

REFERENCE IN PRAGMALINGUISTICS

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Abstract. This article explores the concept of reference in pragmalinguistics, examining its theoretical foundations and the contributions of ten leading scholars in the field. It discusses how reference functions in communication, the role of contextual and cognitive factors, and the challenges associated with referential expressions. The paper also highlights the practical applications of reference studies in artificial intelligence, cross-cultural communication, and discourse analysis. A list of key literature is provided to support further research in this area.

Keywords: pragmalinguistics, linguistics, reference, referential use, context, contextual information,

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается понятие референции в прагмалингвистике, изучаются его теоретические основы и вклад десяти ведущих ученых в этой области. Обсуждается функционирование референции в коммуникации, роль контекстуальных и когнитивных факторов, а также проблемы, связанные с референциальными выражениями. В статье также рассматриваются практические приложения исследований референции в области искусственного интеллекта, межкультурной коммуникации и анализа дискурса. Приведен список ключевой литературы для дальнейшего изучения темы.

Ключевые слова: прагмалингвистика, лингвистика, референция, референциальное употребление, контекст, контекстная информация

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada pragmalingvistikada referensiya tushunchasi, uning nazariy asoslari va ushbu sohadagi o'nta yetakchi olimning hissasi tahlil qilinadi. Unda referensiyaning kommunikatsiyadagi o'rni, kontekstual va kognitiv omillarning ta'siri hamda referensial ifodalar bilan bog'liq muammolar muhokama qilinadi. Shuningdek, maqolada referensiya tadqiqotlarining sun'iy intellekt, madaniyatlararo muloqot va nutq tahlilidagi amaliy qo'llanilishi yoritiladi. Mavzuni chuqurroq o'rganish uchun muhim adabiyotlar ro'yxati keltirilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: pragmalingvistika, tilshunoslik, ma'lumotnoma, havoladan foydalanish, kontekst, kontekstual ma'lumot,

Introduction

Pragmalinguistics is a subfield of linguistics that studies language in use, particularly how meaning is shaped by context, speaker intention, and social interaction. Within pragmalinguistics, the concept of **reference** plays a crucial role, as it relates to how language users identify and describe objects, people, and abstract concepts in communication. This article explores the nature of reference in pragmalinguistics, its theoretical foundations, key contributions from leading scholars, and its significance in understanding language in interaction.

A significant contribution to the development of pragmatics was made by T.A. van Dijk, R. Stalnaker, L. Karttunen, S. Ullmann, J. Leech, S. Levinson, H. Grice, A. Kanlough, J. Morgan, R. Carnap, J. McCawley, J. Katz, R. Harweg, N.D. Arutyunova, E.V. Paducheva, G.V. Kolshansky, T.V. Bulygina, Yu.S. Stepanov, and others. It is worth noting that the fundamental ideas and theoretical foundations of pragmatics were developed at the end of the last century.

Since the primary material for pragmatic observation is practical speech, the word "pragmatic" is often used as a synonym for "communicative," and linguistic pragmatics is viewed as a tool of communication. Under this approach, the concept of pragmatics fully overlaps with that of linguistic communication. However, despite some common aspects of research, pragmatics primarily highlights the impact-related aspect of linguistic communication. In this regard, it is appropriate to recall A.A. Leontiev's statement (Vishnalek, Leontiev, Stepanova, 1982:75) that "communication may not necessarily be pragmatic in nature but can be motivated by other factors, such as cognitive or aesthetic considerations, etc."

As mentioned earlier, the multifaceted nature of research gives rise to a variety of definitions of pragmatics. Depending on their research focus, scholars emphasize different aspects of this field of linguistics in their definitions of pragmatics. Most researchers, however, point to the direct connection between pragmatic factors in the studied material and semantic ones.

The opinion that pragmatics and semantics should not be contrasted in opposition appears in the works of M.B. Bergelson and A.E. Kibrik (1981), Yu.D. Apresyan (1988), and T.G. Vinokur (1993). For example, T.G. Vinokur defines pragmatics as "the study of the semantics of communicative implicature in relation to the structure of social life, or, as it is now commonly called, the worldview" (1993:22).

Virtually all scholars stress the necessity of considering the social context of speech situations. Thus, T.A. van Dijk concludes that "the ultimate goal of pragmatic language theory is to establish a connection between utterances (and, consequently, grammar) on the one hand, and various forms of interaction (and, therefore, the social sciences) on the other" (van Dijk, 1989:13-14). J. Leech also defines pragmatics as the study of meaning in relation to the speech situation, making a strict distinction between meaning in pragmatics and meaning in semantics. Pragmatic meaning is associated with the addressee, whereas semantic

meaning is abstracted from a specific situation and is considered a property of the system (Leech, 1985:6).

