

Deictic Expressions in Punjabi

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate deixis in Punjabi language. Deictic expressions are used to identify the speaker, hearer, time and location of the context in which the utterance takes place. Punjabi possess a good number of deictic expressions. The paper describes precisely deictic expressions. The paper will also discuss briefly the nature of Punjabi language and talks about Person, Spatial and Temporal deixis. Person deixis are the words and expressions that indicate role of participants in a conversation. Spatial deixis is used to indicate location concerning speaker and the listener. Temporal deixis is used to indicate time in which the utterance takes place. It also unveils different features of Person, Spatial and Temporal deixis. The everyday sentences used by native adult Punjabi speakers has been used to analyze deictic expressions.

Keywords: *Deixis, Context, Deictic expressions, Context, Utterances.*

1. Introduction

Language is one of the fascinating and unique properties of human beings. Languages are the principal systems of communication used by particular groups of human beings within the particular society (linguistic community) of which they are members (Lyons,1970). People have an inherent desire to communicate. Language helps in the exchange of knowledge, ideas, experiences, feelings etc both in spoken and written forms. It is not just a part of us, rather it is our identity.

For children to acquire deictic expressions, it takes many years for them to completely understand the deictic contrast between here and there and between this and that. The process of comprehending deictic expressions grows out of theory ability of pointing with fingers. They don't understand the deictic contrast in their early years. However, they start using deictic terms very early. It is then followed by understanding two principles: the speaker is the point of reference (the SPEAKER PRINCIPLE) and each pair of terms contrasts on the distance dimension (the DISTANCE PRINCIPLE). Most children start using one or two deictic terms by two and a half, but they don't know the contrast between them. They learn deictic expressions through three stages- no contrast then a partial contrast and finally full deictic contrast. They go through these stages initially with this and that and later here and there ((C.J.SENGUL, 1978).

People around the globe speak different languages. Ethnologue states there are currently 7,164 languages spoken around the world. All languages vary from region to region in terms of structure and vocabulary, but they share universal properties too. Linguists have classified and categorized various languages into a language family. A language family is a subgroup of languages that have been descended from a common ancestor, called the proto language of that language. There are about 147 language families in the world.

There are several hundred languages spoken in South Asia. The major language families of South Asia include- Indo – Aryan languages, Dravidian languages, Astro Asiatic and Tibeto Burman languages. Punjabi is an Indo – Aryan language. It is spoken primarily in Punjab and other parts of India. It is also spoken in Pakistan. It is one of the 22 scheduled languages mentioned in the 8th schedule of the constitution of India. The word order of Punjabi is SOV and is written in Gurmukhi script.

2. Scope of the Study:

Though, research has been done in Punjabi from various perspectives (phonology, grammar, semantics etc.), no significant study has been conducted to analyze Person, Temporal and Spatial deixis. The present study aims to bridge this gap. Deictic expressions used by native speakers of Punjabi has been studied and analyzed. Thus, the study addresses an underexplored area in Punjabi linguistics, contributing to the understanding of deixis in an Indo-Aryan language.

3. Methodology:

The study is comparative and descriptive in nature. For this study, approximately 60 native Punjabi speaker everyday conversations were selected to analyze deictic expressions. Examples were extracted from these conversations to provide authentic insights. This approach enables an in depth understanding of Punjabi deixis usage.

4. Deictic Expressions:

Deictic expressions play an important role in communication as it helps to identify who is the speaker, who is being addressed and who is being referred to. Every language chooses certain words to fulfill the requirement of humans in order to have complete and successful communication. The reference of certain words and expressions in all the languages relies entirely upon the situational context in which utterance takes place. The term “deixis” has been borrowed from Greek meaning to point, pick out or indicate. So, deictic expressions refer to a class of linguistic expressions that describe the situational context of the speech event occurred i.e. the speech participants and the time and the location.

