comparison yields an index of the similarity between what is remembered and the test item, as measured by the amount of activation that flows from the memory representation into the test item. This similarity index is then used in a decision mechanism. Thus, the recognition principles derived from the list learning literature have been embedded into the framework of the construction-integration model.

In the next section, an experiment on sentence recognition from discourse will be described. These data will provide the framework for the detailed and formal development of our model.

4. Sentence Recognition

Experiment I. Zimny (1987) studied sentence recognition for verbatim old sentences, paraphrases, inferences, and two types of distractor sentences for retention intervals up to four days. She constructed 18 texts of about 150-200 words each, based on the scriptal norms of Galambos (1982). Each text described a sequence of scriptal events (e.g. "*Nick goes to the movies*") by stringing together high-frequency, familiar actions from the norms, interspersed with some non-scriptal material (e.g. his girlfriend wore a dress with pink polka dots). The reason for constructing these texts according to script norms was so that we knew what sort of situation model was likely to be constructed for each text, namely a script-based one. Linguistic analyses specify the structure of the surface representation for arbitrary texts, and propositional analyses are similarly general, yielding textbase hierarchies for a wide variety of texts. Unfortunately, this is not the case for the situation model: for most texts we have no clear idea what sort of a situation model would be generated. Consequently, we must work with special cases where enough research has been done to establish this kind of information. Research in this area has therefore focussed on a few cases such as maps, as in Perrig & Kintsch (1985), mental models, as in Johnson-Laird (1983), or scripts, as in Bower, Black, & Turner (1979) as well as the present case.

For each text, Zimny constructed five test sentences which vary in terms of their level of discourse representation. Old sentences appeared at test as they had in the original text, and are represented at the surface, textbase, and situation model levels. Paraphrases involved minimal word order or single word changes; they are identical with sentences from the text at the levels of their textbase and surface representation, but differ in some ways in their surface structure. Inferences were sentences that could be inferred by readers from the surrounding context with high reliability; these sentences fit into the same situation model as actual sentences from

the text, but they differed both in terms of their textbase and surface representations. While an attempt was made to keep the test sentences similar in terms of their length and complexity, they obviously had to differ in numerous ways, with some being much more salient and recognizable than others. Therefore, Zimny wrote three different versions of her texts, so that each sentence could serve either as an old, paraphrase, or inference sentence. In addition, two entirely new test sentences were used with each text. One sentence was contextually appropriate, while the other was unrelated to the theme and context of the text and served as the baseline for the recognition analysis.

One group of subjects was asked to recognize the test sentences for each text right after reading the text. Subjects were instructed to answer "yes" if they thought they had seen the sentence before, and "no" otherwise. Three other groups of subjects received the test sentences after delays of 40 minutes, 2 days, or 4 days.

The results most relevant for present purposes are shown in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 shows the percent "yes" responses subjects gave to old test sentences, paraphrases, inferences, as well as context appropriate and context inappropriate distractor items, as a function of delay. The main effects of sentence type and delay were both significant statistically, but most importantly, there was a significant interaction between delay and sentence type, $F(6,280) = 38.7, p < .001$. Figure 2 provides estimates of the trace strengths at the three levels of representation over the delay intervals. The percent "yes" data were first turned into d' measures by using the context inappropriate distractor items as a baseline. This transformation was necessary to remove strong, delay-dependent bias effects from the analysis: on the immediate test, subjects used a strict criterion for saying they had seen a sentence before, but after four days they were willing to assert this on the basis of much weaker evidence. Secondly, difference measures between the d' s were computed. The difference between the memory strengths of old sentences and paraphrases provides a measure of the strength of the surface representation

(how something was said). The difference between the strengths of the paraphrase sentences and inferences provides a measure of the strength of the textbase representation (whether something was actually said in the text or not). And finally, the difference between the strength of the contextually appropriate distractor items and the inference sentences provides a measure of the strength of the situation model (whether something is true in the given situational context or not). These difference values are plotted in Figure 2. A statistical analysis of these data revealed that, in addition to significant main effects, the interaction between delay and trace type was also significant statistically, $F(6,280) = 6.29, p < .001$.

- Insert Figs. 1 & 2 about here-

Figure 2 shows some interesting trends. First of all, surface memory was found only on the immediate test. Memory for the textbase was quite strong initially, decreased with delay, but remained above zero even after four days. Situational memory, on the other hand, stayed at a high level, independent of delay.² These are the data that will be modelled here.

Sentence Recognition: Theoretical Derivations. To derive theoretical predictions for the data from the Zimny experiment, somewhat different aspects of the construction-integration model will have to be emphasized than in Kintsch (1988), it still remains the same model. In Kintsch (1988) the memory representation of a text was developed only at the propositional level: surface traces, as well as situational representations were neglected. Obviously, these distinctions will have to be made explicit in a treatment of sentence recognition. On the other hand, the focus of Kintsch (1988) was on the performance of the model as an inference engine - something that we shall neglect in the present application of the model. The reason for omitting this aspect of the model here is that it does little actual work in the present application, and that its inclusion would make an already complex story even more complicated. This

simplification does introduce some distortions, however, which will have to be considered after the simplified case has been presented.

The Zimny data are averaged over subjects and sentences. Predictions will be derived for a single text which is much briefer than the original texts used by Zimny, and for only a few specific test sentences. While these materials are not atypical, it is certainly the case that for another text example and other test sentences somewhat different quantitative predictions and parameter values may have been obtained. However, the overall pattern of results would presumably remain the same. Thus, predictions for a "typical" subject and material set are compared here with data averaged over subjects and materials.

