



A Grammatical Study of Deixis in English and Arabic: A Contrastive Study
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Abstract

Fundamentally, deictics are words whose meaning varies depending on the context or discourse. They create a variety of words, including prepositions, articles, and pronouns. The problem arises due to the idea that native and foreign languages interfere in some aspects. The linguistic models adopted are Lyons, J. (1977) *Semantics* and Al-Shahry, A. D. (2004). *Strategies of Speech*. The objective of this study is to examine how deictic phrases are essential for translators, educators, and diplomats since they are employed in social relations and diplomacy. It is concluded that the Arabic pronouns are further complex than the English one. The former is either explicit or implicit and cannot be separated. **Key Words:** Deictics, inference, deictic phrases, explicit, implicit.

الخلاصة

في الأساس، المصطلحات الإشارية هي كلمات يختلف معناها باختلاف السياق أو الخطاب. وهي تُنشئ مجموعة متنوعة من الكلمات، بما في ذلك حروف الجر وأدوات التعريف والضمائر. تنشأ المشكلة من فكرة تداخل اللغات الأصلية والأجنبية في بعض الجوانب. النموذجان اللغويان المعتمدان هما: ليونز، ج. (١٩٧٧) "علم الدلالة"، والشهري، أ. د. (٢٠٠٤) "استراتيجيات الكلام". تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة كيفية استخدام العبارات الإشارية في التفاعلات الاجتماعية والدبلوماسية، وهي بالغة الأهمية للمترجمين والمعلمين والدبلوماسيين. وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الضمائر العربية أكثر تعقيداً من الضمائر الإنجليزية. فالضمائر العربية إما صريحة أو ضمنية، ولا يمكن فصلها. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** الإشارية، الاستدلال، العبارات الإشارية، الصريحة، الضمنية.

1. Introduction

The most evident way that language structure reflects the link between language and situation is through deixis. Deictic expressions include: personal pronouns, demonstratives, certain adverbs of place and time, and other features related to spatial or temporal aspects of the situation. (Fletcher and Garman, 1979:241; Levinson, 1983:54)Historically, "deixis" (derived from a Greek word meaning "pointing" or "indicating") is currently used to describe the role of demonstrative and personal pronouns, tense, and a number of other grammatical and lexical features (Lyons, 1977: 636). Many studies have examined how the components of a phrase relate to one another by demonstrating the roles they play by collecting those roles from the surrounding environment (Najim, 2012).Fillmore (1982:35) defines deixis as the term used to describe the usage of grammatical and lexical elements and categories governed by specifics of the international context in which the utterances are created. According to Anderson and Keenan (1985:529), the fundamental feature of deixis is that its semantic values are contingent upon the actual context in which it is stated.The importance of the constituent parts of a sentence and its primary function in illustrating the process and its players are discussed by Jassim and Najm (2023), who also highlight the many roles that these components play. The majority of English sentences contain those functions.

2. Deixis in English

As for deixis, Yule (1996:9) states that is derived from the Greek describing one of the main things that the humans perform with expressions. Lyons (1977:636) defines deixis as a word coming from the Greek means "pointing to", or "indicating". Linguists use it to refer to the work of demonstrative and individual pronouns, tense, and a variety of other characteristics that link utterances to the spatiotemporal facilitates of the act of utterance.

3 Classifications of Deixis in English

Bühler (2011: 67) asserts that I, here, and now comprise a deictic center. Consequently, three primary types of deixis exist:

3.1 Personal Deixis

Person deixis is used to indicate individuals (her, him, them, those) and objects (it, these, those books); spatial deixis is used to indicate a place (here, there, near). Person deixis includes pronouns *I, you, he, she, it, we,* and *they* to indicate a specific person:

- (1) We are coming together
- (2) So you were at home.
- (3) She arrived late
- (4) They like playing tennis (Cutting, 2002:7)

To put it another way, person deixis essentially consists of the speaker, who is referred to as the first person, the recipient, who is referred to as the second person, and other important participants in the speech situation; The first person may dominate the second and third, and the second person may dominate the third, suggesting that there is some sort of link between the phrases (Cruse, 2000: 319-20).

Regarding pronouns, here are some of their characteristics:

- Personal pronouns, or at least words, that relate to the speech act are found in all languages . Personal pronouns are a grammatical category of a person.
- The first and second person pronouns are deictic: *I, my, and mine; you, your, and yours.*
- A reference to the individual who spoke. Having deictic pronouns for the third person is another option.
- Precise and definitive pronouns include *those, these, that, and this.*
- The following pronouns are particular and indefinite: *who, that, what, something, and somebody.*
- Non-specific and indefinite pronouns include *nobody, nothing, anything, and someone.*
- You Majesty, Sir, are honorific expressions (ibid).

