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DEICTIC UNITS EXPRESSED IN PROSE TEXTS AND THEIR PRAGMATIC FEATURES

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Abstract

This article examines the modes of expression and interpretation of deictic units (deixis) in prose literary texts. The principal types of deictic units—person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis—are reviewed, and their role in constructing the narrative world through deictic shift is analysed. Drawing on examples from prose works, the functions of deictic units in facilitating reader immersion and establishing point of view are elucidated. The findings confirm that deictic units constitute an essential tool for imparting vitality and multilayered interpretation to prose texts.

Keywords

deictic units, deixis, prose text, deictic shift, person deixis, time and place deixis.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the phenomenon of deixis in global linguistics has been interpreted and analysed from diverse perspectives, thereby illuminating various facets of this complex phenomenon. Approaches to deixis vary across disciplines such as philosophy, logic, psychology, linguistics, and literary studies.

Deictic units in linguistics are lexico-grammatical devices tightly bound to the context of utterance. Their meaning is determined solely in relation to the coordinates of the speaker/narrator, the listener/reader, time, and place. In ordinary spoken discourse, deictic units directly facilitate interaction between participants; in prose texts, however, they perform a more intricate function: creating the narrative world, engaging the reader in the events, and expressing the authorial point of view.

The distinctive feature of prose texts lies in the operation of deictic units through the process of "deictic shift": the reader projects their real-world "I–here–now" centre onto that of the character or narrator in the story. This process underpins the immersive quality of literary texts.

The aim of the article is to analyse the forms of expression and mechanisms of interpretation of deictic units in prose texts, as well as to determine their role in narrative structure and reader perception.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

The analysis is based on descriptive and interpretive methods.

A conceptual framework was developed drawing on deictic theory (K. Bühler, S. Levinson, J. Lyons) and studies of deixis in literary texts (P. Stockwell, E. Semino, D. Herman). In Uzbek linguistics, attention intensified during the 1980s and 1990s towards the integrated study of semantics, syntax, stylistics, and pragmatics within research on speech situations and text linguistics. Numerous doctoral and candidate dissertations have been defended on the investigation of texts and the linguistic means that generate them, resulting in monographs and textbooks. Scholars such as A. Nurmonov, N. Mahmudov, A. Mamajonov, Z. Tohirov, D. Lutfullayeva, Sh. Iskandarova, S. Mo‘minov, Sh. Safarov, M. Hakimov, M. Saidxonov, S. Boymirzaeva, S. Maksumova, A. Ko‘chiboev, M. Qurbonova, A. Pardayev, M. Abdupattoyev, E. Ibragimova, S. Qurbonova, M. Gaziyeva, U. Nosirova, N. Qazaqova, and others have explored pragmatics and its object of study, core concepts and principles, alongside stylistic, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and methodological aspects of

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communication. All the aforementioned studies have contributed to the formation of pragmatic linguistics theory in Uzbek linguistics and continue to serve as a scholarly-theoretical foundation for work in this field. Although research on the pragmatic properties of syntactic units has formed the basis of ongoing investigations, pragmatic linguistics has developed on the foundation of text linguistics; while the pragmatic aspects of texts have been examined, the emergence of new subfields within text linguistics has broadened the scope of research. The pragmatic features of scientific texts have been investigated by M. Hakimov, while the linguopragmatic properties of poetic texts have been illuminated by U. Nosirova.

