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DEICTIC WORDS IN ROMANIAN AND ENGLISH
LANGUAGES
(Contrastive study)
DOCTORAL THESIS

ABSTRACT

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CONTENTS:

1. Preliminaries
2. The target of the thesis
3. Methodology
4. The chapters of the thesis:
 - Chapter 1: Preliminaries
 - Chapter 2: Person Deictic in Romanian and English
 - Chapter 3: Space Deictic in Romanian and English
 - Chapter 4: Time Deictic in Romanian and English
 - Chapter 5: Social Deictic in Romanian and English
 - Chapter 6: Discourse and Descriptive Deictic in Romanian and English
 - Chapter 7: Conclusions
5. General conclusions

1. Preliminaries

Charles Morris was the first linguist who imposed the term of “pragmatics”. Emile Benveniste studied the pragmatic words, named deictic particles: *pronouns*. By analysing pragmatically the pronoun, the researcher obtains the following results: the pronoun *I*

represents the person who speaks at some moment of time and who says *I*. In a discourse we have as many as person pronouns of first person as how many instances we meet. The communication context beginning and controlling by the pronoun *I* is called *discourse instance*. Around the person pronouns *I* and *You* other linguistic traditional forms are developed: demonstrative pronoun and adjective, some adverbs (*here, there, now*), tenses.

Analysing these studies, we present you the paper *Deictic Words in Romanian and English Languages*, under the form of doctoral thesis.

2. The target of the thesis

Our paper has as a target the study of deictic words in Romanian and English languages. The research of the deictic words is not a new fact of language being the expression of subjectivity and economy in communication. The style of interpretation for linguistic material is contrastive synchronic Romanian-English. Deictic words are the first words learned by the children and adults when they learn a foreign language. To be correctly interpreted, the speaker and the receiver/hearer have to share the same context. These words are useful in face-to-face communication. We may say that the speaker is the most important person in a communication.

We pay great attention to demonstrate the similitude and differences between the two languages regarding the analysis of deictic micro system. In other words we observe the characteristics of deictic words by systematizing the language facts using contrastive method. Our target is to make easier the assimilation of English deictic words by the Romanian learners. The fundamental concept used by us in the paper is the concept of deictic. It will be presented theoretically and by systematizing some deictic elements in both languages. The reference targets the referent, the type of reference, the context and anaphora. We do not want to solve all controversial aspects regarding deictic words, these issues being generated by the multitude of perspectives and directions regarding the language fact named deictic. These multitudes of perspectives are produced by the diversity of terminology associated to the concept of deictic: deictic, deixis, indicator, embreior, shifter, egocentric particulars or demonstrative. Our decision was to use the concept of deictic because the deictic words are elements which indicate the person axes, the space and time axes of communication situation. These elements make clear for speaker and collocutor a part or more parts of the messages. Operational concepts are: situation of communication, context, deictic, speaker, collocutor, anaphora, etc. Nowadays, concepts such as situation of communication and context are used generally or in parallel, but they have different nuances.

The situation of communication is analysed isolate being composed of the protagonists of the act of communication, their relationships and space and time axes. In Eugenio Coseriu's view, the situation of communication records the space and time axes of the communication. He opposes to the situation of communication the context, the discourse sphere and the universe of discourse. The context represents "all reality surrounding a sign", the sphere is the space where a sign captures some meanings, and the universe of discourse is "the meaningful universal system".

Another operative concept is the concept of discourse. It is presented from different views. On one hand, we have the language which is the idiomatic context, and on the other hand, the verbal context and the extra verbal context. When we have analysed the deictic words, we did not take into account all the aspects of situation and of context. In other words, in our thesis, we relate to the situation of communication, to the previous linguistic elements, anaphors, or to the following elements, for a certain term of message and, last, but not least, we refer to the communicative context which comprises the participants to the act of communication, the space and time elements of the situation of communication and the relationships between the participants in the act of communication (level of relationship, social hierarchy, etc).

We have decided to treat such a subject after we have observed that there is not any detailed comparative scientific study for deictic words in Romanian and English. The thesis is monographic because it refers to one subject, deictic words, and it is also a theoretical paper with a modern subject, the opinions about pragmatics (the object treating the problem of deictic words) are unclear and controversial.

