Deixis in Spanish research

Publication details
Ricardo Maldonado
Published online on: 27 Jul 2020
1 Introduction

Deixis involves a somewhat restricted class of linguistic expressions that are used to identify and locate entities and events being talked about by speech participants in the situational and/or discourse context of the speech event (Bühler, 1950 [1934]; Fillmore, 1997; Levinson, 2004; Lyons, 1977). It involves a set of expressions and gestures relative to the deictic center, the *origo*, which are commonly accompanied by a pointing gesture. Deictic expressions encode a viewpoint that departs from the deictic center in such a way that at least the speaker and hearer establish joint attention toward some entity in a viewing field either in the extralinguistic context or in discourse. A specific meaning is determined locally by interlocutors whose shared understanding is established interactionally in terms of a common “indexical ground” (Hanks, 1992). This provides the basis by which interlocutors develop a shared understanding of the referred object/event. In the classical view, there are three types of deictic modalities: (a) deixis *ad oculos*, which refers to tangible and observable things in the world; (b) anaphor, which relates elements in the linguistic context; and (c) deixis *am phantasma*, which depicts abstract or imaginary entities that belong to mental or fictional representations (Bühler, 1950 [1934]).

Besides the core property of signaling toward different elements in some linguistic or non-linguistic domain, deictic markers also designate non-deictic properties specifying person, space, motion, and time. In a broader view, deictic forms also operate as indices of time, discourse, and social interaction.

This chapter identifies the most significant factors determining the expression of deictic forms both in extralinguistic reference as well as in text deixis (anaphora). Most of the evidence corresponds to data from Latin American Spanish, predominantly México, yet also considers data from Spain. Section 2 introduces six levels in which deixis is found. It questions the assumptions of traditional approaches to deixis that sustain a perfect correlation between personal pronouns and deictic forms in a triadic system, to offer alternative interpretations of deixis in terms of subjectivity (2.3.2) and focality (2.3.3). Section 2.4. identifies the most outstanding functions for demonstratives and pronouns in text deixis. Section 3 offers some methodological considerations, and Section 4 concludes and provides further directions of research and some conceptual considerations of deixis in general.
2 Review of existing research

2.1 Types of deixis

Six deictic categories can be identified. The three most basic deictic forms operate as indices of person or entities (demonstratives, pronouns, and other deictic adjectives), indices of location (adverbs), and indices of motion (verbs) (Anderson & Keenan, 1985; Richardson, 1996; Tanz, 1980). Extensions of these may also operate as indices of temporal and social distance as well as indices of reference relations among elements in discourse.

2.1.1 Person deixis

‘Person deixis’ pertains to personal pronouns (yo ‘I,’ tú ‘you’; e.g., yo no soy como tú ‘I am not like you’). It responds to interpersonal interaction among interlocutors in face-to-face communication. In a quite broad sense, deixis also applies to social interactions among discourse participants. It encodes the degree of proximity established among participants in discourse. Pronominal forms are used to encode such relations (e.g., Spanish tú ‘you’ versus usted ‘you formal, respectful, kind’ (Diessel, 2012; Fillmore, 1997; Levinson, 2004; Lyons, 1977; see also Chapter 16 on forms of address in Spanish, this volume). These pronominal uses further extend to abstract situations resembling different types of interaction, as in political slogans, advertisements, and so forth (Ciudadano. Vota. Tú eres la respuesta ‘Fellow citizen. Vote. You are the answer’).

2.1.2 Spatial deixis

Among the indices of person or entities there are forms that also designate physical or social distance from the speaker (Bühler’s origo, 1950 [1934]). These correspond to demonstratives (e.g., este/a ‘this,’ ese/a ‘that, aquel/la ‘that distant, inaccessible’). Spanish spatial deictic markers have been characterized in terms of three somewhat discrete regions: proximal este ‘this,’ medial ese ‘that,’ and distal aquel ‘that one over there.’ While these uses exist, the system has undergone important changes to be discussed ahead.

Indices of location pertain to locative adverbs, which have been characterized in terms of distance to the speaker, much in parallel form to demonstratives: proximal aquí/acá ‘here,’ medial ahí and allí ‘there’ and distal allá ‘over there.’ As we shall see in Section 2.2, distance is but one factor interacting with more subjective representations of the way speakers relate to the referred object.