“Language is not merely a set of unrelated sounds, clauses, rules and meanings; it is a total coherent system of these integrating with each other, and with behavior context, universe of discourse, and observer perspective,” says American linguist and Anthropologist Kenneth L. Pike. Therefore, meaning alone cannot be analyzed in terms of linguistic system alone but also takes into account the context in which the event takes place.

English has a variety of deictic expressions. Person deixis such as he and she, demonstratives such as this and that, spatial adverbs such as here and there, temporal verbs such as now, then, today etc. Like English, all languages have deictic expressions that places in them the sender/speaker, hearer/receiver and the narrated participant in addition to the time and place situated. Initially, there were only three categories of deixis: person, place and time. However, discourse and social deixis were included in 1980's. In Punjabi, deictic expressions go hand in hand with the distinction provided by them.

5. Deictic Expressions in Punjabi

5.1 Person deixis

There are three divisions in person deixis, first person, second person and third person. First person is the speaker's reference to himself, the second person is the speaker's reference to one or more addressees and the third person is reference to person and identities that are neither speaker or addressees of the utterance in question.

1. mē kuṛi han

1sg girl aux

I am a girl

2. əsi kal milange

1pl tomorrow meet-fut

We will meet tomorrow

3. tu kiṭṭha rendi e?

2sg where live-prs-f-int

Where do you live?

4. t̪usi khana kha rəe ho?

2pl food eat prs-prog-int

Are you eating food?

5. o meri dōst æ

3sg poss friend aux

She is my friend

6. o mera pra æ

3sg poss brother aux

He is my brother

7. o jan lge æ
 3pl leave-prs-prog aux
 They are leaving
8. e ek kələm æ
 3sg one pen aux
 It is a pen
9. e mere nal bethı æ
 3sg poss with sit-prs-aux
 She is sitting with me
10. o uṯṯa khəṯa hə
 3sg there standing aux
 He is standing there

In the examples mentioned above, the person deixis refers to persons irrespective of gender but changes with number. For example, in the case of first person /mẽ/ is used both for masculine as well as for feminine but changes when we use with plural i.e. /asse/. In the case of second person /tu/ is used for masculine as well as feminine but changes when we use with plural i.e. /ṯusi/. There are two aspects of third person. In one, the deictic expression remains same both for masculine as well as feminine i.e /o/ as in example 5 and 6. It also remains same for plural as in example 7. Another aspect of third person is that it changes to indicate proximity or remoteness. For example, /e/ characterized by front vowel is used both for masculine and feminine to indicate proximity as in example 9 and /o/ characterized by back vowel is used for both the genders to indicate remoteness as in example 10. For inanimate objects /e/ is used.

Table No-1 enlists Person deixis in Punjabi

S. NO.	Person deixis	Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
1.	Ist	mẽ	I	əsi	We
2.	2 nd	tu	You	ṯusi	You
3.	3 rd	o	He/She/It/	o	They

5.2 Spatial deixis

Spatial deixis or place deixis tells us the location of the entities.

11. e merı kıtab æ

Dem poss book aux

This is my book

12. o mera kar æ

Dem poss house aux

That is my house

13. e mere kəpɾe hən

Dem poss clothes aux

These are my clothes

14. o mere dəsɾ hən

Dem poss friend aux

Those are my friends

15. kəp ıtt̪he rək̪hə

Cup adv place

Place the cup here

16. ıtt̪he merı belɾ pəɾ æ

Adv poss belt lie prs

There lies my belt

17. ıdhr ao

Here come

Come here

18. ıdər jao

Adv go

Go there

The Spatial or place deixis changes in order to indicate proximity or remoteness. It includes adverbs of location (here, there i.e. /ıtt̪he/ /ıdər/ /ıt̪he/ /ıdər/), demonstratives (this, that, these, those i.e. /e/, /o/) and certain verbs (come, go). For instance, /eh/ /ıthe/ and /ıdər/ are used to indicate nearness while /uh/ /ıt̪he/ and /ıdɾ/ are used to indicate remoteness.