The following two-sentence text will be used as the input text: *Nick decided to go to the movies. He looked at the newspaper to see what was playing.* (This is the beginning of a text based on a Going-to-the-Movies script used by Zimny (1987), which then continues through the whole event). In Kintsch (1988), this text would have been broken down into propositional units (such as NICK, (GO-TO,NICK,MOVIES), etc.) which then would activate knowledge through their associative links in the reader's long-term memory store (perhaps *Nick wanted to see a film*). This propositional structure would be consolidated through an integration process which eliminates the context-irrelevant knowledge that had been activated. For the sake of simplicity, we omit the knowledge activation process in this application, and only look at the actual text contents, as explained above. However, since we know that surface properties of the text as well as the situation model also play a role in sentence recognition, we make explicit in our analysis the linguistic relations as well as the scriptal relations among the input units in the text.

A simulation of the model constructs a network of text elements that specifies how strongly each element is related to each other. We are concerned with three types of relationships, corresponding to the three levels of representation of text in

memory. Within each level, we specify relation strengths in terms of distances among elements in a coherence network. The pattern of interconnectedness among these items will determine the degree of activation each element will receive.

- Insert Fig. 3 about here -

In Figure 3, 10 word groups (linguistic elements, L) have been distinguished in the text. Most of these correspond to propositions (P) as well as elements of the situation model (M), except P7 and M7 do not have a corresponding linguistic element L7. The linguistic elements form syntactic chunks (S), according to the phrase structure of the sentences. E.g. L3 (to-go-to) and L4 (the-movies) combine to form the chunk S3. Together, L and S constitute the elements of the surface representation of the text. (They are distinguished here merely for convenience, to allow a ready comparison between the actual words and phrases used in the text and the propositions or situation model elements corresponding to these words or phrases). The graph shown in Figure 3 allows one to calculate a distance matrix among the L- and S-elements: for instance, L1 is one step away from S1, three steps away from L2, and not connected to L10.

The propositions P1 - P9 are connected to each other in a somewhat different pattern. Following Kintsch (1974), one can approximate the structure of a propositional textbase by noting the pattern of argument overlap among the propositions. For example, P1 appears as an argument in P2, P3, P5, and P8, while P2 overlaps with P1 and P3. The textbase structure obtained via argument overlap is shown in Figure 4. This network defines a distance matrix among the propositional elements: P2 is a single step away from P1, three steps away from P7, and 4 steps away from P9.

- Insert Fig. 4 about here -

A similar distance matrix can be computed for the elements of the situation model. Since the text was explicitly constructed from

script norms, it can be safely assumed that the situation model in this case is structured as a script, i.e. as a schema with slots for Properties, Agents, Preparatory Steps, etc. (e.g., Schank & Abelson, 1977). The script header M10 must be added to the items directly derived from the text - an exception to the policy of neglecting all inferences in the present application of the model. The resulting structure is also shown in Figure 4. This time, M2 is one step away from M3, two steps from M1, one step from M7, and three from M9.

It is not necessary to think of L1 (the exact word used in the text), P1 (the corresponding proposition) and M1 (an element of the situation model) as three distinct objects in the reader's memory representation. It is the same "Nick" in all three cases, but viewed once from a linguistic perspective where it enters into a certain set of relations with other linguistic elements, once considered as a proposition which plays a role in the textbase, and once considered in terms of its role in the "Go-to-the-Movies" script. For analytic purposes it is useful to distinguish L, P, and M units, but what matters conceptually is that text elements enter into different relationships with other elements, depending upon the level of analysis: surface, propositional, or situational.³

These relationships define a network which is represented by the coherence matrix. This matrix is needed as a basis for the integration process. The rows and columns of this matrix are given by the elements L1 - L11, S1 - S8, P1 - P9, and M1 - M10. The entries of the matrix designate the strength of the relationship between row and column elements. Numerical parameters for the strength of relations among elements a certain distance apart in the graphs shown in Figures 3 and 4 must be estimated at this point. An unsystematic trial-and-error procedure was employed to obtain these estimates. Intuition suggests that local relations in the surface structure and textbase are quite strong but weaken rapidly as the distance between items increases. Hence, values of 5 and 3 were used in the coherence matrix for items 0 and 1 steps apart in either in the surface structure or in the or textbase. All other connections

were set to 0. On the other hand, scripts are more stable long-term memory structures, allowing for more long-distance relations, so that strength values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 were assigned to items 0, 1, 2 and 3 steps apart in the script structure, respectively. Finally, a value of 4 was used to tie together the same node at different levels of representation, e.g., L1 to P1, and P1 to M1. In consequence, the effective connections for the surface and textbase elements in the coherence matrix correspond to the links shown in Figures 3 and 4, but the connections among the model elements are much richer, since not only neighboring nodes are directly connected, but also nodes two and three steps apart in Figure 4.

In this way a 38 x 38 coherence matrix was obtained. Each of the 38 items was assigned an initial weight of 1/38 in an activation vector A_1 . This activation vector was successively multiplied with the coherence matrix. After each multiplication, the resulting activation vector was renormalized so that the sum of all activation values was 1. After 7 such cycles the average change in activation was less than .0001, and the process of spreading activation was stopped at that point. Figure 5 shows the pattern of activation over the 38 elements in the activation vector. L and S elements wind up with relatively low activation values (because only a few linguistic connections contribute to the spread of activation, given the matrix structure and parameter values assumed above). P elements are more strongly activated, partly because they are embedded in a more strongly interconnected network than the linguistic elements, and partly because they are directly connected to the dominant M elements. The reason for the higher activation of the M elements is of course their much greater interconnectedness. Note that the only inference admitted here, the "Going-to-the-Movies" script header, has become one of the most highly activated items.

- Insert Fig. 5 about here -

The memory trace, then, consists of three components: the 38 elements that were constructed from the text (in the general case,

these would be augmented by a substantial amount of activated knowledge - inferences and elaborations), their interconnections as represented by the coherence matrix C , and their activation values, given by the activation vector A .

We can now turn to the recognition test. First, consider an old test sentence that is taken verbatim from the original text, e.g. *He looked at the newspaper*. As in the memory models discussed above, the familiarity value of this sentence is based on the dot product $T \cdot A$, where T is a vector with unit activation in all elements associated with the test sentence and A is the activation vector. The calculations are illustrated in Table 1.

