

DEIXIS

Phonetics 2.
Levinson. Pragmatics. Ch. 2

- ◎ **Deixis concerns the ways in which languages encode or grammaticalize features of the context of utterance or speech event, so the interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of that context of utterance: pointing via language**

- ◎ **The importance of deictic information is most evident when information is lacking:**
- ◎ **I'll be back in an hour**
- ◎ **Meet me here a week from now**

- Deixis belongs to the domains of pragmatics, since it concerns the relationship between the structure of language and the context in which it is used.
- By means of deictic elements, natural language utterances are 'anchored' to aspects of the context.

◎ Traditional categories of deixis:

Person: me, you,

Place: here, there

Time: now, then

But also:

Discourse deixis

Social deixis

Vocal deixis

- ◉ Deictic expressions, or indexicals, mainly used in face-to-face interaction.
- ◉ **I'll put this here**
- ◉ **is easily understood by participants in a conversation, but people not right there may need help.**

PERSON DEIXIS

- Encoding of role of participants in the speech event.
- First person: grammaticalization of reference to speaker
- Second person: one or more addressees
- Third person: neither speaker nor addressee.
- Difficult for young children

Place deixis

- Encoding of spatial locations relative to the location of the participants:
proximal/distant
- This/that
- Here/there
- Come/go

Time deixis

- Encoding of temporal points or spans relative to the time when the utterance was spoken (or a written message inscribed) : **coding time** (which may be different from receiving time)

◎ Usually grammaticalized in deictic adverbs of time:

◎ Now, then, tomorrow, this year

But above all in tense. (proximal/distant)

Social deixis

- ◉ Grammaticalization of social information
- ◉ In many languages, distinctions of fine gradation between the relative ranks of speaker and addressee are encoded throughout , for example the morphological system.
(honorifics in many Asian languages)

- ◉ In familiar languages usually encoded in:
- ◉ Honorifics (show respect or social deference) : Sir, Madam, Your Honour
- ◉ choices between pronouns (T/V)
- ◉ vocatives

Vocal deixis

- Goffman has pointed out that interlocutors in the course of any natural conversation are constantly changing the footing of their talk. In Goffman's usage, this term refers to the alignment which speakers take up to themselves and to others as evidenced by the way they handle the production and reception of utterances (1981:128).

◎ Participation framework: footing

Goffman: animator, author, principal

Animator: dynamic dimension of the speaker in action.

Author: links the speaker as the originator of the words that are encoded.

Principal: authority, or the one whose position is established and identified by the words. Together, these form the “production format” of the utterance.

- In conversations, it is important to mark footing appropriately: is the speaker speaking for himself, or is he quoting somebody?

- **Changes in footing are signaled by prosodic cues or code switching**
- **One of the most frequent changes in footing: reported speech in conversation**

Deictic centre

- **Central person: Speaker**
- **Central time: the time at which the speaker produces the utterance**
- **Central place: the speaker's location at utterance time**

- ◉ **Discourse centre: the point the speaker is currently at in the production of the utterance**
- ◉ **Social centre: speaker's social status and rank, to which the status of addressee's is relative.**

- ◉ Some exceptions:

- ◉ Shift of deictic centre – stories: point of view

- ⦿ Prosody: important cue
- ⦿ **Vocal deixis**: Prosodic and paralinguistic effects.

Speakers use a given range of relative loudness, pitch and tempo (Laver 1994) and with a given voice quality (Laver 1990). (*habitus* of the speaker).

A noticeable shift of these values : shifted deixis . It can evoke the presence of a second deictic center.

Discourse deixis

- It has to do with the encoding of reference to portions in the unfolding discourse in which the utterance is located:
- In the next paragraph....
- Anyway,

- ◉ Expressions that indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse:
- ◉ Utterance initial **BUT, THEREFORE, IN CONCLUSION, TO THE CONTRARY, WELL, BESIDES,** among others

- ◎ **These expressions indicate how the utterance that contains them is a response to, or a continuation of some portion of the prior discourse.**