



TEXTBOOK “INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH PRAGMATICS”



Novra Melisa P. Hutabarat

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PREFACE

The present book, “Introduction to English Pragmatics”, is meant to be an all-round tool for undergraduates, who are dipping their toes in this intriguing research field. It was conceived in order to make the complex notions of pragmatic theory easier and more relevant to real language use, in particular when it comes to language learning and teaching.

Chapters are arranged thematically and are introduced by specially commissioned framing introductions which provide an overview of the key issues explored and of the contributors' positions in relation to them. It is supplemented with practical analysis, interactive discussion points and case studies to stimulate student engagement, critical thinking and fundamentally elucidates the groundwork of pragmatic applications.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all students and colleagues whose feedback and enthusiasm inspired the development of this material. I hope this book provides a helpful and stimulating resource for both learners and instructors in the field of linguistics and applied language studies.

Regards,

The Author

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO PRAGMATICS

1.1 What is Pragmatics?

Pragmatics is a fundamental branch of linguistics that studies how people use language in actual communication. Unlike syntax and semantics, which focus on sentence structure and literal meanings respectively, pragmatics is concerned with how language is used in context to achieve communication goals. It addresses how listeners and speakers understand intended meaning, interpret indirect speech, and rely on context, background knowledge, and social norms.

A. Core Concept

At its core, pragmatics is about the *intended meaning* behind words. That is, not just what is said, but what is meant, taking into account:

1. Who is speaking
2. To whom they are speaking
3. Where, when, and why the interaction occurs
4. How shared knowledge and cultural norms influence interpretation

B. Key Definitions by Experts

1. George Yule (1996): "Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning."
– In his book *"Pragmatics"* (Oxford University Press), Yule emphasizes that pragmatics focuses on what speakers mean rather than what the words or phrases themselves might mean literally.
2. Stephen C. Levinson (1983): "Pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding."
– From his book *"Pragmatics"* (Cambridge University Press), Levinson highlights how context is essential to understanding meaning in communication.
3. Charles W. Morris (1938): "Pragmatics is the study of the relation of signs to interpreters."
– In his semiotic theory, Morris introduced the term 'pragmatics' as one of three branches of semiotics (alongside syntax and semantics), focusing on how users interpret signs.
4. David Crystal (1997): "Pragmatics studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others."
– In his book *"A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics"* (Blackwell), Crystal stresses the social aspect of pragmatic choices.

C. Main Concerns of Pragmatics

Pragmatics seeks to answer questions like:

1. How do people understand indirect speech acts? (e.g., "Can you pass the salt?" not just as a question but as a request)
2. How does deixis (context-dependent references like "here", "that", or "you") function in conversation?
3. What are presuppositions and implicatures?
4. How do politeness, social norms, and cultural values affect language use?

Examples:

1. Literal vs. Intended Meaning:
 - Sentence: "It's cold in here."
 - Literal meaning: The temperature is low.
 - Pragmatic meaning: A request to close the window or turn on the heater.
2. Indirect Speech Act:
 - Sentence: "Do you know what time it is?"
 - Pragmatic function: A polite way of asking someone to tell the time, not an inquiry about their knowledge.

D. Why Pragmatics Matters

Understanding pragmatics is crucial for:

1. Language teaching and learning
2. Cross-cultural communication
3. Artificial intelligence and human-computer interaction
4. Analyzing political or media discourse
5. Interpersonal relationship dynamics

1.2 Scope of Pragmatics

Pragmatics encompasses various subfields that explore how speakers use and interpret language in real-world contexts. Each area deals with how meaning is negotiated, shaped, or altered depending on *contextual*, *cultural*, and *intentional* factors. The scope of pragmatics, therefore, goes beyond the literal meanings of words and focuses on *how meaning is constructed in interaction*.

A. Deixis

Deixis (from the Greek word *deiktikos*, meaning "pointing") refers to words and phrases whose interpretation relies heavily on the *context of the utterance*, especially the speaker's position in time and space. Types of deixis:

1. Person deixis: I, you, we, they
2. Place deixis: here, there, this, that
3. Time deixis: now, then, today, tomorrow
4. Discourse deixis: this (referring to a previous statement), as mentioned

5. Social deixis: honorifics, titles (e.g., Mr., Sir)

Example: "I'll meet you here tomorrow." – The interpretation of "I," "you," "here," and "tomorrow" depends on who is speaking, where, and when.

B. Reference and Inference

Reference is the act by which a speaker uses language to enable a listener to identify something, while inference is the listener's ability to interpret or "read between the lines" to grasp the speaker's intention.

