

A Study of Associative Anaphora in English

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Synopsis

In this paper we will argue that, unlike previous studies, associative anaphora in English should be dealt with based on three levels as described below.

First, we maintain that associative anaphora should be treated only within the framework of general semantics in the first level. Second, we propose that associative anaphora should be dealt with only as to how each participant in discourse comprehends associative anaphora in the second level. The focus here is on careful consideration to the prototype and the scheme and so on, of each item in discourse and its context, observing the cooperative principles, paying heed to the intentionality and the acceptability of each participant in discourse. Third, we stipulate that the degree of comprehension of associative anaphora on the level of the individual should be treated within the framework of pragmatics and that we should determine the linguistic filter among individuals concerning the acceptability of each sentence in the interrelation to both the first and second levels, in the third level.

In the first chapter, we will look at the previous studies of associative anaphora including those by Miéville (1999), Lavigne-Tomps & Dubois (1999), Apothéloz & Reichler-Béguelin (1999) and discuss their problems rigorously and in detail. The previous studies are, in a sense, representative of recent research in associative anaphora. We can say

that they are persuasive and convincing within their theoretical framework, but we can't be satisfied with their approaches in that none of them seem to pay attention to the problem of the difference in the acceptability of the sentences between individuals, while our pragmatic approach puts emphasis on each individual's judgement of the sentences.

For example, in Charolles (1999), in the sentences (A) "(a) A letter was awaiting Sherlock Homes." and (B) "(b) The typewriter was an old model." it is stated that the underlined part (a) can't be linked with the underlined part (b), because there are no transitional items which can link (a) and (b), so those sentences are not acceptable in discourse. However, it is conceivable that some participants can accept the sentences without any transitional items, therefore, we think that we need a new theoretical framework giving this problem proper attention.

In the second chapter, we will propose a new theoretical approach based on pragmatics and a cognitive viewpoint. We feel this approach can overcome the problems of previous studies of associative anaphora. It is an approach from the viewpoint of three structures of language comprehension. Above all, the third structure has pride of place in our pragmatic approach.

In the last chapter, we will review our conclusions and point out residual problems.