

Reference and Inference in Conversation of Buyer and Seller

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Abstract: When people doing interaction, they will produce some utterances to deliver a certain meaning by using some language feature which can be in form of words or sentences. These language features enable the reader or speaker to identify something and the meaning that tries to be delivered must be inferred. This research is aimed at identifying reference and forming inferences from utterances spoken in some conversation between buyer and seller in some mini markets. The data were taken from 7 conversations of buyers and sellers. The utterances from that conversation, which are using some language features to determine the reference and recognize the inference to get the speaker meaning, were collected by note taking after hearing them when visiting some mini markets around Denpasar City. They were analyzed using the theory of inference from Yule (1996) supported by Cummings (2007) and Woods (2010) and also Halliday's theory about context of analysis is used to obtain proper analysis. The analysis is presented descriptively since this research is a qualitative research. Generally, the results of this research show that references from the utterances are in the form of Noun phrase and the inferences are often made by the buyer as the listener since the utterances spoken by the sellers are short and full of implied meaning. Inference helped the buyer to take any action when they shopped. The contexts of the situation are also important to be noticed to form an inference from the interaction between the buyers and the sellers.

Keywords: *Inference, Utterance, seller, buyer*

INTRODUCTION

Generally, inference is a part of pragmatics because it is dealing with drawing a conclusion that is regarding the contexts of the interactions. Yule (1996:3) mentions that pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker or writer and interpreted by a listener (or reader). In addition, Rahardi (2003:12) also states that pragmatics is the study of direct or indirect utterances, implicature and other parts of it conducted by the speaker and the hearer. Putrayasa (2014) explains that meaning that is studied in pragmatics is the speaker meaning which related to the contexts. Pragmatics treats meaning as a relation that involves triadic, those are entities, meanings and contexts. As mentioned previously, meaning is carried by linguistic features such as words or sentences. Words do not refer to anything, but people do. Then reference can be said the action a person with the role as speaker or writer uses the linguistic features to make the other participant; hearer or reader recognizes something (Yule, 1996). Reference is related with the speaker purpose and belief. Since there is no direct relation between the entities and words, it will cause problems in understanding the meaning of a speaker. It is the duty of the hearer to infer and identify which entity the speaker intends by using a particular referring expression (Yule, 1996: 17). Inference can be said as the action of the hearer to construe the speaker meaning that he accepted from the speaker utterances. As mentioned by Woods (in Haugh, 2012): "*inference is a basic form of reasoning whereby consequences that a proposition has are drawn (leading to entailments), and those which seem necessary, permissible or reasonable for one to draw (leading to implicatures, among other things)*".

It is the same as the hearer makes conclusion based on the expression and the context of the interaction. In composing inference, it is necessary to consider the implicature. Implicature means the conveyed meaning or implied meaning that arises from the utterance (explicature). Yule (1997: 40) mentions that it is important to note that it is speakers who communicate meaning via implicatures and it is listeners who recognize those communicated meanings via inference. It can be said that inference which are taken from references lead to reasonable assumption. Inference derived from the reference and must be seen from the context of situation. Context of situation according to Leech (1983) is some aspects that has something to do with physical and

social environment of a utterance. Context is also the knowledge that is mastered by the speaker and the hearer, therefore it is facilely for the hearer to interpret the speaker meaning. Halliday and Hasan (1983) mention that the context of situation is the environment in which meanings are being exchanged.

There are some studies found about reference and inference. First is Reference and inference in *wangsalan sindenan* (tradisional rhymes from Java) by Wijoyanto (2017). He analyzes the connection between reference and inference in wangsalan is the meaning of wangsalan as well as the answer to the puzzle from wangsalan. The relations of reference and inference he focuses in the article are relation of form, content and pragmastylistic function of wangsalan. He found that in term of form, the relation built from phonetic and lexical. In term of content, the relation is in the form of conceptual and associative. The last, in term of pragmastylistic function, he found there is relation of aesthetic and illocution function. Second study is from Alvina, Charlina & Rumadi (2017) about inference in the collection of short stories reading Hang Jebat. They found that there are some types from inference found from the data, those are deductive inference, elaborative and conversation inference.

