Reference and inference (and referring expressions)
reference – an act in which a speaker, or writer, uses linguistic forms
to enable a listener, or reader, to identify something
inference – its role is important for successful reference; the listener's task
is to infer correctly which entity the speaker intends to identify by using
a particular referring expression

Referring expressions – proper nouns (*Shakespeare, Milton, Canada*)
                            – definite noun phrases (*the writer, the singer*)
                            – indefinite noun phrases (*a woman, a beautiful view*)
                            – pronouns (*he, her, it, them*)
Speakers sometimes even invent names. Successful reference is necessarily
collaborative. Both the speaker and the listener have a role in thinking about
what the other has in mind.
1. *Mister Aftershave is late today.*

attributive and referential use of referring expressions
(whoever/whatever fits the description x speakers have a person/thing in mind)
2 a. *There is a man waiting for you.*
   b. *He wants to marry a woman with lots of money.*
   c. *We'd love to find a nine-foot-tall basketball player.*
3. *There was no sign of the killer.*
Expressions themselves cannot be treated as having reference, but can be
'invested' with referential function in a context by a speaker or writer.
There is **basic 'intention to identify' and a 'recognition-of-intention'
collaboration in work**. It works between all members of a community who
share a common language and culture. There is a convention that certain
referring expressions will be used to identify certain entities on a regular basis.

Names and referents
4 a. *Can I borrow your Shakespeare?*
   b. *Yeah, it's over there on the table.*
5 a. *Where's the cheese sandwich sitting?*
   b. *He's over there by the window.*
6 a. *Shakespeare takes up the whole bottom shelf.*
   b. *We're going to see Shakespeare in London.*
   c. *I hated Shakespeare at school.*
7 a. *Picasso's on the far wall.*
   b. *The new Mozart is better value than the Bach.*
   c. *My Rolling Stones is missing.*
8 a. *Brazil wins World Cup.*
   b. *Japan wins first round of trade talks.*

The role of co-text and context
The ability to identify intended referents depends on more than one's
understanding of the referring expressions. It is aided by co-text (and context).
co-text – linguistic material accompanying the referring expression
range of reference – a number of possible referents
context – physical environment has a powerful impact on how referring
expressions are to be interpreted

9 a. *The cheese sandwich is made with white bread.*
   b. *The cheese sandwich left without paying.*
10 a. *The heart-attack mustn't be moved.*
   b. *Your ten-thirty just cancelled.*
   c. *A couple of rooms have complained about the heat.*
The basis of correct inference is one's familiarity with local socio-cultural conventions. They may differ from one social group to another and may be marked differently from one language to another.

Anaphoric reference – cataphoric reference
antecedent – anaphor – anaphora – cataphora – zero anaphora – ellipsis
11. *In the film, a man and a woman were trying to wash a cat.*
    The man was holding the cat while the woman poured water on it.
    He said something to her and they started laughing.
There is a range of expressions that are used for anaphoric reference in English. The most typical forms are pronouns, they are typical **pro-forms**.

12. *Peel and slice six potatoes. Put them in cold water.*
13. *I turned the corner and almost stepped on it. There was a large snake in the middle of the path.*
14 a. *Peel an onion and slice it.*
   b. *Drop the slices into hot oil.*
   c. *Cook for three minutes.*

The listener is also expected to make **more specific types of inference** when the anaphoric expressions (anaphors) don't seem to be linguistically connected to their antecendents.
15 a. *I just rented a house. The kitchen is really big.*
   b. *We had Chardonnay with dinner. The wine was the best part.*
   c. *The bus came on time, but he didn't stop.*

Speakers select linguistic expressions with the intention of identifying certain entities and with the assumption that listeners will collaborate and interpret those expressions as the speaker intended.