

**PERSONAL REFERNECE IN
HEMINGWAY'S " HILLS LIKE WHITE
ELEPHANTS"**

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ABSTRACT:

In English , as in any other language , there is a certain linguistic category which makes reference to something else for its interpretation . This category has come to be called " personal reference " . This category is not without function to the semantic organization of a literary text . This paper purports to investigate the use of personal forms as reference items with a cohesive function in Ernest Hemingway's " Hills Like White Elephants" . Hemingway's short prose text is analyzed in terms of Halliday's descriptive linguistics . Following Hallidayan linguistics , no aesthetic evaluation is implied .The paper fundamentally tends to show how linguistic patterns operate within the " system network " . The paper falls into two parts . Part I deals with the theoretical framework where the concept of reference is seminally concerned with ; whereas Part II tackles the textual analysis of " Hills Like White Elephants " .

Halliday's concept of reference : a theoretical snapshot

The concept of " reference " is central to linguistics . Reference , in a broad sense , is the relationship between a concrete entity or an abstract concept and the linguistic item which is used to point to . That is to say , the lexical item refers to something outside the linguistic system . In grammatical analysis , the term is often used to state a relationship of identity which exists between grammatical units , e.g. a pronoun refers to a noun or a noun phrase. (See Crystal , 1980 : 391) .

Halliday and Hasan (1978 : 30) deal with the concept differently within a functional framework . What is characteristic about this type of cohesion is " the specific nature of the information that is signaled for retrieval . " So , " in case of reference the information to be retrieved is the referential meaning , the identity of the particular thing or class of things that is being referred to ; and the cohesion lies in the continuity of reference , whereby the same thing enters into the discourse a second time . " Reference , in this framework is given a semantic hue ; it is a semantic concept . But before delving deeper into the semantic interpretation of reference , it is worth examining three related concepts , i.e. ' text , " discourse , " and " cohesion " .

The term " text " is used in Hallidayan linguistics to refer to any passage , spoken or written , of whatever length , that does form a unified whole . A text may be spoken or written , prose or verse , dialogue or monologue (Ibid . : 1-2) . Halliday and Hasan (Ibid.) consider the text as " a semantic unit : a unit not of form but of meaning " . The text , in this respect , is not " a grammatical unit , like a clause or a sentence ; and it is not defined by its size."

Relevant to the concept of text is " texture" . A text has a texture , i.e. " the property of being a text " . This texture is

provided by the cohesive relation (Ibid.) . For instance , in the illustration , " Helen is a beautiful Greek lady . She lives in Athens , " the meaning of the cohesive relation between " she " and " Helen " is that they refer to the same human character . The two items (the noun & the pronoun) , in Halliday and Hasan's words (Ibid.) , are identical in reference , or coreferential . In this context , the relation between " Helen " and " she " constitutes a tie .

Both the text and cohesion are semantic concepts since they are seminally concerned with the meaning potential . Cohesion refers to the relation of meaning that exists within the text , and that define the text . Moreover , cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another (Ibid.)

In reality , the distinction between " text " and " discourse " in the Hallidayan framework causes some difficulty sine the text is " written " or " spoken " . Crystal

(Opt.ic. : 141) is on belief that the discourse is " a behavioral unit which has a pre- theoretical status in linguistics : it is a set of utterances which constitute any recognizable speech event (no reference being made to its linguistic structure , if

any) , e.g. a conversation , a joke , a sermon , an interview . " Halliday and Hasan (Ibid . 326 – 7) consider the texture of discourse as the third component of texture , i.e. the larger structure that is the property of the forms of discourse themselves : the structure that is inherent in such concepts as narrative , prayer , folk – ballad , formal correspondence , sonnet , operating instructions , television drama and the like . " So , every genre has its own discourse structure . It might seem as if informal, spontaneous conversation had no structure of its own over and over the internal organization of each sentence and the cohesion between sentences .

