

Reference in *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*

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Abstract

Communication is an indispensable tool that is used to communicate various emotions, exchange information, transmit messages, and carry out a variety of other functions. In order to achieve a successful communication, both speakers and listeners work together to attain a common understanding. They do that by deciphering words, word choices, and linguistic connections used to express something. They can achieve that only if they both interpret what is said in the same way. Although individual words do not usually have meanings by themselves, human determine that meaning. Thus, one word cannot always carry a Connotational meaning since humans have a significant role in determining the reference of that word. The present study tackles the concept of reference in "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah". It tries to find out how the different types of reference are used by speakers to express meaning that is inferred by the audience. The study aims at 1) identifying the most used types of reference in satirical talk shows, and 2) showing the way in which reference functions in satirical talk shows. The data are taken from an episode of the American satirical talk show entitled "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah". The finding of the analysis show that: 1) referential and attributive meanings are mostly used in the data, and 2) reference functions as a tool to criticize politicians and ridicule Trump and his family for their irresponsible behavior and carelessness.

Keywords: reference, referential and attributive meaning, Talk show.**الإشارة في "البرنامج اليومي مع تريفور نوح"**

حنين كامل شكير الوطيفي

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية/ كلية المستقبل الجامعة

المستخلص

إن التواصل أداة لا غنى عنها تستخدم لنقل المشاعر المختلفة، كتبادل المعلومات، ونقل الرسائل، وأداء مهام أخرى متنوعة. ويتضمن جزء كبير من التواصل البشري استخدام اللغة التي تتكون من؛ عبارات، وكلمات، ووحدات أصغر تؤدي جميعها إلى تعزيز المعنى. ويتعاون المتحدث والمستمع بتواصلهم اللغوي للحفاظ على الفهم المشترك بينهما وذلك عبر تفسير العبارات، واختيار الكلمات، والروابط بينها التي تستخدم لوصف شيء ما. وأنهما سيكونان قادرين على العمل سوياً فقط إذا كان كلاهما له القدرة على تفسير ما تم التحدث به بالطريقة نفسها. إن الكلمة نفسها لا تتعلق بأي شيء لكن البشر هم من يفعلون ذلك، لأن الرأي البشري له تأثير كبير على ما يتم الدلالة إليه، والمعنى الذي يتم بناؤه بالكلمة المنفردة وحدها لا يمكن أن تنقل المعنى والدلالة دائماً. وتهتم الدراسة الحالية بمفهوم الدلالة في "البرنامج اليومي مع تريفور نوح". وتحاول معرفة كيف تستخدم الأنواع المختلفة للدلالة من المتحدثين للتعبير عن المعنى الذي يتم الاستدلال عليه من المستمعين. وتهدف الدراسة إلى (1) تحديد أكثر أنواع الدلالة استخداماً في البرامج الحوارية الساخرة، و(2) عرض

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طريقة توظيف الدلالة في البرامج الساخرة. إن بيانات الدراسة مأخوذة من حلقة للبرنامج الأمريكي الحوارى الساخر "البرنامج اليومي مع تريفور نوح". وتظهر أهم استنتاجات الدراسة أن (1) المعنى الدلالي والنسبي هما الأكثر استخداما في البيانات وأن (2) الدلالة تعمل بوصفها أداة للانتقاد والسخرية من ترامب وعائلته بسبب أفعالهم المهملة وغير المسؤولة.

الكلمات الدالة: الدلالة، المعنى الدلالي والنسبي، برنامج حوارى.

1. Reference

Humans communicate with each other about things that are not necessarily in their immediate environment. Therefore, there is a need to use words, phrases, or sentences to talk about things that are out of the spatio-temporal context. For that reason, the concept of 'reference' is established, and it becomes an intriguing topic for linguists to investigate.

A reference is a connection between the linguistic expressions, and the object(s) which these expressions are used to represent, or which the speaker intends to highlight by using them [1,p224]. It is a technique where the speaker exploits language to help the listener understand something. Therefore, if reference is created depending on the speaker's intention, then it's the listener's responsibility to infer the link between the stated entities and the words [2,p17]. It can further be described as making statements by using what the reader or listener gathers from the linguistic expressions produced by the writer or speaker, and therefore are taken as true even though they are explicitly stated [3,p 561].

