

# Deixis In Spanish: Pragmatic Role In The Organization Of Speech Space

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**Abstract:** This article examines the phenomenon of deixis in Spanish from a pragmatic perspective. Special attention is paid to its role in organizing speech space and ensuring mutual understanding between communication participants. The main types of deictic expressions are analyzed — personal, spatial, temporal, discursive and social deixis — and their functions in Spanish speech. The features of the Spanish deictic system are highlighted, including the three-member model of demonstrative pronouns (*este – ese – aquel*) and the culturally conditioned use of politeness forms. It is shown how deictic elements help structure discourse, direct the addressee's attention and express the speaker's subjective position. The work emphasizes the significance of deixis for effective communication and its influence on the cognitive perception of speech situations.

**Keywords:** Deixis, Spanish language, pragmatics, speech space, personal deixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis, social deixis, discourse, demonstrative pronouns, communication.

**Introduction:** Modern linguistics considers language not only as a system of grammatical rules, but also as a means of interaction between communication participants. One of the key mechanisms ensuring successful communication is deixis. In Spanish, as in other natural languages, deictic elements play an important role in organizing speech space, forming reference points for reality perception by dialogue participants.

## 1. The Concept of Deixis and Its Classification

The term deixis (from Greek *δείξις* — "pointing") denotes a linguistic phenomenon in which the meaning of a linguistic unit depends on the communication situation. Deictic expressions do not have a fixed meaning outside of context, and their interpretation depends on communication parameters: speaker, addressee, time, place, situation.

According to traditional classification, deixis is divided into the following types:

- Personal (*persona*): *yo, tú, nosotros, él, ella,*

*etc.*

- Spatial (*espacial*): *aquí, allí, allá, este, ese, aquel, etc.*

- Temporal (*temporal*): *ahora, hoy, mañana, entonces, etc.*

- Discursive (*discursivo*): expressions like *el siguiente párrafo, como se dijo antes*

- Social (*social*): politeness forms used, forms of address by title and social status.

## 2. Pragmatic Role of Deixis

### 2.1. Orientation of Participants in the Speech Act

The pragmatic function of deixis consists in providing communication participants with cognitive reference points in space and time. For example, in the Spanish sentence:

"Nos vemos mañana aquí a las nueve." (We'll see each other tomorrow here at nine.)

the words *nos, mañana, aquí* are deictic elements that require knowledge of the communication situation.

Without these reference points, the message loses accuracy and pragmatic value.

## **2.2. Construction of Subjectivity**

Spanish allows for dynamic construction of the speaker's subjective position through personal and spatial deictic forms:

- Este libro — the one closer to me (the speaker)
- Ese libro — closer to you (the listener)
- Aquel libro — far from both

This system helps not only indicate the location of an object but also establish psychological distance between interlocutors, which has important pragmatic significance.

## **2.3. Managing the Addressee's Attention**

Deictic elements direct the listener's attention to specific objects or time periods. This is especially important in oral speech, presentations, and narration:

"Como dije antes, este punto es crucial."

("As I said before, this point is crucial.")

Through deixis, the speaker manages the course of discourse and structures it.

## **3. Features of Spanish Deixis**

Spanish offers a three-member system of demonstrative pronouns and adjectives (*este, ese, aquel*), which is richer than in Russian or English. This allows Spanish speakers to more precisely convey information about the location of objects relative to communication participants.

Spanish possesses a complex system of social deixis: the distinction between *tú* and *usted*, the use of forms of address (*don, doña, señor, profesor, doctor*) reflects the level of formality, age and social roles. This makes Spanish particularly interesting for pragmatic analysis.

## **4. Cognitive Aspects**

From the perspective of cognitive pragmatics, deictic elements reflect mental schemas of world perception. By using words like *ahora, aquí, ese*, the speaker actualizes a certain "cognitive map" common to both participants. Without this shared mental base, understanding the message becomes impossible.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Thus, deixis in Spanish performs a crucial pragmatic function: it provides orientation in speech space, regulates relationships between communication participants, helps structure discourse and express subjective world perception. Understanding deictic mechanisms is critically important for language learners as well as translators, teachers, and linguists.

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