

Anaphora and cataphora on the select State of the City Addresses of the mayor of Dapitan

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Abstract: State of the City Address (SOCA) is a speech modelled after the State of the Nation Address, through which, the general public is made to know the performance of the local government unit and its agenda for the upcoming year. Therefore, it is imperative for SOCAs to clearly convey its message and carry out the myriad function of enlightening its readers which could be achieved through the proper use of reference. This paper seeks to identify the types of reference employed on the SOCAs from 2014 to 2016 of Hon. Rosalina Garcia Jalosjos, Mayor of Dapitan City and look into how the references contribute to the clarity of the message of the text. The qualitative method of research is used in this study through an in-depth analysis of the corpus. After a thorough analysis, it is found out that the two reference types namely, anaphora and cataphora are both employed on the three SOCAs, the former being used more frequently than the latter accounting to 80% and 20% of actual usage, respectively. Moreover, the use of anaphors and cataphors on the three addresses helps in conveying the message clearly because they primarily become aids to avoid the repetition of the same element in the text especially when there wasn't a need to emphasize a point. Finally, it is recommended that writers of State of the City Addresses should have a vast knowledge on how reference should be used and the functions they take in the text, since this is a vital tool to clearly transmit a message.

Keywords: anaphora, cataphora, reference, syntax, grammar, State of the City Address

Introduction

Globalization has brought many challenges by leaps and bounds in this country, most especially in the field of education. In fact, at present, there is a demand for schools to produce graduates who will not only survive but also thrive in a borderless and competitive world. In keeping pace with the recent development and challenges, it becomes

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imperative for everyone to learn the language of the global arena, the English language. Admittedly, Filipinos have preference of the English language, basically, because it has undeniable economic, social, even political advantage. To put it aptly, the crucial role of the language in advancing the cause of the Filipinos gives reason to urge the people to have acquired the skill for English language use. For it is and will remain a medium of communication across countries for many more years to come. It is used more frequently in the Philippines as compared with its neighboring countries in the ASEAN region. And like in other countries in the world, the language has tremendous influence in government and politics. It has become an important vehicle in shaping the political image, earning voters' confidence and disseminating political platforms.

Yet, quite a number of deficiencies confront our written utterances especially with cohesion and coherence. Cohesion and coherence are two textual elements which have long been recognized as important features of good writing. So, language learners indispensably need to write coherent and cohesive texts to qualify English writers, whether they are EFL or ESL learners.

Cohesion and coherence are on textual level. This level is the underlying structure of the surface structure achieved through the use of grammatical elements to form the sentences and the first stage to the formation of the text through cohesion and coherence constructed on the basis of the textual cohesion through the readers' efforts to interpret. The relations between the sentences, at this level, play a major role in the achievement of coherence. Cohesion can be established by various means. These means include reference, a certain item in every language including English, which instead of being interpreted semantically in their own right, they make reference to something else for their interpretation. Wales as cited by Ahmed (2008) further explained that "reference is concerned with the relation between words and extra-linguistic reality: what words stand for or refer to in the outside world or universe of discourse." Traditional semantic view of reference is one in which the relationship of reference is taken to hold between expressions in a text and entities in the world, and that of co-reference between expressions in different parts of a text.

In grammar and text linguistics, reference is used in a much broader sense to mean any kind of designation, textual as well as situational. Even in semantics it is recognized that not all elements of a language

refer to specific objects in the outside world, chiefly the grammatical or function words (e.g. prepositions, conjunctions, determiners and pronouns). Pronouns, however, like other classes of words, can point to something in the environment, whose semantic reference will yet change from situation to situation. In the text, the terms reference and refer are convenient to describe the function of words like pronouns and determiners to designate a noun phrase they identify within the immediate co-text. Additionally, reference is the meaning relationship that links full lexical expression of an entity or circumstance with the pro-form/substitute to which it refers. It is in this premise that this study was conducted primarily to identify the types of reference employed on the State of the City Addresses (SOCA) of the Mayor of Dapitan City. Specifically, the study sought to determine the types of references that are evident on the SOCAs as to, anaphora and cataphora.

