

2 The indexical ground of deictic reference

WILLIAM F. HANKS

Editors' introduction

William F. Hanks received a joint Ph.D. in Anthropology and Linguistics from the University of Chicago, where he is currently Associate Professor of Anthropology. His research interests encompass both contemporary and classical Mayan languages. In his work Hanks has attempted to incorporate central processes implicated in the organization of human interaction into the description and analysis of both cultural phenomena and linguistic structure, investigating for example the interactive basis of Maya divination (1984, 1988, 1990). He also has a strong interest in the social and historical constitution of speech forms. For example, drawing on the work of both Bakhtin and Bourdieu, he has investigated how new language genres were constituted in Mayan society just after the Spanish conquest as part of the process through which Mayan leaders adapted to the new social conditions created by the conquest (Hanks 1987).

Much of Hanks' analysis of language structure has focused on *deixis*. Deictic expressions are terms such as "here" and "over there" which point to features of the surrounding context. In that deictic terms act as pointers they are sometimes called "indexical expressions." The referents of deictic expressions are constantly shifting as the relationship between utterance and context changes. For example, within a conversation the person identified as "I" changes as speakers change (and in much more complex ways when a speaker quotes the talk of another – see Goffman 1974, 1981; Hanks 1990; and Vološinov 1973 for analysis of the framing issues involved in such reported speech). The term "shifter" is thus also used to refer to deictic expressions. The properties of shifters, and their relevance to basic questions about how language is organized, have received extensive analysis in the work of Michael Silverstein (1976, 1985). The existence of deictic expressions within language raises questions about the extent to which it is proper or appropriate to analyze language as a self-contained autonomous system. The early Greeks recognized that the truthfulness of a sentence such as "I am an initiate" could not be determined just by examining the sentence itself but required additional knowledge about who was speaking, etc., and that indeed even for a single speaker the sentence might be true at some points in his or her life (after he or she had undergone the initiation ceremony) but not at others (when he or she was a young child). Such issues apply even to the semantic interpretation of individual words. Thus Heritage (1984) notes that the sense of "nice" in the

expression "That's a nice one" changes radically if the entity being talked about is a head of lettuce in a greengrocer's shop as opposed to a diamond ring in a jeweler's window, or a photograph of one's host. In each of these different situations a listener fills in the sense of "nice" with a very different array of features (e.g. while freshness is quite relevant to how the lettuce is being assessed it is completely irrelevant to the evaluation of a diamond ring). Deictic expressions thus pose with particular clarity the issue of how analysis of language requires that features of context be taken into consideration. Indeed alternative approaches to the study of language sometimes diverge most sharply on precisely this issue. Thus for some formal linguists and philosophers the contextual issues raised by indexical expressions are treated as simply a troublesome residue of problems that can be safely ignored while research proceeds on the analysis of language as a formal, autonomous system. On the other hand, for ethnomethodologists (Cicourel 1973, this volume; Garfinkel 1967; Garfinkel and Sacks 1970; Heritage 1984) indexicality is central to the organization of language, something that can never be erased or overcome, and precisely what constitutes language as an essentially context-bound, interactively organized phenomenon. Though ethnomethodology and conversation analysis take the social articulation of natural language as their core subject matter (indeed for Garfinkel and Sacks [1970] mastery of natural language constitutes the defining attribute of a competent social actor), these research enterprises have their roots in sociology not linguistics. The effect of this is that the field of linguistics itself has remained largely immune to the argument that interactive phenomena are central to the organization of language (indeed this possibility was rather vehemently rejected by Saussure [1959] when he delimited the subject matter of modern linguistics).

In the present chapter Hanks provides a major rethinking of deixis, one that integrates basic properties of human interaction into the analysis of core elements of language structure. Indeed he demonstrates that "verbal deixis is a central aspect of the social matrix of orientation and perception through which speakers produce context." Moreover Hanks' development of the figure/ground contrast for the analysis of deixis provides important new conceptual tools for the study of context (cf. Chapter 1). The notion of indexical ground elaborated by Hanks is dynamic, subtle, and productive. The indexical ground is intimately tied to basic processes of human interaction and participant frameworks. The relationships that are encoded in deictic usage "make up what might be called an implicit playing field for interaction - a set of positions in deictic space, along with expectations about how actors occupy these positions over the course of talk." However, while the deictic properties of this field provide a template for interaction, the indexical ground itself is constituted and deployed by participants in a dynamic fashion through their ongoing interaction with each other. The indexical ground thus both shapes interaction, and is shaped by those very same interactive processes that it helps to constitute. This field is capable of systematic transformation, a process illustrated quite clearly in **reported speech** (the phenomenon of reported speech is also given considerable attention from a variety of perspectives in a number of other chapters in this volume, including Bauman, Basso, the Goodwins, and Lindstrom). The analysis Hanks makes in this chapter of how participant frameworks within the indexical ground can be transformed is elaborated considerably in his recent book, *Referential Practice* (1990). In its analysis of how linguistic choices can both define

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context and be defined by it, Hanks' chapter has clear ties to Duranti's in this volume. A key property of the indexical ground is the way in which it encompasses and encodes the differential access that participants have to relevant events (see also the Goodwins' chapter in this volume): "What the relational features in deictics categorize is this accessibility of referents, in terms of interactants' knowledge, orientation of attention, spatial and temporal location, prior speech, and current sensory awareness . . ." The notions of symmetry and asymmetry in perspectives developed by Hanks here, and the way in which this provides a framework for investigating what participants assume each other knows and is known in common, is quite relevant to analysis of reciprocity in participants' perspectives and the organization of shared background knowledge, topics which are central themes in phenomenological sociology and ethnomethodology (cf. Cicourel 1973, this volume; Garfinkel 1967; Heritage 1984; Schutz 1971). In common with this tradition, and almost all of the chapters in this volume, Hanks draws attention to the dynamic character of both the indexical ground and the context constituted through it.

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1 Introduction

When viewed as transcriptions of typical American English utterances, the sentences in (1-5) illustrate what is commonly called verbal "deixis," and the items in boldface belong to the class of linguistic forms called "deictics."

- (1) You and I could meet **here** Tuesday.
- (2) Now you tell me **this**?
- (3) **Here**, take it.
- (4) **He** told **her** about it **over there**.
- (5) **There**, does that make you happy?

There is widespread agreement in the literature that deixis and the linguistic forms that subserve it play a central role in the routine use and understanding of language. Levinson (1983: 54) described it as "[the] single most obvious way in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structures of languages themselves . . ." In a similar vein, Horn (1988: 116) notes that "the interaction between the context of utterance of an expression and the formal interpretation of elements within that expression constitutes a central domain of pragmatics, variously labelled deixis, indexicality or token-reflexivity."

Whereas both Levinson and Horn define deixis in such a way as to encompass an entire range of referential and non-referential functions of speech, from pronouns to regional accents, this chapter focuses on the more restricted class of referential usages of lexical deictics, such as the ones in (1-5). To see the difference, imagine that any of (1-5) is pronounced in an accent that identifies its speaker as being from a certain region or social stratum, or that (2) is rendered with prosody appropriate to an angry response, or that (1) were coded for deference to addressee as it might be in Javanese. All of these codings are indexical, but none is deictic for the purposes of this chapter. Rather, "deixis" designates a special variety of reference, sometimes called "demonstrative reference," which is limited both formally and functionally.

Formally, whereas Levinson's (1983) "social deixis" can be signaled by any aspect of utterance form whatsoever, deictics in the present sense are morphemes (or strings of morphemes) that in most languages make up closed paradigmatic sets. Standard examples include pronouns (1-5), demonstratives and articles (2, 4, 5), spatial adverbs (1, 4, 5), temporal

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adverbs (2), and presentative adverbs (3). In functional terms, these are what Jespersen (1965[1924]: 219) and Jakobson (1971[1957]) called "shifters", and Silverstein (1976) defined as "referential indexicals." Their basic communicative function is to individuate or single out objects of reference or address in terms of their relation to the current interactive context in which the utterance occurs. So a shifter such as "here" denotes a region of space by indicating that this region is proximal (or otherwise immediate) to the place in which the form is uttered. For Silverstein (1976) this relationship of correspondence was to be accounted for through rules of use linking contextual variables with deictic tokens, a formulation consistent with Horn's (1988: 116) "shifters or indexicals, [are] expressions whose meaning can best be viewed as a function from context to individual by assigning values to variables for speaker, hearer, time and place of utterance, style or register, purpose of speech act, etc."

