

Referring Expression in Black Mirror (Season 3 Episode 1: “Nosedive”): Pragmatics Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze and investigate the various forms of referencing expressions and their meanings in the serial movie Black Mirror: “Nosedive.” The descriptive analysis method was applied in this study. The information used was taken from Charlie Brooker’s movie scrip. The findings revealed four types of referring expressions, including pronouns (37.5%), proper nouns (25%), indefinite noun phrases (18.75 %), and definite phrases (18.75%). On the other hand, there are three types of meaning: contextual meaning (37.5%), grammatical meaning (37.5 %), and lexical meaning (25%).

Keywords

referring expression;
meaning; noun; Black
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I. Introduction

Human life would be impossible without the ability to communicate effectively through the use of language. According to Wardhaugh (1997) language is a symbol of human behaviour and reactions to communicate with others. This makes perfect sense, as language structure is influenced by the patterns of our experiences and cultural models that we use to communicate. The function of language is the goal we achieve with language, for example stating, asking, responding, greeting, saying goodbye, and so on (Ervina et al, 2021). Speakers don't just make utterances; they also use utterances to carry out actions in communication. As a result, people can work together in the same sense they would be in any other shared activity when they communicate.

Generally speaking, communication is built on two people exchanging information. It's common to use "communication" to describe discourse, specifically the exchange of messages. A message that isn't received implies that communication isn't working correctly. Communication must be understandable by both the speaker and the listener to be effective. Everyone has their way to convey intentions or purposes. It very much depends on a variety of social factors or dimensions, context, and speech situation as well (Hendar & Anshari, 2021). This is a branch of linguistics called pragmatics, and it deals with how people use language. Pragmatics focuses on how people use language in a real-life setting.

When we interact with one another daily, we must make a speech to others for them to comprehend what we mean. Every word we speak has meaning and significance, and it is hard for somebody to say anything without having a reason for doing so. The study of the relationship between language and context is known as pragmatics. As Griffiths (2006:153) defined, pragmatics is the study of how words are used in conversation. Languages understanding suggests that understanding an utterance involves more than knowing the meaning and grammatical relation.

In pragmatics, speaker-hearer social distance affects language use. It examines how speakers organize their messages by who, where, when, and how. The study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and perceived by a listener (or reader) focuses on what people

mean when they speak. Pragmatics helps people analyse because it learns language forms and their users.

Those who do not speak fluent English may struggle to interpret the communication message. To avoid communication breakdowns, everyone must become familiar with reference expressions. If it is unclear to a listener or reader what a reduced referring expression is refers to, then the expression is referentially ambiguous, said Fedorova (2014).

In speaking, a "referring expression" is a word or expression used when a person is talking about something or someone. Referring expressions are noun phrases used in an expression. They are linked to something outside of language, like a living or dead or imaginary person or group of people or things. Yule (1996:134) says the expression is a linguistic term that lets someone who hears or reads something know what it is. It's said that referring expressions in natural languages are almost always context-dependent in one way or another, Lyons (2009:167).

Like the study of linguistics that has numerous varieties, referring expressions have various kinds. The four types of referencing expressions identified by Brown and Yule (2000:208) are pronouns, definite noun phrases, indefinite noun phrases and proper names.

a. Pronouns

Pronouns are often the form of expression used by speakers to refer or to give entities. For examples from pronouns are:

1) ***He** gave me a chocolate*

2) *It is not **mine***

b. Proper Names

A name appears to be an essential reference noun. After all, names are only identifiers for people and places, and they might be the first, last, whole, or the title plus the name. For examples:

1) *Hello, **Abel** (first name)*

2) *Good to see you, **Abel Cyntia** (full name)*

c. Indefinite Noun Phrase

When people begin a noun phrase, they use "a" or another indefinite pronoun, such as "one" or "some." Typically, this is utilized when someone does not understand the term or when they do not have a common ground with you. Additionally, it is an effective method of presenting new concepts (Heim, 2011:86). When the referring phrase is not specific, the person hearing it must choose from the noun's extension, from among the numerous possible referents, which portion of the extension is meant by. For examples:

1) *Thanks for giving me **a bucket of flowers**.*

2) *Stacy met **a guy** in Kopitagram yesterday.*

d. Definite Noun Phrase

Defining noun phrases should include more words, like demonstratives, to help people understand them (this, that). In a referring phrase, the definite determinant comes into play when the speaker (or writer) thinks the person hearing or reading will be able to identify the referent (Kreidler and Gisborne 2000:142). For examples:

1) ***The man** right there wants to acquaintance with you*

2) ***That's** the newest comic collection*

To communicate effectively, the listener must comprehend the speaker's objective. The message's efficacy is determined by the information or emotion communicated. When we are aware of the audience, we can amplify our expressions. A referring expression can occur in any speech, and this study aims to identify referring expressions in a serial movie.