The link between semantics and the communication situation is also emphasized by T.V. Erokhina, who argues that "pragmatics studies that part of the meaning of an utterance that is revealed against the background of real communication, which is conditioned by extralinguistic factors" (Erokhina, 1988:53). Yu.D. Apresyan defines pragmatics as "the relationship encoded in a linguistic unit (lexeme, affix, grammatical form, syntactic construction) concerning: 1) reality; 2) the content of the message; 3) the addressee" (Apresyan, 1988:8).

Thus, the most widespread view of pragmatics has emerged, seeing it as a system of means and techniques used by the speaker to achieve their goals: "to best express their thoughts or feelings," "to best influence the listener or reader in order to convince, move, or touch them" (Stepanov, 1981:325-326). As a consequence of this perspective, pragmatics places primary emphasis on the speaker, the communication situation, and the addressee, since successful influence requires taking into account the type of addressee.

Reference

Reference is the act of using linguistic expressions to identify entities in the world. It allows speakers to connect words to things, ideas, or people, enabling successful communication. The study of reference in pragmalinguistics often distinguishes between **referential and attributive uses** of expressions.

- **Referential use** occurs when a speaker has a specific entity in mind and uses a linguistic expression to enable the listener to identify it.

- **Attributive use** occurs when a speaker describes an entity without having a specific referent in mind, relying instead on descriptive content.

In the scope of reference and inference, several aspects are identified, those are:

- Referential and attributive use

The concept of referring something doesn't always match with the physical image or entity. The certainty of existence also matters when someone referring, since the act of referring also being directed towards something none exist, as in these example:

1. There is [a] beautiful girl waiting for you in the building
 2. I would be happy to find [an] icy white cotton falling from the sky in Indonesia
 3. Abdul wants to join [the] Surabaya's green force
 4. I don't get any signs of [the thief]
 5. No matter how hard it is, [the lover] will come through
- The words [a], [an] and [the] are called attributive use since it can be replaced with whoever or whatever description to describe unknown entity. But, it is not only restricted to that simple words, since it can also uses phrase such in [4] and [5]. Meanwhile, the phrase beautiful girl, icy white cotton falling from the sky and Surabaya's

green force are called referential use, due to its referring to another entity that the speaker has already known its label, but intend to describe with another expression to attract listeners or readers. In [1], speaker can easily state a name of girl (diyah, lateefa or etc) which is actually well-known by him. But, instead of mentioning it, speaker describes her with 'beautiful girl'. This expression is functionally called as referential use. In short, attributive is used to refer unknown entity, but referential is attached to the known entity.

- Name and referent

In referring to something, people can also use name. And based on the collaborative understanding among all member of society (not only speaker and listener) the act of referring something gains its success. Take a look on these examples:

1. Can I borrow your [Sukarno]?
2. Wow, it looks delicious, may I ask your [Bensu]?
3. Where does the [Mocachino] stay?
4. [Grasshopper] is coming full-armed
5. [Titanic] takes over the whole upper-shelf

What do you think when someone borrows Sukarno?

Sukarno is name of the first Indonesian president and he had passed away years ago. Logically, borrowing Sukarno will never happen. But, when the name 'Sukarno' is associated with 'borrow', listener can infer something else that it is not a human named Sukarno, but a biographic book containing life story of Sukarno. The association between 'Sukarno' (name) and the book (referent) is called Pragmatic connection. The cooperative use of proper name to refer something else is influenced with the common collaborative knowledge between the speaker and listener.

- Significance of co-text

Co-text is a linguistic material helping us to depict what the reference is actually referring to. It is almost impossible to interpret what is actually expressed by speaker by ignoring the co-text. Thus, every single unit of co-text is so much significant to discover the meaning when certain expression is placed in the same position inside the sentence.

Examples:

1. Titanic was in its maiden voyage
2. Titanic was considered as the best in romantic category Surely, we can depict different entity of Titanic in [1] and [2]. The first Titanic is a huge and luxurious ship, while the second Titanic is a Hollywood film starring Leonardo De Caprio and Kate Winslet. But, what leads us into this correct interpretation? Yes, group of words after the word Titanic. In [1] the association between Titanic and 'maiden voyage' leads us to the image of ship. In [2] 'romantic category' contribute an image of love story in the film which been awarded as best. Can we interpret that Titanic in [1] and [2] are different entity without 'maiden voyage' and 'romantic category', the answer

is surely cannot. These two are examples of what is called as co-text. As their importance is example of the significance role of co-text toward the listeners' or readers' interpretation.

- Anaphoric reference

During the communication, complex sentences are used to provide enough elaboration as needed by the speaker. And it is almost impossible to always use short expression separately. Thus, references are sometimes repeated again and again. But it would be peculiar to always use complete reference again and again. Hence, anaphoric reference takes its role to link back the reference.