3.2 Spatial/Place/ Space Deixis

The term "spatial deixis" is used to refer to the location or place:

- (5) This is what we expected.
- (6) That was excellent.

Stated differently, place deixis refers to the positions in relation to the speaker center and other places in the speech event. Locating an object and describing or identifying it are the two fundamental methods of referring to it.

- (7) The office is three miles from his house. (ibid).

Cruse (2000: 320) and Cutting (2002: 8) state that locations might be stated in relation to participants' locations:

(8) The college is five hundred yards away.
The spatial deictic framework of English is largely poor, with two phrases that are typically referred to as proximal and distal. The proximal term *here* denotes something such as "locale generally near to the speaker", and *there* means "relatively far off the speaker". *Here* could refer to a space smaller than the square meter the speaker is standing on, or it could refer to something much larger, like this:

- (9) Here in his local galaxy cluster.

Occasionally, it could be presented as "at this time" and "at that time," while occasionally it could be presented as "at this place" and "at that place," respectively. *This* and *that*, which are generally understood as place deictic expressions because they convey closeness to or distance from the speaker, can therefore also be used to represent time deixis, which is a temporal span that includes or excludes coding time. Instead of being absolute, place deixis is relational. As in the following words, we identify items or places in relation to the speaker and each other instead of using latitude and longitude absolute measures:

- (10) The park is two kilometers from here.
- (11) The park is 500 meters away.

The speaker's location during the coding time is essential to interpreting this sentence.

Bühler (2011: 67) asserts that there is a significant distinction between what is near the speaker (this, here, now) and what is far away (that, there, then). Additionally, we are able to determine whether the speaker is being

approached (come) or moved away (go). He is coming if he is moving in your direction, and He is going if he is moving in the other direction.

3.3 Temporal/ Time Deixis

As for temporal deixis, Bühler (2011: 67) denotes that it is utilized to indicate time (now, then, next week, last month). For interpreting all these deictic expressions, which person, time and place the speaker has in mind have to be known.

Marmaridou (2000:82) indicates that time deixis refers to how members of particular civilizations perceive and quantify time. In this manner, the time axis is divided into three main divisions: before, during and after their utterance.

In English, *now* and *then* are the most fundamental temporal deictics.

Now and *then*, together with *soon* and *recently*, and verb tenses, are the most fundamental phrases in English that encode time deixis. *yesterday*, *today*, and *tomorrow* are utilized to situate an utterance in relation to time when time deixis is connected with calendrical units of time. But the way these terms are used is flexible; they can refer to the full time period mentioned or only a pertinent portion of it, as in the instances below:

(12) It is a holiday today.

(13) Today, my friend's leg broke.

the comprehension of both options seems to rely on a number of contextual factors, such as sociocultural knowledge. This point is demonstrated by the following examples: *now* and *turn around*.

(14) He is at home now.

(15) He is a teacher now.

Given that it is a part of an order with specific content and that following the order requires quick action, the first statement is understood to indicate the coding time. The adverbial in the second and third sentences is interpreted against broader concentric cycles as, according to our cultural knowledge, a person in an office is likely to be there for a while, but being a deputy director is a long-term position that does not belong to a single person.

It is asserted that the adverb is actually related to a temporal span that has already been formed in discourse, as seen in the following example, and it then denotes distance from the deictic center either concerning the future or the past:

(16) I'll meet him tomorrow and I'll tell him then.

While *tomorrow* sounds to be time deictic, *then* refers back to the span of time that *tomorrow* established as a referent.

(17). She was a child then.

Because it derives its meaning from a reference to a place, or period, in time, it is said to be a relational term. As such, it is also employed in an anaphoric way. *then* denotes the same time period in the example above. As in the words below, "today" might refer to more intermediary or broader time periods away from the deictic center.

(18) It is pay day today.

(19) Youngsters today occasionally act weirdly.

The coding time in Ex. 18 is within a 24-hour period, but in Ex. 19, it is within a more expansive and ambiguous time frame.

Adjectives like *next* and *last*, as well as demonstratives like *this* and *that*, are frequently used to communicate time deixis in conjunction with certain time cycles and their names, such as *next week*, *last Monday*, *this month*, and *that December*.

It is noteworthy that the aforementioned time expressions have culturally relevant outcomes when they are combined with calendrical or non-calendrical representations of time. For instance, *this year* could refer to the period of time between January 1st and December 31st, the calendrical rendering of the expression, or the non-calendrical rendering of the expression, which begins on the day including coding time and ends after 365 days. In a scholarly context, *this year* may refer to the period from September 1 to August 31 that includes coding time; in a British yearly revenue context, it may refer to the period from April 1 to March 31 that includes coding time. Similarly, the week or month having coding time is indicated by *this week* or *this month*. Additionally, *this December* refers to the month of the calendar year that has coding time; nonetheless, it is preferable if this December falls in the future instead of the past.