Motion deixis is encoded by verbs where the subject follows some trajectory which is calculated from origo (ir ‘go,’ venir ‘come,’ regresar ‘return,’ dirigirse a ‘go to,’ volver ‘return’). Languages vary with respect to the requirement for the speaker to actually be at the place where the utterance is expressed. While English allows mental displacement, Spanish does so in a restricted manner. In English, the speaker need not be at the referenced location at the time of speech event (Are you coming to the party?), whereas in Spanish s/he does. Therefore, venir ‘come’ is generally in conflict with deictic distal adverbs like allí or ahí (Richardson, 1996). In contexts like (1) the speaker is supposed to be at the house as s/he speaks. Otherwise, ir ‘go’ must be used, as in (2):

(1) ¿Vas a venir a la fiesta?
    ‘Are you coming to the party?’

(2) ¿Vas a ir a la fiesta?
    ‘Are you going to the party?’
This requirement is not totally inflexible for Spanish. In contexts where the hearer joins the mental path of the speaker, *venir* ‘come’ can be accepted: *Si voy a la fiesta, vendrás conmigo?* ‘If I go to the party will you come with me?’ (Richardson, 1996). Moreover, the requirement is becoming less strict in some Spanish dialects (see Chapter 15 on pragmatic variation, this volume). Younger generations in Mexican Spanish tend to accept *vas a venir a la fiesta* even if the speaker is not present at the referred location (*Ellie, espera. ¿Quieres venir mañana a la fiesta?* Twitter 21.9 2019). By using *venir* ‘come’ instead of *ir* ‘go,’ the speaker incorporates the hearer in the mental representation of the trajectory reaching a goal. This is also true for other verbs of motion, like *regresar* ‘return’ and the transitive use of *traer* ‘bring.’ In *Mañana me voy a traer mi botella de mezcal a la fiesta patria del trabajo* ‘Tomorrow I’m going to bring a bottle of mezcal to the independence day party at work’ (Twitter 12.09 2019) the speaker is not at the referred location at the time of speech. The mental displacement of the speaker to the goal implies some emotional consideration. The higher degree of mental/emotional involvement of *venir* comprises a desire to reach some goal, as in Example (3) from the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA):

(3) *Ya estoy aquí, vida, ya vengo a arrebatar*te. (CREA, Prensa, España, 2003)

‘I’m finally here, my love, I have come to snatch you’

This is probably associated with the use of *venir* ‘come’ which implies going to some place yet planning to return: *Déjame tomar agua, ya vengo* ‘Let me drink some water, I’ll come back’ (CREA, Oral, Venezuela, around 1990). The use of *vengo* implies a demand for the hearer to wait for the speaker to return.

2.1.3 Time deixis

Time deixis involves temporal expressions depicting moments that are traced from the time of speech: *entonces* ‘then,’ *ahora* ‘now,’ *mañana* ‘tomorrow,’ *hoy* ‘today,’ *ayer* ‘yesterday.’ The conceptual relationship between space and time is reflected in the frequent development of temporal expressions from spatial terms. The spatial interpretation of time is unidimensional (Diessel, 2012). Time is commonly conceptualized as a straight line providing the conceptual ground for a fictive observer (Boroditsky, 2002; Lakoff, 1993; Langacker, 1987). Temporal adpositions, such as English *before* and Spanish *frente* ‘forehead/front,’ commonly derived from body part terms, and temporal adverbs, such as *después* ‘then,’ are often based on spatial deixtics (Diessel, 2012; Heine, Claudi, & Hünnemeyer, 1993).

2.2 Approaches to deixis

Person deixis locates the deictic center in reference to the speech participants. It has been claimed that Spanish has a system based on person with a three-way organization depending, like Japanese, on whether the relation is to the speaker, the hearer, or some other referent (Kuno, 1973). Spanish demonstratives and adverbs are claimed to be in perfect correspondence with personal pronouns (Alicna Franch & Blecua, 1975; Lamiquis, 1967), such that *este* ‘this’ *aquí* and *acá,* roughly ‘here,’ pertain to the space of the speaker; *ese* ‘that,’ as well as *ahí,* and *allí,* roughly ‘there,’ involve the space of the hearer, while *aquel* ‘that distal’ and *allá,* roughly ‘over there,’ designate a space for a third person, which would exclude both speaker and hearer (Alarcos Llorach, 2001; Alonso, 1968; Bello, 1972; Matte Bon, 1995; Real Academia Española, 2009).