1. Reference involves the use of linguistic expressions (nouns, pronouns) to denote real or imagined entities.

2. Inference involves background knowledge and context to fill in gaps.

Example: "The man over there is my brother." – The listener must infer which man is being pointed out.

C. Presupposition

Presuppositions are background assumptions that a speaker believes the listener accepts as true. These are often embedded in the structure of sentences.

Triggered by words like: again, too, stop, know, realize, etc.

Example: "Jane has stopped smoking."

Presupposition: Jane used to smoke.

D. Implicature

Implicature refers to what is suggested in an utterance, even if not explicitly stated. This concept is central to Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975), which outlines how speakers generally cooperate in conversation by adhering to conversational maxims (Quality, Quantity, Relevance, Manner).

1. Conventional implicature: Attached to specific words (e.g., "but")

2. Conversational implicature: Arises from context

Example:

A: "Can you come to the meeting?"

B: "I have a lot of work to do."

Implicature: B is indirectly saying they cannot come.

E. Speech Acts

A speech act is any utterance that not only conveys information but also performs an action. Originating in the work of Austin (1962) and developed by Searle (1969), speech act theory distinguishes between:

1. Locutionary act: the actual utterance

2. Illocutionary act: the intended function (e.g., request, warn)

3. Perlocutionary act: the effect on the listener

Example: "I apologize for being late." – Performs the act of apologizing.

F. Politeness and Interaction

Politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) explains how people manage social harmony through language. It focuses on face-saving strategies used in interaction:

1. Positive face: the desire to be liked and approved
 2. Negative face: the desire not to be imposed upon
- Strategies include indirectness, hedging, honorifics, and mitigation.

Example: “Would you mind closing the window?” – Polite request minimizing imposition.

G. Contextual Meaning

Context shapes how utterances are understood. It includes:

1. Physical context: where the communication occurs
2. Linguistic context: what was said before
3. Social context: relationships and roles of participants
4. Cultural context: norms, values, shared knowledge

Example: “It’s hard to give up smoking.” – Depending on the context, this could be advice, a complaint, or a warning.

H. Pragmatics and Language Learning

Pragmatic competence is vital in second language acquisition (SLA). Learners must grasp not just grammar and vocabulary but also:

1. How to perform speech acts appropriately
2. Use politeness strategies
3. Interpret indirect or culturally nuanced expressions

Failure to do so can lead to pragmatic failure, causing misunderstandings or offense.

Example: A direct request like “Give me the salt” might be acceptable in one culture but impolite in another.

Summary Table: The Scope of Pragmatics

Area	Focus
Deixis	Contextual reference
Reference & Inference	Speaker intent and listener interpretation
Presupposition	Assumed background knowledge
Implicature	Implied meaning
Speech Acts	Language as action

1.3 Pragmatics vs. Semantics

Although both semantics and pragmatics are subfields of linguistics that study meaning, they approach meaning from different angles. Semantics is concerned with the literal, conventional meaning of words, phrases, and sentences—independent of context—while pragmatics studies how meaning is shaped by contextual factors, speaker intentions, and social conventions.

Aspect	Semantics	Pragmatics
Focus	Literal, dictionary-based meaning of words and grammatical structure	Intended meaning, based on speaker intention and context
Context Use	Meaning is stable and context-independent	Context is essential to infer speaker's intended meaning
Meaning Source	Comes from language system (lexicon and syntax)	Comes from context, shared knowledge, and social conventions
Example	<i>"Can you help me?"</i> means asking about ability	Often a polite request for assistance
Inferences	Rarely draws inferences; focuses on entailments	Frequently involves implicatures, presuppositions, and inference

Illustrative Example:

Utterance: *"It's cold in here."*

- Semantically: A descriptive statement about temperature.
- Pragmatically: It might imply a request, such as *"Please close the window,"* or *"Turn on the heater."*

This example illustrates how pragmatic meaning often goes beyond what is literally said—requiring the hearer to infer the speaker's intended message based on context and shared knowledge.

Key Distinction:

- Semantics = What is said (literal, encoded meaning)
- Pragmatics = What is meant (contextual, inferred meaning)

A. Why Study Pragmatics?

Understanding pragmatics is crucial for effective communication. It enables us to go beyond literal meanings and interpret intentions, tone, implications, and cultural norms that are vital in everyday interaction.

1. Interpret Intention

Pragmatics helps us understand what people mean, even when they don't explicitly say it.

Example:

A: "Do you want to go for coffee?"

B: "I have a meeting in 5 minutes."

→ Pragmatically, B is declining the offer without saying "no."

2. Handle Ambiguity

Natural language is often ambiguous. Pragmatics helps resolve ambiguity using context.

