

A Study of Galbraith's Deictic Shift Theory in "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" : A Stylistic Analysis

Asst. Inst. Hiba Jebur Hamzah

Suad Abdullah Maeedi

University of Basrah/ College of Education for

AL-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University

Human Sciences, Department of English,Iraq

Technical Institute of Samawah, Iraq

E.mail hiba.h7mza87@gmail.com

E.mail souad.maidi@atu.edu.iq

Abstract

The deictic shift theory supposes that fictional narration has various deictic fields as Galbraith (1995) explained. Deictic fields indicate a set of deictic expressions associated with a character, narrator, spatial, temporal and social relations. The study hypothesizes that readers can transit from one situation to another by shifting the deictic expressions. Thus, it indicates a psychological orientation to interpret the characters and events in the fictional world of the narrative text. The study aims to investigate and identify the deictic dimensions, identifying the most frequent deictic expression reflects the viewpoint in the narrative text. The results of the study show that the most prominent frequent deictic expression, namely: personal deictic shift which shows the narrator's inner struggle against the world he lives in, then when he moves to the new world (in his dream) , there is a deictic shift which clarifies the social-relation with the other people in the new society. The personal deictic shift manifests the narrator's new viewpoint towards the real world. Spatial and temporal deictic are closely related with the personal deictic expression.

Key words: deictic shift, personal deictic shift, spatial deictic shift, temporal deictic shift

1.1 Introduction

As human speech is realized in a certain circumstances, conditions and environments, human beings utilize the language in order to establish intercourse with one another. Thus, the main function of the language is to transfer a certain piece of information. However, this research tackles with the deictic shift theory explains how the reader of a text adopts a cognitive attitude inside the world of the narrative and interprets its events from that perspective. This cognitive framing represents an essential element of the reader's involvement in the fictional text, in which the reader constructs a fictional world by interpreting deictic indications presented in the text. In addition, deictic shift theory represents a set of assumptions about readers and stories that arose from the

research on the function of deixis in fictional narratives. Studying deixis will make it simpler to characterize the role of pronoun, personal, demonstrative, time, and lexical futures, which connect utterances with the location and temporal associations and facilitate the capture of reference meanings such as who, where, and when the utterance is uttered.

1.2 Hypothesis of the Study

The study hypothesises that readers involved in narrative work, comprehend and interpret a literary text by being familiar with more than one deictic expression. The study indicates a psychological perspective to explain and trace characters and events in the fictional world of narrative texts through the deictic shift. It hypothesizes that readers encode the deictic references to interpret the narrative text from various viewpoints.

1.3 The objectives of the study

The study aims at:

1. Investigating the deictic dimensions in Dostoevsky's "The dream of a ridiculous man"
2. Interpreting the possibility of readers to involve in the world of the text when they read it.
3. Moving from one position to another within the story world through the various deictic references in the text.
4. Classifying and identifying the most frequent deictic expression and its effect in the literary text,

2. Deictic Shift Theory

The deictic shift theory indicates that the reader can construct a perceptual/mental model of the text world and transform the deictic centre into that model. That is, The activation between the reader and the textual clues shows the author's view throughout the reading process to create a deictic correspondence system in the narrative world . Throughout the story, the reader continues to reconstruct and reconfigure the deictic center as cued by the text. The theory of deictic shift involves analyzing specific elements within a text - such as grammar and vocabulary - to determine where and when a particular event occurs within a reader's mental model. This theory excels at identifying and categorizing these textual elements and how they impact the reader's understanding of the story's perspective. (Bennett, 2005, 8)

Galbraith (1995,46) suggests that paying attention to deictic markers in a text can encourage readers to mentally position themselves within the world of the story, within a specific deictic location that may be associated with the narrator or a certain character. However, this position may not be fixed, and can

shift based on various linguistic and non-linguistic cues, leading readers to interpret events from a new deictic center.

The continuity of reading leads to a network of deictic and in turn a sophisticated series of cognitive actions . For example, while reading a literary text, we indulge in a deictic shifting field within the narrative world. In simpler terms, when a story includes a flashback, it creates a different point of view within the narrative. Galbraith observed in 1995 that our comprehension of narratives influences how we interpret changes in perspective. Therefore, it is anticipated that readers will notice the shift in perspective as they read the text. Hence, If the readers transfer into a narrative world that is merged within an extended narrative world, it is expectable to shift from the embedded fictional world to the world that built it. (Lambrou and Stockwell,2007,p125 as cited in Gheni, 2009, 134).

