

Deixis and Deictic Expressions in English

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Abstract: One of the most remarkable scientific revolutions of the 20th century was the development of modern linguistics. It has to do with linguistic studies, where the initial emphasis changed from prescriptive grammar and the goal of improving people's writing and speaking to the notion that a language may be considered as a self-contained and structured system placed at a specific point in time. A branch of linguistics known as pragmatics explores how individuals comprehend and carry out a speech act in a certain speaking setting.

Keywords: deixis, context, category, pragmatics, deictic expressions

Introduction

Deixis falls under the category of pragmatics since it directly addresses the link between language structure and context. In order to examine deictic expressions, this essay will first provide numerous definitions from various linguists, then present and debate several deictic categories, and then comment on various uses of deictic expressions, such as deictic and anaphoric. The study of meaning is connected to the linguistic subfields of pragmatics and semantics. Semantics examines how word meanings relate to one another. Pragmatics, on the other hand, investigates how context shapes meaning. The study of pragmatics demonstrates that understanding the context of an utterance, understanding the status of those involved, understanding the speaker's intention, understanding the place and time of the utterance, and understanding the social information that is encoded in various expressions about the speaker's relative social status and familiarity are all important factors in understanding how to interpret an utterance. One of the most difficult components of learning a language is developing pragmatic awareness, which frequently comes from experience. Person deixis, geographic deixis, temporal deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis are the several types of deictic expressions.

Definitions, categories, and usage of deictic expressions

Deictic phrases serve as a vital link between the relevant time, place, and individuals. The Greek word "deiknynai," which means "to show," is the source of the English term "deictic." A similar term, "deixis," is used in pragmatics and linguistics to describe a process in which words or expressions are perceived to be completely dependent on context. In order to highlight the significance of context, Levinson defines deixis as the reflection of the interaction between language and context.

Deixis is an important field studied in pragmatics, semantics and linguistics. Deixis refers to the phenomenon wherein understanding the meaning of certain words and phrases in an utterance requires contextual information. Words or phrases that require contextual information to convey meaning are deictic [6, p 54].

The speaker, the addressee, the time, and the location are all included in the contextual information of Levinson's statement. For instance, if we pay particular attention to the words I, am, and tomorrow in the sentence I'm leaving tomorrow, who are they referring to? Without knowing the

speaker's identity, the location, and the time of the utterance—in other words, the context of the utterance—we cannot determine the meaning of this statement. Expressions like "I," "you," "we," "this," "that," "here," "there," "today," and "tomorrow" are all indexed, and in order for the listener to completely comprehend what is being said and intended, they must be able to identify the speaker, the time, and the location of the utterance. The literature has recognized three deictic categories. There are three types of deixis: personal (I, you, us), spatial (this, that, here, there), and temporal (now, today, yesterday). Following Lyons and Fillmore, Levinson adds two more deictic categories in addition to person, place, and time deixis. These include discourse deixis, which involves the encoding of references to specific passages of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance is located, and social deixis, which deals with the encoding of social distinctions related to participant-roles, particularly aspects of the social relationship holding between speaker and addressee(s) or speaker and some referents [2, p 45].

A deictic expression is a word or phrase that highlights the multiple connotations that words take on depending on the context. Deictic expressions are essential because without a pragmatic approach, it would be impossible to understand what someone was saying. This involves the interaction between language structure and the contexts in which it is used. A deictic term is one that is context-bound and reliant on deictic clues. As a result, deictic words have a fixed semantic meaning as well as a denotational meaning that changes with context.

Deictic expressions assist us in determining what is near and what is far from the speaker, in addition to the time, place, speaker, and addressee. The terms proximal (near the speaker), like this, here, now, and distal (away from the speaker), like that, there, then, are used to define this. The study of spatial deixis is more appropriate for this notion of distance. Deictic phrases also aid in determining whether a movement is going in the direction of or away from the speaker (go vs come). The pronoun systems I, we, she, demonstratives this, these, and tenses walked are where deictic categories in languages are most readily seen, according to Fillmore.