Example:

"He saw her duck."

→ Semantically ambiguous: Did he see a woman lower her head or see her pet duck?

→ Pragmatics uses context to determine the correct interpretation.

3. Enhance Communication

Pragmatic awareness allows us to interpret indirect speech, read between the lines, and prevent misunderstandings.

Example:

"That's a nice watch you have."

→ Could be a compliment, a distraction (before a theft), or even sarcasm—depending on the context.

4. Navigate Social Norms

Pragmatics plays a crucial role in politeness, face-saving, and social appropriateness.

Example:

Instead of saying, "Give me the salt," we say, "Could you pass the salt, please?" to maintain politeness.

5. Support Language Teaching

Pragmatic competence is essential for language learners. Grammar alone isn't enough; learners must know how language functions in real contexts.

Example:

A learner who says "Shut the door!" to a teacher might unintentionally be rude, unaware of softer expressions like "Would you mind closing the door?"

B. Real-Life Relevance

Pragmatics has critical applications in intercultural communication, business, education, and technology.

1. Intercultural Communication

Failure to grasp pragmatic norms across cultures can lead to misunderstandings or perceived rudeness.

Example:

In some cultures, refusing directly is acceptable; in others, indirect refusal is preferred. Saying “*No, I can't come*” may seem blunt in one culture but honest in another.

2. Business and Diplomacy

Understanding implied meanings, politeness strategies, and indirect speech is essential in negotiation and professional discourse.

3. Language Technology

Pragmatic analysis is key to improving AI-based systems like chatbots and translation tools to interpret context-sensitive meanings.

1.4 Types of Context in Pragmatics

In pragmatics, context is not optional—it is fundamental to understanding how meaning is constructed and interpreted. The same sentence can have vastly different meanings depending on linguistic, physical, social, or cultural context. Without considering context, communication can become ambiguous or even break down entirely.

A. Linguistic Context (Co-text)

Definition: The surrounding linguistic material—what has been previously said or written in the discourse.

1. This helps resolve ambiguity, identify referents, and interpret elliptical or incomplete expressions.
2. Also called *co-text*, it narrows down meaning by providing preceding and following linguistic clues.

Example:

“He left early.”

➤ Without context, “he” is vague.

➤ With context:

A: “John was really tired.”

B: “Yeah, he left early.”

→ “He” refers to *John*.

Functions:

- Disambiguates pronouns (he, she, it)
- Interprets ellipses (missing parts of sentences)
- Clarifies references (that, this, there)

B. Physical Context (Situational Context)

Definition: The immediate physical environment in which communication occurs, including time, place, spatial relationships, and objects present.

Physical context shapes the referential meaning of deictic expressions like “here,” “there,” “now,” and “this.”

Example:

“It’s over there.”

→ This makes sense only if speaker and hearer share the same visual space or environment.

Functions:

- Grounds deixis (e.g., spatial, temporal)
- Shapes nonverbal cues (e.g., gestures, eye contact)
- Supports multimodal communication (pointing, body language)

C. Social Context

Definition: The social relationship and roles between participants in an interaction (e.g., teacher-student, boss-employee, strangers, friends).

Social context governs the level of formality, choice of vocabulary, and politeness strategies.

Example:

- To a friend: *“Shut the window.”*
- To a professor: *“Would you mind closing the window?”*

Functions:

- Guides politeness and speech acts
- Manages face-threatening acts
- Adjusts register and tone

D. Cultural Context

Definition: The shared cultural knowledge, values, beliefs, and pragmatic norms that shape how language is used and interpreted in a given society.

1. What is considered polite, indirect, assertive, or rude varies across cultures.
2. Misunderstanding cultural context can lead to pragmatic failure.

Example:

- In American English, it's acceptable to say directly:
"I disagree with you."
- In Japanese, indirect forms like:
"That might be difficult..."
are more common to preserve group harmony.

Functions:

- Shapes communicative expectations (e.g., turn-taking, interruptions)
- Influences interpretation of politeness, directness, and silence
- Affects how compliments, refusals, and apologies are understood

Summary Table: Types of Context in Pragmatics

Type of Context	Definition	Function	Example
Linguistic	Prior and surrounding discourse	Clarifies pronouns, ellipses, references	<i>"He left early" → 'He' = 'John' from previous line</i>
Physical	Environment (time, space, objects)	Grounds deixis and supports reference	<i>"It's over there" → Requires shared visual field</i>
Social	Social roles and relationships	Determines formality, politeness, tone	<i>"Shut the door" vs. "Could you please shut the door?"</i>
Cultural	Shared norms, values, and beliefs	Shapes pragmatic expectations and interpretations	<i>Directness vs. indirectness across cultures</i>

Academic Significance

Understanding context is essential in:

1. Cross-cultural pragmatics (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993)
2. Intercultural communication
3. Language teaching, especially for second language learners who may interpret utterances literally without grasping the pragmatic force.