But what are these contextual variables and how exactly are they related to the denotata picked out in deictic usage? If deictic context is segmentable in this way, how does it hang together as a whole? How is interactive context linguistically structured in acts of reference? It is noteworthy that Horn's list ends in an "etc.," suggesting that there might be an open-ended list of such variables. In similar fashion, ethnographies of speaking, as in Hymes (1974) and Silverstein (1976), have long proposed that speech events be decomposed into a number of segmentable components, typically symbolized as $Es \rightarrow \{Spkr, Adr, Loc, Time, Key, \dots\}$. The problem is that such open-ended lists suggest that the components are coordinate and independent, and they leave us with the nagging uncertainty of never knowing whether the list is complete or whether yet more components are needed (cf. for instance Levinson's 1987 expansion of the set of participant roles, and decomposition of roles into features along the lines of distinctive features in phonology). Do components differ from utterance to utterance, context to context, language to language, or all of these? In examining individual utterances, how should one think of the relations between the components? A good description of deixis could help answer these questions.

It is widely recognized that all natural languages have deictics (Anderson and Keenan 1985, Benveniste 1974, Kurylowicz 1972, Weinreich 1980), and that these forms constitute key points of juncture between grammar and context. Yet there has been relatively little in-depth description of actual usage, and available descriptive frameworks are partial and relatively coarse (cf. Levinson 1983). One result of this is that it is difficult if not impossible to do comparative research on deixis. As Irvine (1985: 574) observed in relation to studies of honorifics, indexical features tend to be erratically handled in standard descriptions, with inconsistencies and lack of appropriate data getting in the way of systematic comparison between languages (or even contexts in a single language).

Table 2.1. *Functional components of deixis*

Type	Role	Typical exemplar
Communicative	signal speech act value	Presentative, Directive, Referential, Phatic, Expressive
Characterizing	describe referent	Human, Animate, Regional/Extended, Punctual/Restricted, Static, Kinetic
Relational	signal relation referent-to-origo	Immediate, non-Immediate, Visible, Tactual, Inclusive, Exclusive, Discourse
Indexical	ground reference to origo in speech event	Speaker, Addressee, Speaker & Addressee, Anaphoric

In this chapter I try to show that deictics (under the present definition) share a distinctive semantic structure, which sets them apart from non-referential indexicals (such as status indicators) and also from other kinds of expressions that do combine reference with indexicality, but are nonetheless not deictics.¹ My aim is to get a clearer picture of the semantic and pragmatic mechanisms of deixis, and to contribute to a better metalanguage for pragmatic description and cross-linguistic comparison. Because deixis links language to context in distinguishable ways, the better we understand it, the more we know about context. In effect, the study of deixis provides privileged evidence for the ways that natural languages define interactive context by encoding pragmatic categories and forms of interaction in the grammar itself.

1.1 Functional heterogeneity of deixis

It is helpful by way of starting to summarize the kinds of information encoded in deictic forms. The first fact one confronts in trying to describe the conventional meanings of these forms is their functional heterogeneity. Table 2.1 displays in rough outline what I take to be the main types of information encoded in standard deictics.²

In saying that the information in Table 2.1 is **encoded**, I do not wish to assert that for any form it is possible to state a set of invariant features that remains constant across all of its uses. The features are not necessary and sufficient conditions on the proper usage of forms. Rather, they are defeasible aspects that conjointly characterize the range within which proper usage varies, and therefore the conventional **potential** of forms. Consider the different uses of "here" in (6-10).

- (6) Oh, it's just beautiful here! (sweeping arm gesture to countryside)
 (7) Here's a good one for ya'. (embarking on narrative)
 (8) John lives over here, but we live here. (pointing to small map)
 (9) Oh doctor, it hurts here. (hand on abdomen)
 (10) I'm over here! (shouted to companion through the woods)

Notice that whatever else is going on in these utterances, the word "here" in each contributes to an act of reference, and yet these acts seem quite different. The region referred to in (6) is of broad extent and includes both interlocutors, whereas the one in (10) is restricted to the speaker's place and excludes that of the addressee. Example (9) refers to a small segment of the body of its speaker, whereas (8) is a deferred ostension using a map in the common perceptual field of the interactants. Notice that (8) could well be used to refer to a spatial region that actually excludes both interlocutors at the time of utterance, and the two regions contrasted could be actually very close together or very far apart depending on the scale of the map.

Rather than attempting to reduce all of these to a single abstract feature bundle, a revealing description of deixis must maintain these distinctions and try to explain why they fall within the range of a single lexical form in English, whereas the paraphrase equivalents in another language might require distinct forms.³ For instance, in Yucatec Maya, examples (6) and (10) require what I have called the Egocentric Inclusive locative adverb *way e?* "here," whereas (7) requires the Presentative Evidential *hé?el a?* "here it is," as in *hé?el ump'eél a?* "here's one (take it)," and (8-9) correspond to yet a third form, the Sociocentric Restricted locative adverb *té?el a?* "right here (where we can perceive)" (see Table 2.3). The descriptive challenge for a comparative theory of deixis is to provide a sufficiently delicate vocabulary to give a consistent account of such a range of pragmatic effects.

The Communicative functions of deictic types are speech act values that specify what kinds of act are performed in routine proper usage of the deictic. Presentative designates the kind of act illustrated in (3). Directive designates the act performed when one speaker points out a referent, as in "There it is (look!)." The Referential function is the contribution of deictics to acts in which referential objects are individuated, as in (1-10) (with the possible exception of (7)). The term Phatic is the standard label for what speakers do in managing their contact with interlocutors, including what Yngve (1970) called backchannel, as well as the participation procedures described by C. Goodwin (1981). In Maya the adverbial deictic *b'èey* "thus, so, like (that)" is commonly uttered *sotto voce* by addressees listening to a speaker, as a way of signaling attentiveness and comprehension (not necessarily agreement). This is a Phatic use. Expressivity is the foregrounding of a speaker's own involvement in an utterance, including

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subjective evaluation, special emphasis, surprise, admiration, etc. Expressive functions of deictics in Maya include these and others signaled by special foregrounded constructions in which only deictics occur (Hanks 1984, 1990).

It is occasionally observed that deictics differ from semantic descriptions in that they denote referents without actually describing them, as in (11) vs. (12):

(11) I work here.

(12) I work in my office on Wilton Avenue in Chicago.

While this observation captures what is indeed a different blend of information in the semantics of deictic and non-deictic expressions, it is not strictly accurate. Deictics regularly encode features such as Human, Animate, Regional/Extended vs. Punctate/Restricted, Concrete vs. Abstract, and Static vs. Kinetic. These do describe aspects of the objects to which they refer, and they therefore make up a dimension of Characterizing features. Contrast these with the true Relational features, which specify the relation between the object of reference and the current utterance framework in which the act takes place. Typical ones include Proximal vs. Distal, Immediate vs. non-Immediate, Visible, Inclusive vs. Exclusive, Up vs. Down, Centripetal vs. Centrifugal. The distinctive property of these is that they all presuppose an origo relative to which they are computed. That is, they describe not the referent itself, but the relation between the utterance framework and the referent.

If the Relational features specify the deictic relation, the Indexical ones specify the origo to which the relation attaches. In (6) the Indexical function is what grounds the reference to the interlocutors in the countryside at the time of utterance. In (7) it includes the state of the discourse and interaction leading up to the utterance, and in (8) it includes both the proximity of the interactants to each other and to the map, as well as the fact that this is a deferred or transposed deictic reference. Although all of these examples are cited as single utterances, for the sake of brevity, they should all be understood as interactive moves in a chain of moves, and this too is an aspect of the indexical ground of reference.

It is this plurality of features that I point to in saying that deictics are functionally heterogeneous. While studies may focus on one or another subset of the functions, a general account must provide a way of integrating them. What is the organization of all this information in the semantics of individual utterances, deictic types, given classes of deictics, and deixis in general? Where do gestures fit in the semantics of deixis? As diacritics of Communicative functions? As special constraints, as aspects of the indexical ground, or as independent signs with their own semantic structures? How do the different features bundle in languages? Are there patterns of cooccurrence that would allow us to predict likely combinations? The first

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step towards answering such questions is to clarify the relational structure of deictic reference.

2 Relational structure of deictic reference

Consider the glosses in (13–17), which are alternative attempts at defining what I call the relational structure of deictic reference.

