

## **THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF COMMUNICATION THROUGH DEIXIS**

**Iuliana-Valentina BOBOAC \***

**Abstract:** *The objective of this study is to examine the role played by deixis in the contextualization of discourse, and to illustrate the different types of deictic structures in Old Romanian language - a case study on Mihail Moxa's "Cronica Universal" (1620).*

**Keywords:** *deixis, focus, indicator.*

1. The deixis is the process by which certain elements of the statement direct the attention toward the enunciation, as generating a message, in a certain situation of communication.

Other definitions for deictics were also given: "Unul dintre aspectele fundamentale ale organizării pragmatice a discursului, desemnând faptul că referința anumitor componente ale unui enunț nu poate fi determinată decât prin raportare la datele concrete ale situației de comunicare"<sup>1</sup> (DSL, 2001: 157); "prin deixis se înțelege capacitatea unor forme lingvistice (deicticele) de a se referi la contextul comunicării: la participanții la comunicare (locutor, alocutor) și la cadrul spațio-temporal al acesteia."<sup>2</sup> (GBLR, 2010: 625)

Deictic elements relate primarily to the main elements of communication: the actors of communication (speaker and addressee); temporal verb marks as the core of communication; the focus of communicative interest on objects (pronouns and demonstrative pronominal adjectives); focusing on the action by objectifying it. The incidental structure operates as deictic element, at a phrastic level.

2. From a semantically point of view, two groups can be highlighted: deictic elements by their very nature, and indicators for deictic forms.

2.1. The deictics by their very nature are: personal pronouns (personal pronouns were only the first and the second person, in Latin), proper names (in the noun sphere, they are called actants), and deictic verbal tenses, referring to the time of speech (in the verb sphere).

Personal pronouns possess a special meaning, and a specific grammatical behaviour: they are not substitutes, and do not have a gender opposition, thus being the ideal semantic housing (deictic flexibility).

The fact that these pronouns are not substitutes, and that they directly include the person who speaks, and is spoken to, has led some grammarians to exclude them from the class of pronouns. In connection with that aspect, C. Dumitriu highlighted: "Dacă prin pronume se înțeleg cuvintele ce substituie nume, atunci *eu* și *tu* și toate cele similare lor nu sunt pronume, pentru că în nici un context nu admit comutarea cu un

---

\* University of Pitești, [iuliana\\_boboaca@yahoo.com](mailto:iuliana_boboaca@yahoo.com)

<sup>1</sup> "One of the fundamental aspects of pragmatic discourse organization, denoting the fact that the reference of a sentence's certain parts can be determined only in relation to the actual data of the situation of communication".

<sup>2</sup> "by deixis one understands the ability of some linguistic forms (deictics) to refer to the context of communication: to the communication's participants (speaker, addressee), and to the spatio-temporal frame of it."

nume (...) Totu i, p strând tradi ia, care opune pe *eu, tu* i toate cele similare lor unor pronume propriu-zise ca *el, ea* etc. men inem pe *eu, tu* i toate cele similare lor în rândul pronumelor personale.”<sup>1</sup> (Dimitriu, 1999: 238)

Actually, these are mask-pronouns (*persona, -ae* = mask) representing the person speaking (speaker, mask, first person), and the one that it is spoken to (the addressee, mask, the second person). These pronouns occupy a special place in the pronominal system, having access to direct representation, and not substitution, as the transmitter, and receiver are the fundamental poles of the communication scheme. This can be determined by their pragma-semantical nature: “Care este prin urmare realitatea la care se refer *eu* sau *tu*? Destul de straniu, exclusiv o realitate de discurs (...) *Eu* înseamn persoana care enun prezenta instan de discurs, con inând *eu*. Instan unic prin defini ie, doar în unicitatea sa.”<sup>2</sup> (Benveniste, I, 2000: 240)

- (1) “[...] pre care vor obidi pre s raci cu strâmbul, **eu** s -l cert?” (71v: 154);
- (2) “De am **eu** f cut ceva cu nedereptul, nu-mi veghea voe nemic [...]” (71v: 154);
- (3) “[...] iar **tu**, suflet împ r tesc, de pururea înseto ezi cu mentea [...]” (4v: 99);
- (4) “[...] iar **tu** s aibi cu ce-l sprijoni!” (116v: 186).