Now consider a paraphrase, such as *Nick studied the newspaper*. Most of the elements constructed from this sentence are again duplicates of elements in the existing memory structure, but there are some new ones: the word *studied* (but not the proposition P_5 , which remains unaffected by the substitution of a synonym), as well as two new S elements (in place of S_4 and S_5). These three new elements are added to the coherence matrix and connected with the existing memory structure in the same way as the original elements themselves were interconnected. Thus, an expanded coherence matrix C_p is obtained. Activation is now spread through this new structure until the activation vector A_p stabilizes, which occurs after just 2 cycles. Table 1 shows the resulting pattern of activation for this test sentence. Its familiarity is slightly below that of the old, verbatim sentence, in qualitative agreement with Zimny's data.

- Insert Table 1 about here -

The computation of familiarity values are also shown for two inference sentences in Table 1. The first test sentence "*Nick wanted to see a film*" is composed almost entirely of new elements, requiring the addition of 12 items to the original coherence matrix. It is a plausible inference (though not a logically necessary one), and its familiarity value comes out quite high, though well below that of the

paraphrase sentence. The second inference sentence "*Nick bought the newspaper*" shares more elements with the original memory structure, but does not fit into the script structure as tightly as the first (wanting to see a film is itself a preparatory step in the Movies script, while buying the newspaper is just something appended to the newspaper introduced earlier). As a result, the second inference receives slightly less activation than the first. Finally, the familiarity value of a distractor sentence "*Nick went swimming*" is computed in Table 1; its only connection with the original paragraph is the name "Nick", and it receives the lowest activation value, as it should.

The familiarity values computed so far look sensible, and are in qualitative agreement with the data. With additional assumptions about forgetting, further predictions can be derived. Suppose we simulate memory for two delay intervals, a short delay, corresponding to Zimny's 40 min. and 2 day intervals, which yielded comparable results in Figure 1, and a long delay, corresponding to the 4 day delay. We want to derive predictions for the time of recognition testing, i.e. after the paragraph has been read, and after forgetting has taken place. We are assuming that the effect of forgetting is a weakening of the connections between the items in memory, with the connections among surfaces traces decaying most rapidly, textbase connections less so, while the situation model remains intact, as in the Zimny study (Figure 2). Numerically, this means that we set surface and textbase connections to 4 and 2 for 0 and 1 step distances (instead 5 and 3) to simulate the short-delay test. For the long-delay test, all surface connections are set to 0, and textbase connections to 3 and 1, for 0- and 1-step distances, respectively. (Note that we are in effect collapsing acquisition and retention into a single matrix here). Then, the same calculations are performed as in Table 1. However, the resulting activation values are not directly comparable across the three delay intervals, because of the way activation vectors have been renormalized after each multiplication. By keeping the total activation always at 1, the activation vectors indicate only relative values among the items in each vector, but not absolute values across different matrices. In

order to obtain absolute strengths values, each activation vector must be weighted by the total sum of all entries in the corresponding coherence matrix. If there are many and numerically stronger connections in a matrix (immediately after reading), activation will reach a higher level than if there are fewer and weaker connections (after 4 days). These absolute strength values for the three delay intervals are shown for old sentences, paraphrases, inferences, and new sentences in Figure 6.

- Insert Fig. 6 about here -

Obviously, Figure 6 gives a fair qualitative account of the data in Figures 1 and 2. The differences in response strengths between old items and paraphrases disappear as delay increases, and old items, inferences and new items converge, but not completely. In order to go from the strengths values shown in Figure 6 to Yes-No responses, further assumptions need to be made about how strength values are transformed into Yes-No decisions. Instead of developing here a standard TSD model for that purpose, a simple response-strength model was assumed employing a ratio rule. The probability of a "Yes" response was computed by subtracting from each strength value a delay-specific threshold value and dividing the result by the total response strength, mapping the strength values into the [0,1] interval. Thus, four parameters need to be estimated for this purpose: a threshold for a Yes response for each of the delay intervals (we know that there are pronounced changes in bias over a four-day delay), and a value for the total response strength. These four parameters were estimated by the method of least squares. The resulting fit to the data from Figure 1 is shown in Figure 7.

- Insert Fig. 7 about here -

It would be hard to improve the fit of the predictions in Figure 7 through more sophisticated methods of parameter estimation for the coherence matrices, or a more elaborate decision model. Clearly, the present model does very well, in that it gives a good qualitative

account of the data (Table 1 and Figure 6), as well as a good quantitative fit (Figure 7).

In evaluating the fit of the model it must be remembered that we have not constructed an ad hoc model for sentence recognition, but have put together this model from various existing components: a recognition mechanism from the list learning literature, ideas about the memory representation, and a model of comprehension processes from recent work on discourse processing. Neither is there anything new about the way memory representations are constructed here: phrase structure chunks, textbases, and scripts are all familiar and widely used. Even the parameters in the model are constrained, both a priori (connection strengths can decrease with delay, but not increase), and empirically (surface traces must decay rapidly, textbase traces more slowly and incompletely, and model traces not at all). A theory of sentence recognition has been constructed largely from old parts, and it appears to be empirically adequate.

Nevertheless, a more skeptical view is also possible. There are a large number of parameters in the theory, and although it is not known how many are really free to vary (nor how this relates to the degrees of freedom in the data), their precise values are certainly underconstrained. Furthermore, illustrative predictions for particular test sentences are used as a basis for predicting data averaged over many texts and sentences as well as subjects. In short, it is not entirely obvious what is responsible for the good fit that was obtained - the theoretical principles emphasized here, or the design decisions made in putting this theory together.

To some extent this dilemma reflects the fact that it is hardly ever possible to evaluate a complex theory with respect to a single set of data. Fortunately, the theory makes some additional predictions that do not depend on any further parameter estimation. If the model presented here is more or less correct, then other predictions about sentence recognition follow which can be evaluated at least qualitatively without further parameter estimation.

