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Takahara: Three-Term Space

THREE-TERM SPACE DEIXIS

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Abstract. Space Deixis is a linguistic device to locate objects in space relative to speakers and hearers. These deictic systems differ cross-linguistically in creating spatial divisions from two to nearly a dozen ways. This paper is concerned with three-term deictic systems which are commonly found among Altaic languages with special attention to Korean, Japanese, and Turkish. Semantic characteristics of these systems are generally explained as locating objects (1) close to speakers, (2) close to hearers, and (3) remote from both speakers and hearers (Lyons 1977). Various occurrences of space deixis are analyzed with the application of this classificatory scheme, and it will be pointed out that complexity of semantics involved in space deixis of these languages requires an alternative description. First, all three divisions are modified with the notion of psychological shift in point of orientation. Secondly, the contextual features of direct witness or absence of witness need to be considered in determining the function of space deixis. In non-witness speech situations, objects are localized distinctly in space for the reason that the tertiary divisions by the space deixis are functionally reduced to identify speech event either (1) close to speakers and hearers, or (2) remote from speakers and hearers.

All languages have linguistic devices for making reference to an entity in the context of speech events by placing it at a certain point of time or location or in a certain status relationship with a speaker, addressees and other participants. These devices are typically grammaticalized into time, space, and person deixis in the languages with differing degrees of complexity. Take space deixis, for example. Although most languages tend to locate and identify an object or an event at proximal or non-proximal distance relative to where a speaker or the addressees are, some languages elaborate their deictic systems further by encoding different space dimensions and different point of spatial orientation. Consequently, according to the size of combined variables space deixis may consist of any number of deictic terms. Out of these varieties the present paper is concerned with the semantic characteristic of the three-term space deixis which is commonly found among the Altaic or peripheral Altaic languages such as Korean and Japanese. Furthermore, the deictic expressions which are examined consist of lexical space terms, not the phrasal or more structurally complex types.

Initially, morphological constitution of the three-term space deixis of our interest is looked at in comparison with a prototypical two term deixis in English. While English space deixis has two locative adverbs and two demonstrative phrases, the three-term deixis consists of three base morphemes from which the deictic terms in all categories can be derived.

	English	Korean	Japanese	Turkish	Tungus
Proximal:	here/this place	yo-gi ko-gi	ko-ko so-ko	b-r(d)a s-r(d)a	e-ne
Distal:	there/that place	cho-gi	a-so-ko	o-r(d)a	te-re

The Altaic deictic terms combine locational indicator of *close to* and *further from* the speakers *and/or* hearers and a prime morpheme for point in space, **-gi**, **-ko**, or **-ra**. In this system two points of reference are used in addition to two-way divisions of space. A referred entity is, therefore, identified in terms of whether it is close to a speaker or a hearer, or is remote from both speaker and hearer. On the other hand, in the two-term deictic system,

the space dimension is divided into two categories with respect to the location of a speaker, thus the referred entity is identified as being proximal to or distal from the speaker.

Let us consider that the tertiary space deixis consist of three deictic demonstratives which represent the 1) speaker-proximal, 2) hearer-proximal, and 3) distal categories such as follows:

1) Something is here/in this place close to me. (speaker-proximal)
2) Something is there/in that place close to you. (hearer-proximal)
3) Something is over there/in the place far away from you and me. (distal)

These semantic characteristics which are generally defined to be basic to the three-term deixis are, however, limited only to the witness situations in which a referred entity is visible to the participants. In the non-witness situations where a referent is not visible to the participants the semantic behaviors of the deictic demonstratives become considerably different from the norm and become more complex.

My investigation is, therefore, mainly concerned with the semantics of the space deixis in the non-witness situations. To start with, I selected two exemplary non-witness situations in which a speaker either refers to an entity in remote geographic locations or recalls it from past experience, and examined the corresponding occurrences of three space demonstratives through the analysis of written texts. My textual sources consists of advertisements, travel publications, and non-fictional personal dialogues. After I formed general assumptions on the semantic behaviors of the deictic demonstratives, I obtained the informants' responses for verification. The following briefly summarizes the main observations and the findings how the semantic characteristics of the space deixis change in the witness and non-witness contexts.

