

10 Referring as an Interactional Achievement

Thus far, we have examined how speakers achieve special things whilst referring by placing certain categories of reference forms in unexpected positions, and do nothing special beyond referring by placing the usual categories of reference forms in the positions that they are expected to go in. We have also looked at how speakers choose the reference forms that they do, based on the ability of the forms to satisfy several referential design principles at the same time. Various compatible and conflicting design principles guide speakers in choosing the most appropriate or useful reference form for the given occasion of reference. We have even gone on to examine some unusual referring strategies that operate within the prosodic domain.

In this chapter, we will be drawing on analysed fragments of conversation to see if we can unearth a set procedure that captures what speakers do, and what hearers do, for every occasion of reference. In short, I present here an interactional model of the referential process for conversation. The model concerns itself with the process by which speakers go about selecting a reference form and then using it. Equally, we are interested in how recipients hear a reference form and then come to pick out the intended referent. Since we know that interlocutors do these things with monotonous regularity, surely there must be a set of procedural steps to follow.

In my research I find evidence for referential expressions being modeled from speakers' conceptualization of entities in the world. Speakers talk about things in ways that reflect how they think about them. The substance of my claim is that the relationship between referential expressions and worldly entities is mediated by mental construal. I claim – and aim to demonstrate – that speakers actually refer to what is in their minds. I do not claim that speakers don't refer to entities in the world, merely that they refer to things in the world as they “appear” in the mind.

CA has been justifiably reluctant to speculate about what interlocutors think and how they feel. It is this refusal to psychologize about the interaction that gives CA its analytical rigour. However, conversation analysts do not completely shy away from cognition. Schegloff's (1996a: 459) explanation of recognitional usage is framed entirely in terms of what speakers and recipients suppose each other to know. We all know that we use our minds to think and speak. When interlocutors talk about persons and things, they have mental images of what they are referring to. Shadows of these

images are provided by what people say.²⁵⁶ I hope to show that a fine-grained CA analysis, when supported with backgrounding ethnographic information, can provide insight into what people have in mind when they speak and listen. I hope to demonstrate that these insights can be gained without psychologizing about the interaction itself. Rather, it is a rigorous interactional analysis that provides the solid footing for gaining insights into mental processes.

Of central importance to this chapter is the question of what referents are. The view that referents are to be found in the world is part of what Jackendoff (2002) calls the common sense view of language. If you can see something there in the world and refer to it, then common sense tells you that what you are referring to is in the world. Yet a close examination of how referring is actually done in naturally occurring talk-in-interaction can show that we are on shaky ground if we divorce reference from the mind.

The view that I propose in this chapter accords with Jackendoff's mentalistic view of reference. For him, referents do exist in the mind. Objects in the world are visualized in the mind along with the world in which they occur. The data we will examine supports his idea of "pushing 'the world' into the mind" (Jackendoff 2002: 303-306). However, Jackendoff's account focuses only on what the speaker does. I will add a discussion on what the hearer does in interpreting the speaker's utterances. In the interactional view of reference that I present here, the hearer's role in the referring process is at least as important as that of the speaker.

In §10.4 I will present a 9-stage model of referring in conversation that does not require entities to be real or tangible, and does not care about whether the facts of an utterance are true, or whether interlocutors are correct or mistaken in their beliefs. In this model of reference the hearer is integral to the process. Indeed the hearer has more tasks to perform than the speaker. If both speakers and hearers perform their respective tasks correctly, then the reference has a chance of being successful. We will see, however, at the end of the chapter, that there is a further condition that must hold – beyond the execution of the nine steps – before reference can be deemed to be

²⁵⁶ It isn't that you can tell exactly what images people have in mind when they refer to something, it is more that various possible images become ruled out by what people say. If a person uses the name *Rex* to refer to his dog *Rex*, and we know that he has a dog called *Rex*, then we can't be sure exactly what he has in mind as *Rex*; but it should be possible to rule out his horse *Nelly*, his cat *Felix* and his other dog *Boris*. An interactional analysis of what people refer to provides us with the tools to delimit the range of possible mental images.

successful. But before I go on to present the model, it is important to come to terms with reference as a phenomenon.

10.1 Some mundane observations about reference

CA concerns itself with explaining the mechanisms of mundane social interaction. In this dissertation, I take the position that referring is an interactional process which, like other interactional processes, can be subjected to fine-grained analysis and observed for its underlying orderliness. Other interactional processes, such as conversational turn-taking, have been examined in detail so as to reveal rules that govern their operation. When a turn-so-far comes to a point of possible completion at the end of a turn constructional unit, interlocutors draw on the rule-governed system of turn allocation to enable themselves to coordinate with each other, so as to tackle the question of who will speak next and when.

In their seminal paper on turn-taking, before presenting their proposed turn-taking rules, Sacks et al. (1974: 700-701) list 14 “grossly apparent facts” about conversational turns that are applicable to “any conversation”. In a similar way, I hope that an analogous list of “grossly apparent facts” about reference will help to establish, from an interactional perspective, what sort of phenomenon reference is. In this fashion, I will raise a number of issues that – although they might initially seem too banal to be worth mentioning – are not matters so trivial that they can be ignored. So doing, I hope to put the ensuing analysis on a proper footing. Some of the following observations about reference will require some explanation, whereas others should be so self-evident that they will not.

In any conversation, we can make the following observations about the referential process:

1. SPEAKERS USE “REFERRING EXPRESSIONS”²⁵⁷ TO REFER TO PERSONS AND OTHER ENTITIES²⁵⁸.

Even though linguists may not all agree about how to define a word, there are few, if any, who would dispute that speakers use *words* to talk. Unfortunately, the banal observation that speakers use *referring expressions* to refer to things is generally not a

²⁵⁷ Following this first “grossly apparent fact”, I will hereafter return to using the terms *denoting expressions* or *referential expressions* rather than the more widely established “referring expressions”. I use the established term here because I am about to deal with the problematicity of the term and its usage.

²⁵⁸ “Other entities” can be assumed to include physical and abstract entities, events, places, periods of time, propositions, points of view, etc.

starting point for discussions about reference. If it were, perhaps a very serious problem could have been avoided.

The problem is that so-called *referring expressions* don't refer to things in their own right, people do.²⁵⁹ Just as words don't say things – except via the extension of a *words-as-speaker* metaphor, referring expressions can only be said to refer to things via the extension of the same *words-as-speaker* metaphor. Thus, “the expression ‘X’ refers to Y” is a metaphor for a much more complex state of affairs, whereby a speaker A uses the expression “X” to refer to Y so that hearer B can know what A is talking about. That this metaphorical extension is so widespread in the literature is hardly surprising, given that its employment makes for great economy, whereas by contrast its abandonment makes any discussion more verbose. However, the failure to recognize that a words-as-speaker metaphor underpins so much discussion about reference, leads many authors to not only grossly simplify a complex state of affairs, but also to start from a premise that isn't correct. As I mentioned in §5.1, it is not true to say that referring expressions refer, they denote. It is because referring expressions denote denotata that interlocutors are able to use them to refer to referents. Referring is a multi-tasked process which is dependent on the denoting power of words. For this reason, *denoting expression* or *referential expression* are much more appropriate terms than *referring expression*. Effectively these expressions *do denoting* and *do NOT do referring*. As expressions that *do denoting*, they are employed by interlocutors for *doing referring*.

2. DENOTING EXPRESSIONS ARE EMBEDDED WITHIN UTTERANCES THAT ARE USED FOR MORE THAN MERELY REFERRING.

Overwhelmingly, denoting expressions exist in turns-at-talk that express some sort of proposition. The proposition will have a grammatical subject (which may be overt or may be implicit) and the rest of the proposition will say something about²⁶⁰ whatever the subject is expressing. Thus speakers use propositions to comment on, make claims about, refute claims about, call into question, and generally perform the range of jobs that Aristotelian predicates²⁶¹ *do* to the subjects that they require. Additionally the turn

²⁵⁹ This is essentially Strawson's dictum (Strawson 1950).

²⁶⁰ Of course, it can only “say” something by virtue of the “words-as-speaker” metaphor that I'm employing.

²⁶¹ In any proposition, the Aristotelian notion of a “predicate” includes everything except the subject. By contrast, in formal logic, first order predicate calculus, lexical and formal semantics and generative syntax the predicate includes the verbal root but does not include object or adjunct arguments. For this sense of “predicate”, I will instead use the term “predicator”.

may include various elements which function syntactically as non-subject arguments or adjuncts that are used by speakers to refer to other persons and entities. Thus, within turns-at-talk, certain grammatical constructions place various items referred to in relation to other items referred to. Thus in an utterance like “John saw Mary”, the speaker is placing the referent of *John* and the referent of *Mary* in a “seeing” relation to one another, by means of the predicator *see*. Other grammatical constructions place items referred to in relation to various categories.²⁶²

Certain conversational turns-at-talk do lack overt predicators. That is, they merely consist of a nominal expression on their own (e.g., *the gym* – see below, in footnote 263). However, even these bare nominal expressions are used by speakers to do more than merely refer to things. The “missing” predicators are implicitly inferred from context. Many of these turns constitute second-pair-parts in question and answer sequences. As such, the “missing” predicators are generally recoverable from the first-pair-part. Thus, beyond merely using these expressions to refer to persons and entities, the speaker also uses them to answer questions.²⁶³

Other turns-at-talk constitute increments to a previously complete turn-so-far (Ford, Fox & Thompson 2002; Walker 2004). As such, a speaker will produce these “stray” nominal expressions in order to elaborate on prior references. They may constitute a repair to a problematic prior reference²⁶⁴, by either the same or another speaker, or alternatively the recipient of a prior turn may produce the “increment” in order to display receipt of the prior reference. In any case, the “missing” predicators are effectively recoverable from the turns-so-far onto which these increments are fitted.

²⁶² For example, in the utterance “I’m not a child” (Schegloff 2007a: 441-442), the person being self-referred to by the free pronoun *I* is being related, in the negative, to the membership category *child*. In this case, the expression *child* is not being used to refer.

²⁶³ For instance, in line 5, Ava uses the expression *the gym* to answer Bee’s question (lines 3 & 4) as well as to refer to the place where she played basketball. (The fragment is borrowed from Schegloff 1996b: 85).

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1   Bee B(h)asketb(h)all? H [°whe(h)re
2   Ava                               [Yeah fuh like ans hour enna ha:[lf.
3   Bee                               [.hh Where
4       didju play ba:sk[etbaw. ]
5 → Ava                               [(The) gy]:m.
6   Bee In the gym? [(hh)
7   Ava                               [Yea:h like group therapy. Yuh know...
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²⁶⁴ Recall from Fragment 62 that Lucy twice upgrades person reference by elaborating on references to both the makers and the recipient of the bark shelter (“my mob” in line 19 and “your father” in line 21, respectively). Each of these two referential upgrades take the form of increments to a previously complete turn-at-talk (*parraninawup*, “they were making a shelter for him”, line 17).

Other nominal expressions are generally hearable as incomplete. They are hearable as grammatically incomplete TCUs because of the need for a proposition to express something about whatever the nominal expression is being used to refer to. Effectively, such turns-so-far are also incomplete from a pragmatic perspective (in that they don't constitute complete actions). More often than not, they are also incomplete from an intonational perspective as well. As such, beyond being implicated in simply referring, these nominal expressions also play a role in projecting further talk to follow.²⁶⁵

3. BECAUSE UTTERANCES CONTAINING DENOTING EXPRESSIONS ARE USED FOR MORE THAN MERE REFERENCE, BY PRODUCING SUCH AN UTTERANCE, A SPEAKER IMPARTS KNOWLEDGE TO A HEARER.

Upon hearing an utterance containing a denoting expression, the hearer comes to know *something more* than they knew before the utterance was produced. For the hearer, this *something more* does not have to constitute genuine news. The updated knowledge needn't be more enlightening than the mere realization: "the speaker is now talking about something that I know about". Thus the act of referring to something causes the hearer's knowledge state to be updated – perhaps in a large way or perhaps only in a small way. The mere articulation of a denoting expression to a hearer triggers cognitive processes in the mind of that hearer, even when the act of referring is not completely successful. Hearers are thus affected by the act of referring. The process of referring is thus necessarily an interactional one. In fact, in the absence of an interlocutor to interpret an utterance, a speaker may produce denoting expressions and construct utterances in an attempt to refer to things, but since no-one is there to perceive the reference, there can be no evidence that

²⁶⁵ For example, recall that in line 520 of Fragment 76:

520 Phyl wakal::, (0.7) nan n°ig°unu; (0.3) kalanyga::t; (.) antania pana.
 Young fellow(s), what's her name's, Kalanygat's [and] that
 Antonio.

Phyllis produces the "stray" nominal word *wakal*, "small/progeny", in an attempt to refer to a child whose name she had forgotten. The expression is hearable as incomplete. The drawn out final lateral and the slightly rising "continuous" intonation contour projects further talk to come. This, along with the 0.7 second pause that follows, the word search word *nan* ("what's its name") and the subsequent 0.3 of silence are hearable as hesitation phenomena associated with a word search. In the self-repair, the name *Kalanygat* replaces the word-search word *nan* to give an effective reading, "Kalanygat's child".

“referring” has been actually performed, let alone that it has been successfully performed.²⁶⁶

4. REFERENCES TO PERSONS AND ENTITIES ARE TO BE FOUND IN ENVIRONMENTS (SEQUENCES OF TURNS-AT-TALK) WHERE THERE ARE OTHER REFERENCES TO PERSONS AND ENTITIES.

References to persons and entities do not exist in isolation. They belong in utterances, which belong in turn constructional units (TCUs), which belong in turns, which belong in sequences of turns, which belong in interactive talk involving two or more interlocutors. The vast majority of these turns-at-talk contain denoting expressions. The process of referring is thus integrated within the system of conversational turn-taking. Just as interlocutors take turns at talking, they also take turns at referring. Thus referring, like turn-taking in which it is embedded, is an iterative process.

5. IN ANY MULTI-TURN PASSAGE OF TALK, THERE IS MORE THAN ONE THING THAT INTERLOCUTORS REFER TO.

It's conceivable that certain poems or songs may consist solely of referencing to a single entity. However, this is decidedly uncharacteristic of natural conversation.

6. PERSONS AND ENTITIES THAT ARE REFERRED TO ONCE FREQUENTLY (THOUGH NOT ALWAYS) GET SUBSEQUENTLY RE-REFERRED TO.
7. PERSONS AND ENTITIES THAT ARE REFERRED TO BY ONE INTERLOCUTOR FREQUENTLY (THOUGH NOT ALWAYS) ARE SUBSEQUENTLY RE-REFERRED TO BY ANOTHER INTERLOCUTOR.
8. WHEN CURRENT SPEAKERS ATTEMPT TO REFER TO SOMETHING IN THEIR TALK, ATTENTIVE RECIPIENTS ATTEMPT TO LOCATE WHAT IT IS THAT THE CURRENT SPEAKER IS TALKING ABOUT, AT LEAST TO A DEGREE THAT IS ADEQUATE, GIVEN THE CONSTRAINTS OF THE TALK-SO-FAR.