6. Speed-Accuracy Trade-off Functions.

In deriving the predictions for the Zimny (1987) data shown in Figures 6 and 7, two different inference statements were used as examples. Both were pragmatic inferences that people were likely to make in this context, but they differed in interesting ways. The first inference, "*Nick wanted to see a film*" is strongly related to the text at the level of the situation model: It is a common (though certainly not a necessary) prerequisite for going to the movies. On the other hand, at the textbase and surface levels, the connection is made only by a single term, "*Nick*". In contrast, the second inference, "*Nick picked up the newspaper*", shares both "*Nick*" and "*newspaper*" with the original text at the surface and textbase levels, but is not directly related to the going-to-the-movies script; it is merely an addendum to "*newspaper*". This makes an interesting difference in the way the present model handles these statements.

As was shown in Table 1, the wanting-to-see-a-film inference accrues more activation (258 units) than the picking-up-the-newspaper inference (212 units). However, there is a significant difference in the speed with which this accrual occurs. In the first case, the amount of activation attracted by the inference statement in the first cycle is low (173 units, or 73% of the eventual total), and rises rather slowly over 13 cycles to its asymptotic value. The second inference, on the other hand, gets most of its activation right away (198 units, or 93%, so it is initially the stronger one) and reaches asymptote in 9 cycles. If one wanted to venture a generalization from just these two examples, one could say that model-based inferences are weak initially but increase in strength to a high value with enough processing, while inferences that are based more on surface similarity acquire activation quickly, but do not change much with further processing. In the model, this is obviously a consequence of the fact that surface and textbase relations are very local, while the situation model network is more extended.

The way to test this hypothesis would be to collect speed-accuracy trade-off data for inference statements differing as outlined above. Alternatively, one can try to apply the model to some existing speed-accuracy data collected by Schmalhofer, Boschert, & Kühn (in preparation) that illustrate a closely related phenomenon. Schmalhofer et al. collected data from novices and experts verifying sentences from a highly technical text (an introduction to some features of the programming language LISP). They found rather striking differences in the speed-accuracy functions for these two groups of subjects, and we shall try to account for these differences by means of the hypothesis suggested above. In the Zimny data we are dealing with different types of inferences (surface- vs. model-based similarity), while Schmalhofer et al. deal with different types of subjects (experts with a good situation model and novices with an incomplete or faulty situation model). For the reasons mentioned above, the present model predicts quite different speed-accuracy trade-off functions in both of these cases.

Experiment II. Schmalhofer et al. (in preparation) had 40 subjects study brief texts introducing them to the programming language LISP. Half of the subjects had no programming experience, while the other half were proficient in the programming language PASCAL (but had no experience with LISP). Therefore, the subjects with programming experience presumably knew about functions in general, and when studying the LISP text, could employ this knowledge about function schemata to understand what they were reading, i.e. construct an appropriate situation model. Novices, on the other hand, were presumably unable to do so within the relatively short time they were allowed to study these texts. On the other hand, they certainly could understand the words and phrases they read and form a coherent text base.

_ Insert Table 2 about here -

Subjects were tested on four texts. An example of a text used in the experiment is shown in Table 2, together with three types of test

sentences: an old verbatim sentence, and a correct and an incorrect inference. Subjects were asked to verify whether or not the test sentences were true, and to provide confidence judgments.⁴ When a test sentence was presented, a subject made 6 responses in a sequence, at 1.5 sec intervals when a signal tone was presented. The first response signal occurred 750 msec before the sentence appeared on the screen. Obviously, subjects could only guess at that time, but during the next 7.5 sec they had ample time to fully process each test sentence. The last response signal differed from the previous ones, and subjects could make their final response without time pressure.

The percentage of "yes" responses on two consecutive responses can be used to determine the subject's change in opinion whether the sentence is true or false. Incremental d' values were calculated to assess this change. The incremental d' value for the processing time 0 is based on the difference between an unbiased guess (50% true responses) and the subject's actual guessing. No significant differences either between groups or sentence types were observed on this initial guessing trial. The results of the analyses for the next five responses for old sentences, correct inferences, and incorrect inferences are shown in Figures 8, 9, and 10, respectively. Separate analyses of variance were performed for each sentence type. The factor response signal time was, of course, always highly significant, while the difference between the high and low knowledge groups never quite reached levels of statistical significance. More important were the interactions between these factors: as Figure 8 suggests, novices and experts performed equally on old sentences, but for inferences (Figures 9), a significant statistical interaction was obtained, $F(4,148) = 4.15, p < .01$.

- Insert Figs. 8, 9 & 10 about here -

For true inferences, novices are relatively confident early in processing that the sentence would be true and become more and more uncertain during later processing. Experts, on the other hand,

do not jump to conclusions, but gradually accumulate evidence throughout the processing period. Both experts and novices tend to accept false inferences as true initially, but experts eventually reject them confidently, while novices remain uncertain. These findings can be readily interpreted within the construction-integration model as it has been applied here to sentence recognition data.

On-line integration. In previous work with the construction-integration model, the sentence was assumed to be the processing unit, purely for reasons of convenience: as long as one is not much concerned with what happens within a sentence, this is a useful simplification. However, if one is interested in how activation develops during the reading of a test sentence, the convenient fiction of the sentence as a processing unit must be abandoned. Instead, it will be assumed here that words are the processing units. As each word is read, all elements that can be constructed at this point are constructed and added to the existing net, which is then re-integrated. Thus, each sentence contains as many processing units as it has words (or, rather, word groups, the L-units in Figure 3).