A movie is a literary work that entertains as well as informs. Because the *Black Mirror* serial movie contains numerous pertinent expressions, they will be classified.

Based on the case above, the research aims to do a study on the pragmatics side, with the topic of referring expression of the character in the *Black Mirror* serial movie. "Nosedive", a *Black Mirror* episode, is about a society where everything is perfect and based on one's rating. Throughout the episode, the main character Lacie Pound is seen working diligently to improve her statistics to be among those with a high four rank.

II. Review of Literature

There are many ways to refer to things, Yule (2000:208) said. They can be pronouns, definite noun phrases, indefinite noun phrases, or proper names. In this study, the research used types of referring expressions that Yule had grouped together.

When someone talks or writes, they are giving meaning to what they say or write. In linguistics, meaning is information or concepts that the sender wishes to convey, or is conveyed in communication with the recipient (Lisnawati & Ansor 2021). When a word or lexeme refers to something or someone else, it has a meaning. It is just necessary to recognize that not all words have real-world meanings.

Communication is the process of delivering messages by someone to other people to tell, change attitudes, opinions or behavior either directly orally or indirectly through the media. In this communication requires a reciprocal relationship between the delivery of messages and recipients namely communicators and communicants (Hasbullah, et al: 2018).

Many experts say that we can only figure out the meaning of a sentence if we know where that sentence is in the context of the discourse or the context of the situation (Chaer, 1994: 288). According to O'Grady (1996: 275), meaning is something that should exist in the mind rather than words, that it should be more abstract than visuals, and that there are more than characteristics.

Following an explanation of the experts theory of meaning, it is possible to conclude that meaning may be classified into three types: grammatical meaning, lexical meaning, and contextual meaning.

a. Grammatical Meaning

Grammatical meaning is the meaning that emerges from the interaction between linguistic parts in bigger units, such as the relationship between words in phrases or clauses. According to Ervina et al (2021), exists if grammatical processes occur such as affixation, reduplication and composition. For example, when the s-suffix is added to the word *chairs*, it has the connotation of numerous chairs.

b. Lexical Meaning

The lexical meaning of a word is its dictionary definition. This essential meaning is associated with a word's root. According to Lyons (1981:146), Lexical meaning is the meaning of lexemes. For example, the word *laptop* refers to a portable computer that is suited for use while traveling.

c. Contextual Meaning

Contextual meaning refers to the meaning of a lexeme or word in a certain situation. According to Cruse (1995:16), contextual meaning is the whole collection of normalcy relations that a lexical word contracts with all possible contexts. Contextual meaning may also refer to the context, such as the language user's location, time, and surroundings. For example:

(a) Kesha is a **brilliant** businesswoman.

(b) Kesha's painting was full of **brilliant** colours.

In the first example (a), the word brilliant refers to someone who is intelligent, whereas in the second example (b), it refers to painting that is colourful. In both of these phrases, the context determines how the word "**brilliant**" should be interpreted and how its meaning can adapt.

Many referring expressions convey the speaker's expression toward the other characters in this episode of *Black Mirror*. In addition, the research will examine types of referring expression and will find the meanings of the words that have a referring expression in the *Black Mirror*: "Nosedive" movie serial.

III. Research Method

Qualitative descriptive research is this type of study. As Bogdan and Tylor state in Widyaswara (2012: 31), qualitative descriptive research is a type of research that generates descriptive data from people or observed behaviour in the form of written and oral words. The purpose of this study was to explain the various types of referring expression factors in the *Black Mirror* (season 3 episode 1: "Nosedive") movie serial through descriptive research.

When conducting the research, the source of data utilized in this study is a script for a serial movie. The research used data from the *Black Mirror*: "Nosedive" movie script. The research highlighted the script's referring expression in this investigation.

The research collect data using a document analysis technique based on the qualitative method and the data that was used. The procedures for this study are as follows: 1) Identifying the data that will be the subject of the study. 2) Identify the purpose of the research. 3) Conducting an analysis and developing the description through the types of referring expression 4) Recognize the data that the timing in which utterance was uttered.

IV. Results and Discussion

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. As mentioned in the very first chapter, the goals of this study are to identify and classify the various types of referring expressions; pronoun, proper noun, indefinite noun phrase, and definite phrase and also the meanings of the words that have a referring expression in the serial movie *Black Mirror*: "Nosedive."