To make it different from the previous studies, this study however, tries to see the reference and inference from daily conversation, which happen in mini markets. Many store keepers or seller speak short sentence in responding buyer response, but in the other hand, they have to use extended sentences to explain about the promo or special offers of their store to buyers. From the seller utterances, buyer often have to make inferences to understand what is the intents of their utterances as well as get the information that the buyers need. Notice of this phenomenon, this research then conducted to analyze the references and inferences in deductive type that can be used and made according to the buyer and the seller utterances.

METHOD

The data of this research were taken from several mini markets around Denpasar. They were collected by observation, recording and note taking after visiting the mini markets and hearing some utterances spoken there by the buyer and the seller. It is not always a conversation, but also just monologs spoken by the seller. Some utterances that can be the premises to form an inferences are selected from those conversations. After collected, the data were analyzed by using theory of Inference from Cummings (2007) and Woods (2010) and supported by theory of contexts of situation from Halliday & Hasan (1983). Analysis is presented descriptively therefore this research is a qualitative research.

RESULT

Reference according to Yule (1996) the purpose of speaker which expressed with referring expressions to make the listener can get the point of the discourse. The reffering expressions usually in the form of proper noun, definite and indefinite noun (using 'the' or 'a'/'an'), and pronouns. The successful reference is determined by the choice of expression and the ability of the listener to infer. Inference according to Cummings (2007) is divided into 3: deductive, elaborative and conversation Inference. This research is only focusing on Deductive Inference. Deductive Inference deals with semantical meaning. It can be gained from logical deductive norm and from lexical item of semantical meaning. According to Woods (in Haugh, 2012) Deductive inference is generally considered monotonic although the former can also be considered non-monotonic, when considered from the perspective of soundness as opposed to validity. Monotonicity refers to the property of inferences whereby the addition of new information does not reduce the set of what is known. It means Monotonic is an inference that is made does not change even though there is an additional information or premise. Non-monotonicity, on the other hand, refers to inferences where their present reasonability may be lost upon the addition of new information. It can be said non-monotonic is an inference which might be change from the first form because of the addition of a new information. This Inference is divided into two major types, those are Direct Inference; which deduced from one premise. The inference should not be wider. Indirect Inference; which taken from two premises. The process of drawing the conclusion forms a new proposition based on the previous proposition.

The data were 7 utterances that were mostly spoken in some mini markets that were visited. Those are divided into 2 types of Deductive Inference; Direct and Indirect Inference. Four data are short conversations between buyer and seller or vice versa; These belong to Indirect Inference and the remain data are monolog spoken by sellers; these belong to Direct Inference.

DISCUSSION

Direct Inference

Direct Inference means the inference is taken from one premise (Cummings:2007) and the inference that can be made should not be wider than what is drawn by the premise. The utterances taken as the data here is spoken by the sellers, and the hearers are only responding by nodding, saying no or expression 'oh'.

Data 1:

Seller: *mau tebus murah nya bu? Sedang ada promo untuk belanja diatas 50rb, 10 rb untuk produk – produk ini.* (would you like to have the special price, Ma'am? We are having promotion, if you shop more than 50 thousand rupiah you can buy these products for only 10 thousands rupiah each.)

The language features use here are *tebus murah nya* (have special price) and *produk-produk ini* (this product). They are definite noun phrases, since these expressions do not mention what the real objects are. These become the references spoken by the speaker. It helps to build the direct inference because the sentence consists of one premis. The field of this utterance is in the cashier when the buyer paid for the product she took, the tenor is the buyer (as hearer) and the seller (as the speaker) and the mode is the seller in this utterance explained about special product that can be purchased if the buyer shops more than 50 thousand Rupiah. The first premis is actually on the utterance "*mau tebus murah nya, bu?*" but it can help to make an inference: the buyer had shopped with the total price more than 50 thousand rupiah. Additional information on the utterance "*ada promo untuk belanja diatas 50rb, 10 rb untuk produk – produk ini*", as what is meant by Monotonical inference will just add another inference that can be made, that is The buyer can pay only 10 thousand rupiah for some products which are displayed in the cashier table.

Data 2:

Seller: *Sekarang sweetynya promo, hanya 60 rb untuk ukuran L dan XL saja.* (For now, the Sweety is on special price, It is only 60 thousands rupiah for size L and XL).

