Setting the stage: How speakers prepare listeners for the introduction of referents in dialogues and monologues

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Abstract

In the present paper we analyze how speakers introduce new characters in narratives. We argue that, before what is ordinarily thought of as the introductory referring expression, speakers have used a variety of strategies to set the stage mentally for the character. We think in terms of discourse units, reference episodes, rather than structural units for studying reference. We take as our starting point the interactive strategies used in dialogues, and we look at monologues in terms of how speakers contextualize them [cf. Linell, Per, 1998. Approaching Dialogue: Talk, Interaction and Contexts in Dialogic Perspectives (IMPACT Studies in Language and Society). Benjamins, Amsterdam]. We build on work in several areas, especially the analysis of information flow [Chafe, Wallace, 1994. Discourse, Consciousness and Time: The Flow and Displacement of Consciousness Experience in Speaking and Writing. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago]. We found that speakers often treated referents as given or accessible on their first mention. However, speakers had previously used one or more pre-introductions either to activate the referent from common ground, to create a character placeholder, or to signal that a new character was forthcoming. In addition, speakers may provide cues as to whether the referent will be difficult to access. Monologue speakers varied in how they apparently construed the audience, and their reference strategies followed from their construal. We argue that the speaker’s ability to prepare

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the audience incrementally is a further example of intersubjectivity and an important part of communicative competence.
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1. Introduction

In the present paper we want to explore how speakers guide listeners in constructing representations of new characters in narratives, looking at both dialogic and monologic settings. Traditionally, analyses of introductions have focused on the role of the introductory referring expression, the first direct mention of an entity (e.g., Ariel, 1988, 1991, 1996; Chafe, 1994, 1996). We will argue that even before that point, the speaker has begun setting the stage mentally for the listener, using a variety of strategies to begin activating a representation of the referent. We believe this is an important part of establishing a referent, with both cognitive and social-interactional functions.

This study is part of a larger project in which we look at the establishment of reference as a communicative task. We believe that the ability to coordinate what it is we want to talk about is one of the most remarkable of human accomplishments. We are interested in the variety of strategies, both structural and interactive, that speakers use in doing so. We are especially interested in how their strategies convey assumptions about both their general common ground with their audience and also about the current cognitive status of concepts for their audience (Smith and Jucker, 1998; Smith et al., 2001; Jucker and Smith, 2004).

We will analyze strategies used by speakers in either dialogic or monologic settings to introduce four characters from a silent movie. In all cases, speakers have just watched the same Charlie Chaplin video. In the dialogic setting, the audience is present and shares knowledge of the first half of the movie, while in the monologic setting, participants are asked to describe and discuss the movie for a missing partner. We will be interested in contrasting, for example, how they introduce characters who are already familiar to all audiences (Chaplin) or new to all audiences (an artist).

Traditionally, models of reference and research methodology tend to be based on data from monologues, in either written or spoken form. Linell (1998) argues that, instead, dialogues should be seen as the more basic site of language use and dialogism the more basic model. Monologues would then be seen as “context-specific decontextualizing variants” (1998: 278). Further, he adds later,

... what we call monologic activities can never be entirely monological; they are also bound to specific contexts, purposes, interests, concerns, and commitments. As ‘situated decontextualizing practices’, they are themselves situated. (1998: 286)

In that spirit, we will begin by analyzing strategies used in dialogic narratives and then look at monologues in terms of the issues raised by our analyses of them. As we consider sensitivity to the audience to be a basic part of language use, we are especially interested to
see how monologue speakers deal with the displacement of the audience; that is, how they situate their narratives without ongoing cues from an audience that is physically present.

In addition, we will discuss wider issues regarding the nature of research on spoken interaction that arose as we developed our research. We started with assumptions about research in general and reference in particular that had to be re-evaluated and reformulated during the course of our study. Most research reports present research methodology as a linear process and focus on the product of that work. We want to convey instead something of the process of our research and how our thinking changed as work progressed.

Our plan was to build on work dealing with basic issues in reference (e.g., Ariel, 1996; Chafe, 1994, 1996; Gundel, 1996) and also on previous work on interaction (Clark, 1992, 1994, 1996). We began with a set of assumptions that seemed reasonable at the time. We assumed that the introduction to a character would be discrete and easy to identify and that most of the work in creating the representation of the character would occur in a given noun phrase that constituted the introduction. We thought most referents would be readily classified as given or new, and for the remaining introductions it would be easy to identify the script or conceptual link (Cote, 2001) that served as the basis for inferring the referent. We also thought that it would be easier to characterize strategies used in monologues than those used in dialogues; strategies used in monologues would be more different and more uniform. Finally, we expected that interactive devices would function mainly to correct or clarify an inadequate introduction.

Our original plan had been to identify the use of a specific set of strategies based on common ground (‘from the boat’, ‘that we saw’), common presentation devices (‘there was’, ‘he saw’), and structural discourse markers (‘and then’, ‘so’). We would then determine whether they were distributed differently for dialogues and monologues.

We had prepared examples of introductions for our coding such as excerpts (1) and (2).

(1)  *Then he saw* the young woman from the boat.
(2)  *There was* a man with a large mustache.

Instead, we found introductions that looked like (3) and (4).

(3)  B: and then he was turning around,

    and it’s you know

    there’s that lady remember that lady that he saw on

    the ship?

A: uh huh

B: *that he kind of fell in love with* or whatever?

A: yeah.

B: *so and he saw* her.

(4)  B: (H) *so then some other guy*

he is kind of like chubby

<SV fat SV>
he comes straight down where he’s sitting at
A: \(<SV\ mhm\ SV\>
B: and they’re like wondering who he is,
he’s like \(<Q\ oh\ I’m\ an\ artist\ Q>\),
I think that’s what it said an artist
(H) [so] they are talking and everything
A: [mhm]
B: (H) and then the bill comes and then the artist is like \(<Q\ oh\ I’ll\ pay\ for\ it\ Q>\).

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That is, the introductions appeared to take place over a series of utterances and turns. There was not necessarily a discrete and identifiable introduction as such. Nor was there a clear line between the introduction and other elements that either foreshadowed or elaborated on the first direct mention. At first we were tempted to think that our speakers were somehow incompetent. But soon we realized that these examples were quite typical of everyday conversations. The challenge then was to understand what it is that speakers are doing when they introduce a character in this apparently messy way.

That led us to a reformulation of our original question—how does an introduction occur? Instead of asking which noun phrase serves as the introductory referring expression, we asked what strategies make it possible for the listener to construct the needed representation. Does it make sense to say that this representation results from a given noun phrase, the referring expression? Or might it make more sense to say that it is constructed incrementally, in a multi-stage unit?

We propose then to define reference in general and introductions in particular in terms of a reference episode, with a sequence of potential elements that together are used by the listener to establish a referent. This approach would be consistent with earlier advice that linguists should think in terms of discourse units (cf. Linell, 1998; Watanabe, 1998) rather than structural units to define referents. A reference episode begins at the first point at which the speaker gives a role to the referent or hints at the presence of the referent, and it ends when the speaker seems satisfied that the listener has constructed a good-enough representation. Typically, speakers depart from the narrative line for such introductions and return to the narrative line or else introduce a new referent when the unit is considered complete (cf. Redeker, 1987).