In the category of inherent deictics, the personal pronoun for the third person has also entered, achieving practically the tripartite scheme of communication (speaker-addressee-delocutor). In Romanian, as in other Romance languages, the third personal pronoun evolved from the demonstrative *ille*, which was, anyway, a deictic indicator. In fact, this pronoun marks the transition between the inherent deictics, and the deictic indicators, summing features of both types. From the inherent deixis, it has the impossibility of attracting an adjectival determinant, and to become, like other demonstratives, itself a pronominal adjective. From the deictic indicators it has got: the nature of a substitute, and the gender opposition.

In addition, the deictic pronouns are constituted in the criterion for the verb sub classification: the statement verbs are only those which select them as subject, this requiring, as a manifestation form of law compatibility, the selective restriction of [+human] (the third person pronoun does not require, as a substitute, this restriction, because the verbs have, regardless of the subclass they belong to, the form of the third person).

- (5) “**Elu** se scul i mërse la besêrec , de v zu un om sp rtigos [...]” (111r: 183);
- (6) “[...] **el** purta rîndul i cîrma Isachiie Comnin [...]” (134r: 199);
- (7) “**Ia** botez i pre frate-s u cre tiné te.” (107v: 181).

The first and second person, plural forms (person V and VI, for the verb), represent what is called an inclusive plural, which is including the reality of other people: *noi* = *eu* + *tu* + *el...* (*we* = *I* + *you* + *he ...*), just as *voi* = *tu* + *el* + *ei* (*you* = *you* + *he* + *she*) ... (cf. GALR, II, 2008: 731).

- (8) “**Ei** r spunser : *Cînd vor veni turcii la noi, noi ne vom ap ra.*” (143r: 208);
- (9) “De nu-m veți ajuta acmu, apoi **voi** v veți | căi.” (143r: 208).

<sup>1</sup> “If by pronouns one understands words that substitute names, then *eu* (*I*), and *tu* (*you*), and all of their matches are not pronouns, because in no context would they admit the replacement with a noun (...) However, obeying the tradition, who opposes *eu* (*I*), *tu* (*you*), and all their similar structures to some proper pronouns as *el* (*he*), *ea* (*she*), so on so forth, we keep *eu* (*I*), *tu* (*you*), and all of their similar structures, among the personal pronouns”

<sup>2</sup> “Therefore, what is the reality to which *I* or *you* refers to? Strangely enough, exclusively a reality of discourse (...) *I* = the person who states the present instance of discourse containing *I*. Unique instance by definition, only in its uniqueness.”

2.1.2. In what concerns the noun level, the most common deictic elements are the proper names, not described as such in the system of deictics by *GALR*. Even so, they were defined as deictics in *DSL*: “Pragmatic, se disting prin categoria deixis-ului, trimi  nd la cuno tin e comune locutorului i interlocutorului”<sup>1</sup> (*DSL*, 2001: 415). In the chapter about the noun, *GALR* gives a semantic description that characterizes them as deictics: “Numele proprii sunt lipsite de sens  n afara actului denominativ de individualizare a unui anumit obiect”<sup>2</sup> (*GALR*, I, 2008: 119) It is noted that they are closer to the pronoun, having the disadvantage of substitution (in)ability. They could, however, be close to the pronouns *eu*, *tu*, which, themselves, as proper names, signal each time, in speech, a singular existence. Moreover, some studies have reported that: “Se sus ine uneori c exist o str ns rela ie  ntre deictice i numele proprii (fie c deicticele sunt un fel de nume proprii, fie c numele proprii sunt un fel de deictice.”<sup>3</sup> (Gor scu, 2005: 519). As a noun, the deictic supports the pronoun-substitution, and restricts to the maximum level the imperative determination (\**Who Jesus?*).