1.5 Approaches to Pragmatics

Pragmatics, as a field, can be broadly divided into two main approaches: Theoretical Pragmatics and Applied Pragmatics. While both deal with the relationship between language, context, and meaning, they differ in their objectives, methodologies, and areas of application.

A. Theoretical Pragmatics

Definition:

Theoretical pragmatics focuses on abstract principles and models that explain how speakers use and interpret language in context. It aims to describe the universal mechanisms underlying pragmatic inference, communication strategies, and meaning construction.

Key Objectives:

1. To explain how hearers interpret implied meaning (implicature, presupposition, inference)
2. To model how speakers use language to perform actions and manage interactions
3. To explore the cognitive processes involved in communication

Key Theoretical Frameworks:

1. Grice's Cooperative Principle and Conversational Maxims
 - a. Proposed by H. P. Grice (1975), this theory suggests that conversation relies on a shared assumption of cooperation between speaker and listener.
 - b. Grice identified four maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner.
 - c. Violating these maxims often leads to implicature—indirect meaning.

Example:

A: "Are you going to the party?"

B: "I have a lot of work to do."

→ Implied meaning: *B is not going*, even though not stated directly.

2. Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969)
 - a. Language is seen not only as a vehicle for conveying information but also as a form of action.
 - b. Three types of acts:
 - *Locutionary act*: the literal utterance
 - *Illocutionary act*: the speaker's intention (e.g., promise, request)
 - *Perlocutionary act*: the effect on the listener
3. Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986)
 - a. Communication is guided by the principle of relevance: listeners expect the most relevant interpretation with the least cognitive effort.
 - b. Focuses on inferencing and contextual effects.

Academic Significance:

These models form the foundation for the study of implicature, presupposition, deixis, and politeness within pragmatics.

B. Applied Pragmatics

Applied pragmatics focuses on the real-world use of pragmatic knowledge and theory. It is concerned with practical issues, such as communication across cultures, language disorders, educational settings, and human-computer interaction.

Key Domains of Application:

- 1. Language Teaching
 - Helps learners acquire pragmatic competence, including how to use language appropriately in different social contexts.
 - Teaches strategies for making requests, giving compliments, refusing politely, etc.

Example: ESL students may know grammar but struggle with polite speech acts.
- 2. Intercultural Communication

Studies how people from different cultural backgrounds use and interpret pragmatic cues differently.

Example: Direct refusals may be acceptable in some cultures, but offensive in others
- 3. Clinical Pragmatics

Investigates how individuals with language or cognitive impairments (e.g., autism, brain injury) struggle with pragmatic skills, such as turn-taking, implicature, or figurative language.

C. Academic Significance:

Applied pragmatics bridges linguistic theory and human needs, contributing to pedagogy, clinical intervention, artificial intelligence, and cross-cultural understanding.

Comparison Table: Theoretical vs. Applied Pragmatics

Approach	Focus	Application
Theoretical Pragmatics	Conceptual frameworks and principles	Understanding how meaning is inferred; modeling speaker-hearer interaction
Applied Pragmatics	Practical use of pragmatic knowledge	Teaching, intercultural communication, therapy, AI systems

Why Both Approaches Matter

Both approaches complement each other:

1. Theoretical pragmatics provides models that explain how communication works.
2. Applied pragmatics tests and applies these models in real-life situations.

For instance, understanding speech act theory (theoretical) can help language teachers design better curricula for teaching requests, commands, or refusals (applied).

Summary:

Pragmatics is the study of how people understand and produce meaning in interaction, focusing on context, speaker intention, inference, and social conventions. It explores how listeners interpret what is meant, not just what is said, making it a crucial aspect of effective communication.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What is the main focus of pragmatics in contrast to semantics?
2. Explain how context influences the meaning of an utterance.
3. Give an example of a sentence that can be interpreted differently depending on context.
4. How does pragmatics relate to social norms?
5. What does Yule mean by “speaker meaning”?
6. Why is inference important in pragmatics?
7. What is meant by “politeness” in pragmatics?
8. Provide your own example of a pragmatically meaningful utterance.

CHAPTER II

DEIXIS

2.1 What is Deixis?

Deixis (from the Greek word *deiktikos*, meaning “pointing” or “indicating”) refers to expressions in language whose interpretation depends entirely on the context of the utterance. These expressions are inherently indexical, meaning that they point to something in the physical, temporal, or social context of communication.