- (13) "This" is equivalent to "what I-now notice." (Russell 1951[1940]: 114)
- (14) "I" means the person who utters ↓ this token ↓. (Reichenbach 1947: 284)
- (15) "The [substitution] types of *this*, *here*, *now* and *that*, *there*, *then* represent relations of distance from the speaker or from the speaker and the hearer." (Bloomfield 1933: 248)
- (16) "This book" is equivalent to "the book which is near the speaker." (Lyons 1977: 646)
- (17) "This" indicates that its object is nearest to the present communication, dominant in the field of perception or attention, focused in the center. (Collinson 1937: 43ff)

Russell's treatment of egocentric particulars was an attempt to reduce deixis to the experience of the speaking subject, whereas Reichenbach sought to reduce it to the token reflexivity of deictic form (hence the diacritic arrows in (14)). Bloomfield states the classic proximity-based gloss recapitulated by Lyons, whereas Collinson combines proximity with perception and cognitive focus. What they all share is that they posit as fundamental to deixis a relation between some part of the speech event and the object of reference.

This basic observation can be rephrased by saying that each deictic category encodes a relation between the referent and the indexical framework in which the act of reference takes place. Thus, a single deictic word stands for minimally two objects: the referent is the thing, individual, event, spatial or temporal location denoted; and the indexical framework is the origo ("pivot" or zero-point) relative to which the referent is identified (the speech event in which the act of reference is performed, or some part of this event). We can see that where (13–17) differ is on the nature of the origo (the speaker, the token sign, the present communication) and the quality of the relation (proximity, perceptibility, cognitive focus). Table 2.2 shows an array of hypothetical paraphrases for English usages.

Notice that the column labeled "denotatum type" shows distinctions between objects, regions, persons and times. This list (surely incomplete) reflects the differences among the classes of referents typically individuated by different categories of deictic. This portion of the gloss incorporates what were called Characterizing features in Table 2.1, since

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Table 2.2. *Some relational structures of deictic reference*

Form		Denotatum type	Relational type	Indexical type*
this	=	"the one	Proximal to	me"
that	=	"the one	Distal to	you"
that	=	"the one	Distal to	you and me"
this	=	"the one	Visible to	me
that	=	"the one	Visible to	you and me"
here	=	"the region	Immediate to	you"
there	=	"the region	non-Immediate to	you and me"
I	=	"the person	Speaker of	this utterance"
you	=	"the person	Addressee of	this utterance"
now	=	"the time	Immediate to	this utterance"

* Indexical types are abbreviated and stand for participation configurations realized in the utterance and actually occupied in the interactive situation.

regionality, individuality, and so forth are taken to be inherent features of the referent, like shape, animacy, and other more familiar features.

The relationship types in the middle column localize the referent relative to the origo. The most important point regarding these at this stage in the discussion is that they may be multiple. That is, we need not assume that any of the glosses in (13-17) is correct to the exclusion of the others. Any language contains more than one type of Relational feature, and languages differ significantly on which ones they encode. The standard assumption that space is always foundational in deixis is an inconvenient fiction not borne out comparatively (Frei 1944, Levinson 1983, Anderson and Keenan 1985).

Whereas Table 2.2 shows only a few possible Indexical types, this portion of the relational structure is susceptible of significant variation as well. The problem is that it is simply not known which aspects of interactive events can serve as the ground of reference. In clear cases one or another of the participants serves as origo, as assumed in (13, 15, 17). Instances of speaker-grounded reference appear to be what justifies Russell (1940) and Lyons (1977: 646, 1982: 121) when they assert that deixis is egocentric, and others when they assert that it is "subjective." But as Bühler (1982[1934]: 105) pointed out, this subjectivity is based in the fact that all indicators require an origo in order to be interpreted, whether or not the origo is the speaking subject. It may be that the location, knowledge and orientation of participants are inherently more central to reference than other aspects of the situation, but Reichenbach (14) and

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Collinson (17) pose a challenge to this assumption. In theory at least, one could imagine any number of alternative indexical pivots, logocentric, person-centric, event-centric, and so forth. Given that acts of reference are interactively accomplished, a sociocentric approach is certain to be more productive than an egocentric one, even when the speaker is the primary ground of reference.

The paraphrases in Table 2.2 incorporate the Characterizing, Relational and Indexical features from Table 2.1, but they leave out the extra-referential Communicative functions. These could be represented heuristically as predicative elements in paraphrases such as (18-19):

- (18) "Take the one Tactually available to me right now." (Presentative)
(19) "Look at the one Visible to you and me right now." (Directive)

As incomplete as these paraphrases are, they allow us to sketch out an important part of the referential apparatus encoded in deictic systems. As a heuristic device, they are productive in two ways. They can be read off as mini-descriptions of interactive contexts in which deixis occurs, thus setting a direction for pragmatic research. And, by varying the three components independently, one can raise questions regarding how features from each component combine. Do certain Relational features require certain types of indexical context, or occur only in certain grammatical categories?

Table 2.3 presents a sketch of part of the deictic system in Yucatec Maya, a native American language spoken in Mexico. The first three forms are Ostensive Evidential adverbs. OSTEVS form a special series of adverbs whose Communicative functions range from Presentative to Directive, while the deictic modal *he?ele?* "indeed, for sure" is an Expressive indexing speaker certainty. The modal is not a referring item at all, while the OSTEVS subsume reference within a complex communicative act. The remaining five forms are locative adverbs (DLOCs) which share the primary function of reference, but differ in terms of their Relational and Indexical features.

2.1 Transformations of the Indexical ground

A basic property of the indexical context of interaction is that it is dynamic. As interactants move through space, shift topics, exchange information, coordinate their respective orientations, and establish common grounds as well as non-commonalities, the indexical framework of reference changes. Patterns of deictic usage reflect these changes, and thereby provide us with a powerful tool for investigating them. Consider a situation in which two Maya interactants are physically separated from each other in the forest, looking for a misplaced tool. One speaker calls out to the other, asking whether he has found it, and the other responds that he has.

Table 2.3. *Synopsis of Maya deictics (partial)*

Form	Gloss	Paraphrase	Features
<i>hé?ela?</i>	"Here it is"	"Take the one in my hand"	Presentative, Tactual/Spkr
<i>hé?el o?</i>	"There it is"	"Look at the one visible to us"	Directive, Visual/Spkr&Adr
<i>hé?eb'e?</i>	"There it is"	"Listen to the one audible to us"	Directive, Auditory/Spkr&Adr
<i>hé?ele?</i>	"Indeed"	"for sure, affirmative"	Expressive, Certain
<i>té?ela?</i>	"There, here"	"at this very place immediate to us"	Referential Immediate/Spkr&Adr
<i>té?el o?</i>	"There"	"at that place non-immediate to us"	Referential, ØImmediate/Spkr&Adr
<i>way e?</i>	"Here"	"at this place including me"	Referential, Inclusive/Spkr
<i>tol o?</i>	"There"	"at that place excluding me"	Referential, Exclusive/Spkr
<i>tí?i?</i>	"There"	"at that place known to us"	Referential, Anaphoric/Discourse

- (20) A. *tí? an wá tol o?*
 "Is it over there?"
 B. *háah, way yan e?*
 "Yeah, it's here (where I am)."

Notice that A codes B's location with the Exclusive DLOC *tol o?*, which always refers to a place removed from its speaker, whereas B makes reference to the same place by using the Inclusive DLOC *way e?*, which always refers to a region that includes its speaker. Wherever B is, the tool is with him, and A can simply follow the voice to find it. Schematically, the two deictic references can be contrasted as in Figure 2.1.⁴

The inversion in their positions is a canonical case of an Indexical difference: A and B stand in different actual relations to the object (the location of the tool) at the moment of the exchange, and they must therefore code it differently. The same phenomenon arises in the exchange of participant deictics and nominal demonstratives: A and B are both "I" to themselves but "you" to each other; A's "this" is B's "that" (more or less). If in (20), B follows the voice and goes to A, then he too would refer to the tool with the Inclusive form *way e?* "here." Once he has joined A at the tool site, he can no longer describe its location as *tol o?* "out there,"

Figure 2.1

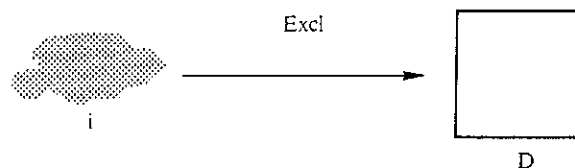
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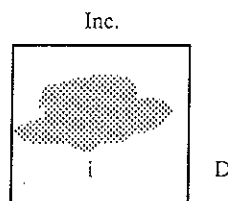
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tol o? "there (excluding me now)"



way e? "here (including me now)"



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Figure 2.1 Relational schemas for *way e?* "here" and *tol o?* "there"

any more than he could switch the participant roles at his pleasure, describing himself in the second person and his interlocutor in the first.⁵ These rudimentary details of usage make up what might be called an implicit playing field for interaction – a set of positions in deictic space, along with expectations about how actors occupy these positions over the course of talk. In their deictic systems, languages provide irreplaceable resources for this process.