2.2. The verbal deixis puts the communicative focus on the simultaneity of the act of enunciation, and on the production of the action (present tense), of the previous projection (past tense), and subsequent to the speech moment (future). The relative tenses, which are defined in connexion to absolute tenses, may acquire, in a special context, a deictic value. By their very nature, the absolute tenses are grammaticalized manifestations of deixis, while the relative tenses, referring to the first, are anaphoric. Their definition captures precisely these traits: “Un temps d ictique est donc un temps qui exprime une relation directe par rapport au moment de l’ nonciation – c’est- -dire – un temps absolu. Un temps anaphorique serait alors un temps qui exprime une relation temporelle par rapport   un  v nement ou un moment de temps diff rent du moment de la parole.” (Vetters, 1993: 90)

In studies of languages, where the sequence of tenses exists, a group of verbs called absolute-relative was added next to the two already existing groups (absolute and relative).

3. Deictic indicators. If inherent deictics express the referent by their nature, pointing out the overlap between the situation of communication and discourse, deictic indicators are indexical signs that establish such connexions – speech integrators. They are organized according to the two basic components of the statement: the nominal group, and the verbal group.

3.1. Typical for the nominal group are the intensive pronouns, politeness pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and the demonstrative value of the definite article.

3.1.1. The intensive pronoun should be called deictic pronoun, as in all contexts in which it appears as a pronominal adjective, it always identifies the name that determines it. It is the only pronominal adjective which, by its deictic nature, is selected by the personal pronouns (*eu  nsu mi*, *tu  nsu i*, *el  nsu i*), and even proper names (*Moxa  nsu i*). In fact, it is an indicator that illustrates deictic persistence, a grammaticalized form of emphasis, being selected by nouns which are already determined: *b iatul  nsu i*, not \**un b iat  nsu i*.

<sup>1</sup> “Pragmatically, they are distinguished by deixis category, appealing to the common knowledge of the speaker, and addressee.”

<sup>2</sup> “Proper names are meaningless outside the denominative act of individualisation of a particular object.”

<sup>3</sup> “It is sometimes said that there is a close relationship between deictics and proper names (whether deictics are a kind of proper names, or the names are a kind of deictics.”

- (10) “[...] de-acia se osebiia **însu i**, de vrea vorovi de boiari i de mesereri.” (52v: 135);  
 (11) “Iar Irina tot b tea s fie **îns i** cîrmitoare [...]” (94v: 171);  
 (12) “[...] c tocma **în i [i]** împ rații nemică nu făcea fără sfatul acelora [...]” (90r: 168).

3.1.2. The politeness pronoun represents an insufficiently grammaticalized phase of degrees of deference. Because politeness is not reflexive, it does not occur in the first person, but only in second and third persons, being lexically organized into three degrees. Thus, for the second person (*tu*) we have the *level of usage* (unknown person or older): *dumneata*; the level of hierarchy (superior in the hierarchy) *dumneavoastr*; level of reverence (high distance in the hierarchy): *Domnia Ta*. Similarly, in the plural: *dumneavoastr*, *dumneavoastr*, *Domniile Voastre*. For the third person, Romanian language has the same degrees: *dumnealui*, *dânsul*, *Domnia Sa*.

- (13) “Cîndu- dède sufletul cu nevoe, Nerue dup-**însul** dobîndi domniia.” (43v: 131);  
 (14) “[...] i-i purta cu **nunsul** în oaste i acase, i pre toate drumurile.” (45r: 132);  
 (15) “Elu-l priimi la **dînsul** cu cinste i-l ținea ca pre un fecior de domn.” (22r: 115);  
 (16) “Deci pre **densa** o b gar în temniță, iară pre coconii-i lep dar [...]” (29v: 119);  
 (17) “[...] pîn va veni domnul-s u la **dîns** .” (22v: 115);  
 (18) “[...] ce ducea grije **d-insa**, c era tin r i frumoas .” (135r: 199);  
 (19) “[...] cinste s aib de la **domniia-ta**, iar de nu, pre drept s -m tai [...]” (70v: 153).