Distance is an alternative parameter where what matters is the amount of space of the location of the referent with respect to that of the speaker. The most common pattern contrasts elements
that are close or far from the deictic center. But there are languages where there is an intermediate
distance; e.g., Abelam (Papua New Guinea) and Irish (Diesel, 1999). For some authors (Alcina
Franch, 1975; Carbonero Cano, 1979; Lamiquis, 1967), Spanish deixis is organized in terms of
three regions, again in correspondence with the pronominal system. Aquí and acá (roughly 'here')
designate proximal distance to the speaker, aquí being less proximal than acá; ahí, roughly 'there,'
allegedly marks intermediate distance, while allí, allá, roughly 'there, over there,' are distal, with allá
being somewhat further away than allí. This, as the classical view, is not free of problems.

2.2.1 Problems for the person-deixis parameter

From different perspectives, the three-way division for demonstratives and adverbs has been chal-
 lenged. It has been suggested that a binary system may be a better representation of the Spanish deic-
tic system (Eguren, 1999; Maldonado, 2013; Real Academia Española, 2009; Stradioto & Maldonado,
2018; Strauss, 2002). According to this view, there is a proximal and distal contrast and these two poles
overlap in different ways with a neutral area. Thus este/a ‘this’ and aquí, acá, roughly ‘here,’ are proximal
contrast with aquí, roughly ‘that,’ and allá, ‘over there,’ which are distal. On the other hand, ese/a
and ahí are generic forms belonging to an indeterminate region (Eguren, 1999; Stradioto, 2012; Stra-
dioto & Maldonado, 2018) that covers a wide variety of functions. The proximal and distal contrast
can be seen in (4) and (5), coming from the Corpus Sociolingüístico de la Ciudad de México (CSCM):

(4) mi hermano lo teníamos aquí internado/ exactamente en este cuarto (CSCM)
‘we had my brother here hospitalized/ in exactly this very room’

(5) la otra [hija] vive hasta allá (*allí) adentro atrás de la capilla (CSCM)
‘the other daughter lives over there inside behind the chapel’

The distal aquel/la ‘that one over there’ seems to be restricted to particular uses, mostly to
written discourse with very specific functions, such as evocative (en aquellos tiempos . . . ‘in those
days . . . ’). This is particularly the case for Latin American Spanish (Eguren, 1999).

Shortcomings for the three-way contrast may be seen in a variety of ways. For instance, the
notion of proximity for aquí is more flexible than one would expect in (6). The referent of aquí
‘here’ is located 20 minutes away from the speaker. In contrast, in (7), the location being referred
to with ahí ‘there’ is right next to the speaker:

(6) Mi estudio está aquí en la Zona Rosa, a sólo 20 minutos
‘My studio is just here in the Zona Rosa, only 20 minutes away’

(7) Quietecito. No te me acerques más. Ahí te quedas
‘Don’t move. Don’t get any closer. Stay right there’

Ahí may refer to spaces that are somewhat near the speaker and the hearer, as in (8). But as can
be attested in (9), ahí may also refer to objects located far away from the speaker and the hearer:

(8) Podría haber ido sí/ sí/ sí/ a la secundaria Tlalpan que está ahí en contraesquina
‘He could have gone [yes, yes yes], to the Tlalpan High school that is just there across
the street’

(9) I: . . . vete a un pueblo ahí lejos por ahí <ai>/ digamos por/ las costas . . .
‘. . . go to a little town there far, there about, / let’s say by/ the coasts’
Since *ahí* may refer to close (7), medial (8), and distant (9) locations, it has been identified as an indeterminate deictic marker covering a wide range of configurations, which may overlap with *aquí* and *allí* (Eguren, 1999; Stradioto & Maldonado, 2018).

Analysis of written texts confirms the lack of adequacy between adverbs and demonstratives and the three personal pronouns. According to Richardson (1996), the area of reference for *aquí* is predominantly ‘inclusive,’ first-person plural (67% 33/49) (see also Brzozowska-Zburzynska, 2005). Moreover, Richardson (1996) finds that the area of reference of *ahí* is predominantly one that excludes the hearer’s location; i.e., a singular or plural ‘third person’ (69%, 9/13). In fact, the use of *ahí* to indicate exclusively the space of *tú* (‘you’) is restricted to 15% (2/13). Likewise, regarding demonstratives, the area of reference of spatial *este/esto* is interpreted as inclusive ‘we’ in 58% (32/99) of the deictic uses. *Ese/eso* have a ‘third person’ area of reference (58%), while 42% (11/26) correspond to ‘second person.’