Thus if a speaker casts a reference as *recognitional*, hearers must attempt to identify a person that they know (of), that they believe the speaker knows (of), that they believe

²⁶⁶ There is a case for saying that people who talk to themselves, imagine themselves in interaction, speaking to somebody. As I sit at this computer writing these pages, I occasionally speak lines aloud. When I do, I (somewhat “schizophrenically”) take on the role of recipient of my own utterances, as well as the animator of those same utterances. As such I design my talk, including all the referencing, with my imagined interlocutor(s) in mind (myself and perhaps certain others). In order that the pages that I write seem reasonable, I often read them aloud. When I do, I listen to how they sound and if I can make sense of them, well and good. If not, I make adjustments accordingly. As such I imagine myself as a recipient of this referencing, trying to follow the argumentation. Effectively, I measure the success of the argumentation in terms of how interpretable it is for an interlocutor. If it reads well, I judge my attempts at referring to be successful.

the speaker believes that they know to be recognizable (Schegloff 1996a: 459). If the reference is not cast as recognitional, then hearers must still attempt to conceive of something of the type specified by the particular denoting expression (that is, something that falls within the range of potential referents that comprise the expression's denotatum), but need not try to locate it within their own world of personal experience (though they are certainly not precluded from trying).

Recipients who make less than concerted attempts to locate what the speaker is talking about soon begin to display reciprocity that is less than fully attentive.

9. OVERWHELMINGLY, EACH INTERLOCUTOR ATTEMPTS TO KEEP TRACK OF THE THINGS THAT OTHER INTERLOCUTORS ARE TALKING ABOUT.

An important task for the recipient of a reference is determining whether the speaker is talking about something new or something that has been mentioned already. Interlocutors who make less than concerted attempts to match subsequent references to prior ones begin to display reciprocity that is less than fully attentive.

10. THE VAST MAJORITY OF EACH SPEAKER'S REFERENCES ARE SUCCESSFUL REFERENCES.

11. WHEN THE PROCESS OF REFERRING IS NOT COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL, INTERLOCUTORS FREQUENTLY (THOUGH NOT ALWAYS) ATTEMPT TO REPAIR PROBLEMATIC REFERENCING.

Problems with reference are one of the major causes of problems with understanding. Not all problems of reference are repaired. Not all failures of reference are detected by interlocutors as failures (see for instance Fragment 83). Similarly, not all referential problems are deemed serious enough to warrant repairing. Because repair sequences do interrupt the progression of the unfolding talk, sometimes hearers who are having difficulty perceiving a referent will be prepared to let a speaker go on, in the hope that subsequent references will clear up the question of who or what the speaker is talking about.

It is hoped that these eleven grossly apparent facts provide a basic characterization of the referential process, sufficient to understand what sort of phenomenon is under consideration. We are still not yet in a position to explain how exactly successful reference should be understood. For the time being, I hope readers can rely on their own intuitive ideas about what successful reference may be, because the objective of this chapter is to tackle this exact question from a technical

perspective. It will take quite some exploration in order to do so. We will shortly examine a range of data where: a) the process of reference is not successful because it fails to go through to completion, b) where the process of referring goes through to completion but reference is none-the-less unsuccessful, and c) where successful reference is achieved.

10.2 Dissecting referring

In Chapter 2 I proposed that referents are mental constructs that exist in the minds of speakers and hearers, and that these mental referents stand in indexical relationships to worldly or other-worldly entities and participants.

These mental referents exist in dependency relations²⁶⁷ to the sense of denoting expressions and this is why they are able to index participants and entities. I arrive at this conclusion on the basis of interlocutors' displayed understandings and displayed misunderstandings about each other's talk. By performing interactional analyses of naturally occurring fragments of talk-in-interaction and by backgrounding these micro-analyses with supporting ethnographic information, it is sometimes possible to work out not only who and what conversationalists are talking about, but also how speakers convey that information to their recipients, and how recipients arrive at an understanding about that information. By considering the contributions that a denoting expression's sense and denotatum make towards effective reference, as well as the contribution of the interlocutors' shared common ground, it is possible to attempt a dissection of *referring* as a process. This process of dissection lays out the pieces of information that become available to interlocutors, as they become available. On this basis, it is sometimes possible to discern what they are most likely to have in mind, and what they are unlikely to have in mind, upon hearing or producing a particular utterance.

When problems emerge in conversation, interlocutors engage in a turn-by-turn negotiation for meaning. By examining these problematic fragments of talk, it is possible to observe the process of referring as if it were in "slow motion" (and this is the case even when the emergent problems are not necessarily of a referential nature).

²⁶⁷ The mechanism will be expanded in due course. However for the time being, the nature of the dependency is as follows: the hearer's referent is a mental construct that owes its existence to the utterance containing the referential expression. The utterance that contains the referential expression is a tangible, phenomenological construct that owes its existence to a prior mental construct, the speaker's referent.

A very detailed transcription allows the analyst to ascertain the efficacy of individual denoting expressions within utterances, through examination of interlocutors' displayed understandings about the informational content of the talk as it unfolds. Thus, when a speaker uses an expression to refer to something, the effectiveness of the speaker's referring act can be deduced from how the hearer responds to the unfolding talk. We can consider the following to be separate packets of information: (a) the interlocutors' shared common ground, (b) the sense of the expression, (c) the denotatum of the expression, and (d) the sense of the utterance in which the expression is embedded. Each of these packets contribute towards making a reference successful. Because recipients regularly display an understanding (or lack of understanding) about what has been said, it is often possible to measure the contributions that these packets of information make towards making the reference effective. The objective is to lift the lid on the referential machinery in order to observe the moving parts meshing together.

The method is to conduct two phases of analysis. The first phase is to perform rigorous micro-analyses of the fragments under consideration, as I've done elsewhere in this dissertation. As elsewhere, these CA analyses will endeavour to avoid psychologizing – no guesswork will inform this phase of the analysis. Then, based on those interactional analyses, the second phase is to unpack the likely mental processes that speakers and hearers engage in. Once a rigorous interactional analysis has been performed, this analysis should be able to provide a solid platform for an interactionally informed guess at what interlocutors have in mind when they make and perceive references.

10.2.1 The beginning of a story revisited

Because the first passage under consideration was previously analyzed in Chapter 2, for the sake of brevity I will here provide a non-rigorous “light version” of that fragment – sufficient to remind readers of the key details before moving on to the second phase of analysis. For the detailed interactional analysis see Chapter 2.

In Chapter 2 I discussed a lengthy passage of conversation (Fragments 1-3) where a particularly vague reference to “something of the *ku*-class” yielded a great deal of confusion for all of the interlocutors. This confusion was ultimately resolved some forty seconds later when the true nature of this mystery *ku*-referent was revealed. Significantly, even though one of the hearers of this vague reference had little idea

about what was being referred to, she was able to track the mystery *ku*-referent and then re-refer to it twice. The passage has been replicated in abridged form in Fragment 79.

Fragment 79 On the Flat (2005-07-05JB01)

- 24 (0.75)
 25 Phyl karda thamul pinnangam[nybi:rrya;]
 This might be where they fought with spears.
 26 Eliz [xx xxx x:]:.
 27 (0.66)
 28 Phyl Nawa, >ma ngarrangu thunggu pinnamnybirryu.
 Isn't that right? But which way was that shooting?
 :
 :
 37 → Phyl ku panguwangu.
 The thing(s) of the 'ku' class, over that way.
 38 (0.25)
 39 MC (thaniwup kanyimaniwangu) [x x x x x x x x x x]
 (You can sit down over here) xxxx xx .
 40 Eliz [nyinika bere pirrditj]me.=mere
 41 tje pumabatjka nyinda.↓
 That happened a long time ago. They won't know about that.
 :
 :
 76 MC he he.
 77 (1.4)
 78 → JC ku pandaya;=tha°ng°gugu.
 That/those thing(s) of the 'ku' class, what's its name.
 79 (0.4)
 80 Phyl thanggugu.
 What sort of thing(s) of the 'ku' class?
 81 (0.5)
 82 AC ha ha ha ha [ha]
 83 Phyl [he] he hm hm.
 84 (1.2)
 85 Eliz ↓pirda.↓
 Stop it.
 86 (0.85)
 87 → JC ku panda thanggugu >thurdananginthayitjthatjini< †eh †ha:.
 That thing of the "ku" class, what's its name. You two were
 telling a story ha ha.
 88 (0.64)
 89 UnId Huh?
 90 (0.87)
 91 Phyl mh ha ha ha hm.
 92 (0.37)
 93 Phyl Ya:..!
 I dunno!
 94 (.)
 95 Eliz Ba manga†lala;
 Oh, [you mean] Mangalala?

- 96 (1.0)
 97 Phyl Ya ngarra mangalalayul: ɪ
 Dunno, what is Mangalala?
 98 JC [ah]a ha ha ha aɪha haɪ
 99 AC [mh .hh]
 :
 :
 105 JC =.he (.) ma:nggalal:az
 ((And what about)) Manggalala ((mispronounced))? .
 106 (0.15)
 107→ Eliz Mangala°la° kanardang kardaya.
 Mangalala was shot here.

Recall that in line 37, Phyllis makes a very oblique reference to a man who was killed, *ku panguwangu*, “the thing of the *ku*-class, over that way”.²⁶⁸ Because the turn constitutes a kind of story preface, Phyllis recipient-designs the turn specifically for Elizabeth who knows the story, by referring to the man as a corpse (the bare nominal classifier *ku* stands in place of the fuller nominal form, *ku karatj*, “dead body”). Effectively, she disguises the reference to the man as a reference to a thing, so as to exclude the non-targeted recipients and thus not spoil the story. Elizabeth correctly perceives the referent and pronounces the story as potentially newsworthy for the other hearers (lines 40 and 41). However, one of the non-targeted recipients, JC, also tracks this referent and goes on to re-refer to it twice (line 78 and 87), even though she doesn’t really know what sort of thing of the *ku*-class Phyllis had been talking about. When Phyllis forgets having made reference to anything of the *ku*-class, the situation becomes massively confusing for all concerned. Eventually, Elizabeth guesses what JC had been probing for. In line 95, she proffers the dead man’s name, *Mangalala*. Because the name proffered was not identifiable as a personal name associated with any speakers of Murriny Patha²⁶⁹, none of the other conversationalists even recognized *Mangalala* as being a personal name. Thus the confusion does not abate until line 107 when Elizabeth announces, *Mangalala kanardang kardaya*, “Mangalala was shot here”. The line reveals *Mangalala* to be the name of the dead man.

The problem exposed by the data is one of trackability. We need to be able to track what people are talking about. Both Elizabeth and JC were able to track the *ku*-class referent of line 37. Elizabeth knew Phyllis was referring to a man yet JC did not

²⁶⁸ Recall also that the *ku* classifier denotes a very large range of denotata: animates, flesh, meat, game, dead bodies, non-Aboriginal human beings, spirits, totems, totemic sites, money and women’s genitalia; which contrasts with the *kardu* classifier which denotes only living Aboriginal human beings.

²⁶⁹ The man came from a different language group, quite some distance to the east of Wadeye.

know this. In spite of her not knowing, JC was able to re-refer to what Phyllis had referred to. However, to suggest that with lines 78 and 87 she was referring to the actual person Mangalala, without even realizing that what she was referring to was a person, would be at best a trivialization of a complex state of affairs, or at worst, quite simply wrong. On the other hand, perhaps it is better to say that JC is referring to the “discourse referent” of Phyllis’s line 37 (Lambrecht 1994). But what might this discourse referent actually be? The challenge that this fragment raises (as well as certain other fragments in this chapter) is to provide a model of “referring” that is compatible with the interlocutors’ observable treatment of “referents”. In particular, the challenge is to explain how referents may be both tracked and perceived.

10.3 The speaker’s referent and the hearer’s referent

The model I propose is one that considers *referents* – the things that are primarily linked to denoting expressions – to be mental constructs that are secondarily related to worldly entities and participants. Thus the relationship between worldly (or other-worldly) entities and denoting expressions is an indirect one that is mediated by mental construal. As mental constructs, referents can be considered to be of two subtypes, depending on where an interlocutor stands in relation to the utterance in question. The two subtypes can be called the *speaker’s referent* and the *hearer’s referent*.

We will take the *speaker’s referent* to be the mental approximation of some worldly (or other-worldly) participant(s) or entity/entities, about whom the speaker has some knowledge or experience, and who the speaker wants to mention. The speaker’s referent is what the speaker envisages upon production of a particular denoting expression which forms part of a particular utterance, which is in turn embedded within a context. The speaker’s referent is thus the speaker’s conceptualization of the particular participants/entities in question, as they exist in the world that the speaker similarly envisages.²⁷⁰

We will take the *hearer’s referent* to be the mental projection of some worldly (or other-worldly) participant(s) or entity/entities that is conveyed to the hearer by the speaker’s use of some particular denoting expression in an utterance, embedded within a context. The hearer’s referent is what is “called to mind” upon hearing a

²⁷⁰ The speaker’s referent, which as defined here contrasts with the hearer’s referent, is not to be confused with Kripke’s (1977) speaker’s referent, which he contrasts with a “semantic referent”. Kripke’s notions have no place in the model of reference that I am presenting here.

particular denoting expression. As a mental image, it derives its shape from the sense of the denoting expression, from the sense of the larger utterance that the denoting expression forms part of, and from contextual cues – prior mentions of the entities/participants in question, and/or the worldly knowledge and experience that makes the utterance interpretable to the hearer. The hearer's referent is a mental image conjured up in the hearer's mind, by the speaker's utterance (or series of utterances). The clarity of the image is thus dependent on the sense and denotation of the denoting expression within its utterance, the context of the utterance, and the common ground shared by the speaker and the hearer. The clarity of this image may be sharpened as common ground is built up through progressive references to the entities/participants in question.

On the basis of their knowledge, speakers use their mental approximation of those real-world participants/entities, to assign them certain properties that they believe to be attributable to the participants/entities in question. These properties would therefore *also* be attributable to their own mental approximation of those participants/entities. For the reference to be successful, the properties the speaker chooses must be properties that he believes his interlocutor will also recognize as being applicable to those participants/entities in question. Speakers then choose expressions whose sense is compatible with those assigned properties and recruit them for referring. That is to say, speakers will choose an expression whose sense is compatible with how they themselves conceive of those participants/entities in the world *and* how they envisage their interlocutor conceiving of those participants/entities in the world. The expressions denote sets of similarly characterizable entities or participants (denotata), to which their mental projection (the speaker's referent) pertains. Hearers will then draw on their own knowledge and worldly experience and will choose from amongst the expression's denotata, the referent they believe the speaker has in mind. What they believe the speaker has in mind is the *hearer's referent*.

Let us now begin the second phase of the analysis by applying this model to the referencing in Fragment 79. In line 37, Phyllis refers to the man Mangalala in a way that is designed specifically for Elizabeth and Elizabeth alone. Phyllis knows that a

man was killed in the area but she doesn't know what his name was.²⁷¹ She visualizes the man and attributes to him certain properties. Because he was killed, Phyllis is able to attribute the property of "deadness" to her visualization of the man. Her mental representation of the dead man on the saltplain would be the speaker's referent and it is to this image that she actually refers (see Figure 10.1). Because the man's death in the vicinity forms part of Phyllis and Elizabeth's shared common ground, and because she knows that Elizabeth should be able to recognize "deadness" as being a property that is applicable to the man, she assigns the man a *ku* classification. She also knows that talking about the protagonist of a story in terms of his "deadness" should be a sufficiently obscure way to refer to him as to exclude the other non-targeted recipients, because they don't know the story and don't know that "deadness" is a property that is applicable to this man. *Ku* is an optimum choice of classification, because apart from dead bodies, the classifier has such a wide range of denotata. On this basis, she is able to make the reference to the man resemble a reference to something other than a man.