Consider now a slightly less simple but equally mundane example, in which an interactant uses quoted speech. A and B are working in a corn field, squatting down, weeding nearby sections. The two are loosely engaged in talk, but separated by ten feet or so, each paying attention to his own work. A recounts a strip of interaction he had with C, a mutual friend, in the market the day before, and says at one point,

- (21) . . . *ká tuún tuyálah ten, kólóten way e? kih, ká hb'inen i?*
 . . . so then he says to me, "Come here (to me)" he says, so I went to him.

Notice that the portion of (21) in boldface is quoted speech. Although A utters the standard directive for summoning an addressee in Maya, B understands immediately that A is not calling him to his side. He also

understands that the referent of *way e?* does not refer to A's current locus, but to C's locus at the time of the original utterance. Thus, if either A or B were to make reference to C's locus in the subsequent discourse, as A does in the final clause of (21), then they do so using Distal or Anaphoric deictics *ti?* "there (where we said)" or perhaps *té?el o?* "there (where we both know)."

Thus one and the same place is referred to with the Inclusive deictic in quoted discourse but with the Distal or Anaphoric one in direct talk. This shift is well known and typical of all deictic categories. It is what motivated Jespersen's original description of these forms as "shifters." It follows that one and the same deictic is interpreted in one way in quoted discourse, but quite differently in direct. This does not mean, however, that the relational values reverse from use to use, *way e?* encodes Inclusive in (21) just as it does in (20). Rather, the shift can be accounted for by saying that quotation involves a transposition of the indexical ground of reference. The Relational features of the forms remain constant in both types of discourse, but the *origo* is projected in quoted speech from the actual utterance framework into a narrated one. This projection is an important part of what is signaled in the phrases that often mark quotation, 'he said, she said' (for extensive discussion of this, see M. H. Goodwin 1990, Hanks 1990, Lucy, in press).

The information status of referents changes over discourse even when the interactants sit still and speak entirely in direct talk. This change is a third example of the dynamic character of the indexical framework, and it is reflected systematically in the distribution of deictics in text. To take another very simple example, consider (22), in which Francisco explained to me that his nephew teaches English in a nearby town called Yotholim.

- (22) *yáan untuúl insobrina té? yot'olim a?, yohe ?íngles [. . .]*
 I have a nephew **right here in Yotholim** (who) knows English [. . .]
té? yot'olim o? k u d'ik klàases.
 There in Yotholim he gives classes.

[BB.5.56]

At the time of this utterance, we were sitting in Francisco's store some twenty miles from the place to which the phrases in boldface refer, and in uttering both phrases, he made vague pointing motions in the direction of the town. Notice that he has shifted from the DLOC *té?el a?* "(right) there" in the first reference to *té?el o?* "there" in the second.⁶ Extensive research on Maya usage confirms that this shift is a standard one, motivated by the fact that in the first case, Francisco is introducing a new referent into the discourse (compare Leonard 1985). He knows that I am familiar with Yotholim, and that it is generally considered to be a neighboring town, but he is introducing it into the talk for the first time. In the second case he is maintaining a reference already established. This

not refer to A's current locus, erance. Thus, if either A or B subsequent discourse, as A does using Distal or Anaphoric *té?el* o? "there (where we

with the Inclusive deictic in anaphoric one in direct talk. This categories. It is what motivated as "shifters." It follows that way in quoted discourse, but however, that the relational es Inclusive in (21) just as it counted for by saying that indexical ground of reference. constant in both types of ed speech from the actual s projection is an important en mark quotation, 'he said, f. H. Goodwin 1990, Hanks

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ho) knows English [. . .]

[BB.5.56]

in Francisco's store some s in boldface refer, and in notions in the direction of DLOC *té?el* a? "(right) in the second.⁶ Extensive shift is a standard one, cisco is introducing a new 85). He knows that I am ally considered to be a e talk for the first time. In already established. This

difference pertains to the indexical ground, in particular to the state of knowledge and attention focus of the interactants.

In general, because indexical frameworks change more or less constantly in talk, the deictic forms that make for proper reference to objects change as well. Thus whereas the Relational features associated with deictics may remain relatively consistent across uses, the indexical framework of interaction is in constant flux. This may be due to a variety of factors, including the adjustments in bodily orientation of the participants, any motion they may be engaged in, the arrival of new participants on the scene, as well as background frames that may be activated. Because of its relational structure, deixis is perhaps the clearest linguistic indicator of the interactive transformations involved in producing context. General statements about indexical centering can only be evaluated in relation to distinct tokens and distinct types, not to the entire phenomenon of deixis as a whole.

2.2 The locality of the referent

The referential and indexical poles in the deictic relation are not coordinate, but are actually in a foreground-background relation. The referent (denotatum) is the figure and the indexical origo is the ground. This disparity is evident both in the grammatical structures of deixis and in its interactive production.

Regarding grammaticalization, recall the Characterizing and Relational features from Table 2.1. It is the denotatum that these features describe, as illustrated in (23–7).

- (23) *wuna:-'ga:-' = garan⁸ga:-'* *nu:-'ba-gi-yun⁸*
3PI/3MSg-Rdp-Ben=look-Pa2 M-Anaph-MSg-Abs
They looked for that one (Heath 1980: 18)

- (24) *ma-na-ri*
NClass-NonProx-Immed
that (Heath 1978: 59)

- (25) *ni-na-ri-tu* *narguni-ga-bidič-yaw*
MaSg-that-Imm-Erg 3MSg/2PI-Sub-nearly-spear
That one almost spears you (Heath 1978: 227)

- (26) *les voi-ci*
ArtMaPl Adv-Prox
Here they are

- (27) *hē?el-ō?ob-a?*
 OSTEV-Pl-Tact
 Here they are (take them!)

Example (23) is from a collection of Nunggubuyu texts. It illustrates a nominal deictic composed of four morphemes which encode masculine gender, Anaphoric function, singular number and absolutive case. Gender, noun class and number categories subcategorize the denotatum of the deictic, whereas what Heath labels the Anaphoric function is, by my reckoning, a Relational function. It encodes the fact that the denotatum is in a relation of being known (cognitively accessible) to the interactants. Similarly, (24-5) are from Ngandi, another Australian language in which deictics are composed of morphemes signaling noun class, number and case (among other things). In so far as case markers specify the role of the denotatum in the event described, they too apply to the denotational pole of the deictic relation, rather than to the indexical one.

The Ngandi deictic stems (24-5) are composed of two morphemes which conjointly specify the Relational value of the expression: *-na-* encodes non-Proximal (in opposition to *-ni-* "Proximal"), and *-ri* encodes Immediate (in opposition to *-ʔ* "non-Immediate"). While the precise nuances of these features are not clear from Heath's description, it is clear that they have to do with distinct kinds of relations to the indexical origo. In (26), Characterizing information is encoded primarily in the article (Masculine, Plural), while the adverbial deictic encodes the Immediate relation and Presentative/Directive Communicative function. In (27) the Yucatec Ostensive Evidential encodes the Tactual relation with Presentative function. The only Characterizing feature is the plurality encoded in the suffix. These are all instances of grammaticalized information bearing primarily on the denotatum.

Relational features function in deictic reference to foreground the denotatum, but they do so in a way different from the Characterizing features. The latter apply directly to the denotatum, describing it or its role in the proposition. Relational features, by contrast, subcategorize the link between the denotatum and the indexical origo. Thus relations such as Proximal and Distal may appear to offer no evidence for the locality of the referent over the ground. After all, proximity is reversible: if A is close to B, then B is close to A, and the two poles of the relation are coordinate. However, in deictic systems, the relation to ground is heavily weighted toward the referent, even when the link is spatial proximity. The referent is essentially a target rather than a mere end-point.