In order to illustrate how this model works, we first simulate the processing of the original text. Since we are not interested in the on-line properties of this process, this is done in exactly the same way as with the Zimny data: all the appropriate L, S, P and M units are constructed and connected according to the same principles as in Figure 3 and 4. A function schema, with slots for "Name", "Use", "Input" and "Output", provides the basis for the situation model. The resulting network is then integrated, and a pattern of activation is obtained which, together with the net of interrelationships itself, characterizes the memory representation formed for the to be remembered text.

An old, verbatim test sentence is recognized by computing the amount of activation of its elements at each input stage. Thus, the test sentence "*The function FIRST is used to extract the first S-term*", is processed in seven input stages, as shown in Figure 11. First, "*The*

function" is processed, yielding the elements L2, P2, and M2. The second input unit comprises "*FIRST*", that is the elements L3, S1,P3, and M3. The remaining input units are also shown in Figure 11.

- Insert Figs. 11 & 12 about here -

Figure 12 illustrates how the model works for the inference statement "*A single S-term is produced by the function FIRST*". Only one element is constructed in the first processing unit: the unit L20 "*a-single*" (the numbering takes account of what was already constructed in the processing of the original text). More happens next: "*S-term*" corresponds to L12, P9 and M9 of the original text. Furthermore, at this point the new S-element S18 is constructed, as well as the proposition P21 , (SINGLE, S-TERM). Note that no new model element is constructed corresponding to P21, for there is no way to know where in the function-schema such an element should be placed. In the third input unit, not only the new surface element L21 is generated, but also the sentence unit S22 and the corresponding proposition P22 (PRODUCE, \$, (SINGLE,S-TERM)). Both of these are at this point incomplete: we don't know as yet what produces (SINGLE, S-TERM) - the \$-sign is used as a placeholder in the proposition -, and we do not know all of the constituents of S20. S- and P-units are constructed as soon as possible, before all of the relevant information is available. This assumption in the present model is supported by results in the psycholinguistic literature, where it has been shown repeatedly that people assign words and phrases to plausible syntactic structures on-line, and do not wait until a complete analysis becomes possible (e.g. Frazier & Rayner, 1982).

The immediate processing strategy at the linguistic and textbase levels contrasts with a wait-and-see strategy at the situation model level. In the former case, there are powerful heuristics available that make immediate processing feasible - e.g. the Minimal Attachment strategy of Frazier & Rayner (1982), or the Referential Coherence strategy for forming a coherent textbase

(Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978). The results may not be optimal (e.g., causal links are more useful in stories than mere referential links), or they may have to be revised eventually (as in garden path sentences), but they yield useful approximations for on-line processing that can later be modified if necessary. Immediate processing is also used when situation model elements are encountered in a test sentence that are already available in the original memory representation of the text. In that case, it is assumed that they retain their original position in the situation model. (As all heuristics, this will sometimes be wrong, e.g. in the case of false test sentences). Newly formed elements of the situation model, on the other hand, cannot be assigned on-line to a slot in the schema: where an element fits into a schema, or whether it doesn't fit at all or contradicts it, usually can be determined only after the whole sentence has been processed. Thus, the processing of new situation model elements is delayed until the sentence wrap-up. In Figure 12, the elements M21 and M22, (PRODUCE, M2, (SINGLE, M12)), are therefore constructed in Input Stage 6 and assigned to the "Output" slot of the Function schema.

Fit of the model to the data. How well can this model account for the Schmalhofer et al. (in preparation) data? There are three striking features of these data: the fact that for old verbatim test sentences, the speed-accuracy trade-off functions are essentially the same for naive and expert subjects; the fact that experts have slowly rising, high-asymptote functions for correct inferences, while novices are characterized by fast-rising, low-asymptote functions; and the fact that experts eventually come to reject false inferences more strongly than novices. The model implies all three of these observations.

At this point, there are two ways to proceed. We could try to explore appropriate link values for the coherence matrix, estimate thresholds, and so on, as was done for the Zimny data, and attempt to fit the speed-accuracy data quantitatively. On the other hand, if we are satisfied with a qualitative fit only, computations could be based

on the same parameters that were used in the Zimny data. This approach has some advantages in that it avoids the possibility that good fits are obtained merely because we happened to select just the right parameter combinations. There are no reasons at all why the same parameters should fit both sets of data, and good reasons why they should not (different subject groups, vastly different texts, different task demands - for superficial processing of many simple texts in one case and careful processing of much less material in the other). Nevertheless, if the model really has something to say about sentence recognition independent of the numerical values of the parameters in the Zimny simulation, one might expect that the qualitative pattern of the predictions would correspond to the main features of the new set of data. We have therefore chosen the second way to proceed.

- Insert Figs. 13, 14, & 15 about here -

The difference between novice and expert subjects in the present model is that the former have only a fragmentary, partly correct situation model. Since we are only interested in qualitative predictions, the more radical assumption was made that novices have no situation model at all. Specifically the speed-accuracy functions were simulated with the same parameter values that were used for the Immediate Group above, except that all link strengths are 0 in the situation model of the novices. The results are shown in Figures 13, 14, and 15 for old sentences, and correct and incorrect inferences. These calculations are based on the old sentence analyzed in Figure 11 and the inference analyzed in Figure 12. For the false inference, the following sentence was analyzed: "*The argument of the function must consist of five LISP atoms*". The calculations were the same as for a correct inference, except that in the last input cycle the activation of all M-elements was subtracted rather than added to the total sentence activation to reflect the fact that contradictory sentences provide counter evidence at the model level, while whatever surface and textbase similarities there are still continue to support a positive response.

Schmalhofer's speed-accuracy functions (Figures 8-10) plot a d' as a measure of response strength against time. The model predictions are in terms of total activation against input stage.⁵ Figure 13 captures the relevant features of Figure 8: old, verbatim test items increase rapidly in strength and to a high level, the same for experts and novices. Inferences, on the other hand, rise faster for novices, but to a lower level, while the inference function for the experts rises more slowly initially but to a higher level (Figure 14). This pattern of results thus looks a lot like what was suggested for surface-based and model-based inferences in the Zimny data. Finally, Figure 15 exhibits the stronger rejection of false inferences (contradictions) by the experts than by the novices. Obviously, Figure 15 is only a caricature of the corresponding data in Figure 10: real novices do not have zero situation model, as was assumed for the model calculations, only a weak one.