We are borrowing the term ‘episode’ from Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs (1986/1992), but we are using it in a different way. They described several ways in which partners in a communicative game might deal with problematic referents. In one structure, which they called an episodic noun phrase, speakers would offer a referring expression in one tonal unit and then, finding it insufficient but without waiting for feedback, they would offer a second one in a new unit. In our usage, we refer to strategies that are a part of normal introductions, not problematic ones. Speakers and listeners both assume that establishing a referent may take several stages, which may occur across different phrases, utterances, or even turns.
In summary, we propose that in everyday conversations and narratives, speakers present introductions to new referents by means of a reference episode, consisting of several potential elements:

*Pre-introduction*: Devices that set the stage for the introduction of an entity.
*Formal introduction*: The expression that first refers directly to the entity.
*Self-repair*: Adjustment of the characterization of the entity.
*Grounding*: Acknowledgement or negotiation of the entity’s representation.

In some cases, the line between these elements may be clear, but in many cases the elements may overlap.

The present paper will focus on the first of these stages. That is, we want to identify the variety and function of structural and interactive devices that guide the listener in constructing some form of representation of an entity before it is directly named. While we have some reservations about the use of the term pre-introductions, we find that it conveys succinctly the sense of our argument.

### 2. Data and method

Participants were asked to watch a silent movie (*The Immigrant*, 1917) starring Charlie Chaplin. The movie has two main settings, the boat on which the immigrants cross the ocean and a restaurant with an intimidating waiter. A young woman on the boat attracts Chaplin’s interest, but they part when the boat lands. He re-encounters her in the restaurant and invites her to join him, despite having just discovered that he has lost his money through a hole in his pocket. Several events make it clear that the waiter will have no mercy if Chaplin cannot pay the bill. But they are eventually rescued by a man who introduces himself (in a written frame) as an artist. As the artist talks, offering them jobs as models, Chaplin maneuvers to pay his own bill from the tip left by the artist.

For the present paper, we will focus on three pairs of participants in a dialogue version of the task and two individuals who gave monologues. We will analyze how each introduced the four most important characters—Chaplin, the young woman, the waiter, and the artist.

All participants are university students or faculty at California State University Long Beach who volunteered to participate in the study. The data is part of a larger project, the Giessen-Long Beach Chaplin corpus (GLBCC). It consists of 108 sessions with a total of 191 native speakers, ESL speakers, or EFL speakers participating singly or in pairs. Sessions were both videotaped and audiotaped, and transcriptions were prepared using DuBois’ (1991) transcription conventions (see Appendix A).

Dialogue partners watched the first half together, which included the events on the boat up to the point where the passengers disembarked. Speaker B watched the second half alone and then narrated it to the original partner, Speaker A, in a conversational setting. The partners then discussed their reactions. For these partners, Chaplin and the young woman are common ground from the first half, while the waiter and the artist are new characters.

If a partner failed to sign up or to show up, the participant, designated as Speaker C, was instead asked to watch the movie and then tell about it as if to the missing partner. The
researcher suggested that the speaker think of the tape recorder as the phone message machine of the partner. For monologue participants then, all characters might be considered new, except that Chaplin is already a familiar person.

Three dialogues were selected for the present paper because in combination they illustrated the main strategies we had identified from a larger set of 12 protocols (Cabral et al., 2003). Two monologues were selected because they represented contrasting ways of interpreting the communicative task.

3. Background

In order to understand how reference is accomplished in both dialogues and monologues, we found we had to call on insights from areas that are not usually brought together. First we will look at discussions of the significance of the social/dialogic context for language use and at recent discussions of reference that place it in that context. Second we will look at models regarding how concepts are made active mentally. And third we will summarize the model that deals most directly with how speakers vary the structures used to introduce concepts, based on beliefs about the cognitive status of referents for listeners.

3.1. Reference in a social/dialogic context

Humphrey (1976), Goody (1995), and others have argued in various ways that human intelligence evolved in a socially interactive context, to survive through cooperation and to solve social rather than abstract problems. One implication is that cognitive processes should be seen in terms of their basis in social interaction, i.e., that cognition is inherently social. While there is room for controversy regarding various claims about the ‘social mind’ (e.g., Cosmides and Tooby, 1992), it seems safe to propose that human language surely developed in the context of social interactions. In Goody’s terms, the distinguishing feature of human intelligence is anticipatory interactive planning, that is, the ability to anticipate what another person will do and to plan our own behavior accordingly. Drew (1995) finds a natural connection between this approach and that of conversation analysis, as they look at the role of intersubjectivity. Drew identified several types of sequences in which the meaning comes from the speaker’s anticipation or projection of the partner’s response. This includes certain types of teasing, the projection of agreements or disagreements, and the use of preliminaries or pre-sequences. Other conversation analysts have provided further examples, such as the ability to detect and repair a misunderstanding based on the listener’s failure to respond as expected (Schegloff, 1991). We see the speaker’s strategies in preparing listeners for a referent as a further example of the inherently social or intersubjective nature of language use.

This approach is consistent with the claims made in separate intellectual traditions. In provocative essays, Bakhtin (1975/1981) argued that all thought, and especially all language use, is inherently dialogic. Similarly, Vygotsky (1934/1986) argued that social interaction is an inherent part of cognitive and language development and, by extension, of language use. Linguists and psychologists have just begun to explore the implications of
these claims. (See Resnick et al., 1991 and Marková et al., 1995 for notable examples of work dealing with these issues.)

Researchers in both psychology and linguistics have demonstrated various ways in which reference is interactive. Clark and his associates (1992, 1994, 1996) have carried out a series of studies on the role of collaboration in reference. Their data come from communicative tasks carried out by pairs of students in a laboratory setting, in which speakers must get listeners to identify the correct figure from among a set of shared figures. Their work has, for example, demonstrated the importance of the listener’s active participation. We note, however, that in most everyday conversations, one of the major challenges for speakers is to determine to what extent the partners do and do not share relevant information.

Using similar research strategies, but working from the point of view of social psychology, Krauss and Fussell (1991) have demonstrated the role of communally-held assumptions about common ground. The implication of their work is that people are constantly making and testing hypotheses about what their audience does and does not share in the way of background knowledge.

Linguists analyzing anaphoric and cataphoric reference in discourse have also argued that reference is accomplished interactionally. Villaca-Koch (2001) proposes a cognitive-interactive model of reference. She finds that the overall representation of discourse may occur in successive representations, combining forward (projective) and backward (retrospective) movement (2001: 449). For example, in analyzing the use of definite and indefinite expressions, she analyzes an example in which they are used in combination to introduce a character, with each element playing a role in establishing the referent.

In her analysis of anaphoric reference, Pekarek Doehrer (2001) argues that referential processes cannot be separated from the social-interactional organization of discourse. She notes that traditional models are based on the analysis of texts and therefore do not adequately explain the role of referents in natural conversations. She identifies examples of anaphoric reference which do not fit traditional models, in that their use seems not to depend on what might be accessible in a text-based model. Rather, she argues that partners must share an understanding of the activities they are accomplishing through their task (2001: 309). Pekarek Doehler concludes that analyses of reference must not only take into account the ways in which speakers are sensitive to listeners’ knowledge but must also account for how discourse objects are contextualized in a given social activity.