Consider (28), in which A asks B where he left the hammer they had been working with, and B tells him it is at the worksite (several kilometers from the location of the exchange).

- (28) A: *tú?uʃ yàan martiyòò?*
 'Where's (the) hammer?'

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B: *tol o?*
there (vague point towards worksite)

B's response encodes that the place referred to is Exclusive relative to the location of utterance (see Figure 2.1). That is, it is outside the boundaries of the current interactive field, however broadly or narrowly this is conceived. In order to successfully interpret the reference, A must have sufficient background knowledge to infer which place B has in mind. Both the location of the exchange and the background knowledge A and B share are part of the indexical origo of the reference. It would be clearly incorrect to say that B's utterance **refers** to his own location or to the shared background knowledge, yet the reference cannot be computed without these factors. The correct description is that the shared spatial and cognitive field of interaction is the background relative to which the worksite is individuated as a referential foreground.

Predicative and so-called "modifying" uses of deictics provide further indications of the salience of the Referential component. Consider (29-32).

- (29) *it? an tol o?*
It's (out) there.
(30) *way yan e?*
It's here.
(31) *to nukuč k' aáš o?*
(out) there (in the) old forest
(32) *le pak'b'i nah o?*
that cement-construction house

The element in boldface in (29-30) is the locative existential verb "to be (in a place)." This is the standard way of deriving a predicate from a spatial deictic in Yucatec. Both sentences would make appropriate responses to A's question in (28), conditions permitting, since both assert the location of the object (in this case the hammer). Thus (29) might be paraphrased roughly "it is located in the place Exclusive in relation to me" and (3) "it is located in the place Inclusive in relation to me." Notice that they could **not** be paraphrased even roughly as "it is in relation to me that its location is Exclusive" or "it is relative to me that it is close at hand." The problem with these would-be paraphrases is that they reverse the Figure-Ground relation encoded in the deictics, focalizing the indexical ground rather than the denotatum. Predicative uses of deictics retain the Figure-Ground structure of referential uses. They assert the Relational feature, not the Indexical one.

Similarly, phrases in which deictics function as modifiers to lexical descriptions, such as (31-2), usually elaborate the Relational or Characterizing features, not the Indexical ones. So in (31) the place referred to by the Exclusive deictic is described as "high forest," and in (32) the referent is described as a "cement-construction house." In other words, lexical description combines very productively with deictics to individuate the

denotata more precisely. By contrast, attempts to further specify or make explicit the indexical origo of the reference in the same phrase with the deictic are usually odd or require special interactive contexts for proper use: ?"Out there relative to me," ?"This in relation to us right now," ?"That relative to our visual field," ?"Over there from me", and so forth.

Thus the Characterizing and Relational features of deictics serve to focalize the referential pole in the deictic relation. Lexical descriptions and predicative derivations preserve the Figure-Ground asymmetry between the two poles. This is of course related to the fact that in referential usage, it is the denotatum and not the indexical ground that is uniquely identified. Languages provide sometimes elaborate semantic resources for deictic reference in the form of large inventories of Relational and Characterizing features, as in Yucatec Maya (Hanks 1990), Malagasy (Dez 1980), Santali (Zide 1972) and Inuktitut Eskimo (Denny 1982). We summarize this information with cover labels such as "relative proximity," but it is clear that this proximity is not a matter of reversible spatial contiguity. Instead, what is basic to deixis is the access (cognitive, perceptual, spatiotemporal) that participants have to objects of reference in the current speech event. Access, like awareness, is an intensional arc from participants to objects, and this inherently orients deixis towards the denotatum.

So far as can be determined from published descriptions, most languages encode more distinctions among types of referents than among types of indexical origos. Elaborate inventories of Characterizing or Relational features are offset by minimal and often vague indexical grounds. This holds even for many "person oriented" languages (Anderson and Keenan 1985), in which the origo is subcategorized by distinct speaker-grounded vs. addressee-grounded vs. other-grounded deictic types. A possible counter-example is Japanese, for which Anderson and Keenan (1985) cite the three-way distinction: *kono* "near speaker" vs. *ano* "far from speaker and addressee" vs. *sono* "near addressee." Note that the three terms have three distinct indexical grounds, but only two Relational features. According to Boas (1917: 113), Tlingit has only a single Relational feature, "Near," paired with several distinct indexical grounds (relative to me, to you, to him), while Lower Chinook has an analogous three way split (Boas 1911: Section 44).⁷ If these descriptions are accurate, then Japanese, Tlingit and Lower Chinook are atypical in that the indexical ground is more finely subcategorized than the referential focus. Usually, the inverse is the case, in accord with the greater salience of the referent.⁸

3 Figure and Ground in the semantics of deixis

The discreteness, individuation, definiteness, and singularity that are the hallmarks of deictic reference are all typical figure characteristics. The diffuseness, variability, and background character of the indexical origo

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are due to its being, in fact, the ground upon which the referential figure is defined. The Figure-Ground relation, as invoked here, organizes visual perception. Deictic reference is by no means limited to visual, or even perceptual access to referents, but perceptual distinctions are encoded in deictics in a variety of languages, including Yucatec (Hanks 1984), Crow (Graczyk 1986), Malagasy (Dez 1980) and Santali (Bodding 1929, Zide 1972). Even in languages such as German and English, in which apparently no perceptual distinctions are encoded in deictics, the perceptual corollaries of spatial or cognitive immediacy may still be fundamental to the actual use of the forms (Bühler 1982[1934], Lakoff 1987). One advantage of the analogy to Figure-Ground is exactly that it focuses our attention on the fact that deixis is a framework for organizing the actor's access to the context of speech at the moment of utterance. Deictic reference organizes the field of interaction into a foreground upon a background, as figure and ground organize the visual field.

3.1 Figure and ground in linguistic systems

A number of linguists have proposed applications of the Figure-Ground concept to linguistic categories. Starting from examination of spatial prepositions, as in "the pen rolled off the table," Talmy (1978) distinguished the figure object (the pen) from the ground (the table). The figure is conceptually movable and localized relative to the ground, which is stationary within a frame. Talmy noted that such "relative referencing" functions in a broad range of linguistic contexts, including non locational sentences (*X resembles Y*, where *X* is figure and *Y* is ground), equational sentences (*X is Y*, cf. figure is ground), temporal reference, assertion (figure) as opposed to presupposition (ground), cause (figure) as opposed to result (ground) and temporal sequence of events (ground is prior). More recently, Talmy (1983) investigated verbal descriptions of spatial scenes and considerably refined the Figure-Ground analysis. Starting from the selectivity of linguistic representation, he argues that language imposes a primary-secondary division among portions of spatial scenes, thereby laying the basis for a Figure-Ground relation in speech. The corollaries of the primary-secondary division are consistent with this correspondence, and include: movable/more permanently located; smaller/larger; geometrically simpler (point-like)/more geometrically complex (with extent, shape, dimensionality); more salient/more backgrounded; and more recently in awareness/earlier in scene or memory (Talmy 1983: 231). To these can be added another, anticipated (forward path)/recalled (behind, path already covered) (Hanks 1983). Hence, in linguistic systems, and particularly in spatial reference, a broad variety of asymmetric oppositions among objects are encoded according to a consistent division between figure and ground.

to further specify or make the same phrase with the active contexts for proper relation to us right now," "e from me", and so forth. ures of deictics serve to . Lexical descriptions and ound asymmetry between t that in referential usage, hat is uniquely identified. itic resources for deictic tional and Characterizing agasy (Dez 1980), Santali 32). We summarize this roximity," but it is clear atial contiguity. Instead, ceptual, spatiotemporal) he current speech event. a participants to objects, otatum. riptions, most languages its than among types of acterizing or Relational indexical grounds. This (Anderson and Keenan stinct speaker-grounded ctic types. A possible and Keenan (1985) cite . ano "far from speaker at the three terms have tional features. Accord- gle Relational feature, nds (relative to me, to us three way split (Boas curate, then Japanese, the indexical ground is us. Usually, the inverse he referent.⁸

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Recent linguistic research on discourse has contained further applications of the distinction, to explain the relations among a still broader spectrum of grammatical categories. Summarizing work by a number of scholars, Wallace (1982: 212) organized categories of nouns, verbs, clauses and sentences into paradigmatic oppositions, as in {human, animate, proper, singular, definite, and referential}, which are salient, as opposed to their non-salient counterparts {non-human, inanimate, common, non-singular, indefinite, and non-referential}. Similarly, {perfective, present-immediate tense} are the more salient counterparts of {non-perfective, non-present-remote tense} within the verb.