7. Conclusion

A model of sentence recognition from discourse has been developed and tested here which builds upon previous work on item recognition and discourse comprehension. The recognition mechanism used in this model has been derived from previous models of recognition developed to account for list learning data. Two elaborations from the domain of discourse comprehension were needed to enable this recognition mechanism to deal with sentences from a coherent discourse, rather than with list items. First, sentences must be represented in memory at several levels of representation, each of which can contribute to a recognition judgment. Second, the very processes of comprehension as formulated in the construction-integration model of Kintsch (1988) were shown also to be involved in judging whether a sentence had been experienced before as part of a discourse. Thus, familiar theoretical notions could be combined to provide an explanation for sentence recognition.

This explanation fared quite well when tested against the results of empirical investigations of sentence recognition. In Experiment I, a good quantitative account of recognition for old sentences, paraphrases, and inferences was obtained for delays ranging from immediate tests to four days. However, due to the complexity of the comprehension model, a large number of parameters had to be estimated to match these data. Hence, we changed our strategy in Experiment II from one of fitting empirical results quantitatively to one of testing qualitative implications of the model which did not involve further parameter estimation. The data in question concerned the time course of sentence recognition. It was shown that the model predicted major qualitative features of speed-accuracy trade-off functions, without estimating new parameters. Thus, the model has been tested successfully against two large, complex sets of sentence recognition data.

"Old sentences" and similar terms are abstractions. It would be quite possible for a particular, insignificant old statement to receive less activation than a particular, highly salient inference (just as the script-header inference in Figure 5 is more highly activated than most actual text elements). To obtain useful data in recognition experiments, items must be carefully controlled, e.g. words must be comparable in terms of such factors as length, frequency, or imagery value. The data are usually averages over many items in a class. The model makes predictions for particular discourses, and particular test items. We select typical items and work out the model predictions for these, but then match these predictions against averaged data. In other words, we are postulating an "ideal" text, just as theories commonly postulate an "ideal" subject. In principle it would be possible, though the amount of labor would be almost prohibitive, to calculate predictions for each text and test sentence used in the experiment, and then test averaged predictions against averaged data. While this would lead to greater quantitative precision, it would provide us with relatively little further insight.

The model of sentence recognition developed here is quite general and can be applied to many different texts and test sentences, with one serious restriction: in order to apply the model, one needs to know what the situation model would look like for the text and the subjects in question. Linguistic analyses as well as propositional textbases (the latter if necessary based on the default rule of argument overlap, as in the present case) can be constructed for any kind of text, but situation models are much less well understood. In particular, it is not clear how non-propositional situation models (e.g. mental maps, as in Perrig & Kintsch, 1985) could be integrated into the present framework.

Earlier models of sentence recognition share some characteristics with the model proposed here, but differ in other respects. Two such model are the schema-pointer-plus-tag model of Graesser (1981) and the plausibility judgment model of Reder (1982). Both models, in common with an earlier generation of recognition models, conceptualize recognition as a match between the memory representation of an item and the item presented at test, thus violating a basic feature of current recognition models as discussed in Section 1. Furthermore, they are much less specific than the computational model presented here. In other respects, however, there are some communalities between these models and the present approach. Graesser distinguishes two stages of sentence recognition, one corresponding to the question "Is the item in the memory trace?", and the other to "Must the item have been in the passage?" (Graesser, 1981, p. 92). Reder similarly distinguishes between a plausibility judgment and a direct retrieval (Reder, 1982). Clearly, there are some parallels here between matches based on the surface and textbase representation on the one hand and matches based on the situation model on the other. One could, in fact, claim that what has been done here is to provide an explanation and computational mechanism for the phrase "plausibility judgment". Significant differences should not be overlooked, however. Reder, for instance, emphasizes the stage character of the process with plausibility judgments normally coming first, preempting direct matches. In the

present model, matches at all three levels of the representation occur in parallel, with the contribution of the situational match necessarily coming in rather late in the processing of a sentence, as the analyses of the speed-accuracy trade-off data in Section 7 show quite clearly.

One does not need a separate model for sentence recognition. If we put together what we know about the item recognition process per se with the construction-integration model of discourse comprehension, we have a ready-made explanation for many of the phenomena of sentence recognition. Thus, the construction-integration model comes one step closer toward becoming a general theory of discourse comprehension and memory.

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Footnotes

This research was supported by a Grant No. 15872 from the National Institute of Mental Health to Walter Kintsch.

¹The authors of the models discussed here are concerned with general models of human memory. The formal similarity noted above does not hold outside the domain of item recognition.

² The task dependent nature of these results should be emphasized: long-term memory for surface features is frequently observed in other contexts, as is forgetting of situational information. Forgetting rates are clearly material- and task-dependent (for a review, see Kintsch & Ericsson, in press).

³ The reason we do not just have an element "1" instead of L1, P1, and M1, adding the three types of relationships together, is that on recognition tests we are usually dealing with only one of these elements, but not the others.

⁴ Schmalhofer (1986) has found the same pattern of responses for verification as for sentence recognition.

⁵Very similar predictions are obtained if the length of each input unit is made proportional to the number of cycles needed for the integration process to settle.