3.1.3. Demonstrative pronouns individualize the noun-objects by specifying the relationship they have with the parties involved in the communication. There are three types of demonstrative pronouns: proximity – proximal (*acesta*, *aceasta*, *cest lalt ceast lalt*), distance – distal (*acela*, *aceea*, *cel lalt*, *ceal lalt*), and of identity (*acela i*, *aceea i*).

- (20) “**Acesta** Dechei domni doi ai i muri necat într-o tin la un r zboiu.” (53v: 136);  
 (21) “Constantine, cu **aceasta** veri birui!” (55v: 139);  
 (22) “**Ace tia** amîndoi, cînd era coconași, ei învâța carte la s[ve]ti [...]” (51r: 142);  
 (23) “**Acéstea** toate sînt aduse pentru treaba voastr !” (8r: 101);  
 (24) “ i nu e pre **ceast lume** împ r ția lu H[risto]s, unde-i i cînd va fi.” (43r: 130);  
 (25) “Iar den **ce ti** trei ce-au | venit cu tine – le zise – Leo va fi înțîiu [...]” (97r: 173);  
 (26) “Iar ei s sperear de cuvînt i se feriia de **acel** pom ca de un vr jma .” (8v: 101);  
 (27) “[...] de zmulse den r d cin **acea** dobînd împuțită și de ocară [...]” (66v: 150);  
 (28) “Pentru **acéea** toți tînjia și pretutindenea era chiote [...]” (96v: 173);  
 (29) “[...] birui i pre **acea** i scoase cetatea den mîinile lor.” (123r: 191);  
 (30) “Mir -se de-acia împ ratul, pl ti i **acele** trei i le ar t vr jitorilor.” (32r: 121).

Among the distant pronouns, especially among those with a cataphoric function, the semi-independent demonstratives (*cel*, *cea*, *cei*, *cele*) are used in Old Romanian language:

- (31) “Ce avea fric | de Iustinian **cel** cu nasul t iat [...]” (84v: 165);  
 (32) “Avea Nichifor, pre lâng b rb ția | trupască, și **cea** sufleteasc [...]” (124v: 192);  
 (33) “pre care vor obidi pre **cei** s raci cu strîmbul [...]” (134r: 199);  
 (34) “[...] i trimise Dumnezeu de **cele** de pre p mînt [...]” (11v: 103);  
 (35) “De-acia în lță apa corabia și ei se mîntuiră, iară **alalti** toți se necară.” (11v: 103);  
 (36) “[...] iar la **alalte**, la tot era bun și înțelept[...].” (132r: 197).

3.1.4. The definite article has a deictic value, in two different contexts: in a demonstrative knowledge context (*De unde ai luat ziarul?*); or in an implicit knowledge context (*R sare soarele.*):

- (37) “Ce ai luat hrana s racilor, de negoțetorești și precupești?” (104r: 179);  
 (38) “Începu a podobi ceriul cu stéle i cu lucéferi, cu soarele i cu luna [...]” (6r: 100).

3.1.5. The vocative, by its appellative function performs, as an incidental expression, in correspondence (most often) with an imperative, signals the addressee, focusing the message on a specific person from a group or drawing the attention by direct addressing to some highlights of the message:

(39) “**Constantine**, cu aceasta veri birui!” (55v: 139).

3.2. The circumstantial deictics are primarily characteristic for the verb group. The performative verbs and some interjections may also have a deictic value.