Anaphora and cataphora found on the SOCAs

According to Chaleshtori (2009), in his study entitled *Investigating the Role and Variability of Miscellaneous English Cohesive Devices across Registers*, reference is defined as the “semantic relationship between words and things that they stand for.” This term in semantics conveys the relationship between words and to what they are pointed out in the real world. In this study, two types of reference were treated for investigation, these were anaphora and cataphora. As Morley as cited by Ahmed (2008) puts it, “the various markers refer either back to something that has already been mentioned (or implied), in this case they have Anaphoric Reference or forward to something which is about to be said, in this case they have Cataphoric Reference.” After a comprehensive analysis, evaluation and interpretation of the topic, the study revealed the following results.

Reference was found to have occurred 39 times in the 2016 SOCA. Both anaphora and cataphora were employed by its writer through the usage of the following references, *us, its, them, they, their, I, he, his, her* and *your*. To illustrate the occurrence of reference, an excerpt below taken from the SOCA of Honorable City Mayor Rosalina G. Jalosjos is presented. The statement was chosen because it registered the most number of cataphoric references in the SOCA. Cataphora is a sub-type of endophoric reference which refers forward to something that is mentioned later in the text. The encircled words “I” and “you” are the cataphoric references of the underlined words “Dapitanons”

and “Mayor Rosalina Garcia Jalosjos.” These references all refer forward to the presupposed element that was mentioned after these cataphors appeared in the text.

“This calendar year **I** am happy to report to **you** my fellow **Dapitanons**, ~~that we have to start the implementation of the following projects...~~”

“...Kini ang inyong ubos nga sulugu-on, **Mayor Rosalina Garcia Jalosjos**...” (This is your humble servant, Mayor Rosalina Garcia Jalosjos...)

According to *The American Heritage Dictionary* (2025), “cataphora is the use of a linguistic unit, such as a pronoun to refer ahead of another unit, for example the use of him to refer to John in the sentence, Near him, John saw a snake.” In the excerpt above, the two encircled words directly stand for the words *Dapitanons* and *Mayor Rosalina Garcia Jalosjos*, which were the items being referred to and the same thing pointed out by the writer. Hence, these references stand for and in place of the word they refer. Reference could use quite a handful of mechanisms for anaphoric and cataphoric relations depending on the syntactic structure of a sentence as well as its semantic purport. In the case of the above excerpt, it is obvious that the two personal pronouns, the former being in the first person singular possessive case and the latter in the second person plural possessive case, were used by the SOCA's writer as cataphors of their antecedents which came after them. In the quest for cohesion in text, the pronoun and its antecedent should match, that is, a human pronoun must have a human antecedent while a non-human pronoun should have a non-human antecedent. In effect, cataphoric referencing should follow this agreement, hence we have the human pronoun *I*, as a cataphor of its human antecedent *Mayor Rosalina Garcia Jalosjos* and human pronouns *you*, cataphoric reference of the human antecedent *Dapitanons*. A lesser number of studies have been done which were focused on observing and/or investigating the nature of cataphoric referencing. However, one of the earliest investigations of Cowart and Cairns as cited by Fedele and Kaiser (2014), found that a strong preference to interpret a cataphoric pronoun as referring to the first possible noun phrase that appears after the cataphor. This observation is half false and half true based on how the above excerpt appears to be wherein the first cataphor's antecedent

is not the noun phrase immediately following it. As found in the SOCA, its antecedent is situated at the second to the last paragraph of the text. On the other hand, the finding was evident in the occurrence of the second cataphor that shows the close proximity of cataphoric referencing from the cataphor which is immediately followed by its noun phrase antecedent.