Having attributed to the man the property of "deadness", she then chooses a denoting expression that is compatible with the assigned property of "deadness", and with her own visualization of him as a corpse. Phyllis here chooses the bare nominal classifier *ku*, and uses it as a pro-form, so that it stands in the place of the nominal expression *ku karatj*, "corpse". She then embeds it within an utterance, *ku panguwangu*, such that *panguwangu*, "in that direction", is something that is said *about* the man's corpse.

When Elizabeth hears this vague and elliptical utterance, on the basis of her knowledge about what happened in the area, and on the basis of Phyllis's prior mentions of spearing and shooting (lines 25 and 28), she is able to pick out from amongst *ku*'s many and varied denotata the particular corpse that she believes Phyllis has in mind. Her mental image of this corpse is the hearer's referent (see Figure 10.1). Recognizing that Phyllis has chosen this obscure mode of referring so as not to spoil the story, she infers that Phyllis wants the story to be told. Because she knows that Phyllis and herself are the only two conversationalists present who are old enough to know the story, she pronounces the story as potentially newsworthy for the others. So doing, she reveals that she is able to compute this highly elliptical reference. By

²⁷¹ We have no way of knowing what else she knew about this man, if anything. Most of the information I gleaned came from Elizabeth, who certainly knew more about him than Phyllis.

pronouncing it newsworthy in a way that also leaves the elliptical nature of the reference obscured, she shows that she appreciates that the reference was cast in this way so as not to spoil the story.

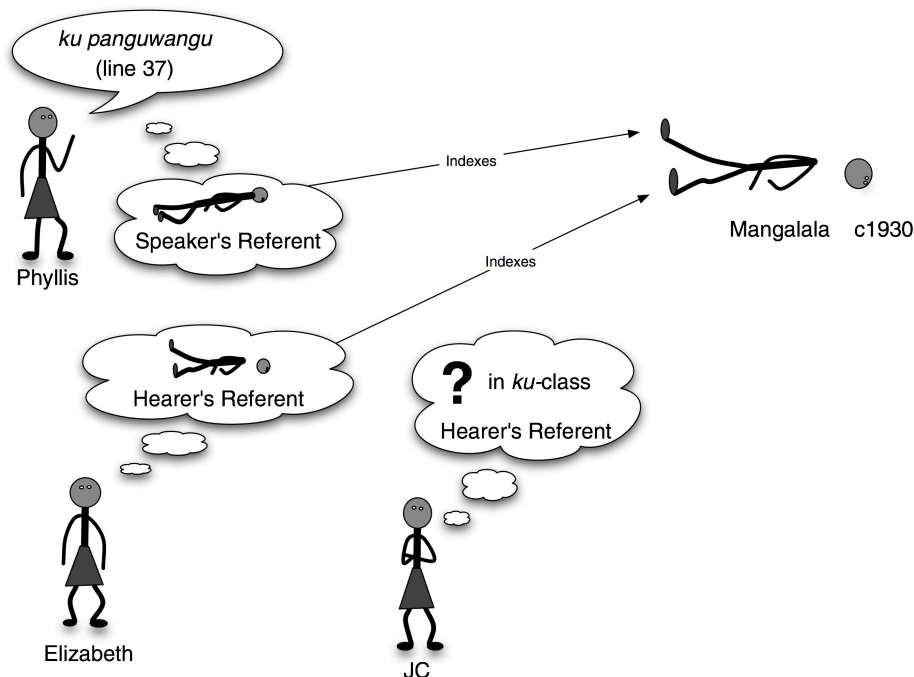


Figure 10.1 The *hearer's referents* and the *speaker's referent* associated with line 37 of Fragment 79. The hearer's referent is what is conveyed to the hearers – what is “brought to mind”. The speaker's referent is the mental projection of the man Mangalala that the speaker draws on in order to cast the denoting expression, *ku*, which is embedded within the utterance *ku panguwangu*. The utterance was cast so that the non-targeted hearers, such as JC, would not be able to pick out the referent that the speaker had in mind.

Although both Phyllis and Elizabeth have in mind the same man, they may not visualize the dead man in exactly the same way. They both know the story (more or less) but they may each be privy to different versions of the story and have different knowledge states about the man in question²⁷² (hence my slightly different depictions of the dead man in the thought bubbles of Figure 10.1). Although the mental images may not be identical, the key point is that they both index the same man that died in the area around 70 years previously, and this is why the reference is successful. We will return to this point in due course.

The question that remains is how to represent JC's tracking of this “referent”. The mere fact that she was able to re-refer (lines 78 and 87) to whatever it was that Phyllis had been referring to (line 37), shows that she did in fact track the referent, although

²⁷² In fact line 97 confirms that they don't have the same knowledge states, since it reveals that Phyllis doesn't know the name of the man who was killed.

she was clearly not able to accurately perceive it. So what is a “referent” that is trackable yet not fully perceivable?

Because line 37 is a first-mention, upon hearing the utterance, JC has very little to draw on in order to narrow down the very broad range of denotata that the nominal classifier denotes. Even though whatever the *ku*-thing Phyllis was talking about is somehow connected to spearing and shooting, none of the things potentially expressed by *ku* (animates, flesh, meat, game, dead bodies, non-Aboriginal human beings, spirits, totems, totemic sites, money, women’s genitalia) can be logically ruled out as being impossible grounds for a spear-fight. Whatever JC did have in mind, it would not have been a particularly clear image. She may have imagined a number of possibilities: kangaroos, dogs, horses, buffaloes, meat-based foods, white Australians, Japanese pearlers²⁷³ – all potential *ku*-referents. The main point is that although she obviously had something of the *ku*-class in mind, it was not the same thing as what Phyllis had in mind. JC’s hearer’s referent is vague and indistinct (see Figure 10.1), at least by comparison to Phyllis’s which is precise. Even if she were able to guess that Phyllis was talking about a dead body, she would not have been able to pick out the particular dead body of Mangalala, so her hearer’s referent does not index the actual man Mangalala. Thus from JC’s perspective, this is not a completely successful reference.

Even though JC does not share with Elizabeth and Phyllis the common ground that made Phyllis’s speaker’s referent perceivable to Elizabeth, the mere fact that she is able to re-refer to the referent (lines 78 and 87), shows that she does have “something” in mind, albeit fuzzy.²⁷⁴ Moreover, it also shows that JC recognizes that with line 37, “referring” actually has been performed. Since the denoting expression in line 37 (*ku*) is identifiable and its denotatum is clear, then enough information has been imparted for JC to grasp the fact that Phyllis is talking about *something* of this particular class. It is enough information to spark her interest and thus she commits to memory the fact that referring has been performed. She also commits to memory the denotatum to which the referent pertains. The referent has thus been effectively

²⁷³ In 1931, three Japanese pearlers were speared by Murriny Patha men less than 20 km from where this conversation was recorded. It was in response to this event that the former mission of Port Keats was established (see Furlan 2005; Idriess 1941; Ivory 2003).

²⁷⁴ For Elizabeth, the common ground she shares with Phyllis (their prior knowledge of the story) enables her to effectively eliminate spurious potential referents from the list of possible referents, so that she can zero in on the particular *ku*-class referent that Phyllis had in mind.

tracked. Even though she is unable to properly perceive the referent, this is still a necessary first step towards perceiving it.²⁷⁵

In line 107, Elizabeth reveals the word *Mangalala* to be the name of the man that got shot, *Mangalala kanardang kardaya*, “Mangalala was shot here”. Elizabeth not only knows that he got shot, she also knows who shot him and she knows that his head was blown off. Since she was privy to this information, she is likely to have visualized him accordingly. The hearer’s referent would thus be her mental image of this lifeless, headless man, lying on the saltplain nearby (see Figure 10.2). It is to this image that she refers. Because he was a man and men have the property of being “name-bearers”; and given that she knows the name of the man, then her choice of denoting expression (his name) is compatible with her conception of him (a dead man with the name *Mangalala*). The denoting expression *Mangalala* denotes sets of people that bear the name *Mangalala*. This expression she embeds within the utterance, *Mangalala kanardang kardaya*, “Mangalala was shot here”.

Phyllis, who knows the story but didn’t recognize the name *Mangalala* as being a personal name, upon hearing line 107, gleans from the sense of the larger utterance that *Mangalala* must indeed be a name; since *kanardang kardaya* says that someone was shot, which is in keeping with what she knows about the story (that someone was shot). Because the denoting expression *Mangalala* denotes sets of people bearing the name *Mangalala*, she picks out the man that she knew to have been killed and visualizes him dead on the saltplain. Because she believes Elizabeth to be talking about the same man that she has in mind, her mental projection of the lifeless man is the hearer’s referent (see Figure 10.2). Presumably, at this point she updates her store of information about the poor man, by adding that his name was *Mangalala*.

JC didn’t know the story in advance. However, even before hearing line 107, she makes the connection that *Mangalala* and the mystery *ku*-thing are one and the same, because in line 95, the word *Mangalala* was proffered by Elizabeth as the source of all the trouble. In line 105, JC displays her understanding of this connection when she attempts to pronounce the word in an effort to bring the straying story back on track. Thus the word *Mangalala* becomes interpretable as an Aboriginal name when embedded within the utterance *Mangalala kanardang kardaya*, because no animals large enough to shoot have that name and it doesn’t sound like the name of a

²⁷⁵ We will return to this point in due course. However, suffice to say this piece of data provides evidence for the separation of the various “hearer’s tasks” that I will elaborate on in §10.4.2.

European or Japanese person. Based on the sense of *kanardang kardaya* (that someone/something was shot here), she pictures a person called *Mangalala* who got shot. Since she had already established *Mangalala* to be of the *ku*-class, then he must have been shot dead. Her hearer's referent is thus also a picture of a dead man bearing the name *Mangalala* (see Figure 10.2).

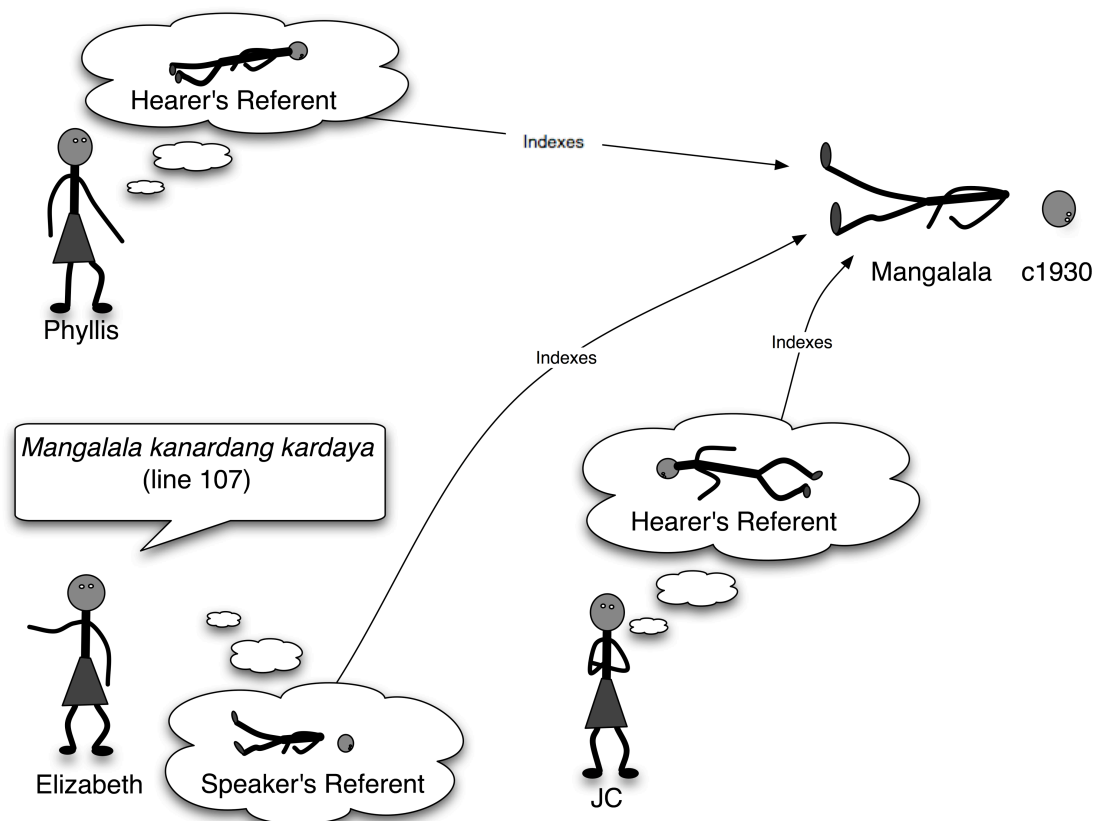


Figure 10.2 The *hearer's referents* and the *speaker's referent* associated with line 107 of Fragment 79. Both hearers, Phyllis and JC, interpret the denoting expression *Mangalala* as being the name of a dead man. Thus what is called to mind is an idea of a man who is dead, whose name was *Mangalala*. These ideas will be similar – but not necessarily identical – to the idea that Elizabeth drew on in order to cast the reference.

JC now knows what the story is about. She can infer that *Mangalala* was a real person. She now knows that Phyllis's reference to something of the *ku*-class was to the same person that Elizabeth referred to with the name *Mangalala* in line 107. For JC, this reference is successful because her conception of the man (her hearer's referent) indexes the same actual man that is indexed by Elizabeth's speaker's referent. Also for Phyllis, the reference is successful for exactly the same reason: that the man indexed by the image in her mind is the same man as the one indexed by the image in Elizabeth's mind. It is because all three of these conversationalists have conceptualized the same worldly participant that the reference is a success. They may

not all conceive of him in the same way²⁷⁶, but the point is that they all imagine the same man.

This second phase of analysis reveals that achieving reference is complex process consisting of a series of tasks for both speakers and hearers. When reference is straightforward the separate tasks are not so readily visible. However, because each of the individual tasks make for potential points of failure, it is in the less than straightforward cases that the multiple stages in the referring process become more apparent.

10.4 Multiple stages in the referring process

We can thus conceive of *referring* as an interactional process whereby a speaker imparts information to a hearer. Moreover, the prior dissections reveal referring to be a series of processes requiring several tasks on the part of the speaker and several tasks on the part of the hearer. I outline the overall process in Table 15.

Speaker's Tasks		Hearer's Tasks	
1	Visualization	5	Noticing
2	Assignment of categorial properties	6	Constraining the domain of reference
3	Selection of a candidate denoting expression	7	Referent tracking
4	Articulation of selected expression	8	Perceiving the referent
		9	Updating the tracked referent

Table 15 The interactional process of referring as decomposed into speaker's and hearer's tasks.