Deictic units were identified in excerpts from prose texts in O‘. Hoshimov’s work Daftar hoshiyasidagi bitiklar. These units were classified by type and subjected to comparative analysis based on narrator perspective (first-person and third-person).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the pragmatic study of linguistic units pertaining to the deictic field—such as pointing and reference—the essence of the means belonging to this group and the historical formation of the system are, to a certain extent, linked to theories of parts of speech. Comparison has long been regarded as an ancient and highly active method even in scientific observation, which represents a higher level of cognition. Among independent parts of speech, pronouns stand out due to certain pragmatic properties; they designate objects and entities indirectly. The pragmatic meaning of pronouns is understood in relation to the speech situation and the text. In pragmalinguistic research, the characteristic features of pronouns are examined. The deictic function can be performed not only by pronouns but also by affixes belonging to grammatical categories. Thus, deixis is expressed through both lexical and grammatical means. As a linguistic phenomenon tied to the speech situation, deixis encompasses components of “speech acts,” including speech act participants, the subject of speech, and the messages expressed. In pragmalinguistics, discussions of deixis highlight concepts such as deictic elements, indicative and non-indicative, descriptive and non-descriptive, shifters, anaphora, and anaphoric relations. In such words as a linguistic phenomenon, the denotate is not primary. The presence of pointing and reference in indicative and non-indicative units, rather than descriptive function, has given rise to the need for concepts specific to texts. The concept of deixis in linguistics emerged precisely to meet such practical needs. As noted in scholarly literature, the typical manifestation of shifters appears in deictic elements. Shifters perform referential functions relative to the speech act, the emergence of the text, and the persons participating in the speech situation. The first-person pronoun men (“I”) serves as an example of a shifter. Pronouns, as indicative symbols, also encompass conventional and pointing functions.

According to S. Levinson, in written communication languages are divided into two groups depending on which moment in time (the moment of utterance production or its reception) is taken as the base. Deixis is not a morphological or lexical phenomenon but occupies a functional layer and becomes activated in the environment of verbal communication. Traditionally, deixis is defined in relation to the temporal and spatial indices of the unfolding speech act. As defined in V. A. Vinogradov’s Linguistic Dictionary, “deixis occurs in the contextual field of pointing or reference independently of the internal structure of the text.” Linguistic units performing this function are also termed “deictic expressions.” The American linguist Ch. Fillmore distinguishes person, place, temporal, social, and discursive types of deixis. Discursive deixis arises not directly from connection to the text but in relation to the choice of lexical and grammatical elements. In his view, deictic expressions are activated differently in spoken and written discourse. The tradition of classifying deixis into types continues to the present. For instance, the first group includes person, place, and time deixis, while the second, as textual deixis, comprises means that reflect relations between sentences. From the scholarly literature, it is evident that various forms of reference are included within the scope of deixis. These include references to communication

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participants—the speaker and the listener—expressed through personal pronouns. Another type of deixis refers to the subject of speech, i.e., an object or person, with third-person pronouns and spatial reference activated, requiring the participation of adverbs of place and other categorial units.

In all acknowledged cases, the speech structure takes as its orientation events occurring in the external world reflected in the content.

Furthermore, deixis can also reflect relations manifested in the internal structure of the text, thereby ensuring semantic cohesion among discourse segments. Speech activity cannot be imagined without deictic expressions, since a speech act cannot fulfil its function without reference to time and place. The essence of concepts such as time, place, and subject is manifested in human perception and participation. To date, research on the three primary types of deixis—person, time, and place—retains its relevance. Linguistic units expressing these types, such as personal pronouns (men, sen, siz – "I", "you" singular informal, "you" formal/plural), spatial adverbs (shu yerda, u yerda – "here", "there"), and temporal adverbs (hozir, oldin, keyin – "now", "before", "after"), continue to be actively studied. Units expressing person deixis include personal pronouns. When the pronouns sen, siz, and u ("you" singular informal, "you" formal/plural, "he/she/it") are used, reference is made to the fact that the speaker and addressee are direct participants in the communicative process.

Love

At first, they did not know each other. A strange force called Love brought them together. They became enchanted by the magic of that force.

Strange, love never walks alone. A flame called Separation followed it. They began to burn together in that flame.

Finally, the flame of Separation died out, and Love led in an intoxicating feeling called Union. Now they were happy.

Strange, love never walks alone. Now it brought an obstacle called Trial. If they had held tightly to Love's hand, passing this obstacle would not have been difficult. But that did not happen. They retreated before the trial.

