A Comparison between Deixis in Persian and Other Languages

Mahmood Naghizadeh

Assistant Professor, Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, Payame Noor University, Ahvaz, Iran

Rahim Ahmadi Nargese [*]

PhD Student in General Linguistics, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran

Abstract

This article aims to describe Deixis in general and compare and analyse it in Persian. There are different kinds of spatial, chronicle, social and personal deixes. They are contextually bound elements which help hearers or readers to determine or distinguish the exact meaning of the utterances. Different languages discuss and classify deictic elements in various ways. In some languages demonstrative and adverbial systems induce expressions that refer to the location of the speaker and addressee. It has information other than distance and position. Persian deixis is in some way similar, but different from other languages.

Keywords: Deixis, determine, contextually, expression, spatial, chronicle, demonstratives pronouns, English

INTRODUCTION

Semitists in their studying (survey) have shown that understanding the exact meaning of an utterance or sentence is not available by means of vocabulary, syntax and linguistic features; the meaning of each utterances and sentence is completely transferred through the certain context including speaker, hearer age, gender, education, social position, place and time of the participants.

An important section of semantics deals with applied linguistics, and pragmatic. Context has a significant role in the distinction of the speaker's meaning because the deistic elements are contextually-bound ones. These elements refer to particular place, time, person such as: here, there, now, later, this, that and so on. Semantics classify deixis into different kinds as follow:

a) Time deixis which show the time utterance being done (occurred) for example. The underlined (bold) word(s) are deictic (time) that determined only by using context:

---

* Correspondence: Rahim Ahmadi Nargese, Email: rahimahmadi14@gmail.com

1. I'll see you tomorrow.
2. I went to the library yesterday.
3. I'll speak with Akbar today.
4. I will noted this point before.
5. They visit us 2days later.
6. He talk to me five days before.
7. She educated six months later.

b) Spatial deixis:

They refer to the special place , the words such as here, there, up, below, under, back, behind , this side , that side , ... are kinds of special deixis.

Examples:

1. Put the books there.
2. Bring the pens here (?injă)
3. Sitdown near the car (næzdīk)
4. Park the car behind the house (poŠte)
5. Bring your bicycle over there (?ănjă)
6. Let's move there, It's very hot here (?ănjă-?īnjă)

Persian demonstratives work in a similar way with English: compare them:

This(?īn)   these(?īnhă)   : near to speaker

That(?ăn)   those(?ănjă)   : far from speaker

We must note that the adverbs here and there refer to the places according to the location of the speaker as in 6 above.

English has two-term adverbial places such as here and there , while Spanish has three-term aqui (here) , ahi (just there) and alli (over there) . In Persian we use the word(s) mean just in Persian (dorost) , exactly in Persian (dæghigh/dæghighæn) and so on to show (point) the specific place or time, the distance between speaker and addressee.

Anderson and Keenan.(1985,295), mention and classify the spatial according to the place while how much/small it is as: extended, restricted , obscured. These three groups describe a semantic classification of the objects to which the demonstratives refer such as land, water, small, lengthy, near, far, visible, and etc. As Lyons and Saeed point out that some verbs such as come (?ămædæn)and go (ræftæn) which show the movement (motion) towards and away from the speaker.

Pay attention to some examples:

▪ -come into my room
▪ -biyă tū ?otăqæm (nearer to speaker)
▪ -Go to that house
▪ -Boro tū ?ūn xūne (farther from speaker)

- ▪ -We can use these verbs in other combinations like:
- ▪ -To become unconscious
- ▪ -?æz hūš ræftæn [farther from speaker]
- ▪ -To come (recover) to one's senses.
- ▪ -Be hūš ?ămædæn [nearer to speaker]

Furthermore there are many words and expressions such as die (mordæn) in relation to born (Motevæled šodæn), become tired and become relaxed which they comparatively termed (xæste šodæn) means nearness of the tiredness or (xæstegim dærræft) farness of tiredness.

We think that we can use hamān and hamin before the words or expressions referring to the place to emphasize (show) the farness or closeness to speaker. Somali language has two words soo and sii which the farmer means toward the speaker and the later means away from the speaker:

1. Soo soco!

  Detc walk

  Come this way (Approach)

  Persian: (Næzdik)

Go on over there (Godways):

2. Sii soco!

  DEIC walk

 "Go on over there!,Go away!"

In English their synonyms are: over here (hæminjă) and over there (hæmănjă)

[we finish this part and begin the next kind of deictic terms]

C) Person deixis:

This kind can be divided into subjective, objective land possessive that have different form in Persian and other language we discuss here:

Persian		Arabic
I	من (măn)	انا (ænæ)
You	تو (to)	انتَ (æntæ)(m) / انتِ (ænte)(f)
He	او(مذکر) (?ū)	هو(hovæ)(m)
She	او(مونث) (?ū)	هي (hiyæ) (f)
It	(شي يا حيوان) (?ān)	-

We   ما (mă)   نحن (næhno)

You   شما (šomă)   {انتم/انتن} (pl) (ăntom(m)/ăntonă(f))

They   آنها (?ānhă)   (pl) (هم/هن) hom(m)/honă(f)

Dual: {انتما/هما}(ăntomă/homă)*

*Dual: Dual means two (or mosænă in Arabic) we have this class in Arabic but not in English and Persian.