Example:

It is stated in the book that Zuhri and Didi got married at the end of 2019. Shortly after that, they stayed in a small house in the peaceful village, far away from people who always disturb them. Two years later, they had a beautiful and cute baby boy, named Taajudin. They named him Taajudin as they wish that he will be a great-man in the future, contributing for the religion and country life. [Zuhri and Didi] is a reference. And throughout the story, this reference must be pointed back again and again using words [they] and [them]. The initial reference is called as Antecedent, and the next link-backing references are called as Anaphoric reference. There is also different pattern of sentence when the anaphoric reference comes first, and the initial reference comes later. This pattern is technically known as Cataphora as in: Yesterday, I walked through the farm and unpredictably I saw it in the fish pool. A big python snake! [in this sentence, the anaphoric reference it comes first, followed by the initial reference big python snake] In constructing speech, human don't always use reference. They may barely express something that is containing zero anaphora or known as ellipsis, as in: Now sleep for fifteen minutes! Struggle for years before you intent to stop! The use of zero anaphora can create an expectation that the listener can interpret what speaker intends to identify.

Literature review

Pragmatic theories of reference focus on how speakers use contextual information to establish meaning. Below are insights from ten prominent linguists and scholars:

1. **J.L. Austin** – Introduced **Speech Act Theory**, explaining that reference is an integral part of performative utterances where meaning is shaped by social interaction.
2. **John Searle** – Expanded on Austin's work, emphasizing the **illocutionary force** of references and how they affect listeners' interpretation.
3. **H.P. Grice** – Developed the **Cooperative Principle and Implicature Theory**, arguing that reference depends on conversational maxims (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner).

4. **Charles Morris** – Defined pragmatics as the study of the relationship between signs and their interpreters, highlighting how reference is influenced by social context.

5. **Stephen Levinson** – Explored the role of **deixis and indexicality**, showing how referential expressions depend on the speaker's and listener's perspectives.

6. **Herbert Clark** – Studied **common ground and shared knowledge**, emphasizing how speakers and listeners coordinate references through mutual understanding.

7. **Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson** – Developed **Relevance Theory**, proposing that reference is shaped by cognitive efficiency and the principle of relevance in communication.

8. **Geoffrey Leech** – Focused on **politeness and pragmatics**, illustrating how social norms influence referential choices.

9. **Paul Grice** – His work on **intentionality and meaning** contributed to understanding indirect reference and speaker meaning.

10. **George Lakoff** – Examined **conceptual metaphors**, showing how metaphorical reference structures human thought and language use.

Pragmatic Reference and Social Interaction

Reference is deeply influenced by social and cognitive factors. The ability to successfully refer to something depends on:

- **Shared Knowledge** – The more shared knowledge between speakers, the less explicit they need to be in their references.
- **Contextual Relevance** – The meaning of a referential term changes based on discourse context and situational cues.
- **Cognitive Processing** – Listeners use mental models and inferencing strategies to interpret referential expressions correctly.

Challenges in Pragmatic Reference

Despite its essential role, reference in pragmalinguistics poses several challenges:

- **Ambiguity** – Some references can be vague or unclear, requiring additional clarification.
- **Misinterpretation** – Differences in background knowledge or perspective can lead to misunderstandings.
- **Definite vs. Indefinite Reference** – Determining whether a referent is known or unknown to the listener affects how expressions are used.

Applications and Future Directions

The study of reference in pragmalinguistics has practical applications in various fields, including:

- **Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing (NLP)** – Understanding reference helps improve machine comprehension of human language.

- **Cross-Cultural Communication** – Pragmatic reference studies aid in understanding language variations across cultures.
- **Discourse Analysis** – Helps analyze texts, speeches, and conversations for deeper meanings.
- **Translation and Interpretation** – Knowing how reference operates assists translators in conveying accurate meanings.

Future research may explore how reference adapts in digital communication, online discourse, and artificial intelligence-driven interactions.

Conclusion

Reference in pragmalinguistics is a dynamic and complex process, integral to effective communication. By understanding how reference works in real-life interactions, linguists and communication scholars can better analyze meaning construction in different contexts. The contributions of leading scholars provide a comprehensive foundation for exploring how reference functions across different languages and discourse settings. As technology and communication evolve, so too will the study of reference in pragmatics, making it a continually relevant field of linguistic inquiry.

Reference and inference is a concept on how meanings are expressed by speaker through linguistic expressions and later being inferred (interpreted) by the listeners. The expressions used to deliver the meaning are not always explicitly state the thing which been referred, a meaning behind the meaning. These meanings are influenced significantly by the collaborative understanding between speaker and listener, and all member of society. We can use words, phrase, name and even sentence to refer, but co-text will determine that the meaning is correctly caught by the listener. Under the scope of reference and inference referential and attributive use are explored and so as anaphoric reference as feature. This topic is essential in English Pragmatics and became fascinating issue to be discussed among linguists.

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