Being a semantic theory , Halliday's linguistics relates reference to the context of situation . If reference has the property of definiteness , or specificity , this specificity can be achieved by reference to the context of situation . The lexical items , in other words , acquire their function or role from their occurrence in a context , grammatical or situational . These lexical items are called " deictics " or " deixes " . Finch (2000 : 10 – 11) elucidates the term " deixis " . So Finch ,

in stylistics " deixis " refers to those features of language

which orientated our utterances in time , space , and speaker's

standpoint . So , for example , the TENSE system is deictic

because it locates events in the present or past . Similarly ,

words such as *here* , *there* , *this* ' and *that* , are normally deictic

because they locate items in space relative to the person who

is speaking : my *here* is your *there* . The first person pronouns *I*

and we and the second person *you* are also deictic in this

respect . This form of deixis is *exophoric* in character in that it

is situational , or contextually bound .

Finch's elucidation is of significance to this paper since it concentrates on the so-called " person system " which is the core of our analysis , as we shall see.

Deictics or reference forms enter into three distinct relations : anaphoric , cataphoric , and exospheric . Anaphoric reference is the coreference of one expression with an antecedent one . e.g. A young black woman delivered the speech , she was African . The cataphoric reference is the coreference of one expression with another one which follows it . e.g. Here is the one , the book you look for . The exospheric reference is used for speech situation , as illustrated by Finch here above .

The question considerably arouses here : what is really " personal reference ?

For Halliday and Hasan , the personal reference is but the person system of the language . The system of reference is known as " person " , where " person " is used in the special sense of " role " ; the traditionally recognized categories are " first person , second person and third person , intersecting with the number categories of

singular and plural (Opt.ic : 44-5) . Halliday and Hasan realize three types of reference : personal , demonstrative and comparative . The present paper is mainly

concerned with the personal reference , i.e. the reference by means of function in the speech situation , through the category of person . The category of personals includes

the three classes of personal pronouns , possessive determiners (usually called " possessive adjectives ") , and possessive pronouns. The items of the person system are all reference items ; they refer to something by specifying its function or role in

the speech situation (Ibid . : 43 – 4) . One more thing before going through Hemingway's prose text , that is , Halliday's linguistic mode considers the frequent occurrences of the linguistic patterns in the text , i.e. the preponderance of the words , groups , clauses and sentences

in the linguistic structures . This is best shown in (Table I) .

Hemingway's " Hills Like White Elephants : textual analysis

"Hills Like White Elephants " is one of the pieces of Hemingway's second collection of short stories , " Men Without Women " (1927) . (See Stone etal : 359 – 362) . Hemingway , in the opening structures , paints in words a real – like scene and scenery . there is a painted railway station in a hot sunny day where the long and white hills serve as a motionless boring background to the boring atmosphere . A man and a woman are sitting at a table waiting for the express from Barcelona . The tranquility of the scene stands in contrast with the heated minds and emotions of the couple at the station . The psychological traits of the characters are unfolded later on by and through the dialogue in the speech situation . The motionless setting is structured by the choice of the relational process (be) which is traditionally viewed as a static verb . (See Quirk etal 1973 ; Halliday 1985) . The central meaning of this category is that something (is) . Language produces various ways of being in grammar . These ways are expressed in different types of relational process in the clause . This being is claded in apparent peace and boredom. Moreover , the opening structures are charged with nominal groups , nouns and adjectives . These options may overdo the picturesque state of the outside world as follows .

The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white . On

this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was

between two lines of rails in the sun . Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain made of strings of strings of bamboo beads , hung across the open door into the bar , outside the building . It was very hot and the express from Barcelona would come in forty minutes .

Stylistically , Hemingway's highly nominal style builds up the mental picture of the station . In the spaces outside quotation marks , Hemingway craves for nouns , adjectives , even static verbs to image the scenery which is symbolic in nature . On the other side of the Ebro , the scene is described as follows .

Across , on the other side , were fields of grain and trees along the banks of the Ebro . Far away , beyond the river , were mountains . The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain and she saw the river through the trees .

The contrast of nature mirrors the contrast of the characters' psychological traits i.e. the contrast between sterility and fertility . While the man pushes the girl to have abortion , the woman defenselessly tends not to do it . Still , the story happens almost entirely within quotation marks .

The dialogue that follows the descriptive opening scene unlocks the love affair between the American and Jig , the girl . The girl is pregnant and the man tries to convince her to have a abortion for the benefit of their affair in the future

. The man's speech is given the tone of hypocrisy , insincerity and selfishness .

The salient feature of the patterns within the quotation marks is the deictics with cohesive function .