3.2.1. When the circumstantial deixis is described, the temporal and spatial circumstances are always highlighted. In reality, there are two semantic dominants: the existential one, belonging to the actors (*space* and *time*: everything that exists is placed in space and time), and the motivational one, belonging to the action (*cause* and *purpose*: every action has a cause that determines it, and a purpose toward which it tends). Circumstances, occurring in binary relations, are organized at the propositional and the phrastic level, have a correlative structure model (*acolo... , unde*). Thus, one can conclude that the first term of the correlation is, always, a deictic adverb: *acolo... , unde; atunci... , când; a a... , cum; de aceea... , fiindc ; de aceea... , (ca) s ...*

(40) “[...] **aorea** biruia grecii pe troiani, **aorea** troianii pre greci.” (25r: 116);

(41) “**Atunce**-l d ruir cu 300 de galbeni, ca s nu-i uite **cînd** va veni [...]” (61r: 146);

(42) “**Cînd** fu Moisi de 85 de ai, **atunce** scoase pre ruda ovreiasc [...]” (15r, 106);

(43) “**Deac -l** v zu, elu- prepuse cu gînd r u i tremése **atunce** [...]” (59v: 145);

(44) “De nu-m veți ajuta **acmu**, **apoi** voi v veți | căi.” (143r: 208);

(45) “R mase domnia la Theod[o]ra, c Zoia, soru-sa, murise **mainte** [...]” (133r: 198);

(46) “Acesta obori domnia turcilor i plec **India, Siiria, Finichiia** și toți domnii p mântului și toți vitějii lumiei, de la **r s rit** pîn la **apus**, i s-au plecat lui. Și împărăți de tot 38 de ai i muri otr vit în **Vavilon**.” (19v: 111);

(47) “Atunce împ rți apa, una o sui **sus**, alta **jos** [...]” (5r: 99).

3.2.2. The Performative verbs “sunt o subclas a verbelor, desemnând ac iuni verbale care prezint caracteristica de a realiza, atunci când sunt folosite la persoana I, indicativ prezent, prin îns i rostirea lor, ac iunea pe care o descriu (desemneaz )”<sup>1</sup> (*GALR, II*, 2008: 734). Such verbs (*a ruga, a spune, a zice, a declara, a porunci, a jura...*) are deictics only in the presence of the personal deictic.

(48) “Ce **ne rug m**, iart -l, c -ț iaste fiu!” (117r: 186);

(49) “Iat i noi, de cît ne iaste puterea, **spunem** cu adev r.” (4v: 99);

(50) “[...] pus era s dea bir la anul un florint de argint, cum **se zice** [...]” (66r: 150);

(51) “Acestuia Iustinian **se gr ie te** c i-au dat Amatine [...]” (66v: 150).

Some other verbs can become performative, but only in special contexts (the speaker assumes the role of proclaiming the entrance in another situation of communication): *Observa iile mele se încheie aici; Drept pentru care am încheiat prezentul proces-verbal; Declar deschise lucr rile conferin ei...*

3.2.3. The interjections have a deictic value, especially the conversational additives or speech interjections: *iat , iac , iac t !...* Some interjections, parts of incidental constructions, are actually propositional substitutes: *Aha!* (=S-o crezi tu!); *Haida-de!* (=Mai las -m !); *Sst!* (= Vreau lini te!). The speech interjections (*b !, bre! , f !, m !, m i!*...) are phatic elements of (re)establishing the contact between the parties:

<sup>1</sup> “are a subset of verbs designating verbal actions showing the characteristic to achieve, when used in the first person, present indicative, by their very utterance, the action they describe (designate)”

- (52) “**Iat** i noi, de cât ne iaste puterea, spunem cu adev r.” (4v: 99);  
 (53) “**Iat** se sfîr i | povéstea de troiani, ca în scurt deplin.” (27r: 117);  
 (54) “**O**, [a]marnic neascultare! **O**, n prasnic c dere!” (9r: 101).

3.3. The incidental constructions constitute, what has been called, the explanatory communication plan. One must distinguish between incidental words and incidental phrases (among them, vocatives and interjections have been described as deictics), and incidental sentences (phrases).