Deictic expressions not only serve to establish a shared viewpoint (Diessel, 2006), they also impose adjustments to different perspectives. Seminal work by Hottenroth (1982) suggests a subjective kind of organization. Since deictic forms signal the relationship that the speaker establishes with some referred object, there are different types of subjective associations in terms of degrees of involvement and epistemic commitment (Delbecque, 2013). The grounding imposed by deictic forms is not reduced to space, person, or time. It also involves ‘subjectivity’ and ‘focality’ (Kirsner, 1990; Maldonado, 2013; Stradioto & Maldonado, 2018; Strauss, 2002), as discussed in the following sections.

### 2.2.2 Alternative views: Subjectivity

Traditional approaches identify two series of spatial markers: those ending in *-i* (*aquí*, *ahí*, and *allí*) and those ending in *-a* (*acá* and *allá*). The *-i* group has been analyzed as static and specific, while the *-a* group is characterized as indeterminate, dynamic, and diffuse (Bello, 1972; Carbonero Cano, 1979; González García, 1997; Matte Bon, 1995; Nilsson, 1983; Real Academia Española, 2009; Ramsey, 1966; Salvá, 1988). This corresponds to the Latin deictic system where *-ic* (*hic* and *illic*) designated static situations and *-ac* (*hac* and *illac*) marked dynamic events involving a path. The static/dynamic contrast was lost in the evolution from Latin to Spanish. It cannot be found in Caracas, Buenos Aires, or even in the most conservative dialect, that of Madrid (Sedano, 1994, 2003). In Madrid, *aquí* has basically displaced *acá*. Buenos Aires is the mirror image, since *acá* is overwhelmingly dominant. Bogotá and México show functional competition among forms, where the diffuse/punctual—but not the dynamic/static—contrast can still be observed (Maldonado, 2013).

Most studies observe that objective distance is secondary in comparison with a subjective representation (Hottenroth, 1982; Klein, 1983; Maldonado, 2013; Schmidely, 1975; Terrado Pablo, 1990). In dialects that have both forms, *acá* ’here’ involves more proximity than *aquí* (*ven acá* ‘come to this very place’ vs. *ven aquí* ‘approximate, come closer’; Brzozowska-Zburzynska, 2005). The relationship with the referent is more intimate with *acá* than with *aquí*. *Acá* refers to the actual space occupied by the speaker, one where other participants are integrated as members of the speaker’s inner group (Stradioto & Maldonado, 2018), as in (10):

(10)  *Me llena de orgullo, como nos llena a todos por acá (??aquí), saber que tu francés progresa* (CREA, Novela, México, 1996)

‘It makes me proud like everybody else here to know that your French is improving’

*Acá* has developed an array of emotional/evaluative extensions manifesting the speaker involvement in the event. Being *acá* is being of high quality: e.g., *ropa muy acá* ‘fancy clothes,’
restaurante muy acá ‘very fine restaurant.’ Acá can also be used with derogatory overtones. Addressing an important person (the president, a teacher) with acá in formal contexts may signal excessive proximity/familiarity (11):

(11) . . . ahí no gana nadie, dice Madrazo mientras él esté en el poder, y él sabe cómo le hace. Y acá (??aquí) el señor Zedillo [el presidente] dice que hay apertura democrática en el país (CREA, Periodismo, México, 1996)

‘. . . there nobody wins, says Madrazo while [Zedillo] is in power, and he knows how he does it. And here mister Zedillo [instead of President Zedillo] says that there is democratic openness in the country’

By contrast, aquí, although proximal, involves enough distance to have more objective representations, such as presenting entities (De Cock, 2018) that can actually be pointed out (e.g., aquí tiene el teléfono ‘here you have the telephone’). A sign at a public library will use aquí, not acá, to indicate where books are to be dropped:

(12) Favor de depositar los libros aquí (*acá) [Biblioteca José Martí, México]

‘Leave your books here, please’

Moreover, aquí can even be used to impose distance and (abstract) limits. In (13), hasta aquí ‘up to here’ goes together with a sign meaning “stop” to impose an important barrier:

(13) Porque los ciudadanos le dicen al político hasta aquí (*acá) estamos dispuestos a que esto se practique (CREA, Prensa, México, 1996).