In other words, deixis occurs when the meaning of a word or phrase can only be understood with reference to aspects of the speech situation—such as *who is speaking, to whom, when, and where*.

- Yule (1996) defines deixis as “the way language points to spatial, temporal, and personal features of the context.”

A. Key Features of Deictic Expressions

1. Context-Dependence

Their referents cannot be determined without situational information.

Example: “*She is coming tomorrow.*” → Who is “she”? When is “tomorrow”? These require contextual cues.

2. Referent Shifting

The referents of deictic expressions change based on who is speaking, when, and where.

“*I am hungry now.*” means different things when spoken by different people at different times.

3. Universality and Necessity

Deixis is found in every natural language and is essential to real-time, face-to-face interaction.

Common Examples of Deictic Expressions

Expression	Deictic Category	Contextual Meaning Depends on
<i>I</i>	Person deixis	Identity of the speaker
<i>You</i>	Person deixis	Identity of the addressee
<i>Here</i>	Spatial deixis	Speaker's location
<i>There</i>	Spatial deixis	Location distant from speaker
<i>Now</i>	Temporal deixis	Time of utterance
<i>Today</i>	Temporal deixis	Calendar date of speaking
<i>That</i>	Discourse deixis	Previously mentioned content
<i>This</i>	Discourse deixis	Upcoming or current content

B. Types of Deixis

Linguists generally categorize deixis into several major types:

1. Person Deixis
 - Refers to the participants in the communicative act.
 - Pronouns like *I, you, he, she, we, they*.
 - Also includes titles or terms of address (e.g., *sir, professor, mom*).
2. Spatial Deixis
 - Refers to physical location in relation to the speaker or hearer.
 - Words like *here, there, above, below, this, that, near, far*.
3. Temporal Deixis
 - Refers to time relative to the moment of speaking.
 - Includes expressions such as *now, then, soon, yesterday, tomorrow, next week*.
4. Discourse Deixis
 - Refers to parts of the discourse itself.
 - This may refer to an upcoming statement; *that* to a previous one.
 - Example: *"This is what I was talking about."*
5. Social Deixis
 - Encodes the social relationship between the speaker and hearer.
 - Includes honorifics, titles, and formal vs. informal forms (e.g., *tu/vous* in French or *kamu/Anda* in Indonesian).
 - Reflects social distance, politeness, or hierarchy.

C. Deixis and Pragmatics

Deixis is a core concern of pragmatics because it demonstrates how language is inextricably tied to context. Deictic expressions show that meaning is not fixed in the language itself, but rather emerges through interaction between speaker, hearer, and context.

As Levinson (1983) notes, deixis provides evidence for the deeply indexical and context-sensitive nature of communication, challenging purely semantic models of language.

Illustrative Example:

Imagine a speaker says:

"I'll meet you here at 3 o'clock tomorrow."

To interpret this, the hearer must know:

- Who is "I"? → the speaker
- Who is "you"? → the addressee
- Where is "here"? → the location where the speaker is at the time of speaking
- When is "tomorrow"? → one day after the time of speaking
- When is "3 o'clock"? → 3:00 p.m. on the following day

D. Deictic Shift and Narrative Use

In narratives, deixis can be manipulated through “deictic shift” where the speaker places the audience inside the story's context.

“And then I open the door and he’s standing there.”

→ Present tense and spatial deixis invite the listener into the unfolding scene.

2.2 Types of Deixis

Deixis can be divided into five primary types, each tied to a different element of the communicative context: person, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deixis. Understanding these categories helps explain how speakers and hearers locate referents in real time, space, and interactional structure.

A. Person Deixis

Person deixis refers to the grammatical encoding of the participants in a speech event: the speaker, the addressee, and others.

Person	Referent	Examples
First person	Speaker(s)	<i>I, we</i>
Second person	Addressee(s)	<i>you</i>
Third person	Those not involved in the conversation	<i>he, she, they, it</i>

Inclusive vs. Exclusive “We”

In some languages (e.g., Tagalog, Fijian, Javanese), “we” is divided into:

- Inclusive “we”: includes speaker and hearer (*we = you + me*)
- Exclusive “we”: excludes hearer (*we = me + others*)

Example (English):

“I don’t know.” → *I* = the speaker

“Are you okay?” → *you* = the addressee

Example (Indonesian):

kita (inclusive) vs. *kami* (exclusive)

B. Spatial (Place) Deixis

Spatial deixis refers to location and orientation in space relative to the speaker (or sometimes the hearer). It is expressed through demonstratives (*this/that*), locatives (*here/there*), and spatial adverbs (*above, below, near*, etc.).