*GALR* does not describe the incidental constructions among the deictics, fact caused, apparently, by two issues: the non-exact definition of incidence as fact of language; and the great diversity of incidental constructions, where not all have a deictic role. A pragmatic definition of incidence, which allows its integration among deictics, was given recently: “Elementele incidente rezult din proiectarea enun rii asupra enun ului.”<sup>1</sup> (Irimia, 2008: 588, cf. Ungureanu, 2002: 20). In *GBLR* it is stated: “Se disting câteva situa ii în care componente ale enun ului (cuvinte, grupuri de cuvinte, propozi ii) angajeaz rela ii pragmatice, discursive, cu celelalte componente.”<sup>2</sup> (*GBLR*, 2010: 354).

A sentence like *Țara se află în plină dezvoltare* has no deictic component, unlike this: *Țara, spune președintele nostru, se află în plină dezvoltare*, which identifies the country, through explanations. The dubbing: deictic incidental utterances – non-deictic incidental statements is very common, because the deixis, as part of reality, is connected with the practical needs of communication: *Omul – s-ar putea crede – e supus gre elii. / Omul, cred eu, e supus gre elii...*

- (55) “[...] iar den ce ti trei ce-au | venit cu tine – le zise – Leo va fi înțiu împ rat[...]” (97r: 173).

The incidental deixis could be included in the textual deixis, which is not meta-linguistic, but directs the addressee's attention (communicative focus) toward certain elements of the message.

Many of the incidental constructions refer directly to the situation of communication, receiving deictic values, in the presence of other indicators of deixis: *O cunosc bine pe Ioana – am fost colege la facultate – i nu pot s cred c ea a spus a a ceva* (cf. *GALR*, II, 2008: 352); *Eu sper ( i i-o spun ca s reții) că m-ai în eles* (cf. Irimia, 2008: 591).

4. It can be noted, from the configuration of deictic elements, that for the communication to work, the deictics are found at all levels of the language, next to supra-segmental items, ostensive (intonation, body language). The situation is similar in Old Romanian language, where the deictics are very well represented, as shown.

#### Bibliography

- Benveniste, É., *Probleme de lingvistic general*, I, Editura Universitas, Bucure ti, 2000  
 Dimitriu, C., *Tratat de gramatic a limbii române, I, Morfologia*, Institutul European, Ia i, 1999  
 DSL, Bidu-Vrânceanu, A. a., *Dic ionar de iin e ale limbii*, Editura Nemira, Bucure ti, 2001  
*GALR*, Gu u Romalo, V. (coordonator), *Gramatica limbii române, I, Cuvântul, II, Enun ul*, Editura Academiei Române, Bucure ti, 2008.  
*GBLR*, Pan Dindelegan, G. (coordonator) *Gramatica de baz a limbii române*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold, Bucure ti, 2010

<sup>1</sup> “Incidental elements result from the projection of enunciation upon the sentence/discourse.”

<sup>2</sup> “We distinguish several cases in which part of the components of statement (words, groups of words, sentences) employ discursive, pragmatic relations with the other components.”

Gorșcu, A., *Deixis, o altă perspectivă*, în *Limba română. Structură și funcționare*, Editura Universității din București, București, 2005  
Irimia, D., *Gramatica limbii române*, Iași Editura Polirom, Iași, 2008  
MDA, Sala, M., Dănilă, I. (coordonatori) *Micul dicționar academic, I*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2001  
Moxa, M., *Cronica universală*, Ediție critică, însoțită de izvoare, studiu introductiv, note și indici de G. Mihăilă, Editura Minerva, București, 1989  
Vetters, C., *Temps et deixis*, în *Le temps, de la phrase au texte*, Lille, Presses Universitaires de Lille, Lille, 1993  
Ungureanu, E., *Construcția incidentă în limba română*, Editura Conphis, Rm. Vâlcea, 2002

NOTA :

Această cercetare a fost efectuată prin  
Proiectul POSDRU/159/1.5/S/138963–  
„Performanță sustenabilă în cercetarea  
doctorală și post doctorală - PERFORM”  
România 2014, cofinanțat de Fondul  
Social European.