We argue also that reference is a social act in the sense that establishing a referent is a mutually face-threatening act. Speakers are in danger of appearing unclear, while listeners are at risk of appearing slow-witted. Thus issues of face-management arise, as dealt with in the tradition of conversation analysis (e.g., Atkinson and Heritage, 1984). A number of speech acts such as requests and invitations have been analyzed in terms of the strategies speakers use to manage face, that is, to avoid or mitigate face-threats inherent in these situations. One strategy frequently described is the use of preliminaries or pre-sequences. For example, a speaker can use a variety of pre-request strategies, which allow the listener to anticipate and to prepare in some way for the request (e.g., Pomerantz, 1984; Davidson, 1990; Drew, 1995). In some cases the pre-requests are so successful that the listener will volunteer a favor rather than wait for the request itself. Alternatively, a listener can warn a speaker that the request is problematic and that compliance is not forthcoming, so the
speaker can withdraw the request. Or, as in most cases, the listener catches on that a request is forthcoming and therefore responds to it more readily.

Originally we had thought that the point of our research was to directly compare structures used in monologic and dialogic versions of our task. Instead, we reformulated our question to ask: what are the social-interactional aspects of each task? How do speakers identify and react to these features? We propose that speakers see the establishment of reference in social terms, and they may seek to avoid the frustration or embarrassment that comes with potential face-threats. One solution may be for speakers to guide listeners by projecting to-be-introduced referents. The speaker is both anticipating and leading the listener to anticipate the introduction.

3.2. Models of processing and activation

How do speakers guide listeners in activating concepts? What assumptions do they depend on regarding the cognitive processes of their audience? We propose that speakers work from an implicit model of processing, which is similar to the processing model that has become well-established in cognition during the last 30 years (e.g., Anderson, 1983). We will work from several assumptions.

It is well-established that concepts can be activated to different degrees at any given point in time, as measured by the speed of processing a name. Further, a concept can be primed, or pre-activated, as a result of activation of a related concept (Meyer and Schvaneveldt, 1971). For example, the word ‘nurse’ is processed more rapidly if it is presented along with the word ‘doctor’ in a task. Also, a given concept can become more and less active as the relevance of the current content changes (e.g., Glenberg et al., 1994). For example, the term ‘sweatshirt’ is more active following a sentence such as ‘Jane put on her sweatshirt and went for a run’ than after ‘Jane took off her sweatshirt and went for a run’.

We believe that many referents may be constructed piece by piece. The most dramatic example of such construction is the creation of false memories. Roediger and McDermott (1995) demonstrated that, following the reading of a list of words that shared associations with a given word ‘sleep’ or ‘chair,’ people frequently are confident in their belief that the word was on the list when it was not. One explanation is that people construct a representation of the concept from the associations activated by the other words. That set of activated associations constitutes the concept, whether or not it has been named.

We propose further that speakers may use implicit models of activation as a basis of their formation of utterances, even when they cannot articulate those models. This is part of their communicative competence. Speakers who fail to anticipate listener needs and to prepare them appropriately for a referent would produce utterances that, even though grammatically correct, would be pragmatically deviant.

3.3. Reference and the management of information flow

Linguists at least as far back as Prince (1981) have recognized the important role of the speaker’s judgment about the cognitive status of entities as given or new for the hearer. In addition, they have noted that many entities new to the discourse context are nonetheless
treated as given because they can be inferred. Our analysis can be seen as exploring how speakers enable these inferences. Also we will explore ways in which speakers prepare hearers for new entities, so that they are in some sense anticipated.

More recently, Chafe (1994, 1996) presents a model of the role of various structures in information management. He describes several constraints that speakers use in introducing referents. Two of these constraints are especially relevant to our analysis. First, speakers follow the ‘light subject’ constraint. Ordinarily, they reserve the subject slot in an utterance for given information, which carries a lighter burden or activation cost. Alternatively, they may use the subject position for trivial subjects, that is, for referents that do not need much processing because they will not be referred to again. Second, speakers generally present only one new piece of information at a time, in a given tonal/structural unit. These strategies seem designed to limit the processing burden for the listener, to fit with built-in limitations on memory and attention.

Chafe (1994, 1996) discusses referents in terms of their status in one of three states: given, new, or accessible. Accessible referents are defined as those in a semi-active state. Chafe proposes that “accessibility is typically established through prior mention” (1996: 42). He notes also that referents may become accessible through inference, giving several examples where there are strong associations between the prior discourse and a new referent, such as the association between ‘gym’ and ‘basketball.’ However, he believes that inference “plays a relatively infrequent role in establishing identifiability and accessibility” (1996: 46) but suggests that “the more precise natures and limits of these two kinds of association will ultimately have to be determined through careful and contextually sensitive analyses of large quantities of natural speech” (1996: 46).

We see our study as exploring further how speakers manage information for their listeners and how they make referents accessible. We will be interested in how they combine these syntactic strategies with others, both syntactic and non-syntactic, for managing the surge of new information when an introduction occurs. In our analysis, this will include the pre-activation of concepts.

4. Analysis of reference strategies in dialogues

First we will analyze introductions by three pairs of participants in a dialogic context. As mentioned above, we chose these three because, taken as a group, they illustrate the main strategies we had identified in a previous analysis of selected strategies used in 12 protocols (Cabral et al., 2003). In addition, by taking a closer look at these individual protocols, we discovered further strategies of interest, and we also came to a better understanding of the role of the various strategies used.

Our analysis will focus on Speaker B’s narration of the second half of the video. The speaker must introduce two characters who are common ground, Chaplin and the young woman. As this is the first time the partners have discussed the video, these are initial introductions, in terms of their discourse. While Chaplin was highly salient throughout the first half, the young woman appeared only occasionally. The speaker must also introduce two characters who are new to the partner, an intimidating waiter and the artist. The waiter and the artist make an interesting contrast in that a waiter is a prop in the familiar restaurant
script (cf. Schank and Abelson, 1977; Sanford and Garrod, 1995) and therefore can be introduced in the context of that script. In contrast, the artist is a major challenge to introduce, since there is no context or common ground as a basis from which to infer his presence or role.

4.1. Introduction of Chaplin

We will begin with the introductions to Chaplin. Speaker 29B starts her narrative:

(5) B: OK so. 
   he left off, 
   and th-they got to the Liberty Land 
   you know how I mentioned Liberty Land?
   A: mhm
   B: so he was all broke because remember he pickpocketed the lady?

First, we notice that there is no clear and discrete introduction of the type we expected, with a referring expression that clearly identifies the character for the first time. Both of the first two mentions of Chaplin use the pronoun he, which should be reserved for subsequent mentions. In addition the first use of he, in he left off, seems to refer to Chaplin as movie director rather than Chaplin as the character. The introduction of Chaplin as character does not occur for several lines.

However, we also note that by the time of this first direct mention of the character, the speaker has re-established relevant common ground from the partners’ shared experience. First, she referred to the group that included Chaplin as its most salient member. In addition, she reminded the listener of the last segment of the movie they had watched together, directly requesting an acknowledgment of a previous remark and thus ensuring activation of their common ground.

Thus we might say that Chaplin as character was implicitly introduced in three different ways, through mention of his role as director, through mention of the group of which he was a member, and through reactivation of a scene in which he was present. We propose that the speaker assumes that these devices have led the listener to activate a representation of that character by the time of what would ordinarily be considered an introduction. In other words, we propose that these devices served as pre-introductions to the character.