It could be noted from the above excerpt that except for the purpose of avoiding the repetition of the same words, they serve an essential function in the text. The cataphor *I* in the entire 2016 SOCA was found to have been used the 10 times, notably the most number of occurrences in the three SOCAs from among the three personal pronouns used as cataphors which were *I*, *you*, and *your*. Undoubtedly, this scenario has been predicted to occur because of the very nature of the text. Which certainly demands to become voraciously personal since it is addressed to the constituents of the city. The prevalent use of the cataphor *I* was delicately done to inject an element of thrill and excitement in the text since readers are left hanging as to who is being referred to by the cataphor. Eventually, the revelation of the antecedent then becomes emphatic because of the emphasis put forth on it. Similarly, the main function of the cataphor *you* is to serve as an agent in emphasizing the antecedent that comes after it. It is the writer's obvious intention to direct the focus of the readers to the antecedent, that is why it was not mentioned immediately and instead, placed an emphatic element to set the momentum towards highlighting the word *Dapitanons*.

This observation is half false and half true as far as the above excerpt is concerned wherein the first cataphor's antecedent was not the noun phrase immediately following it. As found in the SOCA, its antecedent was situated at the second to the last paragraph of the text. On the other hand, the finding was evident in the occurrence of the second cataphor that shows the close proximity of cataphoric referencing from the cataphor which was immediately followed by its noun phrase antecedent. With the use of the abovementioned device, the message of the excerpt was clearly transmitted to the readers. The use of cataphoric references added a little bit of rhetoric drama, since the readers would be left hanging as to who were referred to by the encircled words in the excerpt. It was also very effective in telling the readers of the whole story given that no unnecessary repetition of words was found but instead, references were used for brevity.

It is in the 2015 State of the City Address wherein reference was least used by its writer. In fact, it was found to have been employed on the aforesaid SOCA for only 10 times. Further, its two sub-classifications were used by the writer which were anaphora and cataphora through the employment of the references, *them*, *their*, *his*, *her* and *I*.

Shown below is an excerpt taken from the 2015 SOCA being studied where the above mentioned devices were employed by its writer. The below statement was chosen because it contained the most number of occurrences of anaphoric referencing in close proximity.

“The role of the city government as we approach the new millennium should not be to dominate any facet of Dapitanon life but rather to aid and encourage people, communities, institutions and NGOs to deal with as many difficulties and challenges facing them as possible, and to help see to it that every Dapitanon has equal opportunity to realize his or her potential.”

Azarizad and Tohidian (2012) defined anaphora as “a linguistic relation between two textual entities which is defined when a textual entity (the anaphor) refers to another entity of the text which usually occurs before (the antecedent).” Further, Akamajian et al. (2001) noted that anaphoric referencing “deals with the relation between pronouns or noun phrase and a set of antecedents.” To put it aptly, it is the connection between, for example a pronoun and its noun phrase antecedent, both referring to the same thing. In the above excerpt, two sets of anaphoric referencing are evidently used by the writer of the SOCA. The first one has the plural pronoun anaphor *them* with its noun phrase antecedent, *people, communities, institutions and NGOs*. The other anaphoric relations involved an unusual two personal possessive singular pronoun anaphors, the first one denoting masculinity which was *his* and the other, femininity with the use of *her*. Both anaphors refer back to its antecedent *every Dapitanon*, a noun phrase consisting of an adjective *every* that signals the inclusion of each person or thing in a group or series; and a noun *Dapitanon* which means a native or resident of Dapitan City. Therefore, the antecedent was referring to each of the people living in Dapitan City regardless of what their sexual orientation is. Because of this, the

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writer then used *his* and *her* to specify who these Dapitanons were, which of course each of the people residing in the city.

The use of anaphora in oral and written utterances helps in conveying a message clearly because it primarily becomes an aid to avoid the repetition of the same item in the utterance especially if there is no need to repeat it for emphasis. To illustrate this observation, the excerpt above was rewritten but without incorporating the use of pronouns as anaphors in referring to their antecedent, instead they were completely repeated. The original excerpt would then look like the one below:

The role of the city government as we approach the new millennium should not be to dominate any facet of Dapitanon life but rather to aid and encourage *people, communities, institutions* and *NGOs* to deal with as many difficulties and challenges facing *people, communities, institutions* and *NGOs* as possible, and to help see to it that *every Dapitanon* has equal opportunity to realize *every Dapitanon's* potential.