Doubt and Jealousy crept in between them. Then, for the first time, they hurled stones of reproach at the Love that had brought them together.

Even then, Love forgave them. It tried to acquaint them with forces called Patience and Compassion. But they forgot both Patience and Compassion. They cursed the "evil force" called Love that had united them!

Then… Betrayal entered their fate! Blaming Love, in the end… they parted…

At the crossroads of fate, three innocent infants were left crying. A five-year-old boy, a three-year-old girl, and… Love, now orphaned…

If we consider the expression of deixis in the short prose text above, the pronoun ular ("they") refers to third-person entities, namely the lovers—person deixis; while shunda ("then/at that time") produces time deixis through the meaning of temporal pointing via a demonstrative pronoun. The pragmatic meaning conveyed by the types of deixis expressed in the prose text is that even the greatest human emotion, if it cannot withstand difficulties and is not tempered by trials, may in time turn into an "evil force," and from this the most vulnerable—infants—suffer the most.

Place deixis also occurs with the participation of nominal phrases and other expressions. In our language, units expressing deixis exist; alongside lexical units bearing meanings of reference to person, time, and place, morphological means—including grammatical categories such as person, tense, and degree—as well as words occupy a place. Moreover, certain units that are not essentially deictic may also be observed functioning in this capacity. Regardless of their nature, such units must be appropriate to the text. Morphological means and affixes must possess this property. Morphological elements serve to impart deictic content to

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sentences. Deictic units may in certain situations lose their deictic meaning and acquire anaphoric meaning.

Ape-likeness

Scientists are sounding the alarm that anthropoid apes are declining on earth. They need not worry. Ape-like humans are increasing on earth…

In this short prose text, the pronoun ular ("they") expresses deictic meaning, referring to scientists concerned with the animal world. Pragmatic analysis of the text reveals the meaning that among us, creatures created by God—humans—are losing their essence and turning into ape-like beings.

In any type of deixis, "pointing/reference is distinguished by two aspects: in one, pointing/reference is carried out within the linguistic context, while in the other it is applied relative to the speech situation. It is precisely these properties that distinguish the phenomena of deixis and anaphora."

Patience God granted humans patience. If their bread is taken, they endure. If their property is stolen, they endure. If they are beaten or cursed, they endure. But if black is called white and white black, if an angel is "proven" to be a "devil" and a devil an "angel," enduring this is difficult…

In such a time, the last hope is to seek help from God, to beseech. God's scales work without error…

In this short prose text, where the author skilfully employs the charm of our language, linguistic means are masterfully utilised. Initially, the essence of gradation is expressed through enumeration; its pragmatic aspect lies in the graded trials a person experiences. The presuppositional meaning is clearly articulated through the antithesis of black-and-white, devil-and-angel. The time deixis marked by bunday paytda ("at such a time") refers to a period familiar to the reader—moments when every believer feels helpless before the depths of life's baseness.

CONCLUSION

In prose texts, deictic units are among the fundamental constructive elements of the narrative. Through them, the author "transfers" the reader into the story world, rendering events vivid and personal. Interpretation of deictic units requires consideration of context, narrator position, and reader projection. Thus, diverse approaches to the concept of deixis exist in global linguistics; the use of deictic expressions is applied in certain aspects of communicative activity, in the properties of extralinguistic context, or in the context of thought, as well as in the characteristics of speech activity. At the centre of the deictic situation stands the speaker or reader, and their occupation of place and time serves as the origo. Deixis designates the speaker's location in a certain place during speech activity and determines whether that action is performed or not at a precise time. The reprocessing in the author's consciousness of information from existence, its transformation into poetic thought synthesis, its manifestation as a product of cognitive knowledge, and its pragmatic investigation based on the anthropocentric principle hold significant importance for the development of contemporary linguistics in the fields of text linguistics and pragmatics.

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