Central to deictic shift theory is the notion of the deictic center. The deictic centre constructs the speakers' permission to evaluate the deictic marks to reveal the fictional point of view. In general, when people speak, they tend to assume that their current time and location are the most important and relevant. This means that when they refer to other times or places, they will do so in relation to their own current situation. Essentially, the speaker and their surroundings play a crucial role in determining how references to time and space are understood. Deictic shift theory states that readers embark on a very specific form of cognitive exercise when they approach narratives for their current here-and-now locations that are transposed to the specific parameters of the story world (Norgaard et al.,2010,74).

Segal (1995,15) argues that according to deictic shift theory, the deictic centre usually transforms from the contextual setting in which the text is encountered to a point within a mental model corresponding to the discourse's world. The deictic centre of the text is the viewpoint from whereby the reader interprets the narrative world's portions as it contains who, where, when, and what components (Zubin and Hewitt 1995 as cited in Bennett, 2005, 9).

2.1 Deictic Terms

Understanding the principles of deictic shift theory demands consideration of the concept of deixis. Birner (2013: 74) points out that deixis is a "phenomenon of using a linguistic expression to point to some contextually available discourse entity or property". Deixis is classified into the following categories:

2.1.1 Spatial Deixis

This type of deixis is concerned with space and movement in relation to the speaker's position. This is accomplished with demonstratives such as (this,

that, these and those) and adverbs of place like (here, there and anywhere)(Locastro, 2012: 25).

2.1.2 Temporal Deixis

Huang (2014: 182) states that time deixis is concerned with encoding temporal points and spans tied to the time at which an utterance occurs in a speech event. Adverbs that indicate time such as "now," "then," "today," "next week," and others are utilized to pinpoint the current date or moment.

2.1.3 Personal Deixis

The person category directly reflects the different roles which individuals play in the speech event: speaker, addressee, and other. As these roles shift throughout a conversational turn-taking the origo shifts with them, for instance, A's I becomes B's you, A's here becomes B's there and so on (Levinson, 2006, 112).

2.1.4 Empathetic Deixis

Gheni (2009,133) argues that empathetic deixis "indicates psychological and emotional closeness or distance from whatever person, place or object is being described".

2.1.5 Discourse Deixis

According to Decker (2001: 55-56), discourse deixis, concerns with the usage of expressions within some utterance to designate certain portion of the discourse that involves that utterance, including the utterance itself.

3. Literature Review

This section reviews various related studies on the deictic shift theory in literary texts. Let's start with a study conducted in 2007 by Adel Al-Thamery, which is entitled " Deixis in narrative : the presentation of mental space in Hardy's Novel". The study aims to examine the work of deixis in narrative as it is the main element in building the text world. The researcher adopts text world theory as a methodological framework to study fictional discourse according to the pragmatic conditions and the cognitive effects of language choices in three of Hardy's novels : " far from the madding crowd", the return of the native", and" Jude the obscure". The study based on semantic and pragmatics work within cognitive constructs called" mental spaces" in cognitive linguistics.

In 2017, Islam Adil Jabbar investigates " Deictic shifting and focalization in Morison's Beloved : A Cognitive stylistic study" . It sheds light on the importance of deictic expressions in comprehension the contextual information of the events, characters to understand temporal and spatial dimensions in the text. The study aims to identify shifting in focalization level by focusing on shifting the deictic center in narrative texts. Thus, it considers three types of deictic expressions: person, time and place.

Another study in 2019 by Ali Abdullah Ghani which indicates the use of deictic shift theory as a stylistic approach in analysing point of view effects in fictional discourse. This cognitive perspective sheds new light on how readers engage with narratives and interpret events within them.

Zhang (2022) discusses the comprehension of deixis and its relation to the deictic approach or shift. The study argues the relation of deictic shift with human cognitive ability. Deictic centre and deictic context are defined more broadly when studied from a cognitive linguistic perspective. On the other hand, studying it from a cognitive poetics perspective reveals the cognitive justification for multiple interpretations of literary work.

4. Methodology: Deictic Shift Theory in "The Dream of Ridiculous Man"

4.1 Introduction

Speaking, writing or thinking voices represent a deictic centre, where a reader can detect the cognitive stance, that best tackles the coherence of a text. Deictic shift theory sheds light on some points in a text at which the reader can comprehend the movement of the deictic markers. Thus, the reader has to trace the variation of these voices and the relation between them. The researchers investigate and analyse the transition of the deictic shift that shows the transition from one relation to another. According to Bonacic's research (2007,176), it is apparent that deictic shifts extend beyond just personal, spatial, and temporal changes. Tense shifts also play a role in creating a deictic orientation.