4. Deixis in Arabic

Concerning discourse deixis, Jabra (1982:89) states that it alludes to certain phrases that identify a section of speech when the deictic element is present. The proximal demonstratives "this" and هذا, as well as the distal demonstratives "that" and ذلك ذلك, are employed as discourse deixis in Arabic and English. These ideas are demonstrated in the following Arabic and English examples:

(22) Have you read this book? (The book follows). هل قرأت هذا الكتاب.

(23) This is the most interesting book I have read (referring to the preceding book). هذا من امتع الكتب التي قرأتها قط

(24) This is the cheapest car I have seen.

تلك من ارخص السيارات التي رايتها

قط

Discussions

Recognizing the three types of deixis with their implications and different connotations in English and the five types of deixis with their connotations in Arabic, one can show the similarities and differences between the two languages and how they are used.

When these differences are misunderstood, it could result in diplomatic problems and the lack of conveying the original meaning from the source language to the target language, which could make global problems. The researchers highlight the semantic components and pragmatic roles of the personal, geographical, and temporal deixis in order to highlight the similarities and contrasts between Arabic and English. As a result, the researchers emphasize how important they are for language education. Nonetheless, the translation is meant for both academic audiences and the general world population.

The term "deixis" describes words and expressions that need context to make sense. Both Arabic and English use deixis, however they are used quite differently as stated below:

1. Person Deixis

The difference in person deixis between English and Arabic can be as follows:

English : Person Deixis • Pronouns such as "I," "you," "he," "she," and "they" vary according to the speaker and listener. *You* is used for singular and plural. E.g. *you are a teacher* and *you are teachers*.

Arabic: Pronoun usage is influenced by gender differences (feminine and masculine) although there are similar pronouns in Arabic. Consider the difference between أنتَ (you, masculine) and أنتِ (you, feminine). Arabic has two plural forms, one for males أنتم and the other for females انتن

2. Deixis of Time

Concerning the difference between English and Arabic in terms of deixis of time, the following statements show it:

English: the terms "now," "then," "today," and "tomorrow" are frequently employed to indicate time.

Arabic: Time deixis is also used, although the lunar calendar is frequently incorporated, which may have an impact on time-related terminology.

3. Deixis of Place

As for deixis of place, the following comparison shows the difference:**English**: Space-related terms such as "here," "there," "above," and "below" are used.**Arabic**: Although there are comparable terminology, the language may employ more complex expressions to describe place, frequently impacted by the speaker's viewpoint or the situation.

4. Discourse Deixis

With respect to discourse deixis, the difference is as follows:

English: Discourse-related terms such as "this," "that," "the former," and "the latter" are used.

Arabic: Discourse deixis works similarly to that in English, although it can also contain more intricate patterns that express the speaker's focus or storytelling style.

5. Social Deixis

Regarding social deixis, English and Arabic languages show the following difference:

English: Social relationships can be indicated by titles and forms of address (e.g., Mr., Dr.).

Arabic: Social deixis is more prominent, with words like سيد (Mr.) or عزيزي (dear) that express status, age, or familiarity. The male form is sometimes used to represent respect, and usually contrasts with أنتِ masculine singular *you*

Conclusions

According to the present study, some conclusions can be inferred which can be as follows:

1. Both the Arabic and English languages under study have deictic markers, meaning they are present in both languages.
2. In Arabic and English, there are three main types of deictic indicators. These types of deictics include person, location, and time.
3. In Arabic and English, personal pronouns are essential to person deictics. First, second, and third person pronouns are used in the two languages' three-person systems.
4. The speaker is referred to using the first person pronoun when speaking. For the recipient, or the individual being addressed during the expression period, the second person pronoun is used. Additionally, the third-person pronoun is used for a category that is neither the addressee nor the speaker.
5. Arabic pronouns are further complex than the English one. Arabic pronouns can be explicit or implicit, separated realized as free morphemes, or not separated realized as bound morphemes annexed to nouns, verbs, and prepositions. Furthermore, the morphological inflections of number, gender, and case in Arabic pronouns are more complex.
6. In English and Arabic, demonstratives, adverbs of location, and a few motion verbs are essential to the realization of place deictics.
7. The two types of place deixis in English that pertain to demonstratives are closer to the speaker and distant from him. Conversely, Arabic may be a three-term system that depicts three spatial categories: medial, distant, and close. In contrast to Arabic and English, demonstratives are inflected for two genders (feminine and masculine), three numbers (plural, double, and singular), and many situations.
8. In both English and Arabic, demonstratives, tense, and a few time adverbs are essential components of time deixis.
9. Proximate temporal shapes of demonstratives in Arabic and English denote the present, while distant shapes denote the past and future.
10. The deictic used in the tense and adverbs of time is comparable in Arabic and English.

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