According to the position of the speaker and/or hearer, person deixis locates an object. Third person pronouns denote the non-speech or narrated participant, while first and second person pronouns often refer to the speaking and hearing speech participants.

According to Lyons, the speaker and the addressee are the only active participants in the speech act, whereas the third party is not.

Spatial deixis is a different subcategory of deixis. Both the speech participants and the narrated participants are localized in space by spatial deixis. The pronouns this, that, and these/those are used the most frequently. The adverbs here and there and the prepositions in and on are additional expressions that fall within this category (Levinson, 1983). Whether or not something is nearby the speaker is another aspect of spatial deixis (this vs that).

The spatial deixis is the marking in language of the orientation or position in space. This is because all languages have verb pairs, such as come/go and bring/take, that are interpreted to identify the direction of the motion, towards or away from the place of speech event. There are two ways to identify an object using a referring expression, according to Lyons: first, by telling the addressee where it is; second, by describing it to him, including its characteristics and class to which it belongs.

Another subcategory of deictic phrases is temporal deixis. It refers to an utterance event that occurs at any moment in relation to the speaking time and is consequently indicated by the use of the present tense, time adverbs, and occasionally spatial prepositions such in the evening, at midnight, or on time. The deictic center of a speaker's utterance is the place of an event that is mentioned and represented by time and tense.

The past and the present are morphologically marked in English. The study of grammar's morphology focuses on how words are put together. A linguistic element is morphologically marked when it can be distinguished from other elements more easily by the addition of a morpheme. The simplest unit of meaning is a morpheme. For instance, I do not morphologically mark the first person present tense while I work. The morphemes -s and -ed, on the other hand, designate the third person he works and the past tense he work-ed. The modal verb will is used in future tense construction.

The relationship between the speaker, the addressee, and third-party referents is referred to as social discourse. Social deixis, in the words of Levinson, is "those characteristics of language structure that are attached to the social identities of participants in the speech event, to interactions between them, or to relations between them and external referents". The singular second person pronoun has two forms in certain languages, including Spanish, French, and Romanian: tu and usted - vous-dumneavoastra [6, p 58].

Foley also discusses the wide variety of Asian languages. A complex system of honorifics, "grammatical morphemes and particular classes of words signifying social deixis among the interlocutors or the referent of a participant in the speech" are features of these languages, according to Foley. One can identify oneself with a certain social standing or name a referent by using honorifics properly. According to Levinson (1983), the term honorific should only be used when the relationship between the speaker and the referent, addressee, or bystander conveys a sense of relative rank or deference. Given that Japanese is a language distinguished by a sophisticated system of honorifics, this phenomena is clearly illustrated in that language. Regardless of the type of government, class stratification exists in Japanese society as it does in all other societies. The manner that the language is structured is depending on how the society is arranged, which is how it most nearly reflects this condition. It is regarded as a sign of good education and upbringing to be able to use such statements effectively, not only in Japanese but in several other languages as well, such as European languages with the T/V distinction, such as tu versus vous in French. Intellectuals with advanced degrees tend to utilize deferential language more conservatively [1, p 23].

Conclusion

There are some expressions that cannot be understood unless the interlocutors are aware of the situation, the status of individuals involved, the speaker's intent, and the location and time of the utterance. Deictic words are those that do not always have the same meaning. Because they are connected to the utterance's context, deictic words are an essential component of pragmatics. Different deictic word types and categories have been presented and analyzed in this essay. In conclusion, the English personal deixis system distinguishes between gender (in the third person only) and number (in the first and third person); the second person pronoun can be used to refer to both singular and plural things, i.e., neutralized. Personal deixis can thus be used to signify a variety of overlapping categories, including person, gender, number, and social standing. The specification of locations in relation to points of reference inside the speech event is known as spatial deixis. English has two speaker distances: proximal and distal.

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