However, /ɪdər/ and /ʊdər/ are used in informal speech and more often in non-standard varieties of the language.

Table No-2 enlists Spatial deixis in Punjabi

S.no.	Proximity	Gloss	Remoteness	Gloss	Usage
1.	e	this/these	o	that/those	formal
2.	ɪ ^h the	here	ʊ ^h the	there	formal
3.	ɪdər	here	ʊdər	there	informal

5.3 Temporal deixis

Temporal deixis communicate time. Three types of expressions can be used to present the concept of time. These expressions can be lexical, grammatical and lexically composite. Inflections or auxiliaries serve as grammatical expressions. Expressions like today, tonight as lexical and two days before as lexically composite. The name of days, months, year also indicates time.

19. aɟ mē bəʒar ɟavāɟɪ

Today 1sg market go-fut-f

Today I will go to market

20. kaɭ mē dɪɭɪ ɡəɪ

Yesterday 1sg Delhi go-pst

I went to Delhi yesterday

21. menʊ hʊne caɦɪde

1sg now want

I want it now

22. apā milde ā phɪr

1pl meet a then

We will meet then

23. ɟəɭdɪ kəɾə un

Fast do now

Do it fast now

24. menū une cahīde
 Fast now want
 I want it now

25. mē ambə khada do din pehle
 1sg mango eat-pst two days before
 I ate mango two days before

26. kuḥ sal pehle mē ḍili gəi
 Few years ago 1sg delhi go-pst
 Few years ago I went to Delhi

The above examples represent deictic expressions of time. Inflections such as *javā-gi* , *gəi* function as grammatical expressions as in the examples above. Lexical expressions includes /aḥ/, /kal/ , /hune/ , /phir/ , /un/ /une/. Lexically composite expressions are represented as in example 25 and 26 – *do din pehle* and *kuḥ sal pehle*. There are also some variants of these deictic expressions that are used in informal speech and more often non-standard varieties of the language. For example, lexical /un/ and /une/.

Table No-3 enlists Temporal deixis and its variants in Punjabi

S.no.	Temporal deixis	Gloss	Dialectal Variants	usage
1.	Aḥ	Today	-----	formal
2.	kal	Yesterday / Over morrow	-----	formal
3.	Hon	now	un	informal
4.	Hone	now	une	informal
5.	Phir	then	-----	formal
6.	do din pehle	Two days before	-----	formal
7.	Kuḥ sal pehle	Few years ago	-----	formal

6. Conclusion

The present study focused on understanding the phenomenon of Person, Spatial and Temporal deixis. Like other aspects of the language, deixis is one of the most important elements of a language. The use of Person deixis showed that it is not marked by gender but with number. However, the second person plural is also used as an honorific to give respect to elders. Likewise, there are Spatial and Temporal deictic expressions some of which are used formally and others informally. There are two deictic expressions that are found commonly in both Person deixis as well as Spatial deixis i.e. /e/ and /o/ that functions to represent proximity and remoteness.

Thus, deictic expressions play an important role in Punjabi, strengthens communication by indicating personal, spatial and temporal references. It offers valuable insights into how we perceive our world while having communication. Understanding deixis helps us to establish connections. The findings of the study significantly contribute to the broader field of Punjabi linguistics. By exploring the intricacies of Punjabi deixis, this research demonstrates the Punjabi's richness and complexity, underscoring its importance in the broader field of linguistic studies and informing future research direction.

Abbreviations:

1SG – first person singular	PST – past
1PL – first person plural	FUT – future
2SG – second person singular	INT – interrogative
2PL – second person plural	DEM – demonstrative
3SG – third person singular	POSS – possessive
3PL – third person plural	AUX – auxiliary
F - feminine	PROG – progressive
M – masculine	ADV – adverb
PRS – present	

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