Reference
`https://gawron.sdsu.edu/semantics`
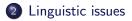
Jean Mark Gawron

San Diego State University, Department of Linguistics

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Overview

1 Introduction

2 Linguistic issues

3 Loose ends on referentiality

Outline

1. **Introduction**

2. Linguistic issues

3. Loose ends on referentiality

Birner's definition of referring expression

Linguistic perspective on reference

Birner, p. 111

...[A] referring expression is a linguistic form that the speaker uses with the intention that it correspond to some **discourse entity** and bring that discourse entity to mind for the addressee.

What is a discourse entity?

Consider a device designed to read a text in some natural language, interpret it, and store the content in some manner, say, for the purpose of being able to answer questions about it. To accomplish this task, the machine will have to fulfil[at least the following basic requirement. It has to be ab—e to build a file that consists of records of all the individuals, that is,

1. *events,*
2. *objects,*
3. *etc.*

mentioned in the text and for each individual record whatever is said about it. Of course, for the time being at least, it seems that such a text interpreter is not a practical idea, but this should not discourage us from studying in abstract what kind of capabilities the machine would have to possess,.

Karttunen (1976)

What is a discourse entity?

an individual mentioned in a discourse

As the discourse unfolds, and things are said, we need to be able to keep track of which things are said about which entities. We imagine a discourse file which contains cards for each discourse entity, and as information is added which pertains to that entity, we **update their file card** to include it.

Primitiveness, Truth conditions

Philosophical perspective on reference (back to truth conditions)

A primitive linguistic act (Basic)

Fred (to Sue):   [The dog]$_{37}$ needs to go out.

a. True if and only if the dog Fred is referring to (perhaps their dog, the one they feed and walk every day, dog$_{37}$) needs to go out.

It doesn't become true if the neighbor's dog (dog$_{38}$) needs to go out.

b. If Sue responds: *What dog?*), it's felicitous for Fred to say **the** *dog*! or *that dog*! perhaps accompanying the utterance with a pointing gesture, perhaps emphasized with a little oscillation of the pointing hand.

c. It's very odd (or at least unhelpful) for Fred to say, "I don't know." ("The speaker intends that the referring expression correspond to some discourse entity ... ")

Birner's definition of referring expression

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Birner, p. 111

...[A] referring expression is a linguistic form that the speaker uses with the intention that it correspond to some **discourse entity** and bring that discourse entity to mind for the addressee.

Clear cases

a. *My brother* lives in *Sacramento*.
b. *The dog* needs to go out.
c. *That* is a great car.
d. A blue Buick sideswiped *my Chevy*.

Clear non-cases

a. The dog *needs to go out*.   Generally NPs!
b. *A blue Buick* sideswiped my Chevy.

Indefinites aren't referring expressions

The speaker **doesn't** intend that this Buick correspond to some discourse entity. We haven't been talking about any particular blue Buick. (How do you know?) (b) is true if any blue Buick sideswiped my Chevy. So if Sue responds: *What blue Buick?*), it's felicitous for Fred to say "I don't know." (even if he saw the event but simply doesn't have any further identifying information).

Problematic cases

1. *The tiger* is a dangerous creature.
2. If you can't come, *that* will be a shame.
3. *Barbara's sincerity* is really touching. (Property predicated of Barbara's sincerity).
4. I can't decide *what* to eat.
5. *Yesterday* was beautiful. (property predicated of yesterday)
6. I saw my cousin *yesterday*. (something happened at some moment in the course of yesterday)
7. *It* 's rain today. (??)
8. *It* 's John who's spreading the rumor. (??)

Outline

1. Introduction

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The linguistic problem

What sorts of linguistic constructions cause us to (a) create a new file card? (b) retrieve an existing card from the discourse file to update it?

Anaphora

Pronouns have **antecedents**. That is, they require that there be a discourse entity they can be connected to. We can use pronouns as a **test** to see whether something is a discourse entity, to see which expressions introduce discourse entities. We look for other kinds of expressions that behave like pronouns.

She has a car.	It is blue. The car is blue. A car pulls into the driveway.
She doesn't have a car.	* It is blue. * The car is blue.

Evidence for discourse referents

1. *The tiger* is a dangerous creature. Nevertheless, it is vulnerable to COVID-19.

2. If you can't come, *that* wiii be a shame. It would make me unhappy. [Complete this exercise: Problem 1]

3. *Barbara's sincerity* is really touching. (Property predicated of Barbara's sincerity).

4. *Yesterday* was beautiful. It was also rainy.