10.4.1 The speaker's tasks

1. The first two tasks may be grouped together under the banner of *conceptualization*. The first of these tasks is *visualization*. That is, the speaker must visualize some particular entities/participants within a visualized world.²⁷⁷ These visualized entities/participants will shortly become the *speaker's referent*, but not yet.

²⁷⁶ At the time, Phyllis may have known that *Mangalala* had his head blown off (I'm not sure) but JC certainly would not have known this. This is why, in Figure 10.2, I have depicted the various speakers' and hearers' referents differently.

²⁷⁷ I'm not intending to assert primacy to the visual senses as the locus of cognition, and nor do I wish to enter into a debate about how the brain works. Many of the expressions that we use in English to describe cognitive processes make use of visual imagery; thus *visualise*, *envisage*, *picture* and *imagine* all denote active processes where ideas are formulated. By contrast in Australian languages, cognitive processes are more likely to be expressed as auditory processes rather than visual ones (Evans & Wilkins 2000). I'm prepared to concede that not everyone thinks about things in a visual way and I don't wish to suggest that non-visual thinkers don't partake in processes akin to what I'm talking about. I thus intend *visualization* to mean "generating an *idea of something* as it occurs in the *world*". Alternatively, it might be conceived of as "holding up an *idea of a thing* as it occurs in its likely setting, in preparation for further thoughts". If speakers are able to do this sort of thing in a non-visual way, then well and good, but I don't wish to abandon this useful visual metaphor because it nicely captures the entirety of this active mental process.

2. The second task is the *assignment of categorial properties* to the visualized entities/participants. The categorial properties need to be properties that the would-be recipient of the utterance will also recognize as being potentially applicable to the particular entities in question.²⁷⁸ When speakers recipient-design their referencing for their interlocutor, they do so on the basis of their categorial assignment of applicable properties – properties that they imagine as belonging to the entity, and properties that they think their recipient will also recognize as belonging to that entity. As much as possible, the properties the speaker chooses should also be ones that have relevance to the way the language expresses reference. Because all languages use number to some degree, relevant properties might include: being just one, being a pair, being a group, etc. Being part of a whole or one of a group are also properties that are likely to be referentially effective. In a language like English, definiteness and indefiniteness are grammatically relevant properties. In Murriny Patha, “being siblings” and “being non-siblings” are grammatically relevant properties. Grammatically relevant properties are ones that will make the process of referring effective.

3. Having thus conceptualized these entities/participants, the third task is the *selection of a candidate denoting expression* (or expressions) whose sense is compatible with those assigned properties.

4. The fourth task for the speaker is the *articulation of the selected denoting expression*. The articulated expression is embedded within an utterance, which is placed within the context of the talk-so-far. The net effect of this articulation is denotation. That is, the selected denoting expression now denotes a set of entities (denotatum) to which the previously conceptualized entities/participants pertain. Thus in contrast to referring, denotation is not a task for the speaker. Rather, denotation is the job of the denoting expression itself.

If coreferential denoting expressions are recruited for referring, and if the two expressions’ denotata intersect, then the hearer must choose the referent from the functional domain of reference; that is, from the set of entities that is functionally designated by the clause-level argument being expressed as part of a proposition (see §6.2). The previously conceptualized entities/participants now become the “speaker’s referent”.

²⁷⁸ To give a trivial example, the property of “having four wheels” is not one that a speaker would wish to assign to a dog unless he had a very good reason for assuming that his interlocutor would be able to recognize a particular dog that happens to have four wheels.

10.4.2 The hearer's tasks

5. On the part of the hearer, the first task is *noticing*. The hearer must notice the denoting expression embedded in the utterance. That is, the hearer must *notice* that the speaker has made an attempt to talk about something.

6. The second hearer's task is *constraining the domain of reference* (when appropriate). The hearer must recognize that whatever the speaker has in mind pertains to a set of entities (the denotatum) that is characterizable in terms of the sense of the denoting expression. In some cases but not all, the sense of the utterance in which the denoting expression is embedded may additionally constrain the set of potential referents to a set that is somewhat smaller than the denoting expression's full denotatum.²⁷⁹ Shared common ground may also be a factor that can help to constrain the number of potential referents.²⁸⁰ This *Context Delimited Domain of Reference* is the information that will ultimately be used by the hearer to perceive the referent, should the process go that far.

7. The third hearer's task we will call *referent tracking*. This task really consists of a commitment of certain information to memory. The noticing of the speaker's attempt to refer to something and the contextualized denoting expression's (delimited) scope of reference are the two pieces of information that need to be committed to memory. If the hearer suspects that the reference is to something not previously referred-to, then a new "file" must be opened (Du Bois 1980) in which these two pieces of information can be stored for possible matches with future references. If the hearer suspects that the reference is not to something new, then a notice of possible re-reference can be appended to any candidate "files" for which the context delimited domain of reference is likely to be able to apply.

8. The fourth of the hearer's tasks is *perceiving the referent* that he (or she) believes the speaker has in mind. If the hearer believes that the speaker has cast the denoting expression as a recognitional, the hearer must now take it on himself to try and visualize a person/thing that he knows, that he thinks the speaker also knows, that is

²⁷⁹ Recall

example 5.1 (p. 60) that in the utterance *kanyethu kura pandjedhadharra*, "the two siblings were bringing something of the water class", that the sense of the verb *pandjedhadharra*, "the two siblings were bringing something", constrains the full denotatum of the nominal classifier *kura* (which denotes watery substances and water sources), by eliminating excessively large and uncarryable water sources from the set of possible referents.

²⁸⁰ That is to say, shared common ground can (a) eliminate unlikely potential referents from the set of possible referents and (b) make certain known participants/entities stand out as the best possible candidates for the referent that the speaker has in mind.

conceivable in terms of the sense of the denoting expression and of the utterance in which it is embedded, and which sensibly conforms to the context of the talk-so-far. If the hearer believes that the speaker has cast the denoting expression as “non-recognitional”, he is *not* obliged to pick out a person/thing that he knows (but is not precluded from trying). However, he must still try to pick out a particular person(s)/thing(s) and visualize it in terms of the sense of the denoting expression and its surrounding utterance, in a way that sensibly conforms to the context of the talk-so-far. This visualization of the person(s)/thing(s) is the hearer’s referent.

9. If the hearer has perceived the referent (correctly or otherwise), the fifth task is to *update* the information about the previously tracked referent (task 7). That is, a believed identification can be added to the notice of attempted reference and to the Context Delimited Domain of Reference (the second of which is effectively made redundant by the subsequent identification). This updated information is committed to memory for future matches with future referents.

The interactional evidence for the last three hearer’s tasks being distinct stages (7, 8 and 9) really only presents itself in environments where the hearer has some difficulty perceiving the referent.²⁸¹ When there is no noticeable problem, these tasks are effectively performed together as a single complex task. It should be pointed out that when the process is not able to proceed beyond stage 8, the “vague” hearer’s referent is essentially repairable. Failure to properly perceive the referent that the speaker has in mind is one motivation (but not the only one) for the hearer to other-initiate a repair sequence. As we work through a phase two of analysis of the next fragment the justification of these 9 stages will emerge.

10.5 Referred-entities and referred-participants

The previous fragment (Fragment 79) featured only third person singular referencing. However, the domain of separation between worldly participants and mental referents becomes more apparent when we look at non-singular referencing. With non-singular referencing, it is easier to see how salient features of the grammar are modeled off

²⁸¹ The evidence for *referent tracking* (stage 7) happening prior to *perceiving the referent* (stage 8) comes from line 37 of Fragment 79, where JC was able to track the subject referent of the utterance *ku panguwangu*, “something of the *ku*-class that way”, yet was not able to properly perceive what Phyllis had been talking about until line 107, where Elizabeth revealed the man *Mangalala* to have been the person that Phyllis had been rather tangentially referring to. Having correctly perceived the referent, she was at this point able to update the filed information about the previously tracked referent, by appending its identification (stage 9).

features that are attributable to referents. In Murriny Patha, person, number, gender and siblinghood are distinctive features of core grammatical arguments. Arguments convey categorial information attributable to group referents that is not attributable to the individual participants or entities that comprise the group.²⁸² The denoting expressions that speakers use to refer to persons in groups reflect their conception of the people that they are referring to.

For Murriny Patha speakers, group referencing is regularly recruited for reference to deceased persons or to persons in avoidance relationships. Recall that Murriny Patha speakers regularly make globally initial reference to “avoidable”, non-present third persons using first and second person dual or paucal free pronouns. Subsequent reference is then made to those non-present individuals using third singular verbal cross-reference (e.g., Fragment 32/Fragment 53). Alternatively, initial reference is made with an inclusory construction, where one participant in the group is named, and subsequent reference to the avoidable person is done with a singular verb (Fragment 54). This is particularly achievable because “dual feminine non-sibling” is so frequently used for initial references to husband and wife couples that this is the first interpretation to come to mind.

If a person’s name is best avoided, one way around the problem is to bypass singular referencing altogether. In Fragment 80, we will see how speakers are able to play *domains of reference* against each other, so as to individuate avoidable participants without ever mentioning them singularly. In the fragment Elizabeth recalls an occasion when the car in which they were travelling became bogged. Present in the car was her own deceased son and the late husband of her interlocutor, Phyllis. Phyllis does not seem to remember the occasion.

Fragment 80 Totems (2006-07-01JB02a)

- 12 Eliz (cough) Daka kardaya (cough)
 This place now.
 : :
 : :
 21 Eliz Neɾkime ʈtjinʈharrkatngime trak kayyu.
 This is where we (1PAUC.INC.F.NSIB) got bogged in a car.
 22 Dol [Ah]
 23 (Ø.3)
 24 Phyl .h°°(nganakaya)°°h
 (Maybe) ((ingressed))
 25 (1.1)

²⁸² The category *dual* is not something that can be attributed to an individual, even if that individual is part of a pair. *Dual* can only be attributed to the pair of individuals.

- 26 Eliz >nan'gungintha tjininginthadha.<
 nan'gungintha tjini -ngintha -dha
 2DU.F.NSIB 2SS.1sit.PSTIMP -DU.F.NSIB -PST
 2DU.F.NSIB 2DU.F.NSIBS.sit.PSTIMP -PST
 You and one other person were here.
 27 (0.6)
- 28 Phyl Ngarra °w°angu.
 Which way?
 29 (0.5)
- 30 Eliz kanyethu kura pandjedha°dh°arra.
 kanyi-gathu kura pandje -dha -dharra
 PROX-towards water 3DAUCS.22bring/take.PSTIMP -PST -moving
 The two siblings were bringing something of the water class
 this way.
 31 (1.5)
- 32 Phyl ngarran°u w°a:ngu mayern ngarran°u w°a:ngu.
 Which way? Which track?
 33 (0.2)
- 34 Eliz °kanyungu kanyungu dingalngu;°
 This way, this way Dingalngu
 35 (0.48)
- 36 Eliz °↓ngarra thardidha°g°athungime.↓°
 towards where we were camping.



Figure 10.3 The four conversationalists in Fragment 80, from left to right: Elizabeth, Phyllis, Dolores and Manman.

This recording was made on a saltplain near the coast. Being low-lying country, it gets very boggy during the wet season. The four conversationalists (all senior women) are seated in a line (see Figure 10.3). Elizabeth and Phyllis are sitting next to each other. In line 21, Elizabeth announces that this was the place where a group of people

were in a vehicle that got bogged. This utterance (which continues from where the earlier line 12 had stalled) constitutes a story preface.²⁸³ Because Elizabeth is seated at the end of the line, Phyllis is the most likely targeted recipient of her story preface. The combination of the free pronoun *nekime*²⁸⁴ plus the verb *tjinharrkatngime* “first-mentions” the participants in the car that got bogged. The subject of the verb *tjinharrkatngime*, is 1st person paucal inclusive feminine non-sibling. Thus it denotes somewhere between 3 and 10 people, at least one of whom was female and whose number includes the addressee (probably Phyllis). Because both the addressee and the speaker are female, the other members of this group may have been male or female (since “paucal feminine” denotes groups comprising at least one female participant).

In line 24, Phyllis ingressively mouths a reply, (which suggests that she had indeed been the targeted recipient of line 21). The ingressed utterance sounds like it might have been the indefinite *nganakaya*, “maybe”. With this minimal, difficult to discern turn-at-talk, Phyllis passes up the opportunity to take an extended turn, thus relinquishing the floor to Elizabeth.²⁸⁵ The turn effectively serves as a go-ahead. In line 26, Elizabeth asserts that Phyllis and one other person were there (in the car that got bogged). The locally initial reference “form” consists of the coreferential denoting expressions *nan’gungintha* and *tjininginthadha*. The free pronoun *nan’gungintha* is coreferential with the subject of the verb *tjininginthadha*. The *functionally-designated*²⁸⁶ subject of these two expressions is 2nd person dual feminine non-sibling, that is “you two non-siblings, at least one of whom is female”. Given that the addressee, Phyllis, is female, the other person need not have been female. However, because Phyllis was a married woman and because there were no particularly salient participants from the immediately preceding talk, due to the spousal connotations associated with dual feminine non-sibling references, line 26 can thus be interpreted as being a reference to Phyllis and her husband, K (see Figure 10.4). If Phyllis were to have doubts about the implied identity of this other participant, presumably the

²⁸³ As frequently happens on trips to the bush, this story is touched off by the setting in which the conversationalists find themselves.

²⁸⁴ The expected 1PAUC.F.INC.NSIB free pronoun is *nekingime*. *Nekime* is either a phonologically reduced (haplogized) form of the paucal feminine free pronoun, or it is a special paucal form that is unmarked for gender.

²⁸⁵ The lack of any clear definitive comment suggests that she doesn’t remember the occasion. Lines 28 and 32 also point to a non-recollection of the event in question.

²⁸⁶ See §6.2. However, because the denotatum of *nan’gungintha* completely overlaps the subject denotatum of *tjininginthadha* (rather than intersect with it, cf. Figure 6.4, p. 151) the functional domain of reference amounts to the same set of participants.

subsequent turn would reveal them. In line 28, there is a problem, but not with the referent. In this line, Phyllis requests clarification as to where the car had gotten bogged, which would be consistent with her not remembering the particular occasion. In 30, Elizabeth addresses this request for clarification, with the deictic *kanyethu*, “in this direction”. However this line also advances the story – *kanyethu kura pandjedhadharra*, “the two siblings were bringing something of the water class in this direction”. The subject argument of the verb *pandjedhadharra* is 3rd person dual sibling. The siblings in question may have been both male or both female, or one male and one female – it is not made explicit in the verb because dual sibling referents are not marked for gender.²⁸⁷ Where this reference form differs from those in Elizabeth’s preceding two turns, is that the verb alone is recruited for referring (and also for predication). *Pandjedhadharra* is thus a locally subsequent reference form. But should it be considered to be locally subsequent or locally initial in terms of its position? And how do these referential domains correlate with each other?