Table 1: Test sentences and their familiarity values.
 (The activation values displayed have been multiplied by 10,000)

OLD:		PARAPHRASE:	
"He looked at the newspaper"		"Nick studied the newspaper"	
L10	182	L1	186
L5	175	studied	3
L6	99	L6	102
S4	107	S	25
S5	241	S	38
P1	534	P1	530
P5	517	P5	514
P6	216	P6	216
M1	456	M1	454
M5	583	M5	582
M6	365	M6	365
Total	<3475>	Total	<3016>
INFERENCES:			
"Nick wanted to see a film"		"Nick bought the newspaper"	
L1	114	L1	172
wanted	1	bought	105
to-see	0	L6	5
a-film	0	S	27
S	1	S	37
S	3	P1	521
S	20	[BUY,P1,P6]	244
P1	394	P6	143
[WANT,P1,P]	79	M1	443
[SEE,P1,P]	81	[BUY,M1,M6]	398
[FILM]	14	M6	194
M1	565	Total	<2122>
[WANT,M1,M]	519		
[SEE,M1,M]	302		
[FILM]	490		
Total	<2583>		
NEW:			
"Nick went swimming"			
L1	187		
went	1		
swimming	1		
S	7		
S	36		
P1	578		
[GO,P1,P]	130		
[SWIM,P1]	130		
M1	448		
Total	<1509>		

Table 2: A paragraph from the text
used in Experiment II and sample test sentences.

Original Text:

The function FIRST is used to extract the first S-term from a combined S-term. The function FIRST has exactly one argument. The argument of the function must be a combined S-term. The value of the function is the first S-term of the argument.

Test Sentences:

Old:

The function FIRST is used to extract the first S-term.

Correct Inference:

S single S-term is produced by the function FIRST.

Incorrect Inference:

The argument of the function must consist of five Lisp atoms.

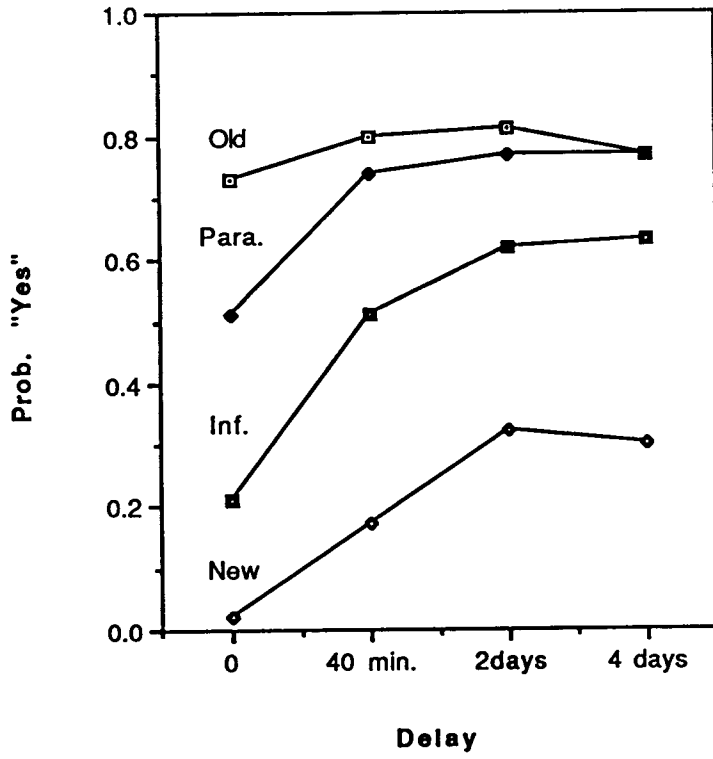
List of Figures

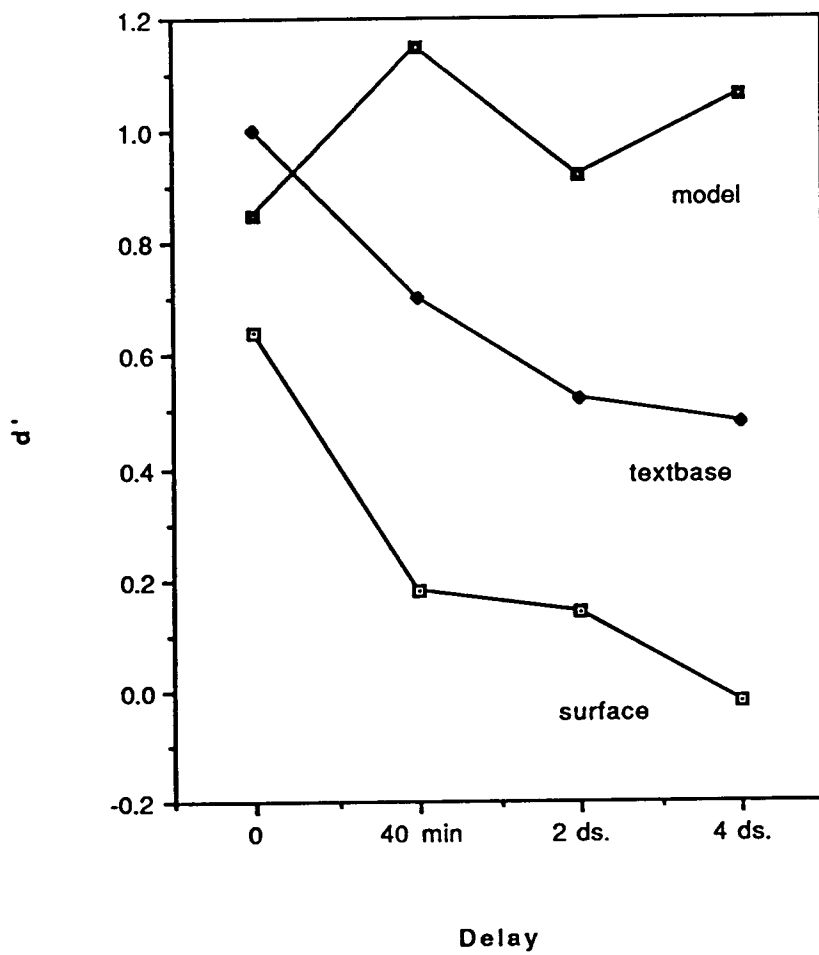
- Figure 1. Percent "yes" responses to old sentences, paraphrases, inferences, and new sentences as a function of delay. After Zimny (1987).
- Figure 2. Estimated strengths of the surface, textbase, and model traces. After Zimny (1987).
- Figure 3. Surface, textbase, and situation model elements of the to-be-remembered text.
- Figure 4. The coherence nets formed by the textbase and the situation model.
- Figure 5. Final activation values (multiplied by 10,000) of the language units (L1 to L10), the surface chunks (S1 to S8), propositions (P1-P9), and model elements (M1 to M10).
- Figure 6. Activation values for the old test sentence, paraphrase, inference, and new test sentence as a function of delay.
- Figure 7. Observed (____) and predicted (-----) percent "yes" responses as a function of sentence type and delay.
- Figure 8. Judged correctness of old, verbatim test sentences as a function of processing time for high- (filled squares) and low-knowledge (open squares) subjects. After Schmalhofer et al. (in prep.)
- Figure 9. Judged correctness of correct inferences as a function of processing time for high- (filled squares) and low-knowledge (open squares) subjects. After Schmalhofer et al. (in prep.)
- Figure 10. Judged correctness of false inferences as a function of processing time for high- (filled squares) and low-knowledge (open squares) subjects. After Schmalhofer et al. (in prep.)
- Figure 11. An old, verbatim test sentence, processed sequentially in seven input stages.
- Figure 12. A correct inference, processed in six input stages.