One example of a text in the advertisement category is for the manufacturer of health drink *yoomeishu* which is produced in the mountainous areas in Japan. The factory location which is supposed to be pure of air and of water is consistently referred to by the speaker-proximal demonstrative, *here*, despite the fact that the addresses of this advertisement could be elsewhere.

Here is the Komagane Plant of *Yoomeishu* which is located in the foothills of the Central Japan Alps in Sinshuu. Last year a group of junior high school students came to visit this plant. When they applied for a field trip, we wondered why they wanted to visit our plant here in these mountains ... (*Asahi Weekly Journal*, 1988, 4.8).

In another advertisement by the same manufacturer, we have

Yoomeishu is shipped from this factory blessed with the natural beauty to all over the country ... Here there is the Komagane Plant of Japan's representative medicinal liquor, Yoomeishu which is 380 years old ... (*Asahi Weekly Journal*, 1986, 10.17).

On the other hand, in the travel brochures and literatures sights and directions are illustrated with the predominant use of hearer-proximate, **there**.

What a grand stage with seven kilometers in width and 50,000 acres in size! I feel myself even smaller than a fly that wandered in the National Theatre of Dramatic Arts. A lively drama is going on at the Matuda Auto Main Plant. There the different protagonists at each scene carry the drama to a happy

ending. The heroes at the scene of welding, for example, are robots ... (*Asahi Weekly Journal*, 1988, 2.26)

These phenomena can be explained from the viewpoint of the advertisers strategy for getting the interest of the potential customers. In the former an advertiser attempts to bring attention to the addressees towards the speaker who represents the product. Travel advertisements in the latter do not operate on the same sales principles. Their goal is to influence the addressees future course of action. Commonly the sales of goods take place where the products are located and the addressees are supposed to come to this place. Travelling, on he other hand, does not take place where the travel transactions are made, but it occurs where the addressees are going to be. Thus the focus of attention should be proximal to the addressees. Incidentally, distal demonstrative, **over there** is entirely absent from the advertisement.

The occurrences of space deixis in personal dialogues are quite idiosyncratic to individual participants, conversational topics and situations. In addition, inherent deictic function of the spatial demonstratives becomes ambiguous through the interactions with contextual factor such as the degree of relative familiarity with the referent among the interlocutors. A speaker may place the referent in the location close to him or her if it is important or endeared depending on the degree of empathy. Similarly, the hearer-proximal demonstrative **there** may be used when the referent is related to the hearer or when the point of spatial orientation is not relevant to the on-going discourse. Thirdly, the uses of distal demonstrative **over there** involve the speaker's presupposition of the hearer's knowledge of the place being referred to through some experience which is commonly shared with the speaker. The place could be where they grew up together, travelled to, have friends and relatives, or whatever the ties may be. The problem is that the addresses may not be cognizant of the deictic referent at the time of utterance unless s/he is on the same wavelength with the speaker. It is often observed, therefore, that a thoroughly confused hearer requests a clue for identifying the referent.

The pattern of occurrences of space deixis in the no-witness situations thus become less regular and unpredictable, since the referent is no longer located by a speaker at a point in simple physical dimension. Instead the referent is placed at some emotional, psychological distance which is privately and arbitrarily set up by the speaker depending on the degree of his involvement with the referent. Based on these observations. it is generalized that anything important or dear to the speaker is referred to by the speaker-proximal demonstrative **here**. In fact, with regard to the aforementioned advertisement of the health drink, one speaker of Japanese told me that it sounds extremely "aggressive" by intuiting the underlying motive of the advertiser to deliberately draw the addressees' attention on something which is close to him/her. Should the same advertisement use the hearer-pronominal demonstrative **there**, it will give an entirely different communicative effect on the addressees. Their attention will still be focused on the referent but without any perceivable personal involvement of the advertiser. That is, the hearer-proximal demonstrative **there** in the non-witness situations seems to acquire a function of definite determiner in place of its inherent deictic anaphor function. Consequently, the hearer-proximal demonstrative **there** merely identifies the referent in the context of utterance as a unique entity. This objectifying effect of hearer-proximal deixis was also observed by Koizumi (1986). Finally, the distal demonstrative **over there** may occur only when a speaker assumes that the addressee shares with him the same experience of the referent. Relatively rare occurrences of the distal demonstrative in the non-witness situations may be explained as the result of this requirement which may not be easily satisfied in many speech situations.