4.1 Pronoun

▪ Data 1

Female house agent: *He* doesn't come with the apartment
[00:09:18,960 --> 00:09:22,000]

Context: Lacie Pound is having a look at the interior of the apartment she hopes to one day call home. A holographic projection of Lacie and a guy approaching her appeared next to her. After that the agent informed that the man is not included in the apartment facilities.

Data Analysis: The data 1 belongs to the pronoun type in the referring expression. Personal pronouns and possessive pronouns are the two categories that form the pronoun set. In the first data, the personal pronoun category is represented by the word *he*. The personal pronoun *he* in this situation refers to the man in the holographic.

It is classified as contextual meaning in the data 1. The word *he* functions as the subject stated by a female house agent. It does not imply that the subject brought the

apartment as a carry-on item, but rather that the man in the hologram is not included as a purchase item when purchasing the property. Therefore, data 1 is classified into contextual meaning, which has a certain situation.

4.2 Proper Noun

▪ Data 2

A priest: Do you, *Naomi Jayne Blestow*, take this man to be your husband,
[00:48:51,520 --> 00:48:56,440]

Context: A priest who was witnessing Naomi and her husband's wedding questioned Naomi whether she was willing to live with the guy in front of her.

Data Analysis: The data 2 belongs to the proper name type in the referring expression. A proper name could be a person's first name, their last name, their complete name, or even a title followed by their name. In the second data, the name *Naomi Jayne Blestow* is part of the full name. The noun *Naomi Jayne Blestow* refers to the lady who is getting married, in this case, Naomi.

According to Data 2, it is classified as lexical meaning. The noun phrase of the sentence above is *Naomi Jayne Blestow* that also functions as a subject. Among the examples of nouns is a proper name. The meaning of the data 2 is compatible with what the priest said, which in Indonesian is "Apakah Anda, Naomi Jayne Blestow, menerima pria ini sebagai suami Anda"

4.3 Indefinite Noun Phrase

▪ Data 3

Ryan Pound: Pelican Cove? What is this? *A eugenics programme*?
[00:11:17,040 --> 00:11:21,640]

Context: Ryan Pound, Lacie's brother, walked to the refrigerator, where there was Lacie, to check what was inside, and then he saw an advertising cover on Lacie's tablet.

Data Analysis: The data 3 belongs to the indefinite noun phrase type in the referring expression. Because the phrase *A eugenics program* starts with the letter "a," it is considered to be an example of an indefinite noun phrase. The noun *A eugenics programme* refers to Ryan's guess about the ad cover on Lacie's tablet.

Data 3 is also classified according to its grammatical meaning. *A eugenics program* is meant to be the guess Lacie's brother, Ryan, in the data 3. The use of articles is one of the conditions for inclusion in the category of grammatical items, that also encompasses phrases that begin with the word 'a.' In Indonesian, the phrase *A eugenics program* directly means to "program eugenika."

4.4 Definite Noun Phrase

▪ Data 4

Lacie: I can still do **the same speech**.
[00:46:28,240 --> 00:46:30,360]

Context: Lacie, who was on her way to Naomi's wedding to give a speech, was unexpectedly called by Naomi to inform her that Lacie had been ordered not to attend her wedding in order to avoid disruption.

Data Analysis: The last data belongs to the definite noun phrase type in the referring expression. The usage of 'the' at the beginning of a phrase is considered to be an example of a definite noun phrase, hence the phrase *the same speech* is considered to be an example of a definite noun phrase. The noun phrase *the* in this situation refers to the speech that Naomi has been prepared half a month before Naomi's wedding.

Data 4 is classified according to its grammatical meaning. The phrase *the same speech* serves as an object that functions as a noun phrase. Similar to data 3, words beginning with 'the' are included in the category of grammatical items due to their use of articles. In the data 4 *the same speech* can also be translated literally into Indonesian as "pidato yang sama."

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be inferred that there are four categories of referring expressions: pronouns (37.5%), proper nouns (25%), indefinite noun phrases (18.75%), and definite phrases (18,75%). On the other hand, there are three sorts of meaning: contextual meaning (37.5%), grammatical meaning (37.5%), and lexical meaning (25%).

Furthermore, it is possible to conclude that the type of meaning that emerges frequently in Black Mirror is contextual meaning. This is due to the fact that the examples of referring expressions found, indefinite noun phrases and definite noun phrases, all come within contextual meaning.

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