It is important to bear in mind that the proposals summarized by Wallace are focused on the paradigmatic relations among different grammatical categories, assigning each category a single coefficient of relative salience. Hence, when linked to an analysis of information structure in narrative, the salience coefficients of each category condition its distribution in foregrounded vs. backgrounded portions of the discourse. In this kind of system, a speaker selects either the more or less focal term for use at a specific point in discourse.

The basic proposal of this paper is different in that I am applying the Figure-Ground dichotomy to the internal semantic structure of individual grammatical forms. A term such as "this" incorporates within its own relational structure both figure (denotatum) and ground (indexical origo). Whereas speakers must choose between perfective and imperfective aspect, or proper vs. common nouns, they do not choose between an indexical and a referential object. Rather, they identify the referential in relation to the indexical. Whereas the asymmetric relations among categories that Wallace treats can be described in terms of markedness oppositions, the linkage between Relational and Indexical components of reference is a matter of combination, not opposition. The difference becomes quite obvious in light of the different generalizations about deixis that arise from the two perspectives. Consider first the classification of distinct deictic categories by their relative salience coefficients.

3.1.1 *Relative salience of distinct deictic categories*

In a number of languages, including Yucatec and Malagasy, there are lexical distinctions among the Communicative functions in Table 2.1. Presentative-Directive adverbial deictics make up a distinct series from merely Referential ones. The former are typically associated with actual gestural presentation of the referent, as opposed to merely indicating it, and may be used as the sole predicate in "minor" sentences, as opposed to a modifier within a noun or adverbial phrase. In Yucatec, Presentative and Directive forms (first three in Table 2.3) are all subject to a number of special grammatical constraints (Hanks 1984). Most of the remaining

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forms, by contrast, are typically used to make reference, not to assert the presence of the referent. In Yucatec, these other deictics do not encode perceptual distinctions, nor are they typically used to actually present a referent, nor are they predicative unless derived grammatically, nor, finally, are they subject to the same set of grammatical constraints (Hanks 1984). The Presentative and Directive forms are relatively more salient and figure-like than the others, and their grammatical and pragmatic features reflect this.

The distinction between categories that encode perceptual features and those that do not could be viewed as another relation of relative figure-like as opposed to ground-like forms. Perceptual deictics single out the referent according to the mode of perceptual access by which it is available to interactants. In Yucatec, perceptual individuation combines with presentative force (Table 2.3) to make a series of deictics whose central interactive function is to direct the addressee's perceptual focus to the referent. Figure-like values cluster together in this case. In Malagasy, by contrast, nominal, adverbial and presentative bases all encode perception (Dez 1980), while Crow deictics distinguish visible from invisible in the nominal series, but lack a distinct presentative (Graczyk 1986).

It is intuitively obvious that Proximal deictics such as *way e?* 'here' and *té?el a?* 'right here' in Yucatec are more figure-like than Distal ones such as *tol o?* 'out there' and *té?el o?* 'there' (Table 2.3). As such they tend to be more Punctual (as opposed to regional), more canonically Referential (as opposed to Anaphoric or non-Referential), more likely to take on presentative or directive force and to be used in reference to concrete as opposed to abstract objects. Some tokens of deictics are non-referential in that they fail to individuate any existent object, 'referring' instead to some vague or hypothetical object. The forms in question tend to be non-Proximal and non-Punctuate. The Exclusive locative *tolo?* may be used to convey that the speaker does not know where something is located, as in *tinsatah wá túus? tolo?* 'I lost it somewhere out there.' Compare (33-5):

(33) W: *má tawáal ten yàan abin?*

Didn't you tell me you're going?

E: *ni? ká?a→ pero máa č im bin to naáč o?*

I'm going, but I don't go way out there.

[BB.5.48]

(34) *un-ani*

there, somewhere down there (Extended, Subord, AT)

(Denny 1982: 361)

(35) *n-š-k' š+e*

this (Prox, Inan, Intensive)

(Zide 1972: 268)

In (33), taken from my field notes, E was explaining to me that she goes to collect firewood only at the edge of the planted field by her house, rarely

Table 2.4. *Relative salience of opposed deictic categories (partial)*

Higher salience	Lower salience
Presentative	non-Presentative
Directive	non-Directive
Predicative	non-Predicative
Perceptual	non-Perceptual
Proximal	Remote
Anticipated	Recalled
Punctual	Regional
Concrete	Abstract
Referential	non-Referential

straying into the forest. The spatial expression (in boldface) refers vaguely to the outback of the woods. Example (34) is taken from Denny's (1982) discussion of Inuktitut Eskimo, where he reports that the distal extended deictic is used to indicate that the speaker does not know the precise whereabouts of the object. Canonically referential usages are more figure-like than such non-specific, only marginally referential ones. In Santali, the inverse case arises. According to Zide (1972) and Bodding (1929: 125), there is an "intensive" or "particularizing" infix *-Vk'* + that restricts deictic reference, glossable roughly as "the very one." This infix occurs only on Proximal bases. These divisions are summarized in Table 2.4.

The hierarchy summarized in Table 2.4 can help answer the question of how information is linguistically organized in the encoded structure of deixis. On the assumption that figural properties tend to cluster, Table 2.4 generates a number of interesting predictions that can help motivate facts of structure and use that appear otherwise arbitrary. For instance,

- If a language has both Presentative and Perceptual features in the deictics, they will tend to be lumped in the same forms.
- Directives are more likely to individuate points than regions of broad extent.
- Proximal forms lend themselves readily to anticipatory reference (as in "this one [coming up]") whereas Remote ones do not.
- Remote forms tend to be used for anaphora and reference to discourse.
- Forms used for non-specific reference to vague zones will be the same ones used for non-punctuate, remote, and recalled referents.

3.1.2 *Relative salience of simultaneous components*

These uses of the Figure-Ground relation as a way of classifying grammatical categories necessarily involve a logical transposition. Whereas the members of a paradigm are opposed according to their respective salience

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coefficients, figure and ground elements of perception are syntagmatically combined in the organization of the visual field. The syntactic combination of elements in discourse corresponds more directly to the Figure-Ground concept than does the assignment of coefficients inherent in individual categories. What actually makes a member of a paradigm figure-like is that it tends to be used in reference to figural objects in discourse. The considerable generality of this approach derives partly from its linking up of discourse with grammar. We would expect such a linkage to interact in detailed ways with markedness oppositions which account for many of the same distributional facts.

In applying figure and ground to the internal structure of deictics, on the other hand, there is also a linking together of discourse with grammar, but there is no transposition. The two simultaneous components of deictic reference combine in just the way the two components of perception do: as asymmetric parts of a single event. When a speaker utters (36), he creates **both** a figure (the one moving) and the ground upon which it is individuated (the shared perceptual and orientational field).⁹

- (36) *hé? kubin o?*.
(Look!) There he goes. (pointing)

The duality of the referential focus as against the indexical background in deictic usage fits into a larger series of Figure-Ground relations among components in a single utterance. Consider the routine Maya utterance in (37).

- (37) *hé?el a? p'o? ak'ab' i? i?*.
Here! Wash your hands here.

[BB.4.80]

Margot was filling a water basin with a hose in the back yard when I walked towards her, looking for a place to wash my hands. Although we were not engaged in talk, she was aware of my intention. Holding the running hose out to me, she uttered (37). The deictic in boldface is presentative, and individuates the running hose as a maximal figure. This entails a directive to me to focus on the referent, walk to it and touch it. Observe that in (36) the directivity was also in force (hence the finger-pointing gesture), but there was no presentation, since the object was not available in the tactual field. Presentative and Directive further entail the distinct act of singular definite reference to the object. While the three functions are laminated in (37), there are clearly cases of deictic reference that are neither Directive nor Presentative (20, 22, 28). Reference in turn entails the indexical origo.