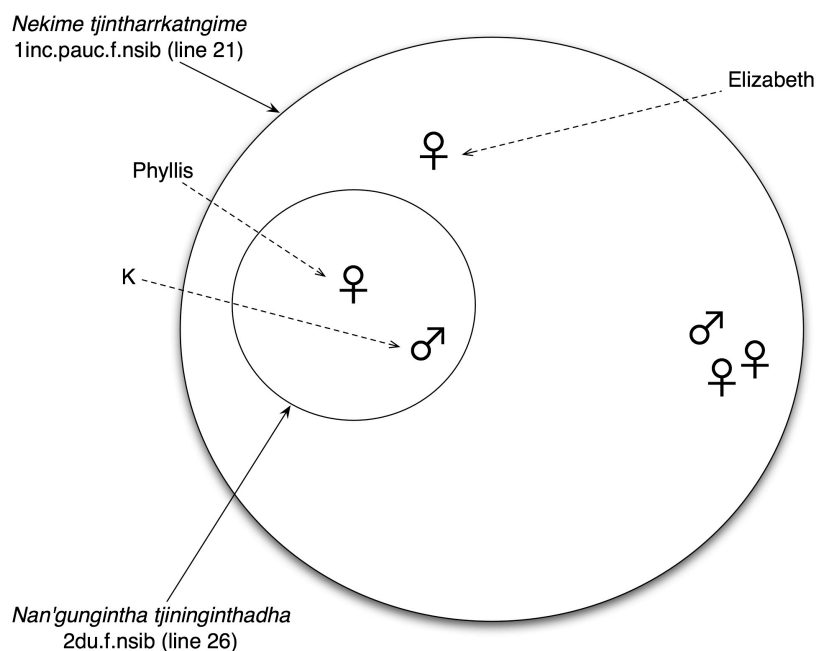


Figure 10.4 Line 26 of Fragment 80 elaborates on the referent of line 21, in that it specifies two participants in the “carhold”, Phyllis and K.

Because the free pronouns in lines 21 and 26 inflect for the same grammatical categories as the subjects of the verbs with which they are coreferential (that is, they

²⁸⁷ However, because of the strong avoidance relationship between opposite-sex-siblings, sibling references are massively weighted towards sets of “brothers” and sets of “sisters”. In this corpus of talk-in-interaction, of the 50+ references to pairs of siblings, none are to brother-and-sister combinations (see also Blythe in press).

have the same denotata) they are denotationally as general as the verbs on their own but less minimal. The functional domain of reference pertaining to the subject of line 21 (1.PAUC.INC.F.NSIB) represents a “carhold” (Stotz 1993) whose number is understood to include both the speaker, Elizabeth, and the addressee, Phyllis. The functional domain of reference pertaining to the subject of line 26 (2DU.F.NSIB) is understood to include both Phyllis and her husband. Line 26 is thus an elaboration on the referent in line 21, in that it specifies two of the participants who were in the car (see Figure 10.4). The two siblings (whoever they are) are also members of the carhold. Line 30 therefore is also an elaboration on line 21, because it too specifies two members of the carhold. The question relevant for the hearers is thus, “What is the relationship between lines 26 and 30?”; or to put it in Schegloff’s terms, “Why that now?” (Schegloff 1996a: 439; Schegloff & Sacks 1973: 299). Could the referent in line 30 and the referent in line 26 have a participant in common? In other words, could Phyllis’s husband be one of the two siblings?²⁸⁸ Or did the car include Elizabeth, Phyllis and her husband, two siblings and perhaps some other people? Perhaps the locally subsequent design of the turn (verbal cross-reference without an accompanying nominal expression) lends itself to an interpretation of elaboration – that is, an interpretation that favours a conjoint reading (i.e., where Phyllis’s husband was indeed one of the two siblings, as in Figure 10.5).

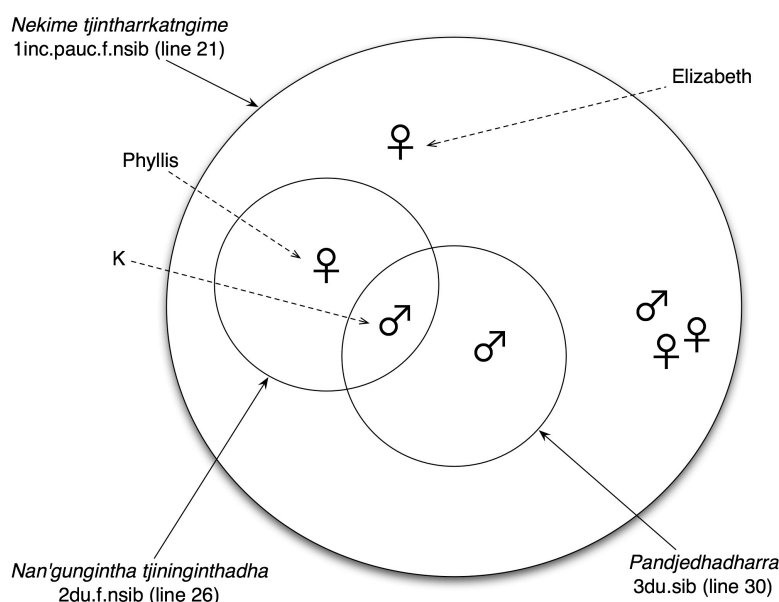


Figure 10.5 Could Phyllis’s husband K be one of the two siblings expressed in line 30?

²⁸⁸ Clearly neither Elizabeth nor Phyllis could have been members of the set of siblings, because the subject of the verb *pandjedhadharra* is 3rd person.

Schegloff's omni-relevant question, "Why that now?", subsumes the further question, "What is 'that' that has been mentioned just now" – specifically, "What is it that the two siblings were bringing this way in the car that got bogged?" Bare nominal classifiers that precede transitive polysynthetic verbs, and are not co-referential with the verbs' subjects, express vaguely specified patients of the particular denoted class (see §6.1.2.1). Thus the nominal classifier *kura* expresses some vaguely specified, though nonetheless specific referent of the "water" class. The construction²⁸⁹ demonstrates that Elizabeth had in mind some particular watery substance, not just any watery substance. This vague referencing puts the onus on Phyllis to work out for herself what sort of watery substance it might have been. Is there any indication that this under-specification has posed a problem for Phyllis? The 1.5 second silence (line 31) is perhaps indicative of a problem. In line 32, Phyllis seeks further clarification as to where the car had been heading (which receives its relevant clarification in lines 34 and 36, "This way, this way, Dingalngu – towards where we were camping"). Thus Phyllis's problem appears to lie in not being able to recall the event, rather than in not understanding who the siblings were, or what sort of watery substance they were bringing. Elizabeth's vague referencing appeals heavily to the common ground that she shares with Phyllis. Even though Phyllis appears not to be able to recall the occasion, Elizabeth nonetheless appears to have been successful in making herself understood. The relevant common ground therefore lies in knowing what sort of liquid is likely to get transported to remote locations in the bush, in cars, by pairs of siblings. Similarly, it also lies in actually knowing a pair of "siblings" likely to transport such a liquid. I was informed that the particular liquid being transported was actually *kura thurrulk*, "beer". Thus *kanyethu kura pandjedhadharra* should be interpreted as "the two people who were in a sibling relationship to each other, were bringing beer in this direction".²⁹⁰

The first point to make is that both lines 26 and 30 contain person references that elaborate on the referent in line 21 (by specifying who was in the car). The second point is that potentially ambiguous references to persons unencumbered by avoidance

²⁸⁹ For discussion of this line, see example 5.1 on p. 60.

²⁹⁰ The two interlocutors, Phyllis and Elizabeth, are both non-drinkers. Each of them regularly take a very negative stance towards drinking. Here Elizabeth has employed the common euphemistic strategy of referring to distasteful or frowned-upon topics in vague or underspecified ways (Allan & Burridge 1988, 1992; Grondelaers & Geeraerts 1998).

or taboo are generally upgraded to a form including either a proper name or perhaps a kinterm. The fact that these elaborations are not upgraded by choosing any referential forms with higher potential for achieving recognition²⁹¹ (names or kinterms), raises the possibility that perhaps one or both of the siblings should not be named – perhaps they are deceased. Given that one established member of the carhold, Phyllis’s husband K, is actually deceased, then the listeners would be asking themselves, could there be another “sibling”, with whom K liked to drink beer, who is also deceased?

Because Elizabeth and Phyllis’s shared common ground includes extensive genealogical knowledge, Phyllis would have easily been able to identify Elizabeth’s own deceased son, G, as a man that liked to have a beer with K. Because G and K both shared the same mother’s father’s father, they called each other *ngathan*, “brother” (see Figure 10.6).²⁹² Since each of these identifiable siblings are deceased, and each are very close kin or affines to the current interlocutors, each are persons who are highly likely not to be named. Under these circumstances, significant Circumspection would be exercised in referring to these persons.

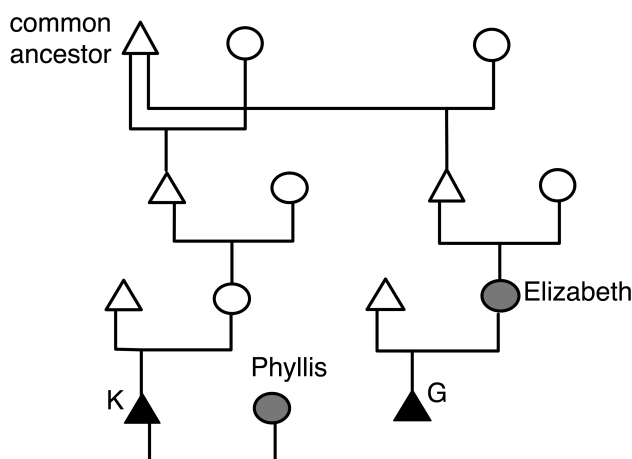


Figure 10.6 The two “siblings” in Fragment 80, K and G, both shared the same mother’s father’s father.

The second phase of the analysis is to describe the prior referencing in terms of the nine-stage schema outlined in §10.4. We will begin with line 26 where Elizabeth specifies the two members of the carhold, Phyllis and her husband K.²⁹³ Firstly, these two people are the two participants that she has in mind before casting the pronoun-plus-verb-combination that is line 26. Her visualization of these two people (stage 1,

²⁹¹ That is, forms that favour Specification and/or Targeted Recipient Design.

²⁹² Same-sex sibling merger will equate the two mother’s fathers and also the two mothers.

²⁹³ Strictly speaking, Elizabeth specifies only Phyllis, and draws on the spousal connotations associated with dual non-sibling references in order to implicate K in having been there.

visualization, the first speaker's task) will soon become the speaker's referent (see Figure 10.7). On the basis of how she visualizes these two people, she *assigns* this mental image certain *categorical properties* (stage 2). Because they are a married couple, she conceives of them as a pair and assigns her conceptualization of them the grammatically relevant category "pair". Because they are not brother and sister, she assigns her conceptualization of them the category "non-siblings". Because Phyllis is a woman, these two categories can be combined with a third feature that captures Phyllis's femininity but disregards K's masculinity. Thus, Elizabeth assigns her conceptualization of them the grammatically relevant composite category "pair of non-siblings, one of whom is female".

On the basis of how she conceives of this couple, she now chooses denoting expressions whose sense is compatible with the way she conceives of them (stage 3, *selection of candidate denoting expression*). She thus chooses the free pronoun *nan'gungintha*, "2DU.F.NSIB", as well as the verb *tjininginthadha*, "2DU.F.NSIB were sitting". She then embeds these two reference forms within a turn at talk that she articulates to her friend Phyllis (stage 4, *articulation of selected expression*).

Phyllis hears this utterance, which she takes to be a reference to two people (stage 5, *noticing*, the first hearer's task). Because this utterance follows an initial reference to a carhold of people, she takes this reference to be a specification of the prior one²⁹⁴ (stage 7, *reference tracking*).²⁹⁵

Upon hearing this utterance, Phyllis chooses from amongst the denotata of these coreferential expressions (pairs of people including "you" (Phyllis), who are not in a "sibling" relationship) the particular couple she believes that Elizabeth has in mind. Because Phyllis is well aware of the Murriny Patha convention of referring to husband and wife couples using "dual feminine non-sibling" references, and since her own husband is deceased and therefore best not referred to by name, she envisages herself and her husband K as the most likely couple to be referred to in this way, at this particular time (stage 8, *perceiving the referent*). The image that she has of herself and K is the hearer's referent, because this is the image that she believes corresponds to what Elizabeth has in mind (see Figure 10.7). Her mental image of herself and K (as she remembers the time when the two of them were together) stands in an

²⁹⁴ Persisting with the "filing" analogy, Phyllis appends the notice of attempted re-reference into a new document in the "file" pertaining to the carhold.

²⁹⁵ Recall that the second hearer's task, constraining the domain of reference (stage 6), only applies when appropriate. In this case it does not apply.

indexical relationship to the actual people (herself and K) at the particular time when he really was alive and when they were both sitting in a bogged car, some 14 km south west of Wadeye. It is because her conceptualization of herself and K (the hearer's referent) indexes the same worldly participants (herself and the then-living K, over 20 years ago) as the worldly participants indexed by Elizabeth's conceptualized couple (the speaker's referent) that the reference is a success.

Finally (or simultaneously with stage 8) she matches the supposed identification of herself and her husband with the already established knowledge that the utterance is a specification of two of the people in the car. This updated information is now available for her to match against future references (stage 9, *updating the tracked referent*, the final hearer's task).

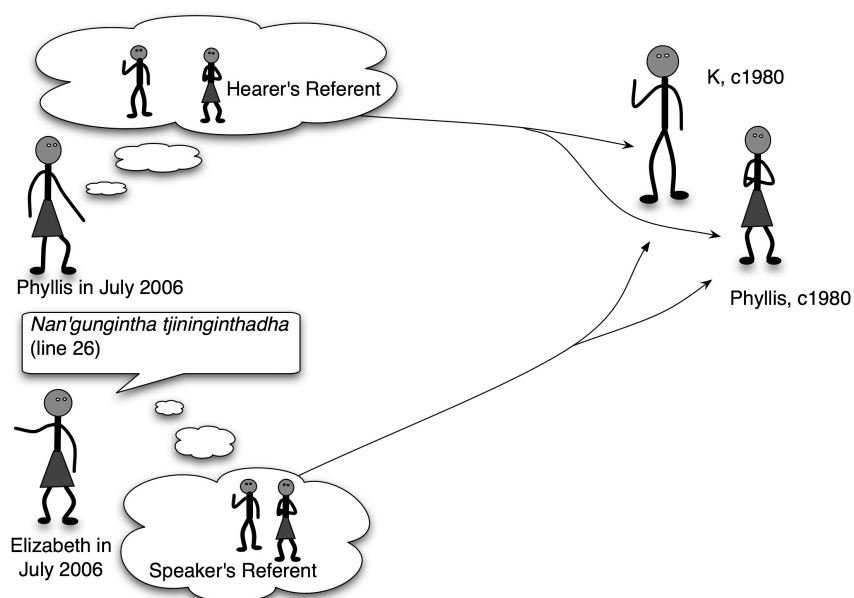


Figure 10.7 The hearer's referent and the speaker's referent associated with line 26 of Fragment 80. Because the participants indexed by the conceptualized image in Phyllis's mind are the same two the participants indexed by the conceptualized image in Elizabeth's mind, the reference is a success.