‘Because the citizens tell the politicians: it is up to here that we allow for this to happen’

This emotional distance also takes place when deictic forms in text highlight textual distance (Ribera, 2007). Este normally implies involvement, as in (14):

(14) ¿Sería práctico y justo obligar el retiro de personas que están perfectamente saludables . . . ? Esta situación ya es grave ahora, pero . . . (CREA, Ciencia, México, 2001)

‘Would it be practical and fair to force the retirement of perfectly healthy and experienced people . . . ? This situation is bad now, but . . .’

More interesting is (15) since the event belongs to the past but the narrator presents it as still relevant to the time of speech:

(15) Una gran cantidad de trabajadores resultaban mutilados o perecían ante . . . el desinterés de los patrones . . . ; ante esta situación, algunos gobiernos tomaron la iniciativa de promulgar leyes. (CREA, Industria, México, 1992)

‘A great number of workers were mutilated or would die facing a lack of interest by their bosses . . . ; in the face of this situation, some governments took the initiative of enacting laws.’

In contrast, esa, in (16), depicts some emotional distance. The events belong to a different time and space from the current reality/concerns:

(16) Se ordenó el ataque, mas los indios aliados no se movían por lo difícil del terreno y la lluvia de piedras. . . . Ante esa situación Sandoval puso el ejemplo. (CREA, Historia, México, 2001)
‘The attack was ordered, however the indians didn’t move since the terrain was too hard to cross and the storm of stones hitting. . . . Given that situation Sandoval set the example.’

*Esa* signals events from an optimal view arrangement (Langacker, 2000), an optimal distance where speaker and hearer have equal access to the object/information (Maldonado, 2013; Stradioto & Maldonado, 2018). It appeals to shared knowledge where the speech act participants coincide (see Chapter 2 on speech acts, this volume), as in (17):

(17) *Una tarde uno de ellos llegó a mi casa con un joven polaco. Alto, sólido, con esa cara noble y ancha de muchos eslavos.* (CREA, Arte, México, 1983)  
‘One afternoon one of them arrived to my place with a young Polish guy. Tall, solid, with that noble and wide face of many Slavs’

The unmarked demonstrative *ese/a* covers a wide range of meanings. Yet it mostly depicts a well-identified situation that is not free of emotive evaluation (Delbecque, 2013), involving a lower degree of familiarity than *este/a*, as in (18):

(18) *Por una de esas extrañas conjugaciones que trama el azar, resulté, en los años finales de los sesenta, pasando muchas temporadas en Inglaterra* (Vargas Llosa, 2006, p. 94) (*Apud* Delbecque, 2013)  
‘For one of those strange conjugations that fate plans, I ended up, at the end of the sixties, spending many seasons in England’

Familiarity implies an intersubjective view leading to feelings of shared empathy and complicity that can be established between the narrator and either the reader or some character in the story (Cuenca & Ribera, 2013). In (19), the image evoked pertains to collective shared memories:

(19) *Parecía uno de esos cadáveres vivientes que muestran las fotografías de los campos de concentración* (Vargas Llosa, 2006, p. 372) (*Apud* Delbecque, 2013)  
‘He looked like one of those living corpses shown in pictures of concentration camps’

In (20), the reader shares the negative evaluation imposed by the narrator:

(20) *me lo dijo con esa brusquedad que tanto me chocaba* (Vargas Llosa, 2006, p. 55) (*Apud* Delbecque, 2013)  
‘he said that to me with that sudden roughness that I always hated’

The physical/mental proximity of *este/a* and the relative distance of *ese/a* may explain the tendency of *este* to impose positive implications, while *ese* suggests negative ones, as in (21) and (22):

(21) *Acabo de escucharlo. Esto promete* [positive]  
‘I just listened to it. This is promising [to be good]’

(22) *No me digas eso* [Negative]  
‘Don’t tell me that’

In contrast, distal markers, like *allá* (*allí* for some dialects of Spain) designate not only distance but also exclusion. The speaker has no access to the referred object either because there is a barrier or because the referred object is in an alternative space, as in (23):
Veo la sonrisa del presidente del bloque radical allí, detrás de las cortinas. (CREA, Oral, Argentina, 1998).
‘I can see the smile of the president of the radical group over there behind the curtains.’

