

The Scalarity of Deictic Motion: Investigating the Gradient Properties of *Come* and *Go*.

Yongjia Deng (ydeng228@wisc.edu)

Language Sciences, University of Wisconsin – Madison

Introduction: Human languages share broad cognitive foundations in structuring deictic contrast in motion events, classically illustrated by the verb pair *come* and *go*. Traditional literature analyzes these verbs around a single deictic center, where interpretation is based on the motion's relationship to the speaker or addressee: *come* indicates motion toward their location, while *go* indicates motion elsewhere (Fillmore, 1966). Recent work challenges this single-center account. Oshima (2006) argues *come* and *go* should be evaluated relative to a contextually salient set of reference points (RPs); *come* requires parameters to form an RP at the goal or home base, whereas *go* does not. However, these accounts leave open why, in third-location contexts where neither interlocutor is at the goal, some destinations license *come* more naturally. Building on Levinson's account of reference-dependent spatial language (Levinson, 2003), this study models the contrast between *come* and *go* in third-location contexts in terms of destination anchoring: the degree to which a motion goal associates as a contextually reference point for the interlocutor. To operationalize the contrast between *come* and *go*, the present study draws on Williams and Vaske's (2003) two-dimensional model of place attachment (place identity and dependence) for measuring anchoring strength. Crossing these dimensions constructs a scale of four-level destination-anchoring strength (Very High, High, Moderate, Low). This study aims to test whether *come* shows gradient sensitivity to the scale of destination-anchoring strength, while *go* functions less constrained by the scale.

Methods: 45 native English speakers (ages 18–71; $M = 35.71$, $SD = 14.63$) were recruited via Prolific. This study employed two tasks to evaluate the acceptability of deictic motion verbs across varying destination-anchoring strengths. In Experiment 1 (Table 1), participants completed a scenario-based acceptability judgment task consisting of 32 items (8 targets, 24 fillers). Each item presented a short conversational context designed to establish the pragmatic conditions for the target sentence. Participants then rated the acceptability of this final utterance on a 7-point Likert scale. To isolate the specific impact of the location, Experiment 2 utilized a descriptive rating task. Participants read textual descriptions of various destinations corresponding to the level of destination-anchoring strength and provided ratings based on their destination-anchoring strength. This allowed to directly evaluate how varying levels of destination dependence influenced the overall anchoring scale used in a 4×2 experimental design. Results were analyzed with Lmer and post-hoc pairwise comparisons (Tukey-adjusted).

Results & Discussions: **E1 Results** (Figure 1) indicated a significant main effect of verb type, showing an overall preference for *go* ($M = 4.73$) over *come* ($M = 3.99$) ($p = .010$). For *come*, estimated marginal means revealed a significant negative linear trend, with acceptability decreasing as destination attachment weakened from the Very High to the Low condition ($F = 19.831$, $p < .001$; Figure 3). Post-hoc comparisons demonstrated that acceptability was significantly greater for the Very High condition compared to all others ($ps < .05$), and for High compared to Low ($p < .001$). In contrast, *go* exhibited robust insensitivity to place attachment levels. There was no significant linear trend across conditions ($F = 2.29$, $p = .084$), and post-hoc comparisons confirmed uniform acceptability with no significant differences among any condition pairs (all $ps > .05$; Figure 4). **E2 Results** (Figure 2): acceptability ratings exhibited a significant downward trend from the *Own Apartment* (Very High) to the *Random Shop* (Low) context ($F = 53.37$, $p < .001$, Figure 2), mirroring the gradient pattern of *come*. Post-hoc comparisons revealed the *Own Apartment* was rated significantly higher than all other locations, and the *Jazz Club* (High) significantly higher than both the *Office* (Moderate) and *Random Shop* (all $ps < .001$). Surprisingly, the *Office* and *Random Shop* did not differ significantly ($p = .166$). These findings provide experimental evidence that third-location motion deixis is reference-dependent, licensed by the socio-pragmatic bond between interlocutors and the destination.