The Presentative, Directive, Referential and Indexical components of (37) are scaled from the most figural to the most backgrounded. Presentative is maximally focal and entails all of the other functions. The indexical origo is the interactive ground on which all of the others rest. The locality

Table 2.5. *Relative salience of simultaneous components of deictic utterances*

Figural	Backgrounded
Presentative	Directive
Directive	Referential
Referential	Expressive
Expressive	Phatic
Relation-to-referent	Indexical origo
Characterizing features	Indexical features
Newly introduced	Already part of common ground

of the Presentative is well reflected on native-speaker metalinguistic glosses of this form, which consistently associate it with acts of manually handing the referent to the addressee (Hanks 1984, in press). In general, those components of deictic acts which are new in context (Leonard 1985), or which effect a change in the orientations of participants, are the most figural. These generalizations are summarized in Table 2.5.¹⁰

3.2 Interactive emergence of the indexical ground

In so far as it alters discourse context, deixis has a creative or "constitutive" function. Even when interlocutors can presuppose a common context rich with shared information, the individuation of the referent may be new (cf. 33, 36, 37). To point out or present an object to an interlocutor is to orient his attention. In some situations, the change may be relatively radical, as in (38), a quote taken from a personal narrative told by DC, a Maya speaker. When he was just a boy, DC once locked his grandfather out of his house, by accident. The old man returned at night wanting to get in, and had to guide DC, who was inside, disoriented in the pitch darkness. DC groped along the inner wall towards the door as the old man rapped his cane, saying:

- (38) *hé?el a? hé?el a? way a tàal e?*
Here it is! Here it is! Come here (to me)

[BB.4.87]

This utterance alters its own context by localizing the door for DC, and summoning him to it (cf. Bühler 1982[1934]: 109 on the importance of voice as an auditory signal of the origo).

Locative deictics in Maya are commonly used in utterances that initiate interactions. This is another case of constitutive reference, in which a participant relation is created and the parties to it arrive at mutual orientation. For instance, (39) is a standard greeting that Maya speakers call out to announce their arrival at the home of another.

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- (39) *àa téeloóo!*
Coming in there!

[BB.4.66]

In this example a woman arrived at DC's gate and called out before slowly entering, waiting for a response of acknowledgment from within the house. DC's daughter-in-law (his neighbor within the homestead) responded with (40), an equally routine utterance.

- (40) *ʔòoken iʔ!*
Enter there!

[BB.4.66]

Occurring without prior interaction, from a perceptually and spatially remote location, from outside the boundaries of the homestead, (39) rests on a relatively lean indexical framework. Rather, it creates a framework, producing an interactive relation that did not exist prior to the utterance.

Speakers routinely interact across boundaries of various kinds, talking from one room to another in the homestead, one corner to another at a work site, through the vegetation in the woods, orchards and fields. In such situations, deictic reference has the potential to reorient participants to a relatively great degree, creating a reciprocal or common focus of attention and bringing about physical proximity (see Kendon 1985). These uses are what Collinson (1937: 17ff) called "points," as opposed to "markers," and more recent studies have called "creative" as opposed to "presupposing" (Errington 1988; Friedrich 1979[1966]: 96; Hanks 1984; Silverstein 1976). Creative deixis significantly alters its own indexical origo. Thus (39) creates the engagement that functions as indexical ground from which the speaker "points" into the homestead, while the response in (40) presupposes the ground and "marks" the spatial referent relative to it (anaphorically).

The play between creative and presupposing aspects of usage is an ongoing one, which means that the indexical origo is a dynamic ground, rather than a fixed object. In many deictic acts, an already constituted indexical framework is presupposed, in which interlocutors share certain relevant knowledge, immediate experience and engagement (22, 28, 37, 40). The origo is already in place. For instance, a directive utterance such as "There he goes (pointing)" is most likely to be used when interactants are already mutually oriented, close together, and perhaps awaiting the motion of a particular individual. Even in highly creative uses, the object may recede to the status of a given, being introduced as a referential figure, and thereafter presupposed as common indexical ground.

3.3 Indexical symmetry and referential salience

A central aspect of the indexical origo is the degree to which the interactants share, or fail to share, a common framework. It is convenient

to distinguish between the specific fields of participant access (spatial, perceptual, cognitive), and the participant domains relative to which reference is made. Typical participant domains are the Common ground (Sociocentric), Speaker (Egocentric), Addressee (Altercentric) and Other (non-Participant in current speech event). Ego- and Altercentric grounds are pragmatically asymmetric because they split the Speaker from the Addressee, while the Common ground is pragmatically symmetric relative to because it joins the two and puts them on roughly equal footing relative to the referent. This use of "symmetry" is consistent with its use by Brown and Gillman (1960) and Friedrich (1979[1966]) in their classic studies of address, and is analogous to Labov's (1972[1970]: 299ff) A vs. B vs. AB events in discourse. The participant relation is negotiated in an ongoing fashion, and the relative symmetry of context is gradient rather than all or nothing (cf. Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs 1986, Goffman 1981, C. Goodwin 1981, M. H. Goodwin 1990).

The indexical origo of deictic reference is bound up crucially in the interaction between participants, and relative symmetry provides a limited way to talk about this interaction. By lumping together many different aspects of the interactive origo into the single dimension of symmetry, it provides a unifying framework in which interactive contexts can be compared and scaled. Examples (28) and (37) illustrate relatively symmetric indexical grounds, whereas (20) was relatively asymmetric. Other aspects of social symmetry and asymmetry have been shown to play a fundamental role in the use of "pronouns of address" (Brown and Gillman 1960, Friedrich 1979[1966], Silverstein 1976), as well as verbal etiquette (Errington 1988) and forms of conversational inference (Gumperz 1982). What we see in deixis is the same social relation among participants, this time as a backgrounded origo for reference and presentation.

A more concrete view of symmetry focuses on the specific parameters in which the interactive origo is embodied. As Friedrich (1979 [1966]) showed for Russian pronoun usage, the indexical ground consists in a number of distinct dimensions, not just an abstract dichotomy (of continuum). Participants can be separated spatially and perceptually, but share highly determinate knowledge of the referent based on experience prior to the speech event. Hence two indexical contexts could be equally asymmetric, but qualitatively distinct in terms of what is shared and unshared. This is significant because different deictic forms rely on different aspects of the indexical field. Whether or not interactants share background knowledge of a referent is largely irrelevant to the usage of presentatives, which require immediate sensory access (cf. 18, 27, 37). On the other hand, reference to a place empirically remote requires proportionately more background knowledge (28, 31). Given a sufficiently rich common knowledge of a place, even reference to it from a great distance can be accomplished with normally punctate, proximal forms (22).

participant access (spatial, domains relative to which are the Common ground (see (Altercentric) and Other (Self- and Altercentric grounds split the Speaker from the hearer). The pragmatically symmetric, highly equal footing relative to the speaker is consistent with its use by Brown and Gillman (1970: 299ff) A vs. B vs. AB. This is negotiated in an ongoing process of negotiation is gradient rather than all or nothing (Hoffman 1981, C. Goodwin

bound up crucially in the symmetry provides a limited range of options. Bringing together many different dimensions of symmetry, it is clear that interactive contexts can be both symmetric and asymmetric. Other factors have been shown to play a role in this "dress" (Brown and Gillman 1970) as well as verbal etiquette and inference (Gumperz 1982). In addition, among participants, this is a shared presentation.

In the specific parameters in which deictic (1979 [1966]) showed that the ground consists in a number of dimensions of symmetry (or continuum). The perceptually, but share highly on experience prior to the act would be equally asymmetric, shared and unshared. This is on different aspects of the shared background knowledge of presentatives, which is (1979: 37). On the other hand, the shared proportionately more sufficiently rich common ground at a great distance can be shared (22).

The overall symmetry of a speech context, therefore, has a central impact on deictic usage. There are relatively few deictic forms that can be used appropriately in highly asymmetric contexts, when interactants fail to share basic information and orientation.¹¹ Presentatives, punctual reference and manual demonstration, for instance, mean little to an addressee who cannot see the speaker and share in his perceptual field. Thus while creative reference can transform indexical context, indexical context also constrains reference. There is a simple proportion between the two, which says the greater the symmetry of the indexical ground, the greater the possibilities for individuated reference. This is equivalent to saying that the more information participants already share in the indexical origo, the more precisely they can individuate referents. When they are face to face, engaged, mutually oriented, and share detailed background knowledge of referents, they can mobilize potentially any shifter in the language. Proper and successful reference can be based on the presupposition that the interlocutor will accurately identify the object (even a remote one), given only the relational description. The less they share, on the other hand, the leaner the indexical origo and the fewer the referential oppositions available to individuate objects. Under very asymmetric circumstances, it is more difficult to succeed at deictic reference without further lexical description or collaborative work of the sort analyzed by Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs (1986). This proportion can be summarized in a principle of relative symmetry, which says simply:

The more symmetric the indexical origo (the more fully constituted the ground), the greater the range of deictic oppositions available for making reference (the more differentiated the possibilities for denoting figures).