Likewise, aquel/la is used to reclassify referents (Ribera, 2007) with which the speaker has no particular attachment. Since the referent is out of the speaker’s domain (Stradioto & Maldonado, 2018), the speaker is emotionally and conceptually detached from the referent. Aquel/la is commonly reinforced by adjectives, which may imply some pejorative evaluation, as in (24):

\[
(24) \text{le regresara de golpe las imágenes en apariencia olvidadas: un grito con aquella cara febril del hombre que subía por la escalera con un cuchillo ensangrentado en la mano (CREA, Novela, México, 1997)}
\]
‘the images apparently forgotten would all come back suddenly: a scream with that feverish face of the man coming up the stairs with a bloody knife in his hand’

The use of aquel/lo in texts also imposes temporal and mental distance to the event. In (25), the narrator reports some difficulty in remembering the details of the event. More drastically, the distance depicted by aquella, in (26), is such that the speaker uses an attenuating expression (según entiendo ‘as I understand’) to avoid responsibility of the veracity of the assessment:

\[
(25) \text{Abrumado, preferí cerrar de nuevo los ojos, tal vez reunir fuerzas para levantarme; . . . No sé cuánto tiempo estuve en aquella situación, temeroso de mirar o de moverme (CREA, Novela, México 1994)}
\]
‘Overwhelmed, I chose to close my eyes again, maybe to get my strength again to get on my feet; . . . I don’t know how long I was in that situation, fearful of watching and moving’

\[
(26) \text{La providencial joven y su madre adoptaron, de común acuerdo, al futuro pintor. . . . Según entiendo, aquella situación duró años (CREA, Novela, México, 1986)}
\]
‘The providential young girl and her mother adopted, as agreed, the future painter. . . . As I understand, that situation lasted for years’

Both in text and extralinguistic environments, deictic forms signal the speaker’s subjective (perceptual, mental, emotional) relationship with some referent. Focality is undoubtedly another crucial dimension for deictic reference.

### 2.2.3 Alternative views: Focality

Deictic markers constitute instructions for the hearer to see an object/event according to the speaker’s view. Focus is a gradual notion involving degree of attention. It pertains to the relative amount of information that the speaker presumes the hearer to have with respect to the referent (Kirsner, 1990; Strauss, 2002). New information is more focal than information already shared among discourse participants. Deictic markers contrast in degree of focality. Este, contrasts with ese, in the same way that the locative allí contrasts with ahí: in most Latin American dialects (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico, etc.), este and allí designate high focus while ese and ahí represent medium focus. The proximal forms aquí (and for some dialects acá), as well as the distal allá, are also of high focus; however, as seen in Section 2.2.2, they involve further specifications regarding degrees of subjectivity and accessibility.
Deixis in Spanish research

Medium focus pertains to shared elements in discourse or to things that need not be highlighted as the definite articles do (lo vi en la oficina ‘I saw him in the office’). Ahí and ese refer to the unmarked situation pertaining to things already shared in the context; thus, they require no major attention. These forms contrast with the high focality of este and allí as the speaker instructs the hearer to identify an object in the surroundings. In (27), allí is of high deixis and may involve pointing; in (28), the high focality of este is reinforced by another high focus deictic marker, the locative aquí:

(27) I: mm el/ que está allí que está allí arrumbado/ donde está la pala
I: ‘mm the one/ that is right there that is right there thrown away where the shovel is’

(28) “Mira este coche que lleva unos días aquí,” le sugiere el conductor al operador. (CREA, España, 1986)
“Look at this car that has been here for a few days,” suggests the driver to the operator.

Aquel(la) designates high deixis, too; however, it refers to distal elements in space or time that are highly significant (29):

(29) Esa tarde jugamos sobre el pasto como si fuéramos niños . . . hasta llegué a pensar que hubiera sido bueno no desear más que aquel gusto fácil por la vida. (CREA, Novela, México, 1990)
‘That afternoon we played on the grass like kids . . . I even got to think that it would have been enough not to wish for more than that easy joy for life.’

It also covers cases of stress and disambiguation (see Section 2.4). In terms of focus, the Spanish deictic system exhibits a binary system where high and medium focus are in contrast.

2.3 Discourse deixis

We may now observe the behavior of deictic markers in discourse. Bühler (1950 [1934]) used the term ‘anaphora’ or ‘anaphoric pointing’ to describe the phenomenon of making deictic (pointing) reference to parts of discourse. According to that view, anaphora is thus a type of deixis. While deixis refers in some way to the communicative situation, anaphora helps in tracking back to previous text (García Salido, 2011, p. 66).

