

DEICTIC AND ANAPHORIC POSSIBILITIES OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS.

Deixis is using language to point to the context surrounding the utterance, i.e. the identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities referred to in relation to their spatio-temporal context. It is often called primary deixis, exophoric deixis or simply deixis alone.

Contextual use of deictic expressions is known as secondary deixis, textual deixis, endophoric deixis or discourse deixis. Such expressions are called cataphoric (when they refer forwards to some elements) or anaphoric (if they are directed backwards pointing to something, which has been mentioned). The latter is widely used in English texts.

Personal pronouns do not have the same deictic possibilities. I/we; you¹/you² can only refer to the participants of the speech act: the speaker and the listener. It is essential to identify the sender and the addressee of the utterance in order to understand its information. For example, a man and a woman are talking on the beach of the sea: “Oh, I forgot about an opener”. – “Don’t worry. I’ve got everything”. Each of them uses “I” in turn to point to himself/herself as the speaker.

The personal pronouns “he/she/it/they” can point to extralingual surroundings of the utterance (exophoric deixis or deixis) and refer to parts of the discourse itself (endophoric deixis, i.e. discourse deixis). In the second case they are anaphoric as they are directed backwards. In the example “He trusted Miss Lemon. She was a woman without imagination.” she substitutes for its antecedent Miss Lemon. Looking for the latter, we interpret the preceding text fragment not as a simple sequence of sentences but as a structural and thematic entity, which makes up a certain discourse context. The deictic possibility of the personal pronouns of the third person is observed, for example, in the situation, where a girl, irritated by her boy-friend’s reaction to the film, is thinking about him: “What a baby he is...”. Here he refers to the situation outside the utterance.

So, personal pronouns are anaphoric expressions in discourse context and deictic when they refer to extralingual context of the utterance.