The importance of reference must be acknowledged for an effective inference to develop. Given the fact that there is typically no direct connection between the object and the words, listeners need to interpret the meaning that is intended by the speakers when using specific expressions. It is common for humans to make references to objects even when they are uncertain about the best "name" to use. Hence, speakers often invent names and employ ambiguous language such as ("that icky stuff", and "the blue thing"), relying on the listeners to find the intended referent. For that reason, an effective reference requires both participants engaging to the others' thought process [2,p18].

Certain factors are recognized as falling within the purview of reference, including:

1- Referential and Attributive Meaning

Depending on the context, the same expressions can be exploited to pick out different referents [1,p225], as in (1):

1. The President of the United States of America has visited the Great Wall in China.

Also depending on the context, different expressions can be exploited to pick out the same referent, as in (2):

2. a. Barack Obama is a wise man.

b. The President of the United States of America is a wise man.

Thus, taken out of context, human language has very little referential persistence. In other words, uncertainty is pervasive in human language [1,p225].

The notion of referring to something may not always equate to the physical representation or reality. Since referring is also directed at something that does not exist, the certainty is also important [2,p27]. Consider these examples:

3. There is [a] beautiful girl waiting for you in the building.

4. I would be glad to find [an] icy white cotton falling from the sky in Indonesia.
 5. Abdul wants to join [the] Surabaya's green force.
 6. I don't get any signs of [the thief].

Since anyone or anything can substitute them to define an unidentified object, the articles [a], [an] and [the] are referred to attributively. However, it is not limited to those straightforward terms because it is also possible to utilize phrases like (6). Meantime, the underlined phrases in those examples are referred to referentially, since it relates to a separate entity that the speaker is already familiar with, but he uses a new expression to define it in order to draw the attention of his readers and listeners. In short, attributive reference refers to unknown objects which is different from the referential that is attached to the known objects [2,p27].

2- The Importance of Co-text

Language users cannot depend solely on the linguistic expressions to identify the referents. The referring expressions provide a number of possible references. Co-text, on the other hand, forms a linguistic component of the context in which the referencing phrase is being used. Hence, different co-texts result in different interpretations for the same expression. Consider the following examples [2,p21].

- 7- a. The cheese sandwich is made with white bread.
 b. The cheese sandwich left without paying.

In example (7), the same expression "the cheese sandwich" have different referents "food" and "person" depending on the used co-text [2,p21].

3- Name and Referent

Reference depends basically on recognizing the intention and collaboration at work. However, this process demands cooperation from all members of the community who are exposed to the same language and culture. The phrase "the cheese sandwich" can be utilized to refer to a person, and the name "Shakespeare" can be utilized to refer to something, according to a completely pragmatic interpretation of reference. If student A were to ask student B the following question and receive a positive response (8 B), it wouldn't be odd.

- 8- A- Can I borrow your Shakespeare?
 B- Yeah, it's over there on the table

Depending on the situation, however, a book would most likely be the intended referent instead of a person [2,p21].

4- Anaphoric and Cataphoric Reference

When a term or phrase alludes to a subject that is brought up before in the discussion, it is known as anaphoric reference. Utilization of the definite article in anaphoric references is common since it serves as a cue that something has already been addressed[4]. Here's an example:

- 9- He sat down at the table and took a small box from his pocket. The object felt heavy in his hands. Inside it was the key to his future.

On the other hand, when a term or phrase alludes to something that will be discussed later in the conversation, it is known as a cataphoric reference [4]:

10- Although I phone her every week, my mother still complains that I don't keep in touch often enough.

2. Data of The Study

The study applies the concept of reference to the American satirical talk show entitled "the Daily Show with Trevor Noah". The data is analyzed depending on Yule's description of reference. One episode of the show is going to be tackled¹.

3. Data Analysis

Extract 1

Noah: The Trump family has a long history of being assholes. It all started in 1822, when Thaddeus Trump parked his horse in a handicapped spot.

(audience laughing) But lately, you could say they've been stretched the limits of how big an asshole a person can be, starting with President Trump himself, who has apparently had nothing better to do than pick fights with children.