Further evidence of the speaker’s assumption comes from an analysis of the structures used in the first mention of the character. First, we note that the speaker uses a pronoun, which is ordinarily reserved for given information (Prince, 1981). Second, the speaker places the introduction in the subject position of the clause which, according to Chafe’s (1994, 1996) model, should be reserved for referents that are either given or trivial. Third, the speaker presents other new information in the clause, which would violate the principle of one new idea at a time. The speaker has apparently violated three well-established discourse principles. We argue instead that the speaker believes that her pre-introductions have already activated Chaplin’s character, through indirect means. This would explain
why her introduction by means of a pronoun is not treated as problematic by the listener and why apparent violations of Chafe’s constraints really are not.

The introduction by Speaker B in another pair (#42) uses some of the same strategies. While his speaker does use a proper name rather than a pronoun for the formal introduction, he still treats Chaplin’s presence as given.

\(6\)

B: well,
  erm,
  ye- as you remember
  they= have been on a trip to America
  and you went out when they reached America
  (H) they were–
  \(\ldots\) (1.3) do you remember yeah \(\ldots\)\?
A: \[@ yes yes I do,\]
B: they were tied .. (1.4) on the ship
  and everybody one by one .. was .. given a ticket &
  & and let out of the ship .. to big America.
  a=n- I didn’t know why,
  but Charlie Chaplin doesn’t have .. any money left

Again, we note that the speaker appears to violate both discourse constraints (Chafe, 1994, 1996). The new character is used as the subject of a clause and there is new information in the predicate. The structures used provide evidence that the speaker is treating Chaplin as given at the time of the first mention.

However, the speaker has prepared the listener for this introduction by guiding him in activating relevant common ground. He used metacognitive expressions as you remember, do you remember and also requested explicit confirmation of the common ground before proceeding with the narrative.

He also referred several times to the group in which Chaplin was a member—three times with the pronoun they, and once with everybody one by one. The latter expression leads the listener to represent the individuals as well as the group. Thus before Chaplin is mentioned by name, the speaker can assume that the listener has activated a mental representation of him that is reasonably complete.

Speaker 52B, like 29B, introduces Chaplin with the pronoun he, treating him as given information. He also uses structures that treat Chaplin as given information. He is placed in the subject position, and other new information is included in the clause. But the speaker also has prepared the listener by evoking memories of the setting in which Chaplin was salient and by referring to the group of which he was a member.

\(7\)

B: OK,
  \(\ldots\) (2.2) er where to start.
  erm \(\ldots\) they arrived [\(\ldots\) (1.3)] in New York,
A: [mhmm]
Thus, in the introductions to Chaplin, we see several ways in which the establishment of a referent depends on much more than the referring expression as usually identified. The referring expression by itself would be inadequate to produce an appropriate representation. In two of the three cases, the speaker never uses Chaplin’s name in introducing him but rather the pronoun he. But we find several strategies that speakers use to help the listener activate prior knowledge of this character.

In all cases, the speaker begins by establishing the shared context for the introduction of Chaplin, and in two of these cases the speaker makes sure that the partner overtly acknowledges that common ground. This suggests that in a dialogic context, reference may consist partly of obtaining agreement on the common ground or context for a character. Once this occurs, the introduction itself can be linguistically under-determined, i.e., it can occur by implication.

There are several ways in which speakers can use this common ground. In all cases, the speaker refers to a group that includes Chaplin, using the pronoun they to refer to the passengers as a group. Since Chaplin is a salient member of that group, we can assume that he was activated by mention of it. In addition, speakers may refer to the overall setting (on a trip to America), to a specific incident (everybody one by one was given a ticket) or setting (they arrived in New York). Or they may refer to an interaction between the partners themselves (you know how I mentioned Liberty Land?).

It is interesting to note that in all three cases, when Chaplin is finally introduced by an identifiable referring expression, that utterance violates both of the discourse constraints described by Chafe (1994, 1996). In his first mention, Chaplin appears as the subject in all three examples. Speakers also introduce other new information in the same unit. However, as Chafe notes, speakers can appear to violate these principles when instead the information introduced is already given. In this case, we would argue that Chaplin is not really new after all, as he can be made accessible from a combination of common ground from prior knowledge of movies and from the recently shared experience. These strategies that allow the listener to infer or activate Chaplin’s presence can be thought of as pre-introductions to him.

Our data suggest however that Chafe’s analysis may be too cautious. He proposes that accessible information is ordinarily treated in the same way as new information (Chafe, 1994: 75). Yet in our examples above, entities that have never been mentioned directly are treated in the same way as given information. Consistent with general models of activation and cognitive architecture (e.g., Anderson, 1983), we propose that it is most useful to think in terms of different degrees of accessibility. In the case of Chaplin, the pre-introduction strategies are sufficient to activate his representation at a strength such that his presence can be treated as given information. As we will see below, in other cases the character is treated as somewhat but not fully activated.
4.2. Introduction of young woman

In the restaurant, Chaplin suddenly sees the young woman he had flirted with on the boat. While she is familiar to the listener, she is not expected in this context, so the introduction is an interesting challenge. With the young woman, as with Chaplin, it is often difficult to identify exactly when she is introduced.

Speaker 29B begins her introduction with and it’s, but there are several further lines before she uses a closing intonational contour (cf. Chafe, 1994) that we take to indicate her confidence in continuing with the narrative. Along the way, she uses a variety of strategies we believe are integral parts of the reference episode.

(8) B: and then he was turning around,
   and it’s you know
   there’s that lady remember that lady that he saw on the ship?
A: uh huh
B: that he kind of fell in love with or whatever?
A: yeah.
B: so and he saw her,

Her first mention of the young woman uses the definite expression that lady, implying that the listener would know which one is intended. But before she proceeds with the story, she uses a variety of devices to ensure that relevant common ground has been activated and that the listener can connect the young woman introduced at this point with the young woman from the earlier part of the story. She uses discourse markers you know and so. She also uses a metacognitive device remember. She reminds the listener of both the context that he saw on the ship and the role that he kind of fell in love with. And she twice uses a ‘try marker’ intonation (i.e., a rising intonation, typically designed to seek confirmation) to solicit acknowledgements that the appropriate memories have been activated.

The devices used are surely intended to help activate these memories for the listener. But in addition we believe they may play another important role, by signaling that the referent may be difficult to access (cf. Cheshire, 2003). The young woman in question should be part of the listener’s memory, but she is probably not salient at the current time. The listener is thus encouraged to allocate extra cognitive resources to this task, to search back through memories of the earlier parts of the movie.

We think of these discourse markers and metacognitive expressions as interactive devices, designed to guide the partners in their interaction around the content rather than to present new content as such. We came to believe that the establishment of the young woman as a referent resulted from the combination of these interactive strategies rather than from any one referring expression that identified her. The expression that lady would not be adequate in itself. The partners share in accomplishing the communicative task, with the speaker providing a variety of cues to help the listener activate the referent in a timely manner.

Speaker 42B also gives a multi-stage introduction of the young woman. Again, it is difficult to say exactly which referring expression introduces the young woman. His introduction illustrates another strategy of interest.
He begins with two devices that we found over and over in association with introductions. First, he pauses, and then he raises the pitch of his voice. Next, he uses the expression and then. In interpreting these, we note that in general, pauses are associated with dispreferred units (e.g., Pomerantz, 1984). Further, the discourse marker and then is described as marking a progression of topics as well as a literal progression of time (Schiffrin, 1987). Thus these devices ordinarily signal that a change is forthcoming. While this change could involve a change in setting or actions (as for example in excerpt #7), they often involve the introduction of a new entity. We believe these devices thus alert the listener to a forthcoming introduction, even though they do not contribute any propositional content to it.