4.2 Analysis and Discussion

Fyodor Dostoyevsky's short story "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" was published in Russian in 1877 as "Son smeshnogo cheloveka." It discusses issues like original sin, human perfectibility, and pursuing an ideal society. The rationalist's incapacity to give solutions to all of life's problems is involved and discussed.

Specific literary discourse conventions determine the interpersonal level of narrative discourse and the interplay between writer-text-reader. The narrative voice reveals a logical inner situation in the narrative, the speaking voice is the deictic centre. The narrating world constructs the inner interpersonal relationship through a sequence of personal pronouns used throughout the story: "*I am a ridiculous man, **they** call **me** mad,.... I did not still remain as ridiculous to **them** as before.* " , "***they** laugh at **me**,..... I would laugh with **them**, not really at **myself**, but for love of **them*** " , "*... But none of **them** knew,anyone else of **my ridiculousness**, it was **I myself**, **I myself** was to blame,I suffered in **my youth** over being unable to help **myself**,in **my soul**,... the whole of **me**. **I** had completely ceased to think then: it made no deference to **me**. **I** resolved to kill **myself** that night. **I** was going to shoot **myself**. **She** was terrified by something,*

... *I turned **my face** to **her**, **she** was running and pulling at **me**, and in **her voice**, ... Though **she** did not speak all the words out, I understood that **her mother** was dying somewhere ” . These are some extracted from the short story. The personal deictic markers manifest a man's consciousness against the world he lives in. The story begins with the first narrator with self-description as "a ridiculous man". He believes in the absurdity of life, he realises the meaningless of life which is inside himself and surrounds him. He believes that nothing is true in the real world or the virtual world before him. All the personal deictic markers show the narrator's orientation to the absurdity of life, leading him to the idea of suicide. The deictic transition is indicated the inner conflict that the narrator lives. He believes everything around him is worthless; however, he feels guilty about being selfish toward the young girl.*

The reader can mentally perceive the transition of events form one situation to another due to the deictic shift which shows the narrator's voice transition from the real world that he lives in to another one which is neither real nor virtual. He travelled to a world after he had killed himself while sleeping (in dream). He was struck with awe at the recently discovered planet, likening it to the mythical Garden of Eden. The inhabitants coexist peacefully without relying on scientific advancements, as the following extractions: “ ***we** were at an innate distance from **our sun**, **They** came to me **themselves**, **they** surrounded **me**, kissed **me**. **they** took **me** with **them** and each of **them** wished to set **me** at ease. **I** saw **them myself**, **I** knew **them** and was convinced, **I** loved **them**, **I** suffered for **them** afterward. **They** looked at **them**: as if **they** were talking with creatures of **their** own kind....**they** sang **their** beautiful,..... **they** ate **their** light food - fruit from **their** trees, honey from **their** forests, and milk from the animals who loved **them**. Among **them** there was no quarrelling or jealousy, **they** did not even understand what it meant. **They** barely understood **me** when **I** asked **them** about eternal life, but they were apparently so convinced of it unconsciously that it did not constitute a question for **them** ”*

The use of words like "they" and "their own" suggests that the narrator has a deep interest and connection to each new person he encounters. Additionally, the use of these deictic personal pronouns shows an association between a specific group of individuals and the places, beauty, and food that belong to them. Everything that exists in the beautiful world or planet belongs to its owner not for a stranger (the narrator in the story). The narrator's presence corrupts this idyllic place. “They lost their happiness, desires, being liars , they fought with each other, the land is tainted forever “ ***they** invented justice and prescribed whole codices for **themselves** in order, that **they** fell down before **their hearts'** desires like children, **they** deified **their desire**..... **we** torment **ourselves** ” .*

When the narrator awakens, he realizes it was all a dream. “ After ***my dream***, ***I** lost words. **I** saw it with **my own eyes** ” . Dostoevsky reveals that through*

the narrator's realisation that evil is not a trait of humans, and people have the opportunity to revert back to their innocent state.