As one could notice from the above excerpt, two sets of noun phrases are being repeated in a sentence. This is how the statement would look like if not employed with anaphoric referencing; the same elements are completely repeated hence, becoming exceedingly wordy to the extent of being messy. Donellan as cited by Ahmed (2008) had a similar viewpoint when he said, "in some cases repetition of information makes the discourse sound like the awkward language of a child's first reader." This phenomenon could be explained by the nature of our language wherein speakers and writers do not reiterate much given information (Ibidem) since repetition would only exist if there is a need to emphasize a certain element in the text.

From the two types of endophoric reference, which were anaphora and cataphora, only the former was employed by the writer of the SOCA. The 2014 SOCA registered 28 occurrences of anaphoric referencing, these were: *their, they, this, it, them, his, and ours*. All of these anaphoric references were used to refer to something that had already been previously mentioned in the text. Below is a line taken from the SONA analyzed, where anaphoric referencing was found to have been employed by the writer. The below excerpt was chosen because it was identified to have one of the most number of anaphoric referencing in close proximity with each other.

*"Year 2013 we elected ~~our~~ **leaders** to whom we entrust the management of the city government. All of **them** are new to the **SangguniangPanlungsod** and I welcome **them**. The composition of this august **body** perhaps has changed but not our responsibilities."*

One could find three anaphors from the excerpt illustrated above. The first two occurrences of anaphora through personal plural pronoun *them* signals the act of referring to their common antecedent which is the plural noun *leaders*. As the rule suggests, a plural anaphor should also have a plural antecedent while a singular anaphor has a singular antecedent. The second set of anaphoric referencing in the above excerpt is quite unusual because the anaphor being used is not a pronoun but a noun. However, according to Levinson (1983) "anaphora covers any expression which the speaker uses in referring on the basis of which the hearer will be able to pick out the intended referent given certain contextual and co-textual conditions." This was explained by Nneka Umera-Okeke in his study *Anaphoric Referencing: A Cohesive Device in Written and Spoken Discourse*, when he said that, "other things or structures can realize anaphoric reference apart from pronouns. For quite some time, the term anaphora seemed to have been used to refer to only pronouns as the only thing that refers back in English language. This is because pronouns are the paradigm examples of expressions used by most speakers to refer to given entities. But because pronouns lack 'content,' linguists have argued whether they could pass the test of any theory of reference." It is for this reason that one would notice from the above excerpt that the second anaphoric relation involves a noun phrase, being the antecedent and a superordinate, being the anaphor.

According to Tutin and Viegas (2000), a superordinate is a widely known element that can be used to introduce anaphoric coreferential NPs. They further added that a superordinate used as an anaphor would appear unnatural if the hyponyms are not of the same pure referential perspective. However, if the referents to be lexicalized constitute a heterogeneous set which can be lexicalized by co-hyponyms, the superordinate term turns out to be quite natural as an anaphor. In the excerpt above the noun phrase antecedent is *Sangguniang Panlungsod* which was followed by its superordinate anaphor *body*. This relation best illustrates the discussions above wherein instead of a pronoun, another word is being used as an anaphor to refer to a

previously mentioned sentential element. The anaphor is a hyponym of its antecedent used by the writer to avoid repeating it in close proximity with each other. This is a technique to make the utterance more cohesive so that the message could be clearly conveyed. From the three SOCAs subjected for analysis, this is the only occurrence of anaphoric referencing wherein the anaphor is not a pronoun.