The language feature as the referring expression in data 2 is 'sweety'. It is a baby diaper product. The word is a proper noun, because it mentions direct object intended. This utterance consisted of one premis only, then it is a direct inference. This spoken when the buyer took the product called Sweety in the store, which is considered as the field. The tenor of this utterance is from the seller and the buyer. Since this utterance spoken for informing special price of the product, this can be explained as the Mode. Observing from the context of situation mentioned above, the inference that can be taken from the reference above is the other Size from Sweety product is in normal prize.

Data 3:

Seller: *Ini hanya untuk belanja diatas 100rb, bu. Ibu bisa memilih produk yang tersedia sebagai hadiahnya.* (These are only for purchasing above 100 thousand rupiah, Ma'am. You may choose the available product as the gift.)

Similar with data (1), data 3 is also spoken in in the cashier (the field) by the seller to the buyer (tenor) and it is about informing a product that the buyer can have if purchasing there with the total price 100 thousands rupiah (mode). The indefinite article *ini* (these) is the referring expression. It refers to certain products which become a prize after purchasing more than a hundred thousand rupiah. This premise can be the basic of producing an inference that is The products pointed by the buyer are not for purchased.

Indirect Inference

As stated by Cummings (2007), Indirect inference is taken from two premises. The previous propositions can help to drawn a new proposition.

Data 4:

Buyer: *Mas, bayar bpjs.* (Excuse me, I would like to pay BPJS)

Seller: *Jaringannya sedang terganggu, pak* (The network is in trouble, Sir)

This conversation happened in the cashier (as the field) where the buyer and seller had conversation (as the tenor) about paying an insurance platform (as the mode). The referring expression is on the utterance *BPJS* and *-nya* which refers to network of *BPJS* website. Therefore, with the referring expression, the context of situation and the premises above can form the indirect inference that is the buyer couldn't pay the insurance platform in the store, due to the network problem.

Data 5:

Buyer: *Rinsonya sebelah mana, mbak?* (Where is the Rinso, Miss)

Seller: *Hanya ada Daia sama super ekonomi aja, bu* (There are only Daia and Super Ekonomi available)

The first referring expression is proper noun: *Rinso*, and then in the next utterance there are *Daia* and *Super ekonomi*. These are some detergent products. The contexts of situation contained in the utterances above are the field; in the store, the tenor; between the buyer and the seller, and the mode is the utterances spoken to ask information about certain product. Therefore, the inference can be made from the references and these two premises after perceiving the contexts of situation, that are This store ran out of stock of one of the product, that is Rinso.

Data 6:

Customer: *ATM nya error ya, mas?* (Is this machine error?)

Seller: *Udah dari waktu ini petugasnya dipanggil, tapi ga datang – datang.* (We've called the maintenance staff couple days before, but there is no one comes)

The reference is to talk about the *ATM* machine in the store. It uses referring expression *-nya* which refers to the machine. Data 6 consists of utterances about the usage of *ATM* Machine which is considered as The Mode. They are spoken by a customer (since he was just going to use the machine not for shopping) and the seller; this is the part of Tenor. The situation happened (The Field) in the store where the machine placed. This context of situation helps to make an inference from those premises, that are the *ATM* machine was broken and could not be used until it fixed.

Data 7:

Buyer: *Aqua galonnya 1, Mas.* (I want to buy 1 gallon of Aqua (mineral water product))

Seller: *Galonnya di bawa ke dalam, ya pak.* (Please bring the container (of the mineral water) inside, Sir)

The reference used referring expression a proper noun *gallon* as the container of the mineral water product mentioned. These utterances can act as the premises to draw an inference. The contexts of situation that should be observed are the field; these utterances spoken in front of the cashier, the tenor; they were spoken by the seller and the buyer, and the mode; the utterances were spoken to purchasing a mineral water with certain size of container. Therefore, the inference that can be made from the utterances above is the store provided the mineral water (Aqua).

CONCLUSION

The references of the data above mostly use proper nouns. These nouns are considered as referring expression which help to build an inference. Inference can be made from one premise and also more than one premises. This will help the listener to understand the speaker meaning accordance to their background knowledge. The contexts of situation are important to be noticed because it helps to draw an inference from certain utterances which mostly come from short expressions together with the knowledge comprehended. By using reference in producing an inference from the utterances spoken by the seller, the buyer can take a proper action for their shopping.

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