Deixis in texts is unidimensional (Diessel, 2012). It is a reinterpretation of the objective spatial dimensions of the demonstrative system being transposed to the temporal dimension of communicative context. It is based on the metaphorical structuring of time as space (Cuenca & Ribera, 2009; Delbecque, 2013; Diessel, 2012; Eguren, 1999). The sequential ordering of discourse elements is commonly conceptualized as a string of linguistic entities in the timeline.

Since the interpretation of the referent comes from extralinguistic context, prototypical deixis is said to be exophoric (mirá ese árbol ‘look at that tree’). By contrast, anaphor is endophoric. It requires that the deictic element be interpreted in direct relationship to the linguistic co-text. In (30), the demonstrative ese is exophoric, while the pronoun lo is anaphoric:

(30) la mujer llora, se entristece y tiene miedo de no ser capaz de querer a ese niño ni de cuidarlo eficazmente. (CREA, Ensayo, España, 1989)
‘The woman cries, she gets sad and fears that she may not to be able to love that (ese) child and to take care of him (lo) efficiently’

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 illustrate the exophoric/endophoric contrast. They follow Cuenca and Ribera’s (2009, p. 107) proposal:
Figure 3.1 corresponds to *este* ‘this’ in Example (30). The referent is outside the domain of the text and is calculated from the Ground, the location of the speaker, as indicated by the arrow pointing from the deictic form to the ground. Figure 3.2 represents the use of *lo*. The anaphor refers to an antecedent within the domain of the Text. Now, deictic forms may have both anaphoric and exophoric functions. The demonstrative *esto* ‘this’, in (31), refers back to *su existencia* ‘its existence’ at the same time that signals conceptual proximity to the speaker:

(31) *El delincuente debe conocer su existencia, para que esto se convierta en una protección, en un arma disuasiva* (CREA, Prensa, México, 1997)

‘The offender must acknowledge his existence, so that this turns into a protection, into a dissuasive weapon’

As proposed by Cuenca and Ribera (2009, p. 108), text deictic expressions refer to an antecedent but also incorporate the speaker (ground G) viewpoint, as in Figure 3.3:

Yet, from Bühler’s (1950 [1934]) ample notion of anaphora, the notion of text deixis is specialized to identify the use of forms referring to elements in the co-text. In text deixis, reference is made to an intra-textual entity (Conte, 1999), like *esto* referring cataphorically to the utterance *eres lo más parecido* . . . in (32):


‘He is being that way,” denied Lucas. “It cannot be. I want you to understand this. You are the one who better resembles Mariana.’”
In text deixis (cf. Himmelman, 1996; Lenz, 2015, regarding discourse deixis), the speaker provides instructions to the hearer to locate the referent in the text (Conte, 1999). It implies the use of a deictic that refers to the text but, unlike anaphora, it does not refer to an extralinguistic entity that has been referred to in the text; rather, it refers to entities that appeared in the text itself, an intra-textual entity (Conte, 1999).

Discourse organizers such as lo antes dicho ‘what was said before,’ lo dicho arriba ‘what was said above,’ lo susodicho ‘the aforementioned’ (suso ‘above’) (Enríquez, Maldonado, & Melis, 2012), temporal markers (e.g., antes ‘before,’ después ‘after’), as well as deictic spatial pronominal forms (e.g., dicho esto ‘this said,’ lo aquí dicho ‘what has been said here’) are included in this function as well as lexical forms, commonly accompanied by deictic markers with metalinguistic content (Maaβ, 2010, cited in Lenz, 2015). Thus, nouns derived from verbs denoting a communicative activity (e.g., argumento ‘argument,’ descripción ‘description,’ explicación ‘explanation’) as well as verbs of speech, can be used as text deictic markers as long as they contain both lexical content and deictic value (Maaβ, 2010, cited in Lenz, 2015); e.g., Continuando con la descripción del proceso de germinación . . . ‘Continuing with the description of the germination process . . .’

Text deixis contrasts with anaphor in that it focuses on a part of the discourse in a metalinguistic, reflexive manner. Text deixis is meta-communicative since the participants talk about their own discourse. It does not refer back to the co-text itself, as anaphor does, but to the linguistic value of a deictic expression. Text deictic phrases must contain meta-communicative elements as well as deictic elements (Lenz, 2015). In (33), for instance, the demonstrative eso refers to the content of the illocutionary act rather than the nominal antecedent (Ribera, 2007).