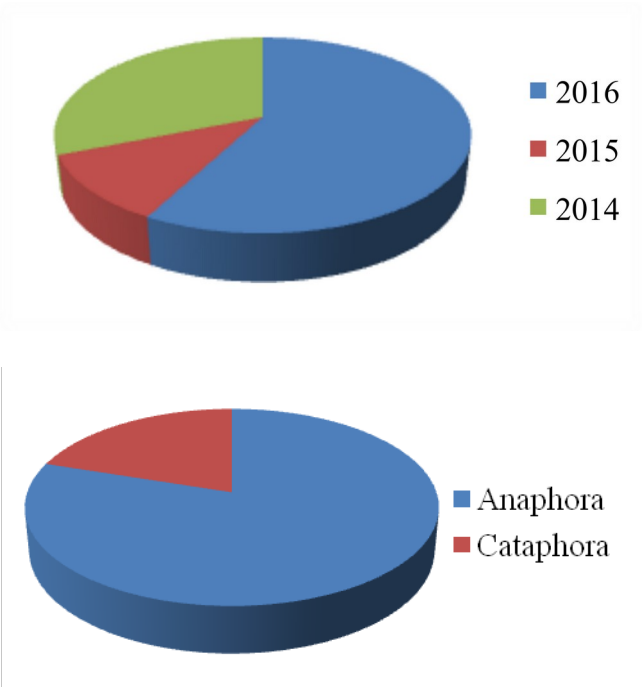


Figure 1. Distribution of employed reference of the 2014-2016 State of the City Addresses

The figure above illustrates the usage frequency of reference on the State of the City Addresses of Hon. Rosalina Garcia Jalosjos, Mayor of Dapitan City from 2014 to 2016. Presented on the left side is a pie graph showing the distribution of reference relations per year. Noticeably, the 2016 SOCA registered the highest number of references reaching up to 58% or 52 occurrences whereby 39 were anaphoric relations and 13 were cataphoras. Among the three addresses, the 2016 SOCA had the second highest number of words reaching up to 3,943 with 971 Cebuano-Visayan words. Came in second was the SOCA delivered in 2014 which had the most number of words accounting to 4,104 with Cebuano-Visayan words of 940. Its writer had used 28 anaphoric references and found to have not

employed cataphors in the address. The least number of references was found in the 2015 SOCA which was only 11% of its total, reaching up to only 10 references which were equally shared by anaphors and cataphors. This result must have been due to the fact that the 2015 address registered the least number of words of only 3,097 but also the most number of Cebuano-Visayan words of 1,496 or 48% of the total words, hence, the underwhelming number of reference.

A total of 90 references were employed on the three SOCAs. As could be gleaned from the pie graph on the right side, anaphora had been overwhelmingly used as compared with cataphora. 80% or 72 of the sum total of 90 references were anaphoric relations and only 18 occurrences or 20% involved cataphors. This means that the SOCAs writer/s preferred using anaphors than cataphors in referring to some elements found in the addresses. The findings above is supported by Azarizad and Tohidian (2012) in their study *A Comparative Study on the Frequency of the Usage of Cataphora and Anaphora in English and Persian Narratives*, where they found that, “the use of anaphoric referencing is more common in both English and Persian narratives and short stories; however, the cataphoric referencing is not that frequent in Persian narratives, comparing to that of those in English narratives.”

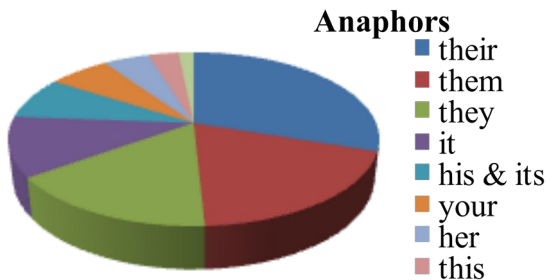


Figure 2. Frequency of employed anaphors on the 2014-2016 State of the City Addresses