As you see In Persian we don't have dual (Mosænă) but in Arabic we have. English has the pronoun "it" ; but in Arabic we don't have. In Arabic the dual (singular or plural) and In plural pronouns the gender is considered to classify them into male and female; but in Persian It (gender) isn't the basis for classification (we don't male/female plural (pronouns), so most of the time Arabic language gives us more information than others. Hayword(1990) gives example from zaei which has two pronouns for first person plural including "nay" (we) (speakers and addressees) or "nil" (we) (only speakers) . It seems that English is simpler than many of the languages (the same source).

d) Social Deixes:

Another kind of Deixis is a social one. Levins (1983) remarks that the pronoun system in some languages indicate information about the social identities of persons. In European language polite and familiar pronouns are examples of it e.g French: us/vous German: du/su, Spanish : tu/usted; In this case Persian pronouns which refer to singular persons are used plurally for person with higher position e.g; "šomă",jenăbăli,hæzrætăli , … instead of "tu" (with lower position) in Persian we use they (?ĭšăn) instead of "?ū" (he/she).

In Asian and European language in using greetings (hi,hello) in English and "sælăm" , "sællămon ?æleikom"* , request (would you or would you mind … in English and "lotfæn" , "momkene", " momkene lotfæn" , … in Persian), or compliment(s) (offers) , we can find various type of utterance that show the social positions. In Persian when we are in a lower position or we want to show so, we use "bænde", "hæqir" or " bænde-ye hæqir" instead of "mæn" (I) .

Another examples are about the verbs "come" in English with Persian equivelant ?ămædæn (usual) , Tæšrif ?ăværd, mošæræf færmūdid , … and for the verb "go" [(usual) ræftæn, Tæšrif bordæn , …].

* Borrowed terms from Arabic

Other verbs such as ?ăværdæn(bring) and bordæn(bring), dādæn (bæxšidæn) means "give" or present; and gereftæn (take) show the distance (near or far of the speaker(s) , furthermore indicate social position .

Lyons(1997) says that sometimes we encounter with localism which refer to general human tendency to extend spatial terms to arrange of other linguistic areas, for

example. In Irish language expressions for feelings and possession are expressed spatially:

1. Ta porch agam = I have a porch
2. Ta slaghadan orm = I have a cold
3. Ta glindar orm = I am delighted

Saeed (2009) talks about "Gramaticalize" and define it as: when semantic distinction are obligatory; we will say that they are grammatilizetion for example all language like Arabic obligatorily includes information about the gender, the choice is as in:

?æntæ = you (female, singular) = تو مذكر [To]

?ænte = you (male , singular) = تو مونث [To]

These pronouns have relational verbal forms. Finally we quite a story from Golistan-e-Saadi and introduce the deixes used in it: The first part about the king's manner:

Pădešăhi ră šenidæm be koštæn ?æsiri ?ešăræt kærd. Bīčăre dær hălæte nūmidi mælek ră došnăm dădæn gereft . Mælek porsid če miguyæd. yeki ?æz vozæră goft vælkăzeminælgheiz vælăfin ?æne năs. Mælek ?æz xūne ?ū dærgozæšt. Væzīre dīgær ke zede ?ū būd goft: ?īn Mælek ră došnăm dăd. Mælek goft: mæră ?ăn doroghe vei pæsændidetær ?ămæd ?æz ?īn răst ke tū gofti ke dær ?ăn mæslehæti būd væ dær ?īn ĵonbeši.

Deixes In the above story:

- -æm →I (mæn=من)=>Sæædi
- ?ū→he(او) => ?æsir
- ?ū→he(او) => væzir
- ?īn→ this(?æsir)
- mæră→ me (مرا)
- ?ăn→that(آن)
- Vei→he (væzir)
- ?ămæd→ come(آمد)
- ?īn→this (răst = true)
- ?ū→he(او)
- to→you(تو)
- ?ăn→ that(آن) = dorogh(false)
- ?īn→ this(این) = răst (true)

As you see there are about twelve deictic elements which are identified by the context (the story of Golestan). In addition we can find the referents or anaphora of the given pronouns.

CONCLUSION

We tried to demonstrate that every language has various deixes. Deixis has different kinds of them such as: 'spatial',' time', 'person', 'demonstratives' pronouns and some verbs as: 'come and go'. These elements are frequently used in text; they are contextually bound element. So the only way for identification of them is context. We noted different examples from different languages to present the significant role of them in determining and understanding the meaning of the text. Finding referents or anaphora in them to improve our understanding and comprehension. We should pay attention to the relativity of them because sometime a place is "here" for speaker, but it is "there" for addressee.

REFERENCES

Levinson, S, C. (1983). *Pragmatics.* Cambridge university press.

Lyons, John. (1977). *Semantics.* Willy Blackwell.

Nāderi, E. & Seif Naraqi, M. (1392). Research method in humanities. Tehran.

Palmer, F. (1372). *Introduction to semantics, Translated by Korosh Safavi.* Tehran.

Quirk, R. (1978). Dictionary of contemporary English.

Saadi's Golestan.

Saeed, J. I. (1997). *Semantics.* Willy – black well.

Safavi, Korosh. (1392). *Applied semantics.* Tehran. Hamshahri.

Safavi, Korosh. (1392). *Introduction to semantics.* Tehran, našre sure.

Sunderland, J. (2002). *Research methods in linguistics.* Oxford.