3. Methodology

With regard to the descriptive means which we have appealed to in creating our study, we analyse a corpus formed of literary texts written by authors who use oral style, we appealed to the dialectal texts, the theoretical aspects have been illustrated with examples taken from specialty books or we used ad-hoc examples for which we have imagined and created contexts.

To analyse the corpus we have chosen an integrative point of view for present pragmatic and linguistic theories of the discourse (deictic word is a fundamental aspect for the pragmatic organization of the discourse): Speech Acts Theory, Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson, and the model proposed by Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchione, Argumentation Theory. We have considered that these aspects offer the most adequate analytical means for our work in defining the deictic elements in Romanian and English. We have occupied by the study of the deictic words in spoken literary and illiteracy Romanian and English languages.

4. The chapters of the thesis

Our work has seven chapters whose content we try to sinter to obtain a comprehensive view regarding the thesis, and then we try to expose it in detail. After the preliminary introduction where we have discussed about the level of the deictic research in Romanian and English languages, after we have brought arguments for our subject choice and after we have defined the operational fundamental concepts, as well as the methodology (chapter 1), we have presented comparatively the person deictic words in both languages (chapter 2), followed in chapter 3 by the analysis of space deictic elements. In the following chapters, we have continued the analysis of time deictic presented in the same way, comparatively (chapter 4), we also wanted to express aspects of politeness by analysing social deictic words (chapter 5). In chapter 6 we have talked about pragmatic connectors and textual and descriptive deictic words. In the last chapter, chapter 7, we have concluded the results on the study of deictic elements in both languages; we have also tried to emphasize the elements of common structure and the elements of different structure in Romanian and English languages. As we know, deictic words are pragmatic universals being integrated to those tendencies considered common. Our scope has been to survey the similitude and differences between the two languages at the level of deictic micro system.

CHAPTER 1: Preliminaries

In this chapter we have detailed the operational fundamental concepts of the thesis, the methodology for collecting data, the level of deictic research in Romanian and English languages, but we have paid special attention to the concept of discourse in *Discourse versus text*, deictic word representing together with other elements, the fundamental organizing concept for discourse. Discourse designates the most various forms of language uses: written or oral, dialogical or monologue. According to the enunciation features, there is made a distinction between the discourse emphasised on the speaker and the discourse adapted to the collocutor. There are the following types of discourse: the autonomous discourse in relation to the situation of communication (scientific discourse), the discourse dependent of the situation of communication (conversation), the discourse centred on the speaker (monologue) and the discourse centred on the both partners (dialogue).

Consequently, the discourse is a communicative event. Sometimes, there are used alternatively, as synonyms, the terms text and dialogue. We have presented the problem of

speaker and the problem of collocutor. In the theory of communication, the speaker represents one of the factors of the communication process. This notion refers to the person who produces the message, using a certain code, and this notion also conveys the message through a certain channel. This term is often used as a synonym for speaker. This synonymy functions only in the case of oral communication: the speaker is so-called the speaking subject. The receiver is just like the speaker, one of the factors of communicative process. The term refers to the person, who receives and decodes a message, knowing the code used by the speaker. For the receiver we have the following synonyms: interlocutor or collocutor, representing that person present in a conversation, which receives and decodes messages come from the speaker.

In this chapter, our target was to present methodologically the fundamental notions for the analysis of discourse. These notions refer to the language and to the characteristic features of the general survey of the text/discourse. First of all, we have realised a short presentation of the main problems regarding the importance of language in the frame of this course.