Reporter: President Donald Trump is going after a 16 year old girl on Twitter. Climate change activist Greta Thunberg was named Times' Person of the Year. She's been known to chastise world leaders for not doing enough. Trump responded to a tweet congratulating Thunberg by saying quote, "So ridiculous. "Greta must work on her anger management problem "then go to a good old-fashioned movie with a friend. "Chill, Greta, chill."

Noah: Come on, man. The president of the United States is on Twitter bullying a teenage girl. Just try to imagine any other president doing something like this. Like imagine FDR doing a fireside chat where he just goes in on Shirley Temple. (audience laughing) He's like, "My fellow Americans, "this little girl can't dance for shit. (audience laughing) "She's got worse moves than I do and my legs don't work." (audience laughing). Also Donald Trump has no right to tell anybody to chill, all right? (audience laughing) He is the least chill human being of all time. Like if there's anyone you wouldn't want on your meditation app, it's this guy. (audience laughing) Can you imagine him trying, he'd be like, "Inhale and exhale! (audience laughing) "Let the air rush into your lungs "like the criminals and rapists swarming across the border "coming to take your jobs and kill your parents. "In fact, your parents are already dead. "Namaste." (audience laughing), (audience applauding)

Noah: I got to admit, to Greta Thunberg's credit, she took it all in her stride, 'cause after Trump tweeted her to chill, she changed her Twitter bio to, "A teenager working on her anger management problem. "Currently chilling and watching a good old-fashioned movie "with a friend." (audience applauding). And that's phenomenal from her. And I'm not surprised, you know, she's 16, so she's used to handling temper tantrums from immature boys, I get it. (audience laughing) And it's not just Daddy Trump who's making headlines right now. Because while he's beefing with kids, Asshole Jr is over here taking shots at even more vulnerable targets.

Referential Meaning

Noah uses the phrase "The Trump family" to refer to Trump and his sons. This is an introduction to what is going to be reported about Trump and one of his sons. Noah uses the word "assholes" to indicate that Trump and his family are acting in a stupid irresponsible way. He also uses this word to attract his audiences' attention. The phrases

¹ <https://youtu.be/YsN4YIbN7LM>

“President Trump”, “President Donald Trump” and “The President of the United States” are used by both Noah and the reporter to refer to Trump. The reporter uses the phrase “a 16 year old girl” to refer to Greta, a climate change activist. He describes her by her age to point the fact that Trump is actually picking fights with children. The reporter uses the phrase “Climate change activist Greta Thunberg” to refer directly to Greta. Noah uses the phrase “a teenage girl” to refer to Greta. Noah then uses the phrase “My fellow Americans” to refer to the American citizens. He uses “this little girl” to refer to Greta. he uses the phrase “the least chill human being of all time” to refer to Trump pointing out to his anger problems and the fact that he is known for his inability to control his emotions, and tongue. He uses “this guy” to refer to Trump. Noah uses “you” “your lungs”, “your jobs”, “your parents” to refer to the audiences’ jobs, lungs, and parents. He uses “the border” referring to the US’s border. He uses the phrase “her stride” to refer to Greta’s. the phrase “A teenager working on her anger management problem. "Currently chilling and watching a good old-fashioned movie "with a friend” refers to Greta. Noah uses the phrase “immature boys” that could be reference aimed at describing Trump as being immature, for criticizing a teenage girl. Noah uses the phrase “Asshole Jr.” as a reference to Trump’s son. This reference is aimed to humiliate Trump and his son by describing both as “asshole”.

Attributive Meaning

Noah uses the phrase “a handicapped spot” to refer to any spot that fits the description. He uses the phrase “an asshole a person can be” to refer to anyone acting like “an asshole”. He also uses “children”. The reporter uses the phrase “world leaders” to refer to all world leaders. Trump uses the phrase “a good old-fashioned movie” to refer to any movie that fits the description. He also uses “a friend” referring to any friend. Noah uses the phrases “other president” and “fireside chat” attributively. Noah uses “anybody” and “anyone”. He also uses “your meditation app” referring to any meditation app. He uses the phrases “the criminals and rapists” referring to anyone that fits the description. Noah uses “temper tantrums” and his use of “immature boys” could be meaning to refer not only to trump, referential meaning, but also to any man acting like an immature. The use of the word “headlines” is a reference to any newspaper headline discussing Trump’s son. Noah also uses the phrase “vulnerable targets” referring to any vulnerable target.