5. I saw my cousin *yesterday*. *It* was a rainy day.
   It was raining *then*. ($\neq$ yesterday)

6. *It* 's rain today. *It*'s rain tomorrow too. (Same?)

7. *It* 's John who's spreading the rumor. $\genfrac{}{}{0pt}{}{\# \text{ It}}{\text{He}}$ was breaking the club rules.

Clear non referring

1. I couldn't decide what to eat. # It was nutritious.
2. I knew what to eat. # It was nutritious.
3. I know what I ate. It was nutritious.

Second approximation

Referring expressions	
Def. Descs	the book
Possessives	John's car, Barbara's sincerity
Pronouns	Me, her, him
Proper names	Julius Caesar
Demonstratives	This, that car
Subj. Locs	under the bed
Generics	The lion is a . . . beast

Hedberg (2000): A scale of increasing "referentiality" (Gundel et al. 1993)

	It	seems to me you're wrong.	meaningless "pleonasm"
	It	is snowing.	WEATHER it Bolinger (1973)
↓	It	was John that I saw.	= *the x that I saw*
	It	's not true.	= the salient proposition (just asserted)

Bolinger ambient-it examples

Weather-it. A lexical property? Certain verbs just have dummy subjects? Or does (some of) these *it*s stand for a discourse entity?

1. It is cold today. (note time adverbial)
2. **It** is crowded in here. (note locative adverbial)
3. — What's it like over there today?
   — **It**'s holding the same pattern as yesterday.
4. **It**'s brewing up a tempest
5. It's so hot that **it**'s giving me a headache.
6. **It**'s her graduation next week.

Assignment: I

1. Complete the task of producing the evidence that the NPs on the slide entitled *Evidence for discourse referents* are referring expresssions (have discourse referents), using the pronoun test.

2. Translate the following sentence using the approach to indefinites illustrated in example (113), p. 123 of the Birner reading.
   John liked the visitor from Spain.

3. Questions 11, 15 at the end of Ch.4 in the Birner reading.

Referential v. attributive I

Donnellan (1966)

1. Smith's murderer is insane.
2. The man with the martini glass is a spy.

1. Smith's murderer is insane. [He is in court, being tried for the murder, acting very strangely.]

2. Smith's murderer is insane. [I wish I knew who he was.]

3. The man with the martini glass is a spy. [Speaker sees Jones, who he knows is a spy, at the party]

4. The man with the martini glass is a spy. [Speaker knows the martini glass has a listening device, and whoever is carrying it is the spy.]

Donnellan: Background

Donnellan's goals

- Show that you can't characterize how a definite description functions independently of the particular occasion on which it's uttered.
- Question this: *The F is G* can't be true if there is nothing which is F. (Referential uses can be).

Always ask if the *whoever* paraphrase works on a particular occasion of use...

What's coming: Leans us in the pragmatic direction. More on pragmatic versus semantic accounts of definite descriptions (familiarity versus uniqueness).

Referential Attributive examples

Sentence	Context
Attributive	
The tenant in this apartment **must be** a very irresponsible person.	A living room littered with trash
Whoever owns this house must be a very irresponsible person	
The successful applicant will have at least two year's experience.	job ad
Referential	
That diamond ring has beautiful color.	at the jewelry store
The bicycle leaning on the oak tree is a hybrid.	in the park
Her husband is kind to her.	in the park

Outline

Pronoun test revisited

1. Leah wants to marry a Swede, but her parents don't like him.
2. Sheila wants to marry a Swede but she doesn't know any. # He's a tall good-looking blond.
3. Sheila wants to marry a Swede. She doesn't know any now, but she wants him to be tall, blond and good-looking.

Anaphoric forms

Anaphora Definition

A linguistic form is **anaphoric** if it must take its reference either from the linguistic context (it has a **(discourse) antecedent**) or the speech context.

1. There he is! The great Harry!
2. **Harry** took **his** bassett hound for a walk.

Anaphora: Salience

Salient = Last mentioned?

a. The Salinas Valley is in Northern California. **It** is a long narrow swale between two ranges of mountains, and the Salinas River winds and twists up the center until **it** falls at last into Monterey Bay.

b. When Mary came home from her first day of school, **her** mom was thrilled. **She** met **her** at the door with a plate of cookies, and asked **her** to tell **her** all about **her** day.

d. Mary told her mom all about kindergarten. **She** was very excited.

d. As if **she** knew **she** were the topic of conversation, Blossom turned her head and looked at him.

e. Every Sunday, as soon as **they** were free, the two little soldiers would set out walking.