Figure 2 shows the frequency usage of the different anaphors on the three SOCAs. The most frequently employed anaphora was the pronoun *their* which registered 19 occurrences or 26% of the total anaphoric relations evident on the addresses. This was followed by 12 actual usage of *them*, 10 of *they*, 7 of *it*, 5 of *his* and *its*, 4 of *your*, 3 of *her*, 2 of *this* and 1 usage of each of the pronouns *he*, *us*, *I* and *ours* and the superordinate *body*. It is quite obvious that the preferred anaphors

used by writer/s of the SOCA were pronouns to refer to something that had been previously mentioned in the text. Underscoring the same point, Kilborn as cited by Ashipu (2012) averred that one way of tying sentences and paragraphs together involves using reference words that point back to an idea mentioned previously. Among the many reference words that can be used to tie one sentence to another or one paragraph to another are words like this, these, those, such and that. These reference words should not be used by themselves but should be combined with the important words and phrases from the previous sentences or paragraphs.

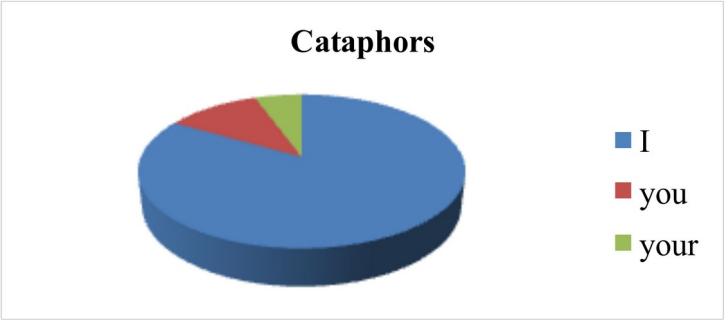


Figure 3. Frequency of employed cataphors on the 2014-2016 State of the City Addresses

Shown in the above figure is the distribution of the actual usage of cataphors on the three SOCAs being studied. It was found that only three cataphors were employed by its writer/s, these were the pronouns *I*, *you* and *your*. Among these three, the cataphoric reference *I* was the most frequently used, hence taking 83% of the total cataphoras or an equivalent of 15 occurrences. Evidently, *I* registered the highest number of actual usage because the text in itself was written from the perspective of the writer who happens to be the performer of the tasks as well. The corpus of the study were the SOCAs of a city mayor hence, it is given, that the manner in which the message should be conveyed must be personal, and one of the best ways to be truly personal is through the use of the personal pronoun *I*. The remaining 17% was then shared by the usage of the pronoun cataphors, *you* and *your* with 2 or 11% and 1 or 6% occurrences respectively. The use of personal possessive pronouns *you* and *your* on the addresses was used to direct a statement towards a certain person or entity for the purpose of expressing gratitude, commendation or challenge. Through its usage, one could notice a certain degree of emphasis on the statement because

it somehow lets the readers to remember who or what was being referred to since they were in close proximity, a natural phenomenon for cataphoric relations.

Conclusion

After a thorough analysis and interpretation of the data, it can be concluded that, the two reference types namely, anaphora and cataphora were both used on the three State of the City Addresses of Hon. Rosalina Garcia Jalosjos, the former being used more frequently than the latter. Moreover, from 72 actual occurrences of anaphoric referencing, the pronouns *their*, *them* and *they* were the top 3 most frequently used anaphors hence, accounting for an overwhelming 57% of the total anaphora. Cataphoric referencing on the other hand registered only 18 occurrences dominated by the pronoun *I* which was used 15 times thus, taking the 83% of the cataphora's total actual usage. Furthermore, the use of anaphors and cataphorson the three addresses helped in conveying the message clearly because they primarily became aids to avoid the repetition of the same element in the text especially when there wasn't a need to emphasize the point. The findings of this study revealed the essential role that reference play in a text, therefore, it is recommended that writers of State of the City Addresses should have a vast knowledge on how reference should be used and the functions they take in the text, since this is a vital tool to clearly transmit a message. Moreover, English teachers should explicitly teach the proper usage of anaphora and cataphora, as instruments to develop cohesion in written discourse, to enable students to write not only with sense but also with fluidity in tying utterances together. Finally, a similar study could be undertaken to further investigate the phenomena revealed herein.

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