

# **Pragmatics:**

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## **Deixis**

# Deixis

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## □ Definition:

**The word “Deixis” is a technical term (from Greek) for one of the most basic things we do with utterances, which means “pointing via language.”**

# Typical examples of Deixis

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**I, you, he, she Here, This,  
Now that,there, then**

## **News narratives show many examples of deixis:**

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### **Example 1 - from a CBS Evening News broadcast.**

- 1. The Americans arrested three suspects, but they made many more enemies **here**,**
- 2. when the soldiers shot back at the gunmen hiding in **these** houses**

### **Example 2**

- But it's clear the situation **here** could grow far worse**
- 2. before the U.S. even has a chance to win it.**

# Person Deixis

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**I: the speaker**

**You: the addressee**

**He, she, it : neither speaker, nor addressee**

**Social deixis ( in French, “vous” “tu”)→ social status**

# Example

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- ☐ **Tom: Hello. Is that the teacher speaking? My little Tom caught cold today and he can't go to school. He asked me to ask you for a day's leave**
- ☐ **Teacher: Who is that speaking?**
- ☐ **Tom: it's **my** father, sir!**

# Space/Spatial/Place Deixis:

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**Here / There**

**This / That**

**They indicate distance or proximity from the speaker,**

**Physical distance or proximity**

**Mental and psychological distance or proximity**

**e.g.--The station is two hundred yards from the college.**

**--Bring that here and take this there**

# example

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- ❑ **Teacher: Tom, where is Mexico?**
- ❑ **Tom: It is on the 11th page of the geographic book, sir!**



# Temporal/Time deixis

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**Now** → proximal

**Then** → distal (both past and future)

**Temporal events that move toward us  
(into view) → *this weekend***

**Temporal events that move away from  
us (out of view)**

# example

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- ☐ **Professor: when is your birthday?**
- ☐ **Boy: February 20th**
- ☐ **Professor: which year?**
- ☐ **Boy: every year!**

# Deictic center

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- ☐ **The time of the utterance's time; the place of the utterance's place, the person just giving the utterance.**
- ☐ **Near speaker—proximal—this, here, now**
- ☐ **Away from speaker—distal—that, there, then**

# Using Deixis

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- **Certain words like here, there, this, that, now, then, yesterday as well as most pronouns such I, you, him, her, them can only be understood if we know about the context in which they are used.**

# Using Deixis

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**For example, the sentence, “ you’ll have to bring that back tomorrow, because they aren’t here”, out of the context will be quite unintelligible. Because this sentence contain large number of certain expressions (Deixis) which depend for their interpretation on the immediate physical context in which they are uttered.**

# Using Deixis

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- ❑ **All these expressions have to be interpreted in terms of what person, place or time the speaker has in mind. There is a broad distinction between what is marked as distant (that, there, then). It is also possible to mark whether the movement is happening toward the speaker's location (come) or away from speaker's location (go) if you are looking for someone and he or she appears moving towards you, you tend to say “here she comes! If, however, she is moving away from you in the distance, you are more likely to say, there she go goes!”**

# Intriguing question

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- ☐ **Deictic expressions are a pragmatic concept**
- ☐ **Why?**
- ☐ **Because their interpretation depends on the context, the speaker's intention, and they express relative distance.**



# **The End**

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# **Thank You!**