The hearer's referent is a concept or an idea that is called to mind upon hearing an utterance. It gets its status as a concept from the categorial feature specifications of the expressions' denotata; or better still, from the functional domain of reference pertaining to the subject of the clause (a pair, including you, not siblings).²⁹⁶ The hearer's referent is an utterance-specific construct. It derives its form from the sense of the denoting expressions, from the context in which they are uttered and from the

²⁹⁶ That is to say, the categorial feature specifications of the functional domain of reference generate in the mind of the hearer a concept or an idea (hearer's referent) that conforms to the semantic feature specifications of the subject argument of the clause.

common ground shared by the speaker and hearer. The two participants that the hearer's referent indexes do not carry these categorial feature specifications because their existence in the world is not dependent on an utterance to call them into being.

We now have a problem with terminology. Because *referents* have been demonstrated to be mental constructs linked to denoting expressions, what are we going to call the two participants, Phyllis and K, who actually were (c1980) in the car that got bogged? Given that they are nonetheless referred to (indirectly that is, via indexation), we will call them *referred-participants*.

We will now attempt a similar process for line 30, *kanyethu kura pandjedhadharra*. Elizabeth visualizes two people (her own son G and Phyllis's husband K) bringing some beer back to where they were camping at Dingalngu, about 14 km south west of Wadeye (stage 1, *visualization*, the first speaker's task). Because she knows that the two men shared a common mother's father's father, she knows that they called each other *ngathan*, "brother". For this reason Elizabeth assigns her visualization of the two men the category "brothers", because she knows that this is a category that Phyllis will also recognize as being applicable to the two men (stage 2, *assignment of categorial properties*). Because each of the two men are deceased and should be referred to in a manner that is circumspect, Elizabeth here chooses verbal cross-reference alone, since this is a strategy that is highly circumspect and minimal, yet should be sufficiently recognitional for Phyllis to perceive the referent. She thus chooses the verb *pandjedhadharra*, "the two siblings were bringing" (stage 3, *selection of candidate denoting expression*) which she embeds within the larger utterance, *kanyethu kura pandjedhadharra* (stage 4, *articulation*).

Because this utterance was produced following Phyllis's request for clarification as to where the car had gotten bogged (line 28), Phyllis recognizes that the utterance has been recipient designed for her: firstly, as a reference that should be recognitional (stage 5, *noticing*, the first hearer's task), and secondly, as providing the requested clarification. She realizes that Elizabeth expects her to recognize not only who the siblings are, but also the liquid that they were bringing. She is also able to take stock of the fact that the verb *pandjedhadharra* delimits the domain of *kura*'s denotatum to carryable watery substances, and that the context of being in a car in the bush further delimits the range of potential referents for *kura* to really only a handful of likely candidates (stage 6, *constraining the domain of reference*). Phyllis knows that

amongst Murriny Patha people, the relationship between siblings of the same sex is particularly close and that pairs of brothers frequently do things together – including drinking beer in the bush (stage 6, *constraining the domain of reference*). Because her own deceased husband has been just-previously mentioned, he is thus a likely candidate for being one of the siblings alleged to have been there, in the car that was bogged (stage 7, *referent tracking*).

Because she is familiar with Murriny Patha ways of referring, she is able to recognize Circumspection when it presents itself. She is thus able to pick out K and G as two men that satisfy the “sibling” criterion, and “beer” as the substance they would be likely to be bringing. Because K and G are the two participants she believes Elizabeth to be talking about, and beer is the liquid she believes her to be talking about, from the syntax of the sentence, she construes the pair of siblings as the subject hearer’s referent and beer as the direct object hearer’s referent (stage 8, *perceiving the referent*, see Figure 10.8). Believing that she has identified both individuals, she appends the identification of G to the prior identification of K and commits this to memory for future references (of which there are none) (stage 9, *updating the tracked referent*, the final hearer’s task).

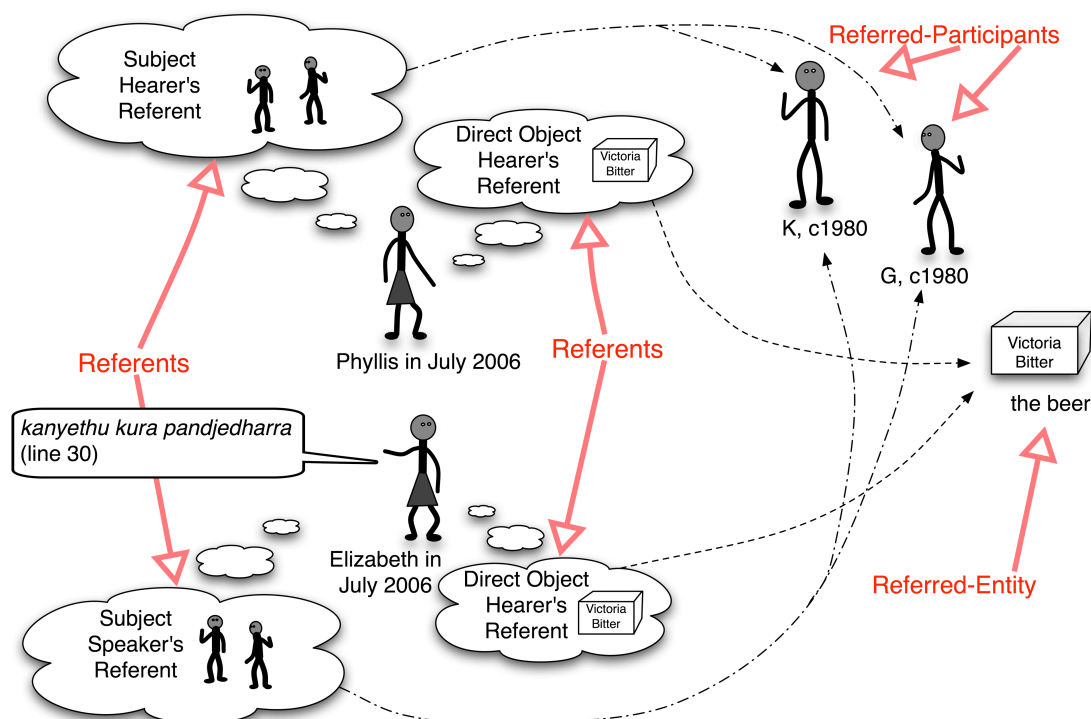


Figure 10.8 Successful referencing in line 30 of Fragment 80. The referencing is successful because firstly, the two people, K and G, are the same people indexed by both the subject speaker’s referent and the subject hearer’s referent, and secondly, because the entity beer is the indexed by both the DO speaker’s referent and the DO hearer’s referent.

Here we have an example of successful reference. Because Phyllis is able to pick out the same pair of participants and the same entity that Elizabeth has in mind, the referencing is successful. It is successful for the same reason that the reference in line 107 of Fragment 79 was successful. It is also the same reason that the reference in line 37 of that fragment was successful for Elizabeth. That is, the people picked out by the hearer are the same as those that the speaker has in mind upon producing the utterance. This systematicity can be reframed in a more technical way:

SUCCESSFUL REFERENCE: When the referred-participants/entities indexed by the hearer's referent are the same referred-participants/entities as those indexed by the speaker's referent, then, and only then can successful reference be claimed to have been achieved.

In the last fragment, we examined a case of successful dual referencing and were able to demonstrate, from a technical perspective, what it is that constitutes success in reference. We now move on to two cases where the initial attempts at reference to pairs are less than successful. In Fragment 81 and Fragment 82 the hearers have some difficulty identifying the individual participants expressed by dual references. Thus, in terms of the 9-stage process outlined in §10.4, the referential processes stall at stage 8, and do not go through to completion. As a result, repair sequences ensue.

Fragment 81 Spiny Chitons (2004-08-08JB03b)

- 538 Phyl °Ya perenintha thangu thangkugu damninthangka↓rdu;=**pereninth**
 539 **wurdamninth**°dh°ayi↑weparl↓warda:thu ↑naç° ↑← TS
 "You two male non-siblings, what what ku-things did you two male
 non-siblings see?" **The two male non-siblings** spoke at the same
 time, didn't they?
- 540 (1.3)
- 541 Eliz °kardinin↓tha°dh°a;° ← OIR
 And the two male non-siblings were?
- 542 (0.2)
- 543 Phyl *Yah kalanygat,* ← RS_{FIRST PARTICIPANT}
 Um Kalanygat ((woman's name)).
- 544 (0.36)
- 545 Eliz Mm [hm.]
- 546 Phyl [°(wu↓jy)°
 ??
- 547 (0.55)
- 548 Phyl Nukunaya. ← RS_{1, SECOND PARTICIPANT}
 Him.
- 549 (0.32)
- 550 Eliz Mm_ ← non-committal response
- 551 (0.23)
- 552 Phyl ka↓ng↑gurl ngay; mhmhmm ← RS_{2, SECOND PARTICIPANT}
 My grandson

- 553 (0.54)
 554 Eliz Ahhu:~h (0.2) ↓a- ↑u-
 555 (0.53)
 556 Phyl .hh he *↑thangguguwa damninthangka↓rdu.*
 "What did you two male non-siblings see?"

In Fragment 81, Phyllis is recounting the funny story we've already encountered about two young boys and their innocent use of some bad language. In the story, two men have just been instructed to ask the two boys what they had seen on the reef. So in this fragment, the two men do precisely that, and ask the two boys what they saw. The extended turn spanning lines 538 and 539 consists of two latched TCUs. The first TCU consists of a line of reported speech hailing from the men, *Ya pereninta thangu thangu damninthangkaru*, "You two male non-siblings [you two boys], what- what *ku*-things did you two male non-siblings see?" The second TCU consists of commentary from Phyllis as narrator, *pereninta wurdamninthadhayiweparwardathu na*, "The two male non-siblings [the two men] spoke at the same time, didn't they". The identity of the two boys had been previously established beyond doubt, prior to the commencement of this fragment. Although each of the men had been mentioned previously, because of various naming restrictions, establishing their identity beyond doubt is a more difficult process. Thus the second TCU is problematic with regards to the question of who the two male non-siblings might be. One of the two men, Elizabeth's deceased son, had been a topic of reminiscence for the preceding five minutes of this conversation. He is thus an extremely likely candidate. The identity of the other person is perhaps less clear.²⁹⁷

In the next turn (line 541), Elizabeth other-initiates a repair. She does so not by using the usual person specific next turn repair initiator, *nanggal*, "who", but with a semantically general "be" verb *kardininthadha*, "the two male non-siblings were". Even though the turn lacks an interrogative, the terminal "fall-to-mid" intonation contour mimics the fall-to-mid contour that is commonly found in interrogative turns commencing with a question-word. Phyllis treats the subject referent of her prior turn's second TCU (lines 538-539) as problematic. Although each of the two TCUs both contain free pronouns of the form *pereninta*, the semantics of each form differs.

²⁹⁷ The initial indexing of these two "avoidable" persons in the talk just prior to this fragment is the topic of analysis in §9.4. Because those fragments are extremely complex, the discussion will not be replicated here. However the reader should understand that Phyllis has already given Elizabeth a number of clues to help her identify the men in question. Clearly however, Elizabeth has not ascertained which two males spoke at the same time.

The first *pereninta* is the vocative second person dual masculine non-sibling pronoun. The regular (non-vocative) form is *nan'guninta*. The second *pereninta* is the 3rd person dual masculine non-sibling pronoun. Even though the form is the same, the two pronouns are not co-referential. The first calls for the attention of the two boys. The second (along with the verb *wurdamninthadhayiweparl*) is used to refer to the two men. That Elizabeth's repair initiator is itself dual, suggests that perhaps the nature of the problem has less to do with establishing the identity of the participants involved, than with establishing which pair it was that were speaking at the same time.

Phyllis self-repairs by elaborating on each of the two participants expressed in her prior turn's second TCU. Firstly, in line 543, she elaborates on one of the problematic participants by producing a personal name, *Kalanygat*, which is actually a woman's name. Elizabeth treats this name as unproblematic by producing in reply a mildly affirmative acknowledgement token, *mm hm*. In other words, she takes the production of the woman's name to be addressing (in part) the problematic reference to the two men. This woman *Kalanygat* is Phyllis's own sister-in-law. The husband of a woman's sister-in-law is the categorial equivalent of a woman's brother, *ngathan* (see Figure 3.2). Due to the strong opposite-sex-sibling taboo, *Kalanygat*'s husband is a person that Phyllis should be circumspect about naming. Here Phyllis refers to the husband by using the name of his wife as an avoidance recognitional.

In line 548, Phyllis produces a 3SM free pronoun *nukunu*, "he/him". In terms of specificity, this "upgrade" does nothing to delimit the range of potential referents because the person in question had already been established as male (and as not being a brother of *Kalanygat*'s husband). However, given that the pronoun actually was produced in a sequential environment where an elaboration on person reference is expected, the omnirelevant question for parties in conversation, "Why that now?" (Schegloff 1996a: 439; Schegloff & Sacks 1973: 299) can be interpreted as, "Can the lack of specificity of the free pronoun actually be its contribution towards identifying the person?" Given the high incidence of avoidance in Murriny Patha conversation, might this be another generic-for-specific euphemism? Is Phyllis avoiding a name, because the relevant person's name is problematic to mention?

In line 550, Elizabeth produces a response token *Mm*_l. The intonation of this particular token is completely level.²⁹⁸ It has none of the affirming force of falling contoured acknowledgement tokens (*Mm*_l or *Mm*_h; or *Mm hm*_l). It also lacks the interrogative “appeal” contour of an open class next turn repair initiator (*Mm*_z or *Aa*_z). Seemingly, it is intonationally non-committal with regard to the hearer’s understanding of the turn to which it is responsive. It certainly doesn’t signal complete surety in having perceived the referent.²⁹⁹ The turn that follows this non-committal response token is a genuine upgrade in specificity, in the form of the self-anchored kinterm *kanggurl ngay*, “my grandson” (in this case, her classificatory *br.so.so*, Elizabeth’s son). In the next turn (line 554) Elizabeth produces a heavily aspirated acknowledgement token *Ahhu:~h* followed by a reaction token³⁰⁰ *a- ↑u-* (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2006). These are not the ordinary acknowledgement tokens (*Mm*_l., *Mm hm*_l., *Ahah*_l.), nor continuers (*Mm hm*_l., *Ahah*_l.) that appear elsewhere in the corpus. The combination of these two “emotionally charged” tokens³⁰¹ certainly reveal that Elizabeth is now very clear about which person Phyllis had been referring to. Having repaired up the problem, Phyllis returns to the story telling, recasting the reported speech of the men (line 556).

²⁹⁸ This level intoned response token is difficult to classify, given its relatively low frequency. Gardner’s (2001) treatment of response tokens gives a very thorough treatment of the many incarnations of *Mm* in British, American and Australian English; even touching on those that technically aren’t response tokens. However he notes that, “There are no level contours on *Mm* in the core Australian database” (Gardner 2001: 266). I have six instances of level *Mm* in my Murriny Patha corpus, which is not a large sample on which to draw major conclusions. However, see footnote 299.