Expression	Meaning	Example
<i>here</i>	near the speaker	“Come here.”
<i>there</i>	distant from speaker	“Go there.”
<i>this</i>	object near speaker	“This is delicious.”
<i>that</i>	object farther away	“That looks nice.”

1. Proximal vs. Distal Distinction

- Proximal: *this, here* (close to speaker)
- Distal: *that, there* (far from speaker)

2. Cross-Linguistic Variations

Some languages have more than two levels of spatial deixis:

- Japanese:
 - *kore* (near speaker),
 - *sore* (near hearer),
 - *are* (far from both)
- Spanish:
 - *este* (this, near speaker),
 - *ese* (that, near hearer),
 - *aquel* (that, far from both)

Note: Some languages (e.g., Lao, Malagasy) even encode visibility and elevation in deixis.

3. Temporal (Time) Deixis

Temporal deixis refers to points or durations in time, anchored to the moment of speaking or writing.

Expression	Meaning	Example
<i>now</i>	the present moment	"Do it now."
<i>then</i>	a different time	"We'll meet then."
<i>yesterday</i>	the day before speech	"She called yesterday."
<i>tomorrow</i>	the day after speech	"I'll leave tomorrow."
<i>soon, ago</i>	vague time references	"We met two days ago."

Tense and Deixis

Verb tense is often a grammaticalized form of temporal deixis:

- a. Present: *You walk*
- b. Past: *You walked*
- c. Future: *You will walk*

Some languages (e.g., Chinese, Thai) do not encode tense morphologically but rely on temporal adverbs for deixis.

4. Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis is used to refer to parts of spoken or written discourse itself. It helps organize conversations, signal transitions, or emphasize upcoming or preceding points.

Expression	Function	Example
<i>this</i>	refers to upcoming content	"This is what I mean: more funding is needed."
<i>that</i>	refers to prior content	"That was the best point you made."

<i>the following</i>	indicates something about to be said	"Consider the following example."
<i>the above</i>	indicates something already mentioned	"As mentioned above,..."

Importance:

Discourse deixis structures the text or conversation and helps the listener or reader track the flow of ideas. It's crucial in academic writing, formal speech, and narratives.

5. Social Deixis

Social deixis encodes the social relationships and roles between participants through linguistic forms that express politeness, formality, familiarity, or social hierarchy.

Two Major Types:

a. Relational Social Deixis

- Based on the relationship between speaker and addressee
- E.g., *Anda* vs. *kamu* in Indonesian

b. Absolute Social Deixis

- Encodes fixed social status independent of the current interaction
- E.g., *Your Excellency*, *Doctor*, *His Majesty*

Language	Examples:
English	"Sir," "Ma'am," "Your Honor," "Professor"
Indonesian	<i>Anda</i> (formal), <i>kamu</i> (informal), <i>Bapak/Ibu</i> (honorifics)
Japanese	<i>-san</i> , <i>-sama</i> , <i>-kun</i> , <i>anata</i> , use of humble vs. honorific forms
Javanese	<i>kula panjenengan</i> (very polite), <i>aku kowe</i> (casual)

Significance:

Social deixis reveals cultural values, such as respect for age, status, or hierarchy. It's deeply tied to sociolinguistics and politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Summary Table: Types of Deixis

Type	Function	Examples
Person	Identifies speaker, hearer, others	I, you, he, we, they
Spatial	Locates referents in space	here, there, this, that
Temporal	Anchors referents in time	now, then, today, tomorrow
Discourse	Refers to parts of the discourse	this (upcoming), that (previous)
Social	Encodes social status/relationship	Sir, Anda, Bapak, Your Honor

Academic Importance

Understanding types of deixis is crucial for:

- Pragmatic analysis of discourse
- Cross-cultural communication
- Second language teaching and learning

2.3. Deictic Center

The deictic center (also called the *origo*) is the conceptual point of reference from which all deictic expressions (such as *I, here, now*) are interpreted. It serves as the anchor for interpreting person, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deixis.

As Fillmore (1997) states, the deictic center is “a set of reference points in terms of which a speaker locates himself and the events he is describing.”

A. Default Deictic Center: The Speaker

In everyday spoken interaction, the default deictic center is the speaker at the moment and location of speaking. From this center, deictic expressions are understood:

Deictic Category	Typical Reference Point (Center)	Examples
Person Deixis	Speaker (e.g., <i>I, me, my</i>)	“I am tired.” → <i>I</i> = speaker
Spatial Deixis	Speaker’s location (e.g., <i>here, this</i>)	“Come here.” → <i>here</i> = speaker’s place
Temporal Deixis	Time of utterance (e.g., <i>now, today</i>)	“Let’s meet now.” → <i>now</i> = moment of speaking

This default center helps the hearer anchor deictic expressions to a known reference during interaction.