Anaphora: Other proforms

1. As Three Ox had a full day on his brothers, he arrived **at the place of the three forks** first. **There** he sat down . . .

2. My mother was too much afraid of her to refuse . . . if she had any disposition to **do so**.

3. Their prayer life will flow from this awareness, **as** will their willingness to offer themselves . . . for the service of God . . .

4. He was surprised. **So** was I.

5. Salt is often a problem, too . A delicious clafoutis of morels . . . is extremely salty, **as** are the carrots . . .

6. Queen Isabella is very beautiful. My Mary is quite beautiful, but she isn't **that** beautiful.

7. You must tie the sash **thusly**.

8. – I'd like six bagels. – Haven't got **that** many.

Zero anaphora (maybe a bad name)

1. When I showed her *that picture of Midge*, Alice wanted a copy [$_{PP}$ ∅].
2. We played *a game of chess* and I won [$_{NP}$ ∅].
3. Where have you been? I have been calling [$_{NP}$ ∅] all week.
4. When they posted *the job*, I applied [$_{PP}$ ∅] immediately.
5. ?? When I found *the sandwich she'd left behind*, I ate [$_{NP}$ ∅] immediately.
6. That morning before work *she removed her engagement ring from her hand*, but he didn't appear to notice [$_{S}$ ∅].

Condoravdi and Gawron (1996)

1. John didn't finish the job because he didn't $\begin{cases} \text{try } [_{\text{VP}} \ \emptyset]. \\ * \text{ want } [_{\text{VP}} \ \emptyset]. \\ \text{want to } [_{\text{VP}} \ \emptyset]. \end{cases}$

2. John contributed \$100 to the cathedral fund.

3. Mary gave John \$100 and he contributed to the cathedral fund ($\neq$ . . . he contributed it . . .).

4. Mary gave a great presentation about the cathedral fund and John contributed \$100 [$_{\text{PP}} \ \emptyset$].

Conclusions

The infinitival VP complement of *try* can be a zero anaphor. The PP argument of *contribute* can be a zero anaphor. THe NP argument cannot. (Fillmore 1986)

Contextually sensitive vs anaphoric

An anaphoric element needs an overt antecedent (or one from the speech situation situation)

1. Every man who bet on the superbowl won.
2. # Every man who bet on the superbowl won it (cf. Every man who made **a bet** on the superbowl won it.)
3. Every man who bet on the superbowl won the bet.
4. The jalopy came lurching to a stop. *The engine* was smoking. **inferrable information** (Prince 1981)
5. Every fugitive was caught within a month (of the time of his escape).

Deixis: Anchored in the speech situation

Personally anchored, Temporally anchored, Spatially anchored (*I, here, now* referred to as **indexicals**)

Presonal	**I** am hungry	)
Temporal	He's hungry **now**. (**tomorrow**, **yesterday**, **ago**)	
	Jill visited Madison two years	before (ling context needed).
		ago (speech context)
Spatial	He's coming **here**.	
	I'm here now. *necessarily true?*	
	A short man with a thick neck just walked in (Royko/Birner)	
Spatial?	What is **this/that** doing here?	

Referentiality of Indexicals

1. I ought to have been a woman. (= It should have been the case that Mark Gawron was a woman)
2. The speaker of this utterance ought to have been a woman. (Reading 1 + This utterance should have been made by a woman).
3. The scenery around here is getting prettier.
4. The local scenery is getting prettier. (Nunberg 1992)

Quantificational context

$$\forall l_{\mathrm{T}}, t_{\mathrm{T}} : \; (l \text{ is the location of train } \mathrm{T} \text{ at time } t)$$
$$\sim \exists l'_{\mathrm{T}}, t'_{\mathrm{T}} \, [\, t' < t \text{ \& prettyness-of-scenery}(l, t') \geq$$
$$\text{prettyness-of-scenery}(l, t) \,]$$

local (like other cases of "zero anaphora") can vary in quantificational contexts like definite descriptions (DDs), unlike indexicals.

Summary

Summary of control properties, modified from Nunberg (1992)

	utterance ctxt	discourse or quant ctxt	anaphoric
I, tomorrow, here	YES	NO	NO
ZA, DDs	YES	YES	NO
he	YES	YES	YES
himself	NO	YES	YES

Note: ZA means Zero Anaphora; DD means Definite Description. Anaphoric means: may take its reference from either an overt (linguistic) antecedent or the utterance context, and it must be one of those two. So this table shows why *zero anaphora* may be a bad description of contextually sensitive words like *local*.

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