CHAPTER 2: Person deictic words in Romanian and English

This part is composed of a chapter dedicated to the person deictic words in Romanian language, emphasizing on the problem of person pronouns, pronominal and adjectival possessives pronouns, reflexive deictic and emphasized pronouns, but we also taking into account the interjection, being a person deictic. Another part of the study analyses the person deictic words in English language. We have obtained the following results, using the contrastive study: both Romanian language and English language have a class of lexical and grammatical words mainly deictic words which fix in the discourse the identity of the participants at the act of communication. The participants are: the speaker represented by *eu/noi*, respectively *I/We*; and the collocutor: *tu/voi*, respectively *you/you*. For the first person singular and plural, the two languages have different forms (*eu/noi*; *I/We*). But for the second person singular and plural we have observed some differences: Romanian language has two forms, one for the singular (*tu*) and one for the plural (*voi*), in English language the form for the singular is the same with the form for the plural (*you/you*). Another observable difference is that the Romanian language never mentions the person pronoun with the function of subject, this thing is compulsory in English (because the verb is marked only in the third person singular –s/-es). For the person pronoun which designates the persons of interlocution, English and Romanian have three roles: the talker, the speaking person, the collocutor, the persons whom we speak to and the third person is the person at who we refer to. Romanian language has a system of person pronouns with a very rich inflection, it is maintained the forms for genitive, dative and the opposition emphasized/non-emphasized. English language does not have these forms.

In both languages there are some parameters about person. One of them is the plural parameter which includes the opposition *inclusive versus exclusive*; this parameter appears in both languages. Another parameter analysed in this chapter is the possession parameter. Romanian possessive system presents for a masculine person forms such as: *meu/tău/său*; *mei/tăi/săi* symmetrically with those forms for a feminine person: *ma/ta/sa*; *mele/tale/sale*. This symmetry does not appear in the English system where we have the following forms: *mine/yours/his/hers/ours/yours/theirs*.

The last parameter submitted to our attention is the parameter of insistence realized by means of emphatic pronoun. Romanian language has a more intricate system of emphatic indicators.

In conclusion, at the level of person deictic, there are strong similitudes between Romanian and English languages, the differences are minimal at the level of possession, at the level of expressing person and at the level of insistence.

CHAPTER 3: Space deictic words in Romanian and English

Space deictic words are richly represented. These deictic words reveal information about the space framework where the communicative event takes place, depending on the position occupied by the participants at the act of communication. This framework is accomplished with the use of some adverbs and demonstrative pronouns. The fundamental opposition *close/distant* is determined by deictic words which locate the protagonists of the verbal communication in the space of interlocution.

Our research results about space deictic elements are: both languages make the difference between close and distant by using two terms. English system has not variable forms for gender to indicate the proximity or distance. Demonstrative pronoun has only simple forms in English. For deictic marks of the pronominal adverbs, both systems have demonstrative pronouns, also named pronominal adverbs, because they come from Latin pronominal roots and they work as many other pronouns as substitutes, being deictic elements.

The Romanian system has for proximity the form *aici* and for distances the form *acolo*. This opposition is also present in English through the forms *here* for proximity and *there* for distances. The Romanian system is binary, double-branched, and in Oltenia speech there is a binary deictic system, but used with a three-termed structure: *aici/aci/acolo*.

CHAPTER 4: Time deictic words in Romanian and English

Time deictic words represent a system of elements sending to the situation in which it is realized the communicative enunciation. In both languages these deictic marks are expressed by different categories of forms: temporal forms of the verbs; adverbial forms referring to the way of time measure, and these forms are used in communication to express the reference to the moment of enunciation; adverbs and adverbial constructions which mark the reference to the different types of time measure (referring to the natural circles such as: hour, day, week, month, year, season, and so on).

Romanian language has simple and compound forms, but the system is not symmetric due to only the past presents simple and compound forms, whereas the future has only compound forms. Conclusively, the system is not symmetric. The present tense can be used with a future value in both languages. For time deictic words it is important to specify the situation through adverbs and adverbial constructions which do not refer to the way of time measure, but these constructions are referred exclusively to the enunciation moment. The pairs *now/then*, *acum/atunci*, which mark the fundamental opposition, are now the most useful pairs for the two systems. For instance, *atunci/then* can represent any moment that it is not identical with that enunciation moment, either anterior or posterior to that act.

For the oppositions of time deictic words, Romanian language uses simple perfect, in Oltenia, to represent a past action close to the moment of enunciation: *fusei până la târg*. Differently, English language uses a present tense named *present perfect* to show a past action, close to the moment of enunciation: *we have just come from the market*.

The imperative creates pre-deictic or deictic situations because it draws attention towards the interlocutor on an object or a person in the view of interlocution: *dă-mi cartea!*, respectively *give me the book!*

CHAPTER 5: Social deictic words in Romanian and English

In our paper we have tried to present separately the social deictic words from the person deictic words. The deictic social expressions include forms of politeness, pronouns of politeness, vocatives, terms of addresses, different morphological expressions (affixes, lexical items), but we also meet some features for the agreement of the predicate with the subject or of the adjectival determiner with the determined words.

