referring expression is a word or phrase that refers to a specific person, place, thing, or idea. It's used to identify something in the real world or in a text, allowing a speaker or writer to direct the listener or reader's attention to a particular entity.

Types of Referring Expressions

There are several types of referring expressions, each with a different way of identifying its referent:

- **Proper Nouns:** These are names of specific, unique entities. They are typically capitalized.

  - Examples: **John**, **Paris**, the **Eiffel Tower**.

- **Pronouns:** These are words that stand in for a noun or noun phrase. Their meaning is dependent on the context and what they are referring to.

  - Examples: **He**, **she**, **it**, **they**.

- **Definite Noun Phrases:** These are phrases that use a definite article (**the**) or a possessive adjective (**my, your, his**) to signal that the listener or reader should be able to identify the specific item being referred to.

  - Examples: **The book** on the table, **my dog**.

- **Indefinite Noun Phrases:** These use an indefinite article (**a, an**) or a quantifier (**some, many**) to refer to a non-specific or newly introduced entity.

  - Examples: **A car** drove by, **some friends** came over.

The Role of Context

The meaning of a referring expression is heavily dependent on context. For example, the pronoun **"he"** has no meaning on its own. Its meaning is determined by what it refers to in a given sentence, like "My brother, Tom, just arrived. **He** looks tired." In this case, "**He**" is a referring expression for "Tom."

Referring expressions are a key part of **cohesion,** one of the ways that sentences are formally linked together to form a coherent text.