In addition, the speaker uses the expression he met, which can be considered a presentational device specialized for introducing new humans into a narrative. This further alerts the listener for a new character.

Finally, the speaker uses the indefinite expression a woman for the first mention. This clearly is inadequate in itself and so the speaker hastens to qualify this introduction with reminders of the prior role you know the young woman whom he had given all his money and context you know on the ship. As in excerpt (8), he guides the listener in connecting the young woman just introduced with the one on the ship.

Again, a variety of devices seem to play a role in establishing the referent, not just a single referring expression. Since the young woman is not expected in this particular setting, it appears to take more work to make her accessible. The variety of devices used in the reference episode may signal to the listener the amount of work that will be needed to activate the needed representation.

The strategy used by speaker 52B is especially interesting, in light of our overall points. Most speakers refer to the young woman for the first time when she appears in the restaurant. But this speaker mentions her directly in describing the disembarkation from the boat.

He uses a definite expression to mark their common ground and an attached relative clause to describe her important role in the story. What makes this interesting is that it does not seem relevant to telling that segment of the story. Rather, the speaker is setting up the listener for a later re-introduction in the restaurant scene.
With this mention, he is later able to create an interactional sequence in which his partner actually provides the referring expression for the young woman. This is of course the ultimate evidence of accessibility.

(11) B: and erm... (1.9) he eats his beans
    and .. looks around,
    and what does he see,
A: the girl.
B: the girl he fell in love with.
A: <@ of course @> (0)
B: (0) <@ sure @>
A: @ @,
B: and erm–
    ... (1.3) yes.
he= invites her to= to have some beans also,

GLBCC 52, 136–146

This seems a powerful illustration of joint action (Clark, 1996), that the speaker has done such a good job of setting the stage for her introduction that the audience is able not only to anticipate her introduction but to provide it directly. In this case, the speaker has not provided any specific content related to the young woman. However, he has done two things of interest. One, he has suggested through what does he see that the listener should be able to supply the introduction. This implies that the character will be someone of significance in the story. Second, he is apparently relying on his earlier set-up, plus the shared meta-script of a romantic comedy. A young woman with whom Chaplin has fallen in love in one scene will surely reappear at an opportune time. It is just of matter of when; the listener should be alert for clues.

It is also especially interesting to note the pleasure both partners express over this successful joint action. Both laugh as well as expressing confirmation of A’s contribution. They may also be amused at their mutual recognition of this cliché of romantic comedy. This seems to support our view that reference establishment involves face-management, that it is a social as well as a cognitive enterprise.

4.3. Introduction of the waiter

In the examples below, the introduction of the waiter at first appears to be straightforward. One can identify the referring expressions the waiter (speakers 29B and 52B) and a waiter (speaker 42B) that serve as the introductions. But even in this case we believe that these referring expressions do not alone create the introductions. Again, we believe the speakers have used pre-introductions to prepare the listener.

First, we note that speaker 29B used a definite expression, the waiter, in the first mention of him. In this case, it is easy to argue that she had pre-introduced the waiter by activating the restaurant script (cf. Schank and Abelson, 1977; Sanford and Garrod, 1995).
(12) B: and he sees a restaurant
    and he is all hungry,
    he goes into the restaurant,
A: <SV mhm SV>.
B: orders service,
...
B: he was having a problem (H) with .. the .. waiter,

Further when the speaker described Chaplin as ordering, that action presupposed the presence of a waiter. The listener was thus led to activate the concept of the waiter before he was introduced directly.

As in example (9) above, the speaker changes pitch to a high voice and pauses before the referring expression. Here there would seem to be no reason for uncertainty on the part of the speaker about the character or what to call him on the part of the speaker—rather these changes can be seen as signals that something new is to be introduced.

It is also interesting to note that the structure of the first mention is consistent with the light subject constraint, but it violates the one new idea constraint. The waiter is treated as already intermediate in accessibility but not as given.

Speaker 42B uses similar strategies:

(13) B: erm .. he went into the restaurant and .. er ordered &
    & something to eat
    ...
    a=nd .. erm then he invited her to a coffee and to some beans
    and .. (H) there was a quite big waiter,
    big strong waiter,
    and another guest wanted to pay,

First, he pre-introduced the waiter via the restaurant script. Second, he described an activity ordered something to eat that directly implied the presence of a waiter. Third, he paused and changed to a higher pitch before the introduction.

In this case, the speaker wants to stress the intimidating size of the waiter (which is new information). Thus he uses a separate unit devoted to the introduction, and he uses a conventional presentational structure there was to do so. The structure is consistent with the light subject constraint but it violates the one new idea constraint. Again, the waiter is treated as intermediate in accessibility.

Speaker 52B mentions the restaurant and Chaplin’s order at one point, then he digresses and returns to the subject of the bill, which provides the context for the direct introduction of the waiter. It is interesting to note that the bill does not have a necessary link to waiters in general, as it may be handled entirely by other staff. However, in this case the bill is the source of much of the humor, as the intimidating waiter attempts to get Chaplin to pay it.
(14) B: and so he gets into a **restaurant**
    ... (1.6) (H) and erm .. **gets himself some beans**
    ...
B:  ... (1.6) when it comes to the **bill**,
    ... (1.8) he finds that he lost the money.
A:  mhm.
B:  ... (H) and er he gets nervous you know,
    and **the waiter** comes

As with speaker 29B, who also used the introduction the waiter, the speaker treats the waiter as given and uses that utterance to introduce another new idea, the waiter’s arrival at an uncomfortable time.

To summarize, before introducing the waiter, speakers had already set the stage for his entrance. All three speakers mentioned the restaurant directly and described an activity that strongly implied his role. In addition, they used devices associated with the introduction of something new. Finally, the structure of their utterances provided evidence that they treated the waiter as already accessible or, in the case of Speaker 52B, as given.

4.4. **Introduction to the artist**

Now we come to the most problematic character to introduce, the man who introduces himself in a text frame as an artist. There is no common ground from the discourse context and no script that can be used to prepare the listener for him. It is especially interesting then to see the strategies used by these three speakers.

Speaker 29B begins by changing to a high pitch and signaling a change of context with the discourse marker so then.

(15) B:  (H) **so then some other guy**
    he is kind of like chubby
    <SV fat>,
    he comes straight down where he’s sitting at
A:  <SV mhm SV>
B:  and they’re like wondering who he is,
    he’s like <Q oh I’m an artist Q>,
    I think that’s what it said an artist
    (H) [so] they are talking and everything
A:  [mhm]
B:  (H) and then the bill comes
    and then **the artist** is like <Q oh I’ll pay for it Q>.

The first mention of the character uses the indefinite and general expression some other guy. But this does not really complete the introduction. The speaker takes several lines to establish the expression the artist that she will use for the rest of the story. We argue that in
this case the expression some other guy serves as a pre-introduction rather than the introduction itself. It tells the listener to establish a mental space for the character, which the speaker then fills in with several kinds of information such as he is kind of like chubby and the self-description I’m an artist.

Speaker 42B uses several of the same strategies. He also begins by pausing and changing to a high pitch. He also uses a discourse marker and then, and he also makes the first reference by means of an indefinite expression, in this case the expression another man.