²⁹⁹ Speculatively, the intonational neutrality may be implicated in signalling partial success and not total failure in perceiving the referent. For instance, Elizabeth may have correctly interpreted the placement of the free pronoun (rather than some other expression) in this particular environment as being motivated by a need to avoid a personal name. Given the frequency of avoidance in this corpus, this is highly likely. She may even have had a particular candidate in mind (e.g., her own deceased son) but was perhaps not completely certain that it was same person that Phyllis had in mind. Alternatively, it might signal some sort of anxiety on the part of Elizabeth upon realizing that the reference was possibly to her own deceased son. Elsewhere, Elizabeth produces another level intoned *Mm*_l following a different reference to the same deceased son. Not being a high-frequency token, it’s difficult to draw conclusions about its role, based on a one-hour corpus. However, it is certainly an interesting and complex phenomenon that surfaces (at least twice) in environments that are in some way problematic for the recipient of the prior turn.

³⁰⁰ This particular token *a- ↑u-* has not been systematically analysed and I probably don’t have enough instances of it in my corpus to do so. However, it does seem to be somewhat similar to the English reaction token *0- o:h*. My consultants translated it as “Oh goodness”. It surfaces after mentions of people who are deceased, mentions of unfortunate events or mentions of something rude.

³⁰¹ The first token is an unusual phonetic realization of the not uncommon acknowledgement token *Ahah*_l; (which has a mid-falling terminal intonation). Here, the second syllable is both heavily aspirated and the fall to the middle of the speaker’s range is drawn out. The token sounds like a laugh and a wail at the same time.

In this last fragment (Fragment 81) the recipient of a dual non-sibling reference had difficulty perceiving the referent and so a repair was initiated. The repair was initiated in such a fashion as to target the duality of the problematic pair (with the “fall-to-mid” intoned dual non-sibling “be” verb). The speaker who produced the trouble-source turn repaired the trouble by elaborating on each of the two participants expressed in her prior trouble-source turn. In the following fragment, the problem underpinning a troublesome dual non-sibling reference is in identifying only one of the two participants that comprises the dual referent. In this case, the person initiating the repair needs to use a specialized repair initiator in order to locate the problematic individual.

Fragment 82 Sorrow (2004-08-08JB03b)

- 277 Phyl LpanmaJrdaraki †nyina:thu karda kanyi,
 She'd had enough of it all....
- 278 (0.1)
- 279 Eliz pangu pangu.
 There there [Peppimenarti].
- 280 (1.3)
- 281 Eliz Ngarra ku kanggurl nyinyire warda lutj mam ngayya.
 [It was] when your grandson³⁰² passed away on me.
- 282 (0.5)
- 283 Phyl Yu;
 Yeah.
- 284 (0.86)
- 285 Eliz Eh,
- 286 (0.26)
- 287 Eliz Nyiniware wurdawurlyu,
 That was the time she came back.
- 288 (1.2)
- 289 Eliz wurrinidha pangu;
 She went there. ((to Ngardinitji.))
- 290 (1.0)
- 291 Eliz pumamngarrubertingintha,
 They brought her to see us two.
- ((32 lines removed))
- 323 Phyl nan'gu°ngi°meka:~†z̩
 You mob...
- 324 (1.0)
- 325 Eliz **bamngan'guyililngintha**;=Aa: duwu wardathu wurrinikarrktha na, ←TS
 bam -ngan'gu -yilil -ngintha duwu wurrini-karrk-tha na
 3sS.13.NFUT-1DAUC.EXDO -be_between -DU.F.NSIB tears 3sS.6go.NFUT-cry-PST TAGQ
 She sat down between the two of us and started to cry, didn't
 she.
- 326 (0.56)

³⁰² Phyllis's classificatory brother's son's son, Elizabeth's own biological son.

- 327 Phyl nangŋgal nan'gungintha panaka °ng°arra warda kardidha. ←OIR₁
 nanggal nan'gungintha pana-ka ngarra warda kardi-dha
 who 2DU.F.NSIB that.you.know-Top where then 3sS.4.bePSTIMP-PST
 Who of you two non-siblings was that one that was there at
 the time?
- 328 Eliz [(click) xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx]
 329 (0.26)
- 330 Eliz (thunuku) patha°g°athuya;
 (Throw it it here).
 331 (1.5)
- 332 Phyl Ngarra [warda] nan'g°ung°intha pana kardidha. ←OIR₂
 ngarra warda nan'gungintha pana kardi-dha
 where then 2DU.F.NSIB that.you.know 3sS.4.bePSTIMP-PST
 Where was your 'other half' at the time?
- 333 Eliz [xxx]
 334 (0.8)
- 335 Eliz panda °k°ar°d°u nga. ←RS
 Hey, that was him there.
 336 (.)
- 337 Phyl (neŋ mun) ɿ
- 338 Eliz [Bamnga]n'guyililŋintha °nga°nggaya.
 She sat down there between the two of us.
 339 (0.14)
- 340 Phyl Ah huh;
 341 (0.7)
- 342 Eliz Karduka wurrinikarrktha; patha°g°athuya.
 She started crying.

Fragment 82 comes from a dyadic conversation. Phyllis and Elizabeth are reminiscing about when Phyllis's classificatory sister was unwell (she is now deceased). The "sister" had returned from Peppimenarti, an Aboriginal community to the east of Wadeye, to a small outstation called *Ngardinitji* where Elizabeth and her husband used to live. The fragment begins (lines 277 and 279) with a discussion about how life was difficult for her there in Peppimenarti. In line 281 Elizabeth announces that she (Phyllis's sister) returned at the time when Elizabeth's own son passed away. Here Elizabeth refers to her own son with the altercentric kinterm *ku kanggurl nyinyi* "your late grandson (br.so.so)". By choosing Phyllis as propositus for the kinterm, Elizabeth here associates the referent (her own son) to her addressee rather than to herself, thus inviting her to recognize who she is talking about (see §8.5).

After a brief digression (32 lines omitted), in line 325 Elizabeth announces that Phyllis's sister had sat down between the two of "us" and started to cry. The turn consists of two latched TCUs, the first of which is the verb *bamngan'guyililŋintha*, "he/she was between us two (exclusive) non-siblings at least one of whom was female". As stated previously, if a married woman is one of the referred-participants

indexed as part of a dual feminine non-sibling reference, the normal implication is that the other participant will be the husband, unless there is another previously mentioned person who might also fit the bill. In this case, there is another previously mentioned person: Elizabeth's own son. For this reason, Phyllis treats this reference as problematic. Although in line 281, Elizabeth had stated that Phyllis's sister had returned at the time her son had passed away, she was not explicit about whether she had returned before or after his death.³⁰³ In line 327, Phyllis initiates a repair by specifically locating the other participant (that is, other than Elizabeth) as being the trouble-source. *Nanggal nan'gungintha panaka ngarra warda kardidha* is a rather complicated construction³⁰⁴ that reads something like, "Who of you two non-siblings was *that one* that was there at the time?"

Even though Phyllis's line began in the clear, it is subsequently overlapped by an indiscernible (possibly mumbled) utterance from Elizabeth (line 328). Elizabeth's line 330 is also indistinct. Here she may have said "throw it here" or she may have said something else. What is clear is that in line 328 she is not orienting to Phyllis's self-selection (line 327) and has not granted her her due right to speak in the clear. Nor, in the 1.5 seconds of silence at line 331, has she produced the required repair. Thus in line 332, Phyllis reworks the repair initiation, by losing the interrogative *nanggal*, "who", replacing it with *ngarra*, "where". The line, *Ngarra warda nan'gungintha pana kardidha*, is also a rather complex construction that reads akin to, "Where [of] you two non-siblings was that [other] one?" By losing the interrogative *nanggal*, here Phyllis enquires as to the husband's whereabouts by taking advantage of the connoted "husband and wife" reading of *nan'gungintha* ("2DU.F.NSIB"), thus producing an utterance that is perhaps best translated with the colloquial expression, "Where was your other half?"

In 335, Elizabeth answers the question, *Panda kardu nga!*, "Hey, that was him there". This turn effectively confirms that the other person that was with Elizabeth, between whom Phyllis's sister had been sitting, was indeed Elizabeth's husband, and

³⁰³ It's unclear to me (and it may also have been unclear to Phyllis) whether her sister had gone to Ngardinitji on account of Elizabeth's son passing away, or because Elizabeth and her husband were going to take care of her during her illness.

³⁰⁴ The construction is the counterpart of those that elsewhere I have called inclusory constructions (following Singer 2001). Where the inclusory construction specifically locates an individual and places them within a defined group-domain of reference, this construction specifies the domain of reference (which is located in social space with respect to the addressee) and attempts to locate the remaining (as yet unindividuated) participant captured by this group-domain of reference.

not her son. In line 338, Elizabeth recycles the verb form *bamngan'guyililngintha* (in the manner of a return pop – see §7.3.2.2), restating that the sister sat down between the two of them. In line 340, Phyllis produces an acknowledgement token Ah huh; that reveals the question of the other participant's identity to be essentially resolved.

In this fragment, one of the two participants expressed as the direct object referent of a verbal cross-reference, “us two non-siblings”, was problematic. The situation where one part of a dual reference is repairable calls for a specialized sort of repair initiator that can cleave the “dual” referent into its sub-components, so as to locate the problematic participant. The two repair initiators produced in lines 227 and 332 are precisely of this type. In the prior fragment (81) there was also a problem with a dual reference. In that fragment, the trouble-source seemed to relate to which, out of a possible two pairs of males, was the pair that had been alleged to have spoken at the same time. That case also called for a specialized repair initiator that captured the duality of the problematic reference.

In each of these fragments, the hearers had problems perceiving the referent that the speaker had in mind. Thus in each case, the referential process got stuck at stage 8 of the 9-stage process outlined in §10.4. As a result, repairs were required before the process could reach its completion. In the next section, the process does go through to completion but the hearer perceives someone other than the person that the speaker has in mind. For this reason the reference fails.

10.6 Success and failure in reference

As discussed previously, the nine stages presented in §10.4 represent points of potential failure for the referential process. Even if the referring process does go through to completion, reference can still fail if the recipient picks out someone other than the person(s) that the speaker has in mind. This is a different sort of failure from the cases examined in Fragment 81 and Fragment 82, where recipients had difficulty perceiving references and went on to initiate repair sequences. The failure of a recipient to perceive the same person(s) that the speaker has in mind may well go undetected as a failure of reference. This is precisely what happens in Fragment 83. Because the difficulties that result are not detected as having sprung from a failed reference, no repairs ensue, the referential problem remains unresolved and further problems escalate.

In Fragment 83, we can actually pinpoint a failed reference as being the cause of a heated argument. Two women begin arguing about whether or not the named individual they have in mind had been born at a particular time. The confusion lies in there being two individuals with the same name. The women begin to argue at cross-purposes about different people. The misunderstanding springs from the hearer's (justifiable) failure to correctly perceive the referent that the speaker has in mind.

Fragment 83 is extracted from one of the ethnomusicological sessions. We've already encountered part of this fragment before as Fragment 56, though here we will be looking at it in more detail. This particular session was quite chaotic. There were six enthusiastic Murriny Patha consultants and four researchers in a room with bad acoustics. From a research perspective, it was far from ideal as there were too many people in the room. This certainly contributed to the resulting confusion. Because there were so many knowledgeable people in the same place, more information was forthcoming than we were able to handle (which is precisely why this passage was transcribed). Mostly the contributed information was relevant to the research though sometimes the discussion strayed somewhat. The discussion relates to the timing of when the wurltjirri repertory of songs came into being, and how it came into being.³⁰⁵ As a means of establishing the timing of the event, the immediately prior talk had related to whether or not one of the women present, Manman, had been married when wurltjirri came into existence. Manman's first husband was a man by the name of Piyelam. When he died, she subsequently married his brother, Joe (see Figure 10.9). At the time of wurltjirri's inception (in the early 1930s), Piyelam was still alive and Manman was still married to him. However in this discussion, by the time we reach the beginning of Fragment 83, exactly to which of the two men she had been married at the time, has not been established beyond doubt.

Fragment 83 Wurltjirri (2005-07-15JB04b)

- 110 Eliz (be[niɾnɫadhaka] parramnaruy ngay kardu mam°ay°.
(When he was dreaming) they came to visit him. I was a kid.
- 111 Lucy [xxxx]
- 112 (0.3)
- 113 Eliz kunuŋiŋgi dangatha.
[I was] just little.
- 114 (0.6)
- 115 Felix dedi ngar- ngar- ngay dedi ngay me- mebertidhawagathuwurri:ya
My father would have taken her [as a promised wife].

³⁰⁵ See also the discussion relating to Fragment 30.

- 116 (0.55)
- 117 Felix ↑na na mam nawa.
Isn't that right mum, isn't that right.
- 118 (0.16)
- 119 Eliz Ah?
- 120 (0.17)
- 121 Felix WURDA NGARRA DEDI NGAY THAMA.
[She said,] "No", to my father, you tell them.
- 122 (0.15)
- 123 → Rita yu karda yaŋgay karrim panguniminya;
yu karda yaŋgay karrim pangu-nimin-ya
yeah here my.father 3SS.stand.EXIST DIST-INTENS-PART
Yeah, the "father" of mine was really there.
- 124 (0.2)
- 125 → Rita muŋrriny pana pulurttji kandjlinkurran.
murriny pana purlurttji kandjin=kurran
name that.you.know man's.name 3SS.have.EXIST=3SS.go.along.EXIST
[Same] name [as] that pulurttji['s father] has.
- 126 Felix [xxx xxx xxx]
- 127 (0.4)
- 128 Felix Piŋyelam. ʔ
Piyelam.
- 129 Eliz [(Mere ya]wu) makardurdarriwangadha mere ngadha,
(Hey No), he wasn't born at the time, he came later.
- 130 (0.1)
- 131 Rita >ŋkardʔuka nyini mana kamamkem panguwathuyŋa, ʔ<
Really he did exist, he was there.
- 132 Felix [Ah-]
- 133 Eliz [M]ja wurda.
But No.
- 134 (0.74)
- 135 Eliz wurda.
No!
- 136 (0.1)

In line 110 and 113, Manman's sister Elizabeth recounts how a group of *kardu tidha* (spirits of deceased *Yek Nangu* clansmen) appeared in her and Manman's father's dream. One of the *tidha* that appeared in the dream was their deceased sister, Kanel³⁰⁶ (see Figure 10.9). In line 115, Felix announces that his own father had been going to take Kanel as his promised wife.³⁰⁷ In line 121, Felix then announces that (before she died), she had refused to go with Felix's father. Although Felix solicits Elizabeth's confirmation of his version of the events (line 117 and 121) there is no audible confirmation from Elizabeth.

³⁰⁶ In the dream, Kanel and the other *kardu tidha* approached him as they performed a dance. The song that they danced to was to become the first of the *wurltjirri* repertory of songs.

³⁰⁷ Felix's father had four wives (one of whom was Rita's mother). However, as many as eight infant girls had been promised to him by various fathers. One of these men was the father of Elizabeth, Manman and Kanel.