There are differences between Romanian culture and English culture observable at the level of language. Social deictic elements represent just one of these aspects for these differences. In Romanian language, the levels of politeness are marked not only lexically, using forms of addresses, but also grammatically, by using the category of politeness pronoun. The politeness pronoun is used to distinguish the levels of politeness. In English language, there is not any system of politeness pronoun, as we have in Romanian language, but its politeness is expressed both lexically, by forms of addresses, and also grammatically by using modal verbs. In this chapter we have taken into account the dialectal texts which represent the richest material of forms for Romanian language spoken in some regions. The forms of addresses are different from one zone to another and vary depending on the following factors: social factors (age, relationship, and social level), stylistic factors (the expressive character of communication) and contextual factors (the formal or informal style of conversation). The stock of addresses forms is very important in sociolinguistics and pragmatics.

Romanian language in contrast with English language codifies the social attributes for the interlocutor (through deictic terms, the second person). Even if English language has not grammar forms for the attributes of the speaker, respectively of the interlocutor, the social context in which the communication happens is essential for the location of the person referent.

This chapter speaks about politeness, about forms of addresses, and about greetings (the greeting is considered a social deictic element).

CHAPTER 6: Textual (discursive) and descriptive deictic words in Romanian and English

Discursive deictic expressions refer to some parts of the discourse (written or oral). Any written text occupies space and it is compound and read at some point of time. The same temporal dimension appears also in oral texts by acts of time emitted by the speaker and by time moment at which the text was received by the collocutor. Having these temporal and spatial aspects for both written and oral texts we can deduce that the discursive deictic words are the same linguistic expressions known as time, respectively, space deictic words. Descriptive deictic words are adverbs and adverbial phrases: *așa, astfel, în felul ăsta, în felul acesta, în acest mod*, or adjectives such as: *așa, astfel, astfel de, asemenea*. Descriptive deictic words are divided into two parts: positive descriptive deictic words and negative descriptive deictic words (these refer to the adverb *astfel* and adjective *astfel de*). The descriptive deictic can be in the same time a discursive deictic. Descriptive deictic words, being ostensive, can be sometimes anaphoric.

The discursive deictic reference is expressed, in both languages, through intrinsic referential deictic expressions (*asta, aceasta, ceea ce*), by relational deictic words or by expressions anchored intrinsic deictically. The heterogeneity of these deictic words is observed from the various lexical and grammatical statuses of the elements as connectors: conjunctions, adverbs, interjections, no grammatical constructions. This heterogeneity can be observed in the type of relation that connectors have either in a relation of grammar dependency or non syntactic dependency or a pragmatic relation, being well-known that these connectors have many pragmatic and semantic values obtained in the context.

CHAPTER VII: Conclusions

In this chapter we try to present the results of our study targeted to the research of deictic words in Romanian and English languages.

Deictic class has a rich inventory in both languages due to the lexicalization proper for each language or due to the differences regarding grammar. Deictic words represent a system of homogeneous marks at level of semantic and functional, and very heterogeneous at the level of grammar, due to the fact that we have in the making of these elements different

morphological classes: grammatical affixes, grammar forms, pronoun forms of first and second person (in some cases of the third person), entire grammar classes (demonstrative adjectives and pronouns, or adverbs) and verb forms.

The resources offered to the speaker by Romanian and English languages to anchor the discourse in space and time are based on the same principles. But, in a detailed analysis of the deictic words in both languages, we understand that each system has its own peculiarities.

We hope that through our study to help the Romanian speakers to learn easily the English deictic words, these words being the first words learned by them. The part of the study addressed to the Romanian language is richer due to the fact we had in our disposition much information.

The pragmatic of Romanian language is a new discipline in a way. The thesis deals with the problem of deictic elements in Romanian and English languages. For this study, we have chosen from all linguistic perspectives, the comparative and synchronic method, also named contrastive analysis, bringing into discussion the synchronic comparison of two unrelated languages: Romanian language and English language.