Similarly, (34) refers to the assertive value of the declarative sentence of the verb hablar ‘speak’:

(33) Te veo cada vez más delgada. Y eso no es broma.
    ‘I find you skinnier each time. And that is not a joke.’

(34) Pues no es justo y de eso estoy hablando.
    ‘Well it is not fair and that is what I’m talking about.’

2.4 Functions for demonstratives and pronouns in text deixis

Further properties can be provided to tease apart deixis from anaphora. According to Cornish (1999), the contrast does not depend solely on the situational or textual origin of reference, but rather on the fact that text deixis profiles entities that were not in focus (anadeixis), while anaphor depicts already topicalized discourse units. Pronouns are better anaphor markers than demonstratives. Demonstratives are used for tracking referents of lower topicality (Brown, 1983) and accessibility (Ariel, 1990). They signal a shift in focus of attention (Sidner, 1983) and involve contrast with another similar referent (Himmelman, 1996; Sidner, 1983). Only contrastive or emphatic uses are commonly found. When two nominal antecedents coexist, aquel/la selects the most distal referent and the proximal este, the closest one, as in (35):

(35) Se realizaron obras de nueva construcción y reformas diversas. Aquellas recibieron subvenciones estatales; estas, no (as cited in Cuenca & Ribera, 2013).
    ‘Jobs of new construction and assorted reforms were done. Those got government support; these did not.’

Likewise, in the presence of two NPs, este selects the closest referent, as in (36), unless the deictic from is the subject, a position in which only the pronoun is accepted, as in (37), (Eguren, 1999):

(36) Se realizaron obras de nueva construcción y reformas diversas. Aquellas recibieron subvenciones estatales; estos, no
    ‘Jobs of new construction and assorted reforms were done. Those got government support; those did not.’
Even in contrastive contexts, there are more restrictions for demonstratives. A high degree of dependence in the clause works only for personal pronouns; not for demonstratives. A demonstrative can be used only if it appears in a subordinate (38–39) or a coordinate clause (40–41). Otherwise, only the pronoun is allowed (37–38) (Eguren, 1999):

(38) **Ana le dijo a Lourdes que ella/*esta no tenía razón.**
‘Ana told Lourdes that she/*this one was not right.’

(39) **Ana le dijo a Lourdes que ella/*esta no recibiría la beca.**
‘Ana told Lourdes that she/*this one would not get the scholarship.’

(40) **María abandonó a su marido porque él/este no la quería.**
‘Maria abandoned her husband because he/this one didn’t love her.’

(41) **María quiere a su marido y él/este la quiere a ella.**
‘María loves her husband and he/this one loves her.’

Moreover, personal pronouns are better for human referents than demonstratives in many languages. This is generally true for Spanish (42–43), with the exception of obliques where only pronouns are accepted (44) (examples adapted from Eguren, 1999):

(42) **Antes de que yo viera a Juan, él/?este ya me había visto**
‘Before I saw Juan, he/?this one had already seen me’

(43) **Cuando ibamos a forzar el armario, *él/este se abrió**
‘When we were about to force the cupboard door, *he/this one opened’

(44) **Mi coche ya no funciona y no sé qué hacer con él/*este**
‘My car doesn’t work anymore and I don’t know what to do with it/*this’

Neuter demonstratives, such as *esto* normally do not take human antecedents. They take first-, second-, and third-order referents; i.e., things (45), events, and propositions (46) (Eguren, 1999):

(45) **Esto no es una pipa** (Magritte, 1928–1929)
‘This is not a pipe’

(46) **En todo caso, cuando se entrevista con el reloj en la mano, no se puede andar por las ramas, tienes que ir al grano y, eso se entiende como ser agresivo** (CREA, Prensa, España, 1990).
‘At any rate, when an interview is under time pressure, one cannot beat around the bushes, you have to get to the point and that is seen as aggressive behavior.’

As compared to adjectival demonstratives (*este coche* ‘this car’), pronominal demonstratives (*este llegó primero* ‘this one arrived first’) are seldom used in text deixis. They occur predominantly in dialogue with an exophoric-identifying function (Himmelman, 1996). Cuenca and Ribera (2013) show that situational uses of deictic forms making direct reference to the communicative...
Deixis in Spanish research

context (¿Tocó usted alguna cosa de este dormitorio? ‘Did you touch anything in this dormitory?’) in narrative are rather low, as opposed to non-situational anaphoric or cataphoric ones (Creeme esto, Guido. