

Semantics and Pragmatics

Lecture No.20

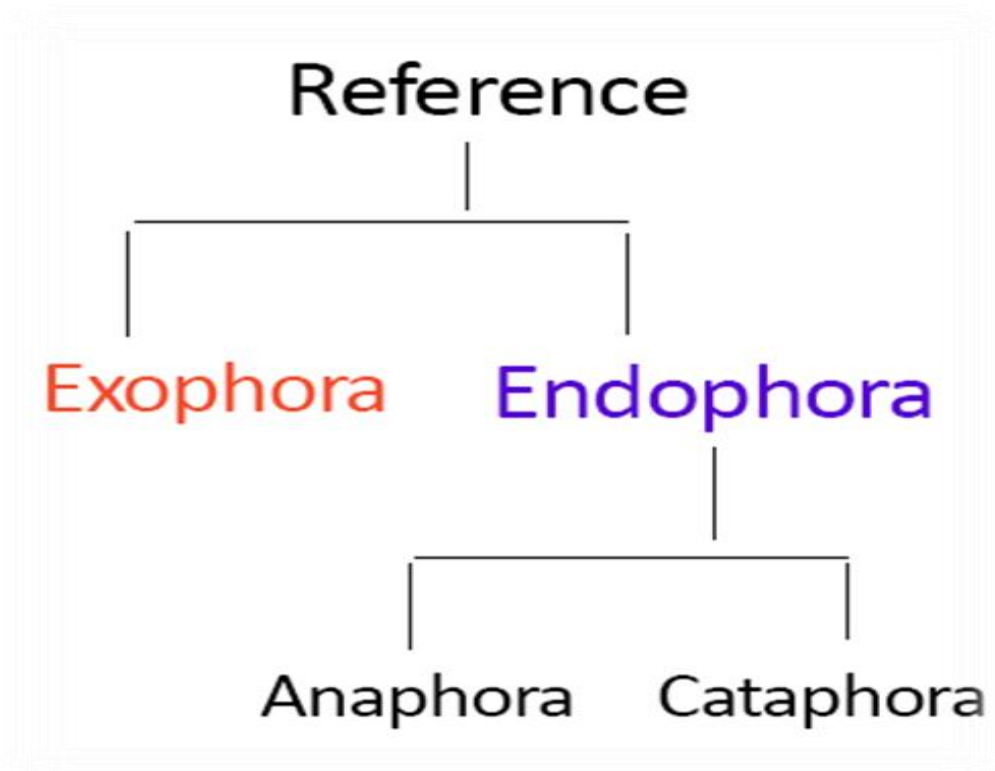
Study Material

Language in Context: Reference

Introduction

- **What is Reference?**
- In pragmatics, an act in which a speaker uses linguistic forms to enable the hearer to identify something is known as reference.
- Reference is a broader term which covers Exophora, Endophora, Anaphora, Cataphora and Grammatical Cohesion.
- The speaker uses linguistic forms, known as referring expressions, to enable the hearer to identify the entity being referred to, which is known as referent.
- Words themselves do not refer to anything, people refer.
- Example: 'Mr. Aftershave is late today'.
- By means of reference, a speaker indicates which things in the world (including persons) are being talked about.
- The term 'reference' has to do with the relationship which holds between an expression and what that expression stands for on particular occasions of its utterance.
- 'My son (person) is in the beech tree' (thing)
- Among referring expressions, we can distinguish between:
 - 1. those that refer to individuals (singular – He, she, it) and those that refer to classes of individuals (general expressions – They, those).
 - 2. Definite (The City) and indefinite (a place, a man) expressions
- The choice of referring expression seems to be based, to a large extent, on what the speaker assumes the listener already knows.
- Referential and Attributive Uses:
 - 'He wants to marry a woman with lots of money'.

- an attributive use, meaning 'whoever/ whatever fits the description'.
- Collaboration:
- In reference there is a basic collaboration at work:
- 'intention-to-identify' and
- 'recognition-of-intention'.



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(End)

Referring to the context outside: Exophora

- Exophora refers to the context which does not exist inside the text.
- When there is no previous mention of the reference in the preceding text, we call it exophoric reference.
- Exophora is dependent on the context outside the text, e.g. proper nouns, etc.
- Consider an example:
- *Ronaldo is a great player.*

- ‘Ronaldo’ is a proper noun and it is being mentioned first time.
- While, player is a common noun and does not clarify which sports does Ronaldo play? therefore, situational or interpersonal knowledge can easily help to identify ‘Ronaldo’ is a footballer.
- Outside context can be ‘Situational context, background knowledge, cultural or interpersonal knowledge.
- For example, John asks his friend *‘Did you buy clothes?’*
- The situation can be: ‘Eid or an event’, Interpersonal knowledge can be: ‘both know about that coming event’.
- **Intertextuality**
- Refers to entities in the background knowledge, whether cultural or interpersonal, that have obviously been mentioned in a previous conversation or text, or have occurred in a previously shared situation or activity (de Beaugrand and Dressler 1981).
- Coherence and Cohesion at text level
- Can help the hearer to interpret the text looking at ‘interpersonal, situational, cultural knowledge etc.
- For example: *‘I joined a party. That was great’.*
- This is a good example of intertextuality. If the speaker skips ‘I joined a party’, the hearer may ask, ‘what was great?’
- **Deixis**
- If referring expression points to the referent in the context (whether interlocutors can see it or not), it is known as deixis.
- There are three types of deixis: Person, Place, Time. (End)

Referring to the Context inside: Cohesion

- **Referring to the context inside: Endophora**
- The expressions which are used to refer an item within the same text is known as endophoric reference. For example,
- *‘I met John, he has just come from England.’*

- In this example, ‘He’ is referring back to John within the same text. It is also known as ‘co-textual context’.
- **Types of Endophora**
- There are two types of endophora: Anaphora and Cataphora.
- **Anaphora**
- If the expressions i.e. them, this, us link back to something that went before in the preceding text, it is known as anaphoric reference.
- This type is frequently used in English text.
- For example, ‘*Students passed the exam and the principal distributed prizes among them.*’
- After the initial introduction of some entity, speakers will use various expressions to maintain reference.
- “In the film, a man and a woman were trying to wash a cat. The man was holding the cat while the woman poured water on it. He said something...”
- The second or subsequent expression is the anaphor and the initial is the antecedent
- **Cataphora**
- Cataphoric expressions link forward to a referent in the text that follows. This type is opposite to anaphora.
- More usually, the noun that the pronoun links forward to follows soon after.
- Use of ‘cataphoric expressions’ is a stylistic choice, to keep the reader in suspense as to who is being talked about. For example,
- *An actor with whom she was rehearsing appreciated Coral Browne’s talent.*
- Here, the ‘she’ links cataphatically with ‘Coral Browne’.
- **Zero Anaphora**
- When the interpretation requires us to identify an entity, and no linguistic expression is presented, it is called zero anaphora, or ellipsis.
- “Peel an onion and slice it. Drop the slices into hot oil. Cook for three minutes.”
- Cook ∅ for three minutes. (End)

Grammatical Cohesion

- “When a referring expression links with another referring expression within the co-text, we say that it is cohesive with the previous mention of the referent in the text” it is known as grammatical cohesion.
- Grammatical cohesion is what keeps the text together.
- **Example**
- *‘I had called the both John and Liza but she remained absent’* shows the importance of grammatical cohesion.
- If the speaker skips pronoun ‘she’, the hearer would not be able to infer ‘who is being talked about?’
- i.e. *‘I had called the both but __ was absent’* seems ambiguous.
- The first type of grammatical cohesion ‘Reference’ has been discussed briefly, now we will look upon; Substitution and Ellipsis.
- **Substitution**
- Substitution helps the writer or speaker to hold the text together and avoid repetition. *So, also, as well, too, etc.* are sometimes used as substitute words.
- Example: *‘He had a beautiful car.’ ‘I wish I had one too.’*
- Here, readers know from the co-text that, in *‘I wish I had one too’*, the ‘one’ replaces ‘a beautiful car’.
- Activity: Find substitute words:
- *Mary can swim, so can John.*
- *I was not confident. The society made me so.*
- **Ellipsis**
- The other form of grammatical cohesion is Ellipsis. It is omitting a word that is not necessary in the text.
- Just like substitution, ellipsis avoids repetition and depends on the hearer or reader’s ability to retrieve the missing words from the surrounding co-text.
- **Example**

- Wasim: I would love to go for a trip, if my boss allows me to avail my holidays.
- Nasir: *'Same here'*.
- Here, *'same here'* omitted the whole sentence i.e. Nasir *'would also love to go for a trip'*.
- Activity: identify where omission has occurred?
- John: I was busy. I could not pick your phone call.
- David: I was as well so, didn't try later.
- **Note:** The use of grammatical cohesion varies from genre to genre. It is much less likely to occur in texts which strive to be completely unambiguous. (End)

Lexical Cohesion

- Lexical devices help to maintain cohesion in the text; i.e. *Repetition, Synonyms, Subordinates and General words*.
- Consider an example, *'I met a person who believes in Allah, Prophets, Holy Books, Angels and the Day of Judgement.'*
- The alternate sentence can be *'I met a Muslim.'*
- **Repetition**
- Of all the lexical cohesion devices, the most common form is repetition,
- Repeated words or word-phrases, threading through the text.
- Substitution and Ellipsis avoid repetition; lexical repetition exploits it for stylistic effect.
- **Example**
- A student made a speech in school *'We need to sacrifice for Pakistan. Pakistan, the country of Quid. Pakistan, the land of love. Pakistan, the heart of Muslim countries. Pakistan, hope for Kashmiris'*.
- The word *'Pakistan'* has been repeated several times to maintain stylistic effect.
- **Synonyms**
- Synonym is; instead of repeating the same exact words, a speaker or writer can use another word that means the same or almost the same.
- You look amazing.

- You look wonderful.
- You look dashing.
- **Superordinates**
- Superordinate is an umbrella term which hides subordinate terms in it.
- For example, bird is an umbrella term and can be used for ‘Sparrow, pigeon, eagle etc.
- The word flower is superordinate of ‘pansies, tulips, roses and so on.
- **General Words**
- The general word is a higher level superordinate: it is the umbrella term that can cover almost everything.
- These can be general nouns, i.e. person, place, thing; general verb, i.e. do and happen, etc. For example, ‘do it.’ may be inferred as ‘killing, cooking or purchasing.