Out of 240 reference items constituted in Hemingway's " Hills Like White Elephants , " 134 have speech roles and 101 have other roles . The speech roles account 89 of 134 for the speaker , 45 for the addressee ; whereas 24 for the plural pronoun . The speech roles , as the (Table I) has shown , are the roles of the speaker and the addressee . But still , there are other relevant entities in the prose text represented by (he . she , they , it) . The feminine third person singular accounts for 17 of 101 , the masculine third person singular accounts for 13 ; whereas 17 accounts for the plural reference form . The specific non- human reference amounts to no less than 54 lexical items . The third person pronouns (singular or plural) are mostly relevant to the (speaker / addressee) dichotomy .

Hemingway's style in " Hills Like White Elephants " is predominantly referential . The system of reference is fundamentally exemplified by the frequent recurrence of the speech roles , i.e. the speaker and the addressee , as in

" I'll go with you and I'll stay with you all the time . They just let the air in and then it's all perfectly natural . "

" Then what will we do afterward ? "

" We'll be fine afterward . Just like we were before . "

" What makes you think so ? "

" That's the only thing that bothers us . It's the only thing that's made us unhappy."

It is worth noting that the (I / you) dichotomy in Hemingway's prose text is exchangeable . Once , the woman plays the role of the speaker while the man is the

addressee and vice versa . This exchange gives more vitality to the speech situation which is endowed mostly with material , mental and saying processes .

The semantic distribution of the reference forms throughout the speech situation is not without significance . The reference forms (I , you , we) enter into the speech situation as participants in the process of saying . The participants , in fact , do something while they say something . The role of the man in the dialogue is to convince the girl that she should have abortion , while the girl acts the role of denying the illusively persuasive argument. Halliday and Hasan (Opt.ic:50) believe that the personals refer to the speech roles (speaker and addressee) are typically exospheric : this includes *I* and *you* and *we* meaning *you* and *I* . They become anaphoric , however , in quoted speech ; and so are normally anaphoric in many varieties of written language , such as narrative fiction . Relevant to the human speech roles are the reference forms (he , she , they) . They are seminally anaphoric , as illustrated in the final lines of the story :

" Do you feel better ? " he asked .

" I feel fine , " she said . " There's nothing wrong with me . I feel fine . "

The exchangeable communication may emphasize not only the speech roles of the sayer and the receptor, but also the core of the dialogue , i.e. the act of abortion encoded in the language of the text by the reference form (it) . This non-human reference is endowed with more than one function . Let's read :

(i) " It's pretty hot . " the man said .

" Let's drink beer . "

(ii) " Anis del Toro . It's a drink . "

" Could we try it ? "

- (iii) " Well , " the man said , " if you don't want to you don't have to . I wouldn't have you do it if you didn't want to . But I know it's perfectly simple . "

Obviously , (it) , in the first instance , refers to a whole process or complex phenomenon , i.e. heat . In the second instance ; however , (it) functions as an anaphoric reference to some expression that precedes it ; whereas (it) , in the third instance , points to the process of abortion whether it occurs syntactically as a subject or an object . The multi – function of this non – human reference may explain the frequent recurrence of (it) throughout the speech situation in Hemingway's short prose text .

All these reference forms make contribution to the cohesion of Hemingway's " Hills Like Whit Elephants ." They are endowed with the cohesive function that the texture of the text can not be provided without the power of these deictics . The anaphoric reference is the predominant feature of the prose text . It is only the anaphoric type of reference that is relevant to cohesion , since it provides a link with a preceding portion of the text . when we talk of the cohesive function of personal reference , therefore , it is particularly the third person forms that we have in mind (Opt.ic : 51) The cohesive function of the deictics is achieved by means of the channel of dialogue between the participants in the speech situation .

Concluding Remarks

The anaphoric type of reference , as it has been shown , functions as a cohesive tie throughout the texture of "Hills Like White Elephants . " The title itself is of semantic relevance to the scene and scenery of the prose text . The language of the prose is referential , mostly stripped out of

the structural devices such as metaphor , simile . This may give the story structure a touch of realism .

The study has shown that while the descriptive passages are built by and through the relational clauses and the normal groups , the linguistic structures within the quotation marks are charged with the reference forms . These structures unfold the psychological tension between the American and (Jig) , the pregnant girl . Therefore, the category of the personals has become the salient feature of Hemingway's short prose text .

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