(16) B: ... (1.1) (H) and ... (1.9) then another man .. came in,
who er thought about engaging these two,
I don’t know he’s he was an artist I think,
and the woman,

GLBCC 42, 195–199

As in example (8) above, the speaker indicates in several ways that this character is hard to establish. He expresses his uncertainty with I don’t know, and he repeats and repairs an expression he’s he was before using the specific referring expression, an artist, which he immediately hedges. We believe that these expressions do not just reflect his own confusion—they are strategic in that they serve to warn the listener that it will be difficult to mentally construct this character. This analysis is consistent with Cheshire’s (2003) analysis of interviews with teenaged students, in which she found frequent examples of hesitations, false starts, and other similar devices before new referents. She argued that they are multi-functional, reflecting the speaker’s difficulty but also serving as a cue to the listener that a brand new referent is forthcoming.

This example of an introduction is also interesting in that it appears to violate Chafe’s discourse constraints. A new character is introduced as the subject of a clause, and there is other new information in the unit. Further, this does not qualify as a trivial referent, since the artist will play a continuing role in the restaurant episode. However, we believe that this expression another man, like the expression some other guy above, serves only as the opening stage of an introduction. The speaker is asking the listener to establish a mental placeholder, with the individuating content to be filled in subsequently. That is, the initial referring expression is ‘light’ in that it is not yet carrying content but rather is serving as a mental placeholder.

The speaker in pair #52 uses a different strategy. She gives some structural cues that a new topic or event is forthcoming, using a pause and the discourse marker and then. She then provides what appears to be a well-formed conventional introduction, using the indefinite article an to introduce the new entity an artist. However, the listener finds this introduction problematic and asks for a clarification.

(17) B: ... (1.1) and then an artist comes to his (H) his table,
.. (1.7) who has a lot of money,
you can noted it notice that by (H) by ... &
the erm .. er the clothes he wears, (0)
A: (0) and how could you see that he was an artist?
B: oh he it w- it was said
     it was [said <SV it was written SV>]
A: [oh alright].
     Yeah (0)
B: (0) it was on the screen.

Although the speaker proceeded as though the reference had been clear, the listener apparently was not able to connect the referring expression used, an artist, with any information she had previously established. We have seen that in other cases, speakers have provided some prior context before the introduction itself. In addition, the speaker has violated Chafe’s two discourse constraints. Thus, we have an interesting example in that an introduction that looked grammatically quite proper turned out to be flawed pragmatically. However, since the partners are in a dialogue context, it is easy enough for the listener to request clarification when the speaker’s strategy is inadequate. In this case, the establishment of the referent is then accomplished as a joint enterprise.

To summarize, speakers use a variety of strategies in trying to establish the artist, a character for which there is no context either via script or conceptual link. Some cues such as discourse markers, pauses, and high pitch may help the listener expect someone or something new. The use of indefinite and general expressions such as another man instruct the listener to set up a mental space for the new character, which can then be filled in. In addition, the speaker’s disfluencies can warn the listener that a character will be problematic. And finally in cases where the preliminary information has been inadequate, even a well-formed referring expression may require clarification.

4.5. Summary of analysis of dialogues

We believe that these examples provide evidence that speakers are doing much more communicative work than we had given them credit for. In establishing an entity they want to talk about, they do more than to choose an expression to identify it. Rather, they use a variety of devices to guide the listener in constructing an appropriate representation incrementally.

Whenever possible, speakers invoke relevant common ground. When there is directly shared experience, as with Chaplin or the young woman, they remind the listener of settings or incidents involving the character of interest. When the referent is identified with a commonly known script, as the waiter with the restaurant script, they refer to the script in general and also to specific activities such as ordering food that imply his presence.

When no common ground is available, as in the introduction of the artist, speakers use other strategies to prepare listeners for it. One device is to use a general term such as another guy to serve as a mental placeholder, with individuating information to be provided subsequently. Another set of devices – pauses, change to high pitch, and discourse markers such as and then – frequently precede new characters for which there is no prior context.
In addition, speakers often provide supplemental cues about the availability and accessibility of referents. With Chaplin, their treatment of him as given can be taken to imply the speaker’s confidence that this character is already salient for the listener. This is in itself a cue as to the meaning of terms such as *he*. In other cases, as with the young woman, speakers provide a number of metacognitive expressions that direct the listener to search his or her memory for a familiar but not highly salient character. And for characters with no prior context, the set of strategies used tell the listener that he or she will have to work to construct a new character.

These means of setting the stage or preparing the listener can be so successful that, in the case of the introduction of the young woman in pair #52, the listener herself can supply the initial referring expression. Or, as in the introduction of the artist by the same speaker, a seemingly well-formed introduction can be unsuccessful and require negotiation.

Strategies that help prepare a listener for a new referent can be thought of as preliminaries to an introduction or as pre-introductions. We consider them to be an important part of reference, serving both cognitive and social functions in a dialogue. We believe the study of reference should be extended to include these and other parts of reference episodes. We argue, in addition, that pre-introductions provide a further example of intersubjectivity.

5. Analysis of monologues

Having analyzed reference strategies used in dialogues, now we want to take a fresh look at strategies used in monologues. We have seen that in dialogic settings, speakers can constantly confirm and disconfirm hypotheses about their common ground and about the current salience of given entities. In monologue settings, however, ongoing feedback is not available, and so speakers have to make a set of assumptions about the audience’s knowledge and about what will be salient cognitively at any given point. That is, they have to create or imagine the context on their own.

We will organize our presentation of monologues differently from our presentation of dialogues. In analyzing dialogues, we found that there was consistency from speaker to speaker in how they treated a given referent. For example, speakers introducing Chaplin treated him as already familiar and salient, while they treated the young woman as familiar but not salient. But in analyzing monologues, we found much less consistency from speaker to speaker, so that it was hard to characterize how monologue speakers introduced a particular referent. When we tried to understand how their strategies could look so different from each other, we came upon a different way of looking at the monologues and the strategies used. It seemed that here there was more consistency within a speaker rather than across speakers. As we will argue below, it appeared that monologue speakers varied greatly in how they construed the communicative task.

We thought we had provided a clever cover story for monologues. Our sign-up sheets had asked for participants to sign up in pairs. But sometimes only one person signed up at a given time or the partner failed to show up. So we asked the participant to describe the movie as though that missing partner now wanted to know about it, and we further asked them to imagine that our tape recorder was the partner’s phone message machine.
However, in watching or listening to speakers in monologues and dialogues, it is clear that they have very different assignments. While partners in the dialogue approach their task as familiar and engaging, the monologists show various signs of awkwardness. Their stories are much shorter overall, and it is especially striking that they convey less of the humor of the story.

This led us to reformulate the questions about monologues and dialogues. Now we asked: how do speakers construe the communicative task and how does that affect the strategies they use? How do monologue speakers solve the problem of the missing audience?

We will compare two examples of monologues that we believe represent two widely different construals of the task. We will argue that their reference strategies followed from their construals.

5.1. Creating an imaginary audience

One speaker, #25, is clearly willing to go along with our story. Her strategy is to create an imaginary audience, which she addresses directly. In addition, she uses formal strategies we ordinarily associate with public speaking or performing (cf. Watanabe, 1993, 1998). One might say that she had found ways to transcend the problems posed by the monologue context.

