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Deixis

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The word “**deixis**” is a technical term in pragmatics.

The term originates from Greek.

Deixis refers to the most basic things we do with utterances which means *pointing via language*. Any linguistic form used to accomplish pointing is called a deictic expression.

Deictic expressions are also known as *indexicals*.

Examples

He knows *her* very well.

He has hid himself *there*.

They are coming *now*.

Have you heard *this one* (joke)?

You are my father and *you* are my best friend.

Characteristics of Deixis

Deictic expressions are meaningful in a given context.

In order to be interpreted , the speaker and the listener have to share same context.

They are particularly useful in face-to face communication.

Types of Deixis

We can find three different types of Deixis:

Personal Deixis: Any expression used to point to a **PERSON** is person Deixis. Personal pronoun such as I, we, you, our, he, his, etc.

Place deixis: words used to point to a **location**. E.g. Here, there, etc. these are also known as **Space Deixis** or , **Spatial Deixis**.

Time deixis: the expression used to point to a **TIME** is time deixis. E.g now, then, ago, before, etc.

Time deixis is also known as **Temporal Deixis**

Reference

Act in which a speaker/writer uses linguistic forms to enable a listener/ reader to identify something (words don't refer, people do)

Linguistic forms = Referring expressions

Referring Expressions

Proper Nouns: Yule

Definite Noun Phrases: The author

Indefinite Noun Phrase: a man

Pronouns: he, she

The choice of one type of referring expression rather than another seems to be based, to a large extent, on what the speaker assumes the listener already knows. Reference is clearly tied to the speaker's goals and beliefs in the use of language.

Inference

It is an additional information use by the listeners to connect what is said to what must be meant.

Example

A: Have you seen my Yule?

B: Yeah, it is on the desk.

A: can I look at your Shakespeare?

B: sure, it's on the shelf over there.

Anaphoric Reference

A rhetorical term for the repetition of word or phrase at the beginning of successive clause.

Antecedent : the first mentioning
o the initial referent.

Anaphora: the second mention

Peel and slice six **potatoes**. Put **them**
in cold salted water

Cataphora: put it before
antecedent.

I turned the corner and almost
stepped on **it**. There was a **large
snake** in the middle of the path.