The reader can comprehend the spatial deictic shift that occurs with locative expression to manifest the movement of places within the events of the story, as in "At *_first I kept thinking that instead there had been a lot before, but then I realised that there had been nothing, ...I became convinced that there would never be anything. As I placed it there, I remember asking myself. I'd shoot myself and there would be no more world, Not to mention that maybe there would indeed be nothing for anyone after me.....he is still here by me "*. Dostoevsky exhibits the adhesion of the narrator's thoughts with the place that he lives in. The narrator believes life is worthless everywhere, even if he lives on the moon or Mars. However, all of his thoughts are changed and we observed a change in special expression as well, as in " why is **there** anguish in my love for them.....**Here** sorrow entered my soul with such force that my heart was wrung, and I felt I was going to die, and **here** . . .well, here I woke up. **This** is an old truth, but what is new **here** is **this**: I cannot get very confused " . The transition of special expressions shows the narrator's inner conflict again as if he compares the real world he lived in and the new planet he saw in his dream. The use of a special deictic shift indicates the variation of his feeling and orientation toward the world as a whole.

The temporal shift is also strongly tied to particular deictic expressions, and there is a distinct movement in tense from past to present to demonstrate event sequences, as in " *I can do so **now**, I'm **now** almost convinced of it. It seemed clear that life and the world were **now** dependent on me. One might even say that the world was **now** as if made for me alone, ...then you do feel pain and it almost always wakes you up. what is coming to pass **now**, allow it to be here "*. The temporal deictic associated with the special markers shows the narrator's attachment to his thought of the valuelessness of life everywhere and at any time. However, the dream that he lives in has changed his view towards the world and made him realise that humanity has a chance to change and produce valuable achievements.

The results of the study show that the most prominent deictic shift expression is personal deictic(81.7%) which indicates the prominent of perceptual viewpoints. Followed by temporal deictic which is (11.2%) and spatial (7.1%), as shown in the following table:

Table(1) The Frequency and Percentage of Deictic Markers

Deictic Expression	Personal Deictic	Temporal Deictic	Spatial Deictic
No. of Frequency	278	38	24
Percentage	81.7%	11.2%	7.1%

Conclusion

In summary, it is essential to highlight the significance of deixis in aiding the understanding and navigation of text. The deictic center serves as a reference

point for readers to interpret other deictic cues and comprehend their context. Put simply, deixis plays a crucial role in making sense of written language.

The results show that the centre of all these shiftings that occur in the deictic terms is the narrator's shifting from his past thoughts to his present perception and his transition from the world in which he lives to the other world which he encountered in his dream and everything he realized there. As stated in the table, personal deixis mostly appeared from other deixes, reflecting the narrator's conflict in the world he lives in.

References

- Adel Al-Thamery. (2007). " Deixis in narrative : the presentation of mental space in Hardy's Novel". Unpublished PhD. Dissertation, University of Basra
- Bennett, Anna Laura.(2005). Expanding Deictic Shift Theory: Person Deixis in Chunk Palahniuk's Fight Club. University of Kentucky Master's Theses.
- Birner, Betty J. (2013). Introduction To Pragmatics. : Oxford: Blackwell.
- Decker, R. J. (2001). Temporal Deixis of the Greek Verb in the Gospel of Mark with Reference to Verbal Aspect. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Galbraith, M.(1995) Deictic Shift Theory and the poetics of involvement in narrative. In Duchan et.al.(Eds.) , 19-59.
- Ghani, Ali Abdulilah. (2009). A Study of Deictic Shift Theory as a Stylistic Approach in the Analysis of Point of View Effects in Fictional Discourse. Al-Ustath Journal for Human and Social Sciences Vol.(58) No.(2) pp(129-142).
- Huang, Y. (2007). Pragmatics. (2nd Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jabbar, Islam Adil. (2017). Deictic Shifting and Focalization in Morrison's Beloved: A Cognitive Stylistic Study. MA. Thesis, University of Basra.
- Levinson, Stephen C. (2006) "Deixis". In Laurence R. Horn, Gregory L. Ward (eds.) The Handbook of Pragmatics, pp. 97–121. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Locastro, Virginia (2012). Pragmatics For Language Educators: A sociolinguistic Perspective. UK: Routledge.
- Norgaard, N., Montoro, R. and Busse, B. (2010).Terms in Stylistics. India: Replika Press Put Ltd.
- Zhang, Junling. (2022). Cognitive Explanations for Deixis in Narrative Fictions. In Theory and Practice in Language Studies Vol.12, No 7, pp.1435-1440.