On the next step of my investigation I tried to get informants' responses to verify my assumptions. I approached my informants in two ways. The first method of response

elicitation is by asking them to accept or refuse a set of deictic utterances which are constructed based on my assumptions of the occurrences of spatial demonstratives. For example, I asked them to approve or disapprove the utterances like,

1) Come to Korea for the Olympic Games **here**.
2) Why not go to Istanbul. **There** you will discover the crossroad of the East and the West.

The second approach was to present the informants a series of sentence frames and ask them to fill in the deictic demonstratives of their choice in order to complete them as a piece of intelligible dialogue. A group of sentence frames are present such as,

3) I went to Seoul. _____ was a splendid city.
What did you do_____?
I am going _____ this summer. Do you have any suggestions?

The informant is asked to supply any space demonstratives for the blanks where **that place** and **there** were expected. In addition, different contexts were introduced by altering the emotional distance, the focus of attention, degree of familiarity, and so on to elicit varieties of responses. I did not come across any problems with the proximal demonstratives, but I had the most difficulty in eliciting the distal demonstrative **over there**. Korean speakers, for example, insisted that chogi "over there" is for something visible, and for that reason they refused to use the term in a given utterance no matter how its context is changed until I added the notion of contrast to it. The revised context not only presupposes the shared experience of the referent among the participants, but the referent is identified in contrast to something else such as in "In Seoul, among all other cities, we visited the best museums **over there**." Most informants finally accepted th use of the distal demonstrative with differing degrees of reservation. Similar experiences occurred frequently with the Japanese and Turkish speakers. One Turkish speaker, however, reacted quite oppositely, and his spatial reference to something at a distance is given by **or** "over there", a distal demonstrative.

No more than a meager information was obtained on Monogolian and Manchu languages due to the lack of reliable informants. Written Mongolian and Modern Tungus from the Tungus-Manchu branch have morphologically two-term space deixis consisting of proximal **ene**, and distal **tere**. Absence of intermediate or hearer-proximal spatial term, however, may not distinguish this system from other Altaic space demonstratives. Tungus distal demonstratives, for example, appear to have more flexible semantic function than other two-term deictic system such as English. Speaker-proximal **ene** "here" may also refer to objects at a non-visible, distant location as if it is in close proximity of a speaker. At least in poetry, **ene** is a commonly used device to indicate speaker's empathy with a given object.

Concluding Remarks. The results of my investigation on the semantic characteristics of three-term space deixis are such as follows. The semantic behaviors of three-term deixis are quite distinct depending on whether a referent in the context of a speech event is visible to the interlocutors or not. When a referred entity is in sight its location is identified as being close to or far away from the location of a speaker or a hearer or of both. On the other hand, if an entity is outside the visual range, its location is identified as psychologically or emotionally proximal distance to the participants, and with less frequency at a father distance from the participants. The location of the referent may also be indicated by the hearer-proximal demonstrative **there**, anaphorically rather than deictically. In this case its deictic function is modified to play the role of a definite article which is neutral to spatial orientation. If it is the case, the universal preference by the informants of the hearer-proximal demonstrative **there** over other deictic terms may be explained. In locating an entity which is absent from the immediate context, its directional orientation is not really relevant, therefore the language speakers opt for a simpler, non-deictic reference of that entity.

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