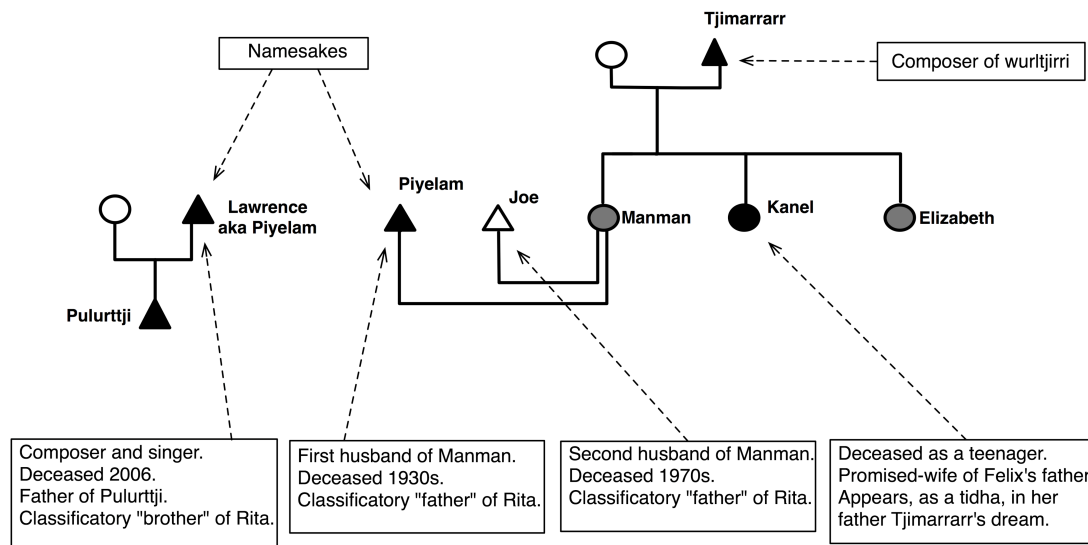


Figure 10.9 Relationships between people referred to in Fragment 83.

In a complex turn spanning lines 123 and 125, Rita announces that her “father”, the one with the same name as that Pulurttji, was there. *Pulurttji* is the name of the son of a prominent singer and composer, Lawrence Kolumboort (now deceased). Although Lawrence was alive at the time that this recording was made, and worked with us on the Murriny Patha song project, he was not present on this particular occasion. Because Rita and Lawrence were classificatory opposite-sex-siblings, Rita was prohibited from pronouncing Lawrence’s name, which like that of Manman’s first husband, also happened to be *Piyelam*. Because the restriction on pronouncing names of opposite-sex-siblings also extends to namesakes, in this turn she refers to Manman’s husband Piyelam as “that father of hers with the same name as Lawrence’s son”. Strictly speaking, he didn’t have the same name as Lawrence’s son, he had the same name as Lawrence himself. We have here another instance of the name of a close kinsman (or spouse) being used as an avoidance recognitional. Effectively, Rita refers to Manman’s Piyelam as “that father of mine [with] the exact name Pulurttji has”, where the name of the son, *Pulurttji*, is applied to the father, Lawrence.

The turn attempts to steer the straying discussion back from the tangential topic of Kanel’s having refused to marry Felix’s father, to the as-yet unresolved question of who Manman was married to when wurltjirri started. Specifically, the turn deals with which of Manman’s two husbands had been “there”³⁰⁸ when wurltjirri came into being. Because Piyelam and Joe were brothers, via same-sex sibling merger, each of

³⁰⁸ “There” as in “not dead and married to Manman”. *Karrim* is a 3rd person singular existential verb of class 3, “stand”, effectively, “he was/is there, standing”.

them were Rita's classificatory "fathers". Thus "the father of mine with the same name as Pulurtji[']s father]" is a specification of exactly which of the previously mentioned former husbands of Manman, Joe or Piyelam, had been "there".

As mentioned previously, the circumlocution that Rita uses to refer to Piyelam consists of a complex turn that spans two TCUs. Whether or not this complex turn is to be considered a single turn is far from clear. The TCU consisting of *yu karda yalngay karrim panguniminya*, ("that very "father" of mine was there", line 123), comes to a point of possible completion at the end of the word *panguniminya*. The terminal intonation of this TCU falls to the middle of the speaker's register range. Following a 0.2 second pause, a second TCU is produced (line 125), *murriny pana Pulurtji kandjinkurran*, "that name Pulurtji has". This line is overlapped with an indiscernible, mumbled utterance from Felix (line 126). This particular TCU terminates with a fully-falling "final" contour. In line 128, Felix produces the restricted name, Piyelam, on Rita's behalf.³⁰⁹

In line 129, Elizabeth disagrees with Rita, announcing that "he" wasn't born at the time. The line is produced in overlap with Felix's pronouncement of the referent as Piyelam. The turn is therefore not produced in disagreement with Felix, but rather with Rita.³¹⁰ Elizabeth's announcement reveals that she takes Rita to be referring to Lawrence (and not his namesake), because Lawrence really was too young to have been born when her father had his dream. Seemingly, Elizabeth has correctly perceived only the portion of Rita's circumlocution (the second TCU in line 125) that equates Lawrence with his son, Pulurtji, and thus understands Rita to be talking about Lawrence, not his namesake. She has not factored in the anchored kinterm *yalngay* (line 123), which is at odds with the "Lawrence" reading of Piyelam (because Lawrence is Rita's classificatory brother, see Figure 10.9). Perhaps she has forgotten (or is not aware of) the correct kin relationship between Rita and Lawrence, and therefore assumes Lawrence to be Rita's said "father". Alternatively, she may have understood *yalngay*, "my father", to be used in reference to Rita's pater. Either way, she hasn't taken stock of the full complexity of Rita's circumlocution and computed

³⁰⁹ Although Felix produced the correct name, there is not sufficient evidence to establish which of the two Piyelams he actually had in mind, since the name "Piyelam" was the relevant name to produce, regardless of how he conceived of the referent. However, more relevant to the present discussion is how Elizabeth conceives of the referent.

³¹⁰ The grounds for claiming this are that firstly, Felix's mumbled line 126 does not render Rita's line 125 inaudible – on the contrary, it is very clear. Secondly, Elizabeth's turn overlaps Felix's pronouncement of the name. Hence her turn is not respondent to his production of the name.

that the kinterm *yalngay*, “my father”, is incompatible with Rita and Lawrence’s “sibling” relationship.³¹¹

In line 131 Rita goes on to reaffirm her claim that Piyelam had indeed been there, which Elizabeth goes on to refute twice (*ma wurda*, “but no!”, in line 133 and *wurda* “no” in line 135). From hereon, the two women each take strongly opposing positions and begin to argue. The argument will not be discussed further here, except to say that the referential problem underpinning this argument remains unresolved, and so does the question of to whom Manman had been married at the time of wurltjirri’s inception.³¹²

What will be taken up here is the nature of this failed reference. Here, we are in the fortuitous position of being able to pinpoint exactly when this reference fails and diagnose exactly which individuals both the speaker and hearer have in mind. Effectively, both the speaker’s referent and the hearer’s referent are identifiable.

Figure 10.10 represents diagrammatically how Rita and Elizabeth conceive of this failed reference. Rita has in mind a mental image of Manman’s husband, Piyelam. This is the speaker’s referent. However on hearing Rita’s complex circumlocutory reference, the person that Elizabeth picks out is not Manman’s husband Piyelam, but rather the singer Piyelam (Lawrence) who was born perhaps five years after the events being discussed. Her mental image is thus of the singer, Lawrence. Her hearer’s referent indexes a different worldly participant (the man Lawrence) from the worldly participant indexed by Rita’s speaker’s referent (the actual deceased husband of Manman). It is precisely because the speaker’s referent and the hearer’s referent don’t index the same worldly participants that this reference fails. This referential failure (as well as the inability of the conversationalists to recognize the problem and then repair the reference) was ultimately to become the root-cause of the ensuing argument.

³¹¹ Quite why Elizabeth didn’t correctly perceive this reference is perhaps an unanswerable question, especially given the lack of video footage of what is a very complex multiparty interaction. Possibly the two-part design of the complex turn (where the second TCU is fitted as an increment to the first) may have been a factor. Perhaps the mid-falling contour was not perceived as strongly projective of more talk to come (note that in line 126, Felix speaks in overlap following the “possibly complete” TCU of line 123). Thus the dependent nature of the parts (“that name that Pulurtji’s father] has” here functions as a specification of “my father”) may have escaped the attention of a partly disattentive recipient. However, for the purpose of the present discussion, it is sufficient for us to have established that both Rita and Elizabeth have in mind different people, who happen to be namesakes, and that this is why the reference fails. The failure to establish successful reference is the ultimate cause of the ensuing argument.

³¹² However, as stated earlier, it was in fact Piyelam, as Rita had correctly maintained.

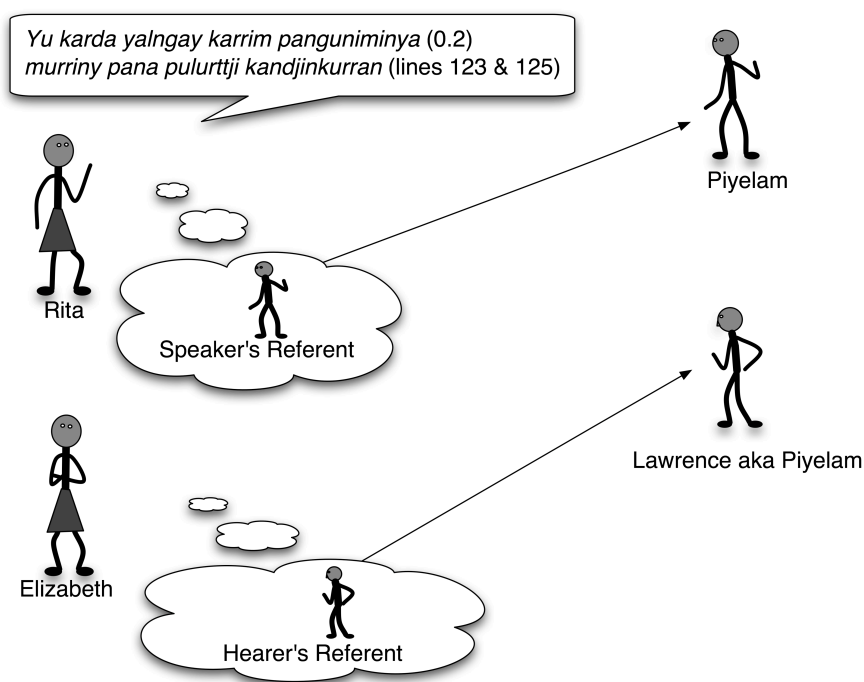


Figure 10.10 Referential failure in Fragment 83. The speaker's referent and the hearer's referent both index different worldly participants.

The fact that the hearer picked out the wrong referent, or that the hearer's referent and the speaker's referent index different participants, doesn't mean that referring wasn't performed. It was performed and the process went through to completion. Elizabeth picks out the referent that she believes Rita has in mind. Her readiness to disagree is the proof of this. It was however a reference that was performed unsuccessfully. Once again I restate our technical definition for how successful reference can be construed.

SUCCESSFUL REFERENCE: When the referred-participants/entities indexed by the hearer's referent are the same referred-participants/entities as those indexed by the speaker's referent, then, and only then can successful reference be claimed to have been achieved.

The nine step referring process presented in §10.4 is not a formula for referential success. The acquittal of all nine stages only results in reference being performed. For success in reference, there is the additional stipulation that the participants/entities that the speaker has in mind, must be the same participants/entities that the hearers have in mind. If this stipulation applies, then reference has been interactionally achieved.

10.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to provide a model of reference that accounts for the observable details of the interactions analyzed throughout the dissertation. Doing so I have had to embark on some interactionally informed speculation about what interlocutors have in mind upon producing a referential expression. However, I have endeavoured not to bring such speculation into the analysis of the interaction. Rather, it is the interactional analysis that has informed the model and has provided the justification for the nine steps proposed in §10.4.

The interactional model presented here is comprised of speaker's tasks and hearer's tasks. In this model, the roles of the hearer are as important as the roles of the speaker. In fact, I claim that without a recipient there can be no reference. If no recipient is present to receive the information transferred through reference, then the speaker can attempt to refer all he likes, nobody will be any the wiser for it.

What I have presented in this chapter accords with Jackendoff's (2002) notion of pushing the world into the mind. Most accounts of reference, Jackendoff's included, downplay the role of the hearer.³¹³ Critical to the model I present here is the notion that referents, for speakers and hearers, are not quite the same. They are both mental representations of entities and participants that hopefully are similar enough that the reference succeeds. Because speakers and hearers have different knowledge states, the speaker's referent and the hearer's referent can never be exactly the same. If the images differ slightly but are nonetheless of the same persons or things, then the reference will succeed. If the images are of different persons or things, then the reference will fail (though the reference won't necessarily be detected as having failed).

Because this chapter particularly deals with the cognitive state of referents, I have here deliberately split hairs by separating the mental constructs that are the speaker's and hearer's referents from "worldly" referred-participants and referred-entities. Elsewhere in this dissertation, this wasn't the point I was trying to make so I have frequently used the term *referent* in reference to people. I don't wish my readers to think that I am being inconsistent with my terminology. If I have stated that so-and-so is the referent, then rest assured I have merely been economical in talking about the

³¹³ In some accounts, even speakers don't seem to be required for referring, e.g., "... linguistic expressions refer to things out in the world." (Abbott 1997: 130, as cited in Jackendoff (2002: 295))

“person” in the mind of either the speaker or the hearer – a “person” who is likely to have a physical counterpart out in the “world”.

An important contribution of Australian languages towards understanding person reference is in providing a wider view of the phenomenon than the pinhole view that third person singular referencing provides. The regular use of dual, paucal and plural referencing makes the need for analysts to distinguish between mental referents and worldly participants/entities more obvious. When Elizabeth uses the third person dual sibling verb *pandjedhadharra* to refer to both her son G and Phyllis’s husband K (in line 30 of Fragment 80), the reference is not to two siblings – the reference is to the pair of siblings. The sentence in which the verb *pandjedhadharra* is embedded does not have two subjects – it has but a single subject and it is dual. How could the referent be anything other than a pair? In that fragment, Elizabeth manages to individuate the two men without making any singular references to either of them. The common sense view that referents exist in the world will struggle to explain how she does this, because in that fragment, there are no references to either man as an individual.

The nine-stage model is not a guaranteed model for success, it is simply a list of necessary tasks. If a speaker performs all of his tasks successfully and the hearers perform their tasks successfully, there is a chance that the reference will succeed. There are, however, many other factors (poor recipient design, lack of common ground, undivided attention, poor acoustics, overlap, underspecification of the referent, etc.) that impinge on the likelihood of achieving successful reference.

Successful reference I take to be when both the speaker’s referent and hearer’s referent index the same referred-participants or referred-entities. In Fragment 83 we saw a case where reference was able to proceed through all nine stages, though at stage 8 the hearer perceived someone other than the person that the speaker had in mind. In this case, the referred participants were not the same and so the reference failed.

Most references to persons do not fail. The vast majority of person-references do proceed through all nine stages, and, both speaker’s referent and hearer’s referent do index the same worldly participants. It is the successful execution of all nine procedural steps, with the additional condition that both speaker and hearers have in

mind the same persons, that is the measure of this success. This is also the measure by which reference is interactionally achieved.