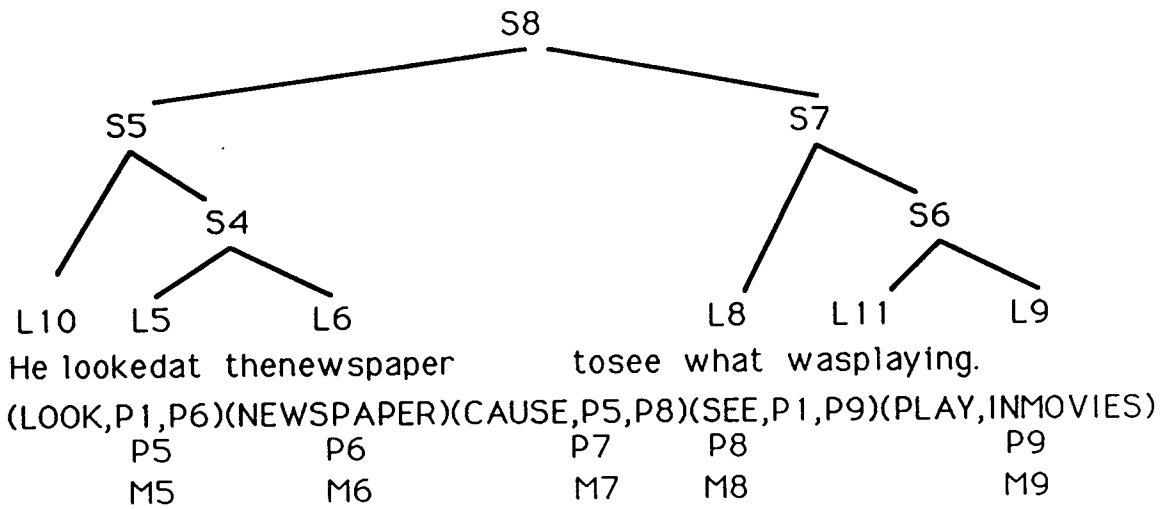
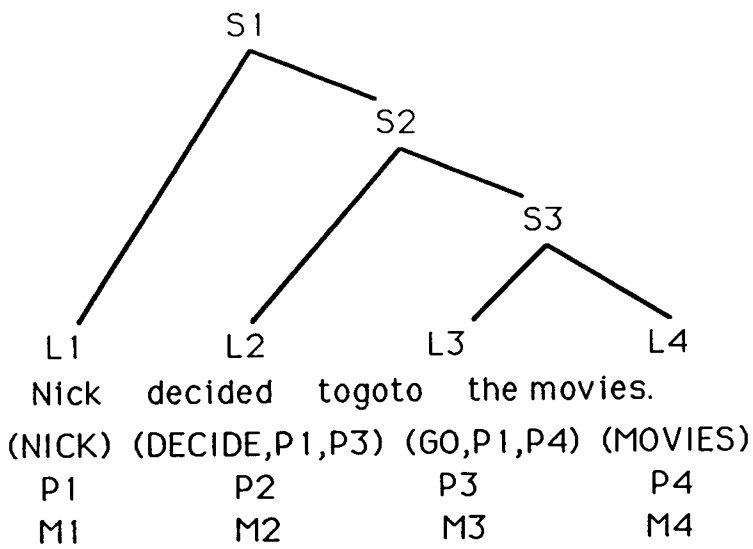
Figure 13. Activation of an old test sentence as a function of processing time for high- (filled squares) and low-knowledge subjects (open squares).

Figure 14. Activation of a correct inference as a function of processing time for high- (filled squares) and low-knowledge subjects (open squares).

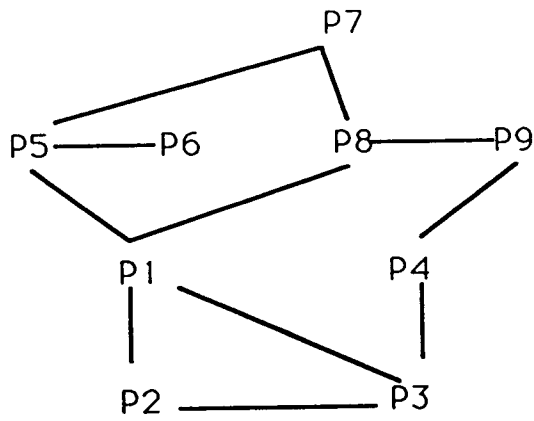
Figure 15. Activation of a false inference as a function of processing time for high- (filled squares) and low-knowledge subjects (open squares).







The textbase structure.



The situation model.