B. Deictic Projection

However, speakers can intentionally shift the deictic center for various communicative or narrative purposes. This is known as deictic projection.

Deictic projection occurs when the speaker adopts someone else’s perspective or a different point in time or space as the center.

Examples of Deictic Projection:

1. In a Phone Call

“I’m coming to you now.”

→ Although the speaker is elsewhere, the deictic center shifts to the listener’s location, so *coming* is interpreted from the listener’s spatial viewpoint.

2. In Narratives

“He opened the door. This room was darker than the rest.”

→ *This room* is referenced relative to the character’s location, not the narrator’s.

3. Future Perspective

“I will be there tomorrow, and then I’ll say, ‘Now I understand.’”

→ *Now* refers to a future moment, not the actual time of utterance.

C. Narrative Deixis and Fiction

In literary texts, especially third-person narratives, the deictic center often shifts from the author to the characters. This allows the reader to experience the fictional world through the character’s perspective.

Example:

“She walked through the door. This was her sanctuary.”

→ *This* locates the place relative to her, not the external narrator or reader.

This projection enables empathy, immersion, and a subjective point of view in storytelling.

Functions and Importance

Understanding the deictic center is essential for:

- Interpreting utterances correctly
- Following narrative shifts in literature or film
- Resolving ambiguities in pronouns, time expressions, and spatial references
- Teaching language learners how context shapes reference

D. Deictic Center in Cross-Cultural and Linguistic Contexts

Different languages and cultures may encode deictic anchoring differently:

1. Some languages (e.g., Korean, Japanese) use verbs of motion based on whether the direction is toward or away from the speaker/addressee.
2. In Lakota and other Native American languages, deictic systems include not only proximity to speaker or hearer but also visibility and elevation.

Summary Table: Deictic Center and Deictic Categories

Category	Default Deictic Center	Shifting Example
Person	Speaker (<i>I, you</i>)	“He said, ‘I’m leaving.’” → <i>I</i> = <i>he</i> (projected center)
Place	Speaker’s location (<i>here, this</i>)	“I’m coming to you.” → <i>coming</i> from listener’s viewpoint
Time	Time of speaking (<i>now, today</i>)	“Tomorrow, I will say, ‘Now I get it.’” → <i>now</i> = future time

Narrative	Author/Narrator	"He looked around. This was home." → <i>this</i> = near character
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2.3 Deixis in Language and Culture

While deixis is a universal phenomenon across languages, its linguistic encoding and pragmatic use differ greatly depending on the language and the culture in which it is used. These variations reflect how linguistic structures are shaped by cultural norms, social hierarchy, and spatial orientation systems.

As Levinson (2003) notes, "deixis provides a window into the intersection between language, cognition, and culture."

A. Cross-Linguistic Variations in Deixis

Different languages express deixis through a variety of lexical, grammatical, and morphological means. Some have more nuanced categories than others, particularly in spatial and social deixis.

Table: Cross-Linguistic Variation in Deixis

Language	Feature	Example
Japanese	Three-way spatial deixis	<i>kore</i> (near speaker), <i>sore</i> (near hearer), <i>are</i> (far from both)
Spanish	T/V distinction for politeness	<i>Tú eres amable</i> (informal), <i>Usted es amable</i> (formal/respectful)
Bahasa Indonesia	Two-way deixis for objects and places	<i>Ini buku saya</i> (This is my book), <i>Itu rumah dia</i> (That is his/her house)

B. Cultural Influences on Deixis

1. Social Hierarchy and Politeness Systems

In many cultures, social deixis encodes relationships of status, age, power, and formality. This is prominent in East Asian languages such as Japanese, Korean, and Javanese.

- Japanese uses a complex system of honorifics and deferential forms to reflect the speaker's relationship with the addressee and referents.
- Javanese distinguishes between *ngoko* (informal), *madya* (middle), and *krama* (high/formal) levels of speech depending on social roles.

Example: (Javanese):

Aku arep lunga (I'm going – informal)

Kula bade tindak (I'm going – formal)

2. Collectivist vs. Individualist Cultures

In collectivist cultures (e.g., Indonesia, Japan, China), deixis is often used to express respect, humility, and alignment with group norms. Pronoun choice, indirect deixis, and the use of group-referent terms reflect cultural values such as modesty and harmony.

Example: Using third-person references (*Bapak ingin makan apa?* – “What would father like to eat?”) in Indonesian even when addressing someone directly.