Name and Referent

Noah uses the phrase “Thaddeus Trump” referring to Trump to attract the audiences` attention indicating that Trump consider himself to be a very powerful man who can do whatever he pleases. The reporter uses the phrase “Times’ Person of the Year” to refer to Greta. Noah uses the phrase “Daddy Trump” referring to Trump. This is also an introduction to the upcoming report about Trump’s son.

Anaphoric Reference

Noah uses the phrase “The Trump family” which then refers to using the pronoun “they”. he uses “President Trump” and then refers to him using “who”. The reporter uses “she” referring to Greta who was mentioned earlier. Noah uses the pronoun “he”

referring to FDR, and uses “she” referring to Greta many times. He uses “he” and “him” referring to Trump multiple times. He also uses “it” referring to Trump’s tweet about Greta.

Cataphoric Reference

The reporter uses “a 16 years old girl” referring to Greta.

Extract 2

Reporter: A new report reveals Donald Trump Jr went on a hunting trip to Mongolia this past summer and killed an endangered sheep.

Female Reporter: ProPublica reports the trip was supported by both government and Trump Jr got special treatment.

Male Reporter; He reportedly shot the endangered Argali sheep at night using a laser sight.

Noah: Who is this guy? He needed to use a laser sight at night to take down a sheep? (audience laughing) This is an animal so peaceful, literally just thinking about them makes us fall asleep. (audience laughing) And he's coming at them like it's a raid on Bin Laden. It's a sheep! (audience laughing) An animal so vulnerable it can't go outside without wearing a sweater, it's a sheep. (audience laughing). You killed a sheep. You basically went hunting in a nursery rhyme, who are you? (audience laughing) And also what kind of asshole wants to kill an endangered species? Like most of us don't even want to take the last nacho out of the bowl, and Don Jr's out here putting panda bears in choke holds. Go to sleep, go to sleep.

(audience laughing) Now look, it's obviously not great karma for Little Bo Creep to be killing off a species, so you would think maybe the Trumps could make things up to the universe with their family charity, except this family is so cartoonishly villainous they even do charity like assholes.

Reporter: Well, President Trump will be paying up to \$2,000,000 to charities to satisfy his settlement of a New York state lawsuit over his misuse of charitable funds at the Trump Foundation. The president was accused of illegally using money from the Trump Foundation to help his 2016 campaign. Also as a part of that settlement, the president was required to acknowledge his misuse of the funds, his children to undergo training about misusing charity funds, and they must report to the attorney general if they ever create a new charity.

Noah: Yeah, you heard that right. The president had to pay \$2,000,000 because he stole money from his own charity. Yeah, he used charity money to make political donations to settle lawsuits involving his businesses and he even bought a painting of himself to hang at his own resort. Yeah, like if Trump weren't rich, he'd be one of those people who pretend that they're dying just to start a GoFundMe, you know? He'd be like, "Hey guys, the doctor says "I've got Ebolaburulitis in my Lorax "and the only thing that can make me better "is to own a giant picture of my own dumb face."

(audience laughing)

Now as you heard, Trump doesn't just have to pay \$2,000,000, the court also ordered his three older kids to attend a training session on how to not steal from a charity. (audience laughing) Yeah, and you might be wondering what that training would even look like, but wonder no more, because we got our hands on the video.

Announcer: And now, The New York State Guide to avoiding charity abuse. Don't steal from a (beep) charity, asshole. This has been The New York State Guide to avoiding charity abuse.

(audience applauding)

Noah: So informative.