First, she provides a prologue to the story, in which she directly addresses the imaginary audience, using several interactive devices. This includes the use of personal pronouns to include the audience, you and we, as well as interactive discourse markers well and so. In this opening, she also pre-introduces the main characters through mention of Chaplin as director/producer and through mention of the group, the immigrants.

\[\text{(18) C: (H) well it’s too bad you missed this movie, it’s actually pretty famous as most Charlie Chaplin movies are, and this one was all about immigrants. (H) so it’s a situation we all know.}\]

Later in the prologue she mentions the central characters as individuals.

\[\text{(19) C: \ldots (1.7) erm basically the major characters, there was himself and then this girl,}\]

Notice however that even with her careful formal introduction to the story there was no point at which there was the type of introductory referring expression we would expect. The first mention of Chaplin is in reference to his overall set of movies (as most Charlie Chaplin movies are), and the second was a reflexive pronoun (himself). It is as if the introduction was in the audience’s inference that a Chaplin movie starred Chaplin. The expression the major characters also leads the audience to activate a representation of Chaplin. Thus the speaker prepares the imaginary audience with several pre-introductions and apparently presumes that a direct introduction would then be redundant.
The speaker also uses several devices in the prologue to help introduce the young woman (see excerpts 18 and 19). First, the mention of immigrants implies the presence of several people; the term major characters prepares the audience to process more than one new character, and the expression and then, as we have seen above, also frequently signals an introduction.

The first direct mention of the young woman consists of the expression this girl. As Givón (1995) has noted, the expression this girl, as opposed to a girl is most likely to be used when a new character will be maintained in a text. It serves as a signal to the audience to keep the character active. Thus the introduction of this character consists of several pre-introductions as well as an initial referring expression.

The speaker also introduces the artist in the prologue.

(20) C: ... mhm–
... (2.3) there were some major minor characters
... that were important for different phases of the movie=,
and er let me see was there one who particularly .. stood out,
... (1.9) er .. why,
a good turn of the story was when they were in New York later on
&
& and there was this ... artist,
able to employ them,
whom they met in a restaurant,
so I think he wanted them as models or something.

GLBCC 25, 48–56

Here she uses several devices to prepare her listener for the problematic entrance of the artist. First there was reference to supporting roles in general there were some major minor characters. Second these characters were separated into individuals one who particularly stood out and finally there was an introduction to the individual and there was this ... artist.

In the two pre-introduction utterances and also in the introduction itself, the speaker used the canonical presentational structure, the existential there was. This structure occurs more often in her monologues than was typical of dialogues. It can be seen as a device that makes it easy for an audience to identify an introduction.

The introduction of the waiter is handled differently. He does not show up in the prologue but rather later on during a description of a specific episode. In this case, as with most speakers, the speaker was able to pre-introduce the waiter from the shared restaurant script into this restaurant and tried to order some food.

(21) C: and I guess since he was very hungry
(H) he went into this restaurant,
and he couldn’t really get his meaning across,
... And he couldn’t really talk to the waiter.

GLBCC 25, 192–198
The presence of the waiter is implied further by the description of Chaplin’s difficulty in communicating with him and he couldn’t really get his meaning across, and he couldn’t really talk to. Both are expressions that imply a human recipient.

Thus, by the time the first direct reference to the waiter is made, his presence has already been well established and the speaker can introduce the waiter with a definite structure, the waiter. Note also that the utterance would violate the one-new-idea-at-a-time principle unless the waiter’s presence is assumed at that point.

In summary, we find that this speaker used a variety of means to create an imaginary dialogue out of a monologue assignment. Her reference strategies were similar to ones in a dialogue in many ways. She used interactional devices such as discourse markers and appeal to the audience. However, she took pains to create a prologue that would make clear what common ground would be required to understand the story. She used it to introduce the three major characters from the story and also to provide the context that was relevant to introducing the fourth. We also note that she used canonical presentational forms more than did typical speakers in dialogues. The speaker is more likely to mark individual introductions with formal devices such as there was.

5.2. Assuming an informed audience

Another speaker, #9, illustrates a different approach to the story. He also begins with a preview, but it is very brief.

(22) C: OK
the movie was about ... (1.1) immigrants coming to America,

GLBCC 9, 5

The story proceeds for several lines without a direct introduction of Chaplin. After a long pause, the speaker describes a lively card game.

(23) C: ... (7.) they showed .. when they were playing cards
the guy getting mad,
... so he stole money
and he wanted to ... (1.8) to pla=y agai=n,
and so the guy .. said <Q OK Q>.

GLBCC 9, 11–15

When Chaplin is finally mentioned directly, as the second the guy, his presence is clearly treated as given information. First, the definite article ‘the’ is used. Second, ‘the guy’ is the subject of the clause, and third, there is other new information in the unit. The only pre-introduction has been the mention of the immigrants at the beginning of the story.

The speaker also fails to introduce the young woman directly, but rather treats her as given information in the course of describing the theft of her mother’s money.
(24) C: ... the lady from which he stole it from her daughter had noticed that the money was gone

As in the introduction of Chaplin, the speaker uses a definite article, puts the expression in the subject position, and introduces other new information in the unit. Again, he is treating the character as given information in his first direct reference to her. The only pre-introduction was in the reference at the beginning to immigrants.

His introduction of the waiter also treated that character as given. In this case, his strategy was consistent with that of other speakers.

(25) C: so he went to the restaurant, got some beans, (H) . this other guy had shortchanged the waiter .. like

Note that while the introduction of the other customer, ‘this other guy’, had structural cues – the high pitch, the pause, and the indefinite this – the introduction of the waiter had no structural cues. That introduction apparently relied on the previous mention of the restaurant script and the order of beans.

Finally, the introduction of the artist looks quite different from most other introductions of this character. It looks like a textbook introduction in that it was accomplished in a single, grammatically well-formed utterance.

(26) C: and in the meanwhile this artist guy came over, (1.5) and was talking to him and offered to pay his BILL,

For this character, Speaker #9 does provide some structural cues for the introduction. He uses a discourse marker for change of context, and in the meanwhile. He also uses the indefinite this (Givón, 1995). But this introduction gives no hint of the audience’s need for some context in order to figure out who the artist might be. The character is treated as given, with the referring expression placed in the subject position and new information provided in the verb phrase. Further, there is no elaboration to clarify who he is.

It is tempting to judge this protocol as somehow inadequate. However, it is well-organized overall, it is composed of well-formed utterances throughout, and it contains much more detail of some events than do other protocols. Our explanation instead is that this speaker construes the task in a different way from Speaker 25. He appears to take the characters as given but to concern himself with describing action sequences carefully. This is what one might do in describing a movie that the audience is already familiar with but cannot remember details. Or it is how one would approach an artificial memory task—tell me what you remember about movie X.
Schwarz (1998) has noted that researchers ignore the fact that they are violating Grice’s conversational maxims, while research participants may be attempting to follow them. For example, in our study we assumed speakers would follow our instructions and would act as though they were addressing a naïve audience. But participants may instead interpret the actual context of their telling the narrative, that it is in a research setting. They may reasonably believe that the researcher is the actual audience and that the researcher will certainly have seen the movie. Further, they may form hypotheses about the purpose of the study and behave accordingly (Orne, 1962). For example, it is reasonable to conclude that the purpose of the retelling is not for the speaker to inform or entertain a naïve audience but rather for the researcher to test the speaker’s memory.