3. Visibility, Elevation, and Animacy

In some indigenous languages, deictic distinctions are made based on:

- Visibility: whether the referent can be seen by both speaker and hearer.
- Elevation: whether the object is located uphill or downhill.
- Animacy: whether the referent is animate or inanimate (as in Aymara).

2.4 Implications for Pragmatics and Language Teaching

Understanding cultural variation in deixis is essential for:

- Effective intercultural communication
- Avoiding pragmatic failure or offense (e.g., inappropriate pronoun usage)
- Teaching second languages (e.g., mastering *tu/usted* in Spanish or *Anda/kamu* in Indonesian)
- Designing translation systems and NLP tools that handle context-sensitive language appropriately

Illustrative Examples

Language	Deictic Usage	Cultural Insight
Indonesian	<i>Ini/Ito</i> for this/that with formal address terms	Respectful forms reflect social harmony values

2.5 Deictic Shifts and Reported Speech

Deictic shift refers to the change in reference points for deictic expressions (such as *I, here, now, tomorrow*) when an utterance is reported or reframed in a different context—especially in indirect (reported) speech or narrative perspective. When shifting from direct speech to reported speech, deixis must often be adjusted to reflect the new speaker, time, and place of utterance.

Example:

Direct Speech	Reported (Indirect) Speech
She said, “I will go there tomorrow.”	She said that she would go there the next day.
Original Deictic Expression	Shifted Form
I	he/she
you	I/he/she/they (depending)
now	then
today	that day
tomorrow	the next day
here	there
this	that

Yule (1996) emphasizes that deictic shift is a necessary process to preserve the temporal, spatial, and personal references when recounting an utterance from a different point of view.

Narrative Perspective and Deictic Shift

In fictional narratives, authors or narrators often shift the deictic center into the mind or perspective of a character, a stylistic strategy that fosters immersion and psychological depth.

Example:

“He looked around. *This* was where it all began.”

Here, *this* is interpreted not from the narrator’s location, but from the character’s internal viewpoint. This use of free indirect discourse or deictic embedding enhances narrative perspective.

According to Levinson (1983), such deictic projection is fundamental in literature for managing focalization, empathy, and emotional salience.

Cognitive and Communicative Relevance Shifting deixis:

1. Signals temporal or spatial displacement
2. Enables the hearer/reader to understand "who said what, when, and where"
3. Reflects the speaker’s control over narrative structure and discourse viewpoint

2.6 Pragmatic Functions of Deixis

Deictic expressions—such as *I*, *you*, *here*, *now*, *this*, and *that*—serve far more than referential functions. They are crucial pragmatic tools that enable speakers and listeners to manage real-time communication effectively. In pragmatics, deixis supports situational anchoring, interactional management, and social navigation. As such, deictic expressions are fundamental to constructing and interpreting meaning in context.

As Levinson (1983) states, deixis “is the single most obvious way in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structures of languages themselves.”

A. Situating Speech in Context

Deixis grounds utterances in specific spatiotemporal and personal contexts, linking what is said to where, when, and by whom it is said.

Function:

1. Provides contextual grounding for language use.
2. Essential in face-to-face interaction, scheduling, directions, and announcements.

Example:

“Let’s meet here at four.”

- *Here* specifies place; *four* specifies time relative to utterance.

Importance:

- Without this function, communication would become ambiguous or disconnected from the real world.
- Language learners must master deictic forms to understand and produce contextualized speech.

B. Managing Attention

Deictic expressions are used to direct the listener’s visual, cognitive, or social attention to relevant referents. This is especially common in joint attention scenarios (e.g., teaching, storytelling, presentations).

Function:

1. Focuses listener’s attention on specific entities or ideas.
2. Facilitates shared reference and interactive alignment.

Example:

“Look at that!”

→ *That* identifies a referent assumed to be visually accessible to both parties.

According to Tomasello (2003), joint attention via deixis is a foundational mechanism in both language acquisition and human cooperation.

C. Maintaining Coherence in Discourse

In extended discourse, deixis ensures continuity by referring back to previously mentioned topics (anaphora) or signaling upcoming content (cataphora).

Function:

1. Keeps the flow of conversation organized.
2. Supports cohesion through discourse deixis.

Example:

“This is why I’m upset: you never listen.”

→ *This* encapsulates prior discussion or refers to an explanation about to follow.

Deictic cohesion links discourse elements across time, enabling logical and thematic consistency (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

D. Expressing Politeness and Social Roles

Social deixis encodes aspects of the social relationship between interlocutors, including status, formality, age, kinship, and power dynamics. The use of titles, honorifics, and respectful pronouns helps speakers navigate social hierarchies and cultural expectations.