Referential Reference

The reporter uses the phrase “a new report” to refer to a particular report revealing Trump Jr.’s trip details. He also uses “this past summer”, also, “the trip” referring to the hunting trip mentioned earlier. Noah uses “this guy”, and he repeats it many times, referring to Trump Jr. indicating that what he did is very odd for a man to do that Noah can’t recognize him out of surprise. He uses “this is an animal so peaceful” referring to the sheep indicating that it is totally irresponsible and unfair to literally shoot a harmless animal. He uses “a sheep” repeatedly to emphasize and attract the audiences’ attention to the innocent animal that was shot. He uses “you” addressing Trump’s son, along with the use of “asshole” to scold. He uses “an endangered species” referring to the sheep that was shot. Noah also uses the phrase “The universe” to refer to our universe. He also uses “you” addressing the audience. Noah also uses “the Trumps”, “their family charity”, “this family” and “assholes” to refer to Trump and his family. The reporter uses the phrases “his settlement”, “his misuse”, “his 2017 campaign”, “his children” to refer to Trump’s. also the use of “that settlement” is a reference to Trump’s settlement of his lawsuit. Add to that using the phrase “the attorney general” to refer to the state’s attorney general who is dealing with Trump’s lawsuit. Noah uses “The president”, “his own charity”, “his own resort”, “a painting of himself”, and “his business” all referring to Trump. He also uses “his three older kids” referring to Trumps kids. He uses “I” and “my Lorax” which are referring to Trump. He uses “the video” to refer to a video which is made by the show to mock Trump and his sons.

Attributive Reference

The reporter uses the phrases “a hunting trip” and “an endangered sheep”, “special treatment” and “a laser sight” referring to whatever fit the description. Noah uses “a laser light”, “a raid” and “a sweater”. He uses the phrase “a nursery rhyme” indicating that Don Jr. went hunting in an incredibly peaceful place and scolding him for that. Noah uses “the last nacho” and “the bowl”. The reporter uses the word “charities” and “a new charity”. Noah uses the phrases “charity money”, “political donation”, “lawsuits” and “those people” attributively. He also uses the phrase “a giant picture”, “a training session” and “a charity”.

Name and Referent

The reporter uses “The Trump Foundation” more than one time to refer to Trump’s foundation. He also uses the phrase “The President” to refer to Trump. Noah uses “GoFundMe” which is a reference to an online fundraising platform. Add to that the announcer uses the phrase “The New York State Guide” referring to New York’s law book.

Anaphoric Reference

The reporter uses “the trip” and “the endangered Argali sheep”. Also the pronoun “he” as a reference to Don Jr. Noah also uses “he” referring to Trump’s son multiple times. He uses “them” referring to the species of sheep. He uses the pronoun “their” and “they” referring to the Trump family. He also uses the pronoun “he” referring to Trump.

Cataphoric Reference

Noah uses the pronoun “it” to refer to the sheep, and he uses the same pronoun referring to “killing off a species”. He also uses “that” referring to trump’s obligation to pay money because he stole money.

4. Results and Discussion

After analyzing the data, the following results have been found:

Table (1): frequencies of the five types of reference use.

Referential meaning	Attributive meaning	Name and Referent	Anaphoric reference	Cataphoric reference
37%	25%	10%	19%	9%

As shown in the table above, referential meaning is highly used where speakers use it for entities known to the listeners, as in “The United States” , “your parents” and “The President” referring to Trump. Referential meaning is used repeatedly such as the use of “asshole” to mock, criticize, and scold Trump and his family. Also the phrase “it’s a sheep” is repeated by Noah to emphasize his resentment of what Don Jr. did. Attributive meaning comes next which indicates that speakers depends mostly on describing the referent rather than referring to it directly even though most of the references mentioned in the show are already known and exist. Speakers rely on the listeners to infer the actual referent of the attribute. This is more clear when looking at some of the attributive references such as “an asshole” to refer to Trump, and “a teenage girl” to refer to Greta. However there are some that are not known and may not exist such as “a handicapped spot”, “a friend” and “an old-fashioned movie” which may refer to any friend and any old-fashioned movie. Anaphoric reference is also used where speakers mention the entity’s name and then refer to it using a pronoun. It is used more than cataphoric reference. Naming is also found in the data. These references are easier for the listeners to infer when a co-text is found. It is highly important as it plays major role in determining the exact meaning of the referring.

5. Conclusion

On the basis of the analysis conducted in the present study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The most dominant of reference types is referential meaning. Pragmatically. It is exploited to emphasize a resentment, criticize, and scold.
2. Attributive meaning is used to implicate meanings since it uses other words to describe entities. It is also used to attract the attention of the audience to the irresponsible behaviors of the president and his family.
3. Anaphoric, cataphoric reference , and naming are the least used types. Naming is used to mock Trump for acting like he is superior to everyone and to the law. It is also used to praise Greta and introduce her as a good person getting attacked by Trump.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There are no conflicts of interest

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