Thus, we should not have been surprised that participants differed in how they approached the task. In some cases, they did attempt to follow our instructions and tell the story as if to a naïve audience. But others quite reasonably treated the researcher, not the missing partner, as the audience.

In sum then, individuals asked to give a monologue may find different ways to handle the challenge. We have selected two radically different approaches for the present analyses. One speaker (#25) created an imaginary audience and spoke as if carrying on a dialogue with that audience. However, the structures used differed from actual dialogues in that she depended more on formal introduction devices, a prologue to ensure the establishment of relevant common ground and conventional structures to signal individual introductions. A second speaker (#9) construed the task in terms of the research setting. As a result, he felt no need to worry about establishing referents. He treated the main characters as given and focused on details of their actions, as one would do in recounting a movie to someone who is already familiar with it. One way to think of it is that each person has been given a problem, a missing audience, and they have chosen different ways to solve it. They have created different contexts for the telling of the story, and their reference strategies follow directly from them.

There are other possible construals of the task we gave and other possible strategies for solving the problems posed by monologues. In addition, different contexts for monologues will pose different problems for speakers. In our case, the monologues were set in a research context. In other situations, speakers would have other bases for assumptions about their audience that would be used to contextualize their monologues. We believe that, despite the valuable existing literature on monologic narratives (e.g., Chafe, 1980; Watanabe, 1993, 1998; among many others), there is much room for exploring them from new perspectives.

6. Conclusions regarding reference strategies

In looking at reference as a communicative task, it is important to understand the variety of problems speakers have to solve in order to communicate successfully. They must ensure that listeners can activate a previously known referent or construct a representation of a new one. And they must do so at the pace expected in the conversation or narrative.

We find that reference is accomplished over a series of expressions, utterances, and turns rather than in a given formal referring expression. We call the whole discourse unit a
reference episode, beginning with the first hint that the listener needs to activate a new character and ending when the speaker resumes the narrative or introduces another new referent. Those elements in the reference episode that serve to prepare the listener for an introduction are seen as pre-introductions. In some examples, there is no clear distinction between pre-introductions and formal introductions.

Speakers prepare their listeners for a new referent in a variety of ways. They guide the listener in activating relevant information whenever possible, and they provide cues about the general nature of new information that is to be introduced. These cues may come in the form of syntactic/semantic presentational structures, discourse markers, and metacognitive expressions. Speakers may also provide general warnings of unexpected elements, with pauses and changes in pitch. And they may give cues as to how easy or hard it will be to access or construct a referent.

While we started with the notion of pre-introductions based on our intuitions regarding speaker strategies, we found evidence for these intuitions based on analyses of the structures used by speakers. Speakers often treated the referent as given at the point of the first explicit mention. They might use definite expressions, place the referring expression in the subject position, and introduce more than one new idea in a unit. Presumably, they believed that their prior utterances had enabled the listener to activate the new referent. In other cases, they treated the referent as accessible, introducing it along with other new information but without placing it in the subject position.

The reference strategies used depend on how speakers construe their audiences. In the case of dialogues, speakers have many opportunities to negotiate their common ground with the audience, including both the prior context of referents and their current salience. But in monologues, speakers must make assumptions about the audience and proceed without feedback. Monologue speakers may differ radically in how they construe their audience and may thus use very different reference strategies, consistent with those different assumptions. That is, they may contextualize their monologues differently, and the contextualization chosen will directly affect the reference strategies used.

7. Conclusions regarding the study of spoken interaction

We also looked for general conclusions regarding the study of spoken interaction. First, we learned that it is valuable to do research that looks both at dialogues and at monologues. We learned more about each once we looked at them together rather than separately. Yet in designing research, tradition has been to look at one or another. The tools for analysis have also tended to be designed for one context or another but not for both.

While we started with the assumption that monologues would provide the norm and that dialogues would be seen as messy variations on that norm, we found that in the case of reference strategies, it was useful to look at them the other way around. This is consistent with the belief that language must have developed in a dialogic context (e.g., Goody, 1995) and that language use is inherently dialogic (Bakhtin, 1981). Our findings support Linell’s (1998) proposals that we should treat dialogues as the more basic case of language use and that we should look at monologues in terms of the re-contextualization they require.
No one model or discipline fully accounts for our observations. Rather, we believe a multi-disciplinary approach is necessary to do justice to the complexity of the phenomena observed. Cognitive models of the activation of concepts provided insights into the processes involved in representing a new referent (Anderson, 1983; Glenberg et al., 1994) while linguistic models of discourse structures (Chafe, 1994, 1996) provided insights into how speakers use these structures to manage information flow.

We believe that, despite all the valuable analyses of reference structures in both psychology and linguistics, we are just beginning to understand how it is that speakers get listeners to construct the mental representations of referents necessary to understand and enjoy conversations and stories.

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Appendix A


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intonation unit</td>
<td>{carriage return}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truncated intonation unit</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truncated word</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech overlap</td>
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<table>
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<th>Transitional continuity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuing</td>
<td>,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lengthening</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lengthening</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pause
  Long ...(N)
  Medium ...
  Short ..
  Latching (0)

Vocal noises
  Vocal voices ()
  Inhalation (H)
  Exhalation (Hx)
  Glottal stop %
  Laughter @

Quality
  Laugh quality <@ @>
  Quotation quality <Q Q>
  Sotto voce <SV SV>
  Loud <L L>
  Whisper <WH WH>
  Multiple quality features <Y<FF>Y>

Transcriber’s perspective
  Researcher’s comment ((()))
  Uncertain hearing <X X>
  Indecipherable syllable X

References


**Sara W. Smith** is professor with a joint appointment in Psychology and Linguistics at California State University, Long Beach. Her long-term interest is in understanding the nature and role of intersubjectivity; recent research has explored ways in which common ground is established and exploited in everyday conversations. Three recent papers have focused on the role of discourse markers in negotiating common ground (Jucker and Smith, 1998; Smith and Jucker, 2000, 2004). Other papers dealt with interactive strategies used in establishing reference, including vague referents (Smith and Jucker, 1998; Smith et al., 2001; Jucker et al., 2003).

**Hiromi Pat Noda** is a graduate student in Linguistics at California State University, Long Beach. Her MA thesis deals with the negotiation of common ground by bilingual speakers with varying amounts of overlap in their language skills as well as in knowledge of the topic. Her long-term interests are in the study of conversational code-switching, discourse pragmatics, and general sense-making strategies.
Steven Andrews is a graduate student in Psychology at California State University, Long Beach. He also works with Dale Jorgensen conducting research on smiling and its effects on the facilitation of requests. His interests include social well-being, decision making in small groups, and non-verbal communication. He is currently employed as a counselor at a drug treatment facility, where he helps youth find happiness in life without using drugs and alcohol.

Andreas H. Jucker is professor of English linguistics at the University of Zurich having previously taught at the Justus Liebig University, Giessen. Recent publications include Historical Dialogue Analysis (1999, co-edited with Gerd Fritz and Franz Lebsanft), History of English and English Historical Linguistics (2000) and Diachronic Perspectives on Address Term Systems (2003, co-edited with Irma Taavitsainen). He is the editor of the Journal of Historical Pragmatics (with Irma Taavitsainen) and the editor of the Pragmatics & Beyond New Series (Benjamins). Current research interests include the analysis of discourse, cognitive pragmatics (relevance theory) and historical pragmatics as well as the grammar and the history of English.