Table 1: Example of context and target sentences in acceptability judgement task (AJT)

PD + PI level	Information	Friday afternoon scenario	Phone conversation	Target sentence
Very high	Mary and Jasmine are roommates.	On Friday afternoon, Mary is at the library, and Jasmine is at the farmers' market.	During a phone call, Jasmine asks Mary about her plans, and Mary says,	I am coming home./ I am going home.
High	Kayla and Jennie are in the same drama club and always have rehearsals together at Dalton Hall; they practice five times a week for their semester performances.	On Friday afternoon, Kayla is at a restaurant and Jennie is in the classroom.	During a phone call, Kayla asks Jennie about her plans, and Jennie says,	I am coming to Dalton./ I am going to Dalton.
Moderate	William and Tom are coworkers in the same chemistry lab and head over to Sterling Hall three times a week.	On Friday afternoon, William is at the gym and Tom is at the dorms.	During a phone call, Tom asks William about his plans, and William says,	I am coming to Sterling./I am going to Sterling.
Low	Claire and Amy are friends.	On Friday afternoon, Claire is at the study lounge and Amy is at the restaurant.	During a phone call, Claire asks Amy about her plans, and Amy says,	I am coming to Walgreens. / I am going to Walgreens.

Figure 1 Line Chart of Acceptability Ratings of Verbs by PD and PI Levels.

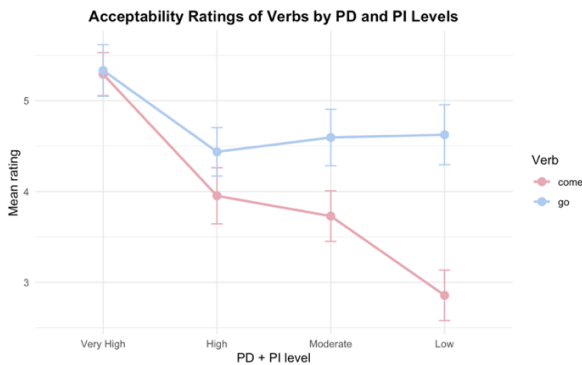


Figure 2 Line Chart of Ratings of Destinations by PD and PI Levels

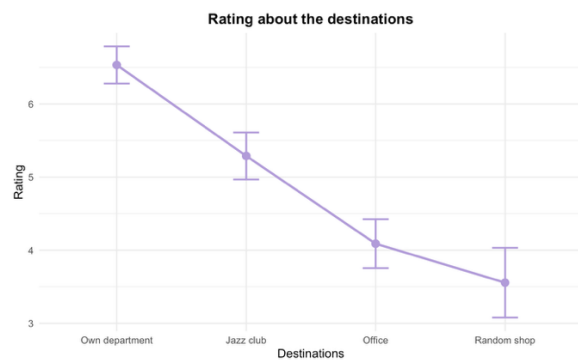


Figure 3 post-hoc pairwise comparisons of 'come'

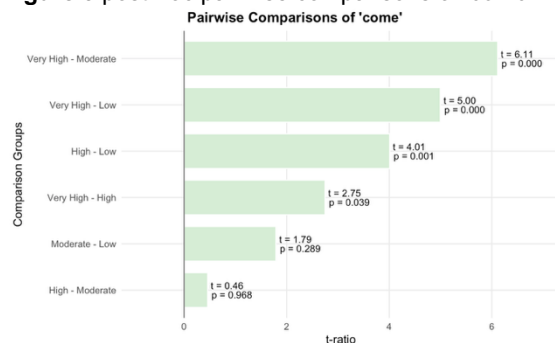
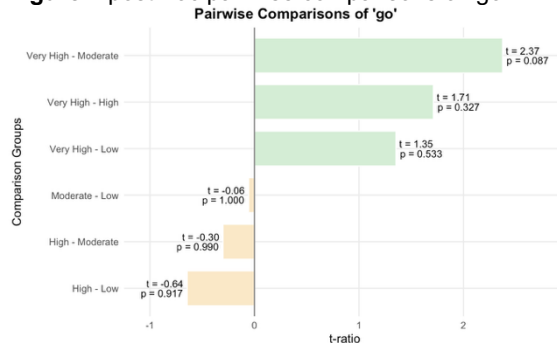


Figure 4 post-hoc pairwise comparisons of 'go'



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