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## **DEIXIS AND DEFINITENESS, INFERENCE, AND IMPLICATURE**

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# 1. Deixis

**Deixis** is a significant area of study in pragmatics, semantics, and linguistics. It refers to the phenomenon where understanding the meaning of specific words and phrases in a speech act necessitates contextual information. Words or phrases that rely on contextual information to convey meaning are termed deictic. (Levinson, 1983:54)

There are three deictic categories identified in the literature, These are: **personal deixis** ( I, you, we ), **spatial deixis** (this, that, here, there ), and **temporal deixis** ( now, today, yesterday ). Following Lyons (1977) and Filmore (1977), Levinson (1983) adds two more deictic categories to the **person, place, and time deixis**. These are **discourse deixis**, and **social deixis**.

## 1.1 Types of deixis

### 1.1.1 person deixis,

As for person deixis, all languages appear to grammaticalize the distinction between participant and non-participant roles and, for participant roles, between speaker and addressee. These categories are grammaticalized as first (speaker), second (addressee), and third (neither speaker nor addressee) persons. In addition, languages may encode a distinction between first person plural inclusive (including the addressee) and exclusive (not including the addressee). Further distinctions based on number and gender of participants may result in more elaborate paradigms (Hurford and Heasley, 1983).

### 1.1.2 Place deixis

**Place deixis**, also known as spatial deixis, refers to the deictic reference to a location relative to the position of a participant in a speech event, typically the speaker. It concerns the specification of locations in relation to anchorage points in the speech event, which can be the speaker, the addressee, or other persons or objects being referred to. Examples of place deixis include adverbs like '**here**' and '**there**', as well as demonstratives such as '**this**', '**these**', '**that**', and '**those**

### 1.1.3 Temporal deixis

**Temporal deixis** is another category of deictic expressions. It refers to an event of an utterance, which takes place any time relative to the speaking time and is, therefore, represented by tense, time adverbials and sometimes by spatial prepositions such as *in the evening*, *at midnight*, *on time* . The deictic center in a speaker's utterance is the location of an event that is mentioned and depicted by time and tense.

Three different ways exist for temporal reference to appear. Firstly, there's the demonstrative system, which is similar to the spatial deixis found in most languages (e.g., English uses "this" and "these" for near objects and "that" and "those" for distant objects). For example, English adverbs like "now," "then," "today," "yesterday," and others showcase words that have a somewhat deictic nature in terms of time. Secondly, most languages have varying numbers of these temporal reference items. Lastly, languages distinguish time deictically in the verbal tense category (Anderson and Keenan, 1985).

### 1.1.4 Social Deixis

Levinson (1983:89) defines social deixis as those aspects of language structure that encode participants' social identities or the social relationships between them in conversation, or between one of them and the persons and identities referred to. Social deixis is a linguistic phenomenon that refers to the social information encoded within various expressions, such as relative social status and familiarity.

It is concerned with the way we organize our utterances and how they are influenced by the social rank and relationship between the participants in the speech event

Social deixis is often divided into two categories: relational social deixis and absolute social deixis

- **Relational Social Deixis:** This type of social deixis involves a deictic reference to a social relationship between the speaker and addressee or to certain social characteristics of the referents apart from any relative ranking of referents

. Examples include the use of lexical items (e.g., 'my husband', 'teacher', 'cousin') and pronouns (e.g., 'you', 'her') to express social relationships

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- **Absolute Social Deixis:** This type of social deixis involves a deictic reference usually expressed in certain forms of address that includes no comparison of the ranking of the speaker and addressee

. Examples include 'your highness', 'Mr. President', and 'your majesty'

### 1.1.5 Discourse deixis

**Discourse deixis** refers to the use of expressions within an utterance to refer to parts of the discourse that contain the utterance, including the utterance itself.

Levinson (1985:62) states that discourse deixis involves the encoding of reference to portions of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance is located. Discourse deixis provides a reference to an utterance backward or forward to other utterances. In other words, discourse deixis refers to all expressions and phrases that point the reader or hearer through spoken or written text.

Examples of discourse deixis include adverbs and phrases such as 'earlier', 'later', 'the preceding x', 'the following s', 'in the following paragraphs', 'in the following weeks', 'during next month', and 'in the next chapter'

Discourse deixis can be easily confused with anaphora, which is used to refer to something previously mentioned.

## 2. Deixis and Anaphora

To avoid confusion between Discourse Deixis and Anaphora. it is important to draw a distinction between them. Anaphora 'concerns the use of (usually) a pronoun to refer to the same referent as some prior term' (Levinson, 1983: 85). An anaphora is an expression that must be interpreted through another expression (the 'antecedent') that occurs earlier in the discourse. For example:

**Harry's** a sweetheart; **he** is so considerate

**Harry** and **he** are both co-referentially identifying the same referent. Anaphora can occur within and between sentences (ibid: 90). Anaphora is often contrasted with cataphora where the words refer forwards.

Before **he** locked the door, **Pete** checked that all the lights were off.

Here the antecedent occurs later in the discourse; this is called ‘**cataphora**’.

### **3. Definiteness**

Semantically, the word 'definite' is used refer to a specific, identifiable (entity or class of entities); it is usually contrasted with indefinite. Definiteness in English is generally conveyed through the use of definite determiners (such as this, my), and especially through the definite article, the. (Crystal·2008,133) This is when one or more specific individual entities (persons·things, places, times, and so on) are referred to, as in the following examples:

-I saw Pete here yesterday.

- My husband is in London now.

The expressions (I, Pete, here, yesterday, my husband, London, now) serve to refer to some individual entity whose identity forms an essential part of the message. To fully understand what is meant, the hearer must be able to pick out the correct ‘referent’ (that is, the entity referred to). A successful definite referring expression must contain enough information to allow the hearer to exclude all potential referents except the correct one (Cruse, 2008:4)

### **4. Inference**

Inference refers to the cognitive process of deriving new propositions by combining a speaker's utterance with context, as well as the actual propositions inferred. It is used to refer to both a process of deriving new

propositions by combining a speaker's utterance with a context as well as the products of that process, the actual propositions inferred. Inference plays a crucial role in linguistic communication and is a fundamental concept in pragmatics

Inference is any additional information used by the hearer to connect what is said to what must be meant. For example, if you are studying linguistics, you might ask someone, can I look at your Chomsky? and get the response, Sure, it's on the shelf over there. In this example makes it clear that we can use names associated with people to refer to things, and also we can use names of things to refer to people . (Yule, 2008:132)

## **5. Implicature**

Implicature refers to something that a speaker suggests or implies with an utterance, even though it is not literally expressed. It is a type of speaker meaning that goes beyond what is literally said and is tied to the speaker's intention.

Implicatures can aid in communicating more efficiently than by explicitly saying everything we want to communicate. Conversational implicatures arise because speakers are expected to respect general rules of conversation, while conventional implicatures are tied to certain words such as "but" or "therefore."

Implicatures can be determined by sentence meaning or by conversational context, and can be conventional or unconventional. Implicature serves a variety of goals, including communication, maintaining good social relations, misleading without lying, style, and verbal efficiency (H. P. Grice, 1913–1988).

For instance, if someone says, "It's a beautiful day," when it's actually raining, they are implying that the day is not beautiful. In this case, the implicature is that the speaker thinks the day is terrible

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