This principle has among its interactive corollaries two which I will state here in the form of generalizations for further research. Relatively **symmetric** indexical frameworks, where interactants share a current orientation, experiential field, and background knowledge, can be treated in reference as though they were asymmetric. Interlocutors can and routinely do "distance" themselves from one another, and from aspects of their immediate situation, through their choices of deictic forms. What is commonly called the "proximal" zone of interaction is not merely contiguous, but is maximally available to participants for subdivision by distinct deictic acts. The more richly defined the origo, the more possibilities there are for deictic use.

Under **asymmetric** circumstances, where interactants fail to share a common experiential field, less can be presupposed and relatively fewer alternative deictic acts can be performed. Asymmetric frameworks are not typically treated in reference as though they were symmetric. That is, it is relatively difficult for interlocutors who are in fact separated to successfully use deictics whose interpretation requires a common ground. Non-deictic

lexical description becomes necessary in the absence of a common ground.¹²

The principal of relative symmetry also has structural concomitants that may help motivate the observed configurations of deictic categories in the world's languages. Relatively more focal deictic categories, which are used to individuate maximally figural referents, require a symmetric indexical ground in order to be fully interpretable. The more focal the deictic reference, the more likely it is that the act requires a symmetric origo in relation to which the object is identified. Hence, "proximal" deictic categories tend to presuppose indexical frameworks in which mutual access among participants is already established. Furthermore, deictic systems should tend to be skewed towards symmetric contexts. That is, they should tend to have a greater number of relatively figural forms than background ones (Table 2.4).

4 Conclusion

Verbal deixis is a central aspect of the social matrix of orientation and perception through which speakers produce context. Many communicative effects are fused with or achieved through indexical reference as shown in Table 2.1. At the heart of deixis is the unique relational structure whereby the referent is identified through its relation to the indexical origo.

Although part of grammar, Relational features are inherently embodied in communicative contexts and cannot be reduced to any set of would-be objective dimensions, such as spatial contiguity. Each relation is paired with indexical conditions that link modes of access to actual sets of actors under concrete conditions. The Indexical component of deixis is the processual background of interaction within which the act of reference takes place. Hence, the generalized structure of shifters conjoins the two poles of practical action in an interactive "conjuncture," which we might call the "conjuncture of indexical reference."

Deixis entails at least three further kinds of relations. The first are the **paradigmatic oppositions** between categories, of which some are inherently more figural than others. This leads to a classification of functions by relative figurality, analogous to markedness, although not identical to it (Table 2.4). Presentatives, for example, are inherently more focal than merely Referential deictics, as Proximate, Punctate forms are inherently more focal than Remote, Regional ones. The second relation is the **syntagmatic contrasts** between different components of discourse, in terms of their being interactively focal or backgrounded (Table 2.5). The third relation is the **relative symmetry of the indexical origo**. The origo consists of the social relation between participants, and symmetry is a way of describing the degree to which their respective orientations overlap. The greater the mutuality, reciprocity and commonality between participants,

the absence of a common structural concomitants that of deictic categories in the categories, which are used require a symmetric indexical. The more focal the deictic requires a symmetric origo in. Hence, "proximal" deictic works in which mutual access. Furthermore, deictic systems contexts. That is, they should aral forms than background

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By joining together these different orders of context in the semantics of individual linguistic forms, deixis illustrates a special case of a more general phenomenon in natural language, whereby the meanings of individual lexical items may be of the same order of complexity as those of sentences. The indexical-referential structure of "this" or "here" is a formally condensed case of the more global interplay between grammar and discourse, which is central to communication as an interactive phenomenon.

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Notes

- 1 Indexicals are traditionally defined as signs that stand in a relation of contiguity with their objects (Morris 1971: 31; Peirce 1955[1940]: 107). In more recent works, this contiguity may be more or less abstract, depending on the theorist. In a framework like Putnam's in which the extension of terms is fixed by local standards, even natural kind terms like 'lemon' and 'gold' have indexical components (1975: 233ff), just as Searle's (1979) treatment of literal meaning generalizes indexicality to virtually all of language. Schutz (1967), Cicourel (1972), Garfinkel (1972) and Schegloff (1982) are among sociologists who have noted the pervasiveness of indexicality in everyday language use. One consequence of the progressive indexicalization of semantics is that deictics can no longer be called merely "indexicals," as they have been in the past. We must look elsewhere for their distinctive features.
- 2 In this chapter I concentrate exclusively on the referential-pragmatic aspects of deixis, and there are several kinds of information conspicuously missing from Table 2.1 that would need to be specified in a fuller treatment. These include

- major category features (e.g. NP, ADV, PARTICIPANT); semantic roles (e.g. Agent, Object, Location, Path, etc.); and special constraints on distribution (e.g. main clauses only, restrictions on derivation, inflection, cooccurrence).
- 3 It would be possible to claim that these are all different lexical forms that happen to be homophonous, but the problem of variable usage of a single form would arise ultimately anyway.
 - 4 The deictic is split into discontinuous portions that circumfix the place name, according to the standard grammatical pattern (Hanks 1990).
 - 5 This is oversimplified for brevity. The Exclusive zone may be quite close physically, and there are usually more deictic alternatives available to speakers than the ones I cite. Transpositions are also common, particularly in status asymmetric exchanges. See Errington (1988: 160ff) on the transposed speech style in Javanese known as *mbasakaké*.
 - 6 *Té?el-* is one of several initial deictic bases that participate in a morphophonemic alternation involving the omission of the *-l-* of the base form in certain environments. The *-l-* is obligatorily present when the deictic form is continuous or when the initial deictic is followed by a vowel-initial suffix, but it is obligatorily omitted when the initial deictic base is followed by a suffix that is consonant-initial. When an independent word (whether consonant- or vowel-initial) follows the initial deictic, the base-final *-l-* is optional (Hanks 1990: 20).
 - 7 Although see Swanton (1911: 172) and Story and Naish (1973: 387), both of which cite more standard glosses for the Tlingit, with three distinct Relational features and the standard range of grounds.
 - 8 I do not discuss here the linguistic resources that languages do provide for transforming the indexical ground by way of transposition, quotation (see above) and special foregrounding constructions (Hanks 1984). Languages with elaborate speech levels, such as Javanese (Errington 1988) or with honorifics, such as Japanese, also subcategorize the indexical origo by signaling aspects of the social relations among participants and referents. Moreover, bundles of Relational and Characterizing features can function as indexes of social relations within the origo, as in the usage of *Tu* and *Vous* forms (and their analogs) in address and person reference systems (Errington 1988, Friedrich 1979[1966], Silverstein 1976). These facts notwithstanding, the origo of the referential relation is typically less differentiated than the figural object.
 - 9 Taking into account the combination of utterance, directed gaze and manual indication, the example actually illustrates the creation of three focal objects, one by each signal. Speakers assume that the three objects coincide, and they typically do, but examples are easy enough to imagine in which they would not, in Maya as well as English. The speaker could be intently observing the addressee or some other portion of the immediate field other than the referent, or the pointing gesture could be omitted, or shrugged off. In canonical events of ostensive reference with *hé?*, all signals reinforce the individuation of a single focal referent.
 - 10 The hierarchy in Table 2.5 can be rearranged through foregrounding. For instance, the expressive force of a Maya presentative utterance can be boosted into focus through reduplication of the deictic base, yielding *hé? yàan hé?el a?* 'here it is (take it!!)' from simple *hé?el a?* 'here it is (take it)'. Such foregrounded constructions are fairly elaborate in Maya and cannot be treated here.

- 11 This generalization does not apply to other types of social asymmetry, such as the status differences coded in honorifics and address forms. A language such as Javanese elaborately codes status asymmetry, especially in the deictic paradigms (Errington 1988: 96, 205ff). The kind of symmetry I am most concerned with is the commonalities of participant access to referents distinct from the participants themselves. The emphasis I place on shared access is motivated by the requirement that, for interactively successful reference to take place, both participants must identify what counts as the same object.
- 12 These generalizations all assume that no major status asymmetry exists between interactants which licenses one of them to make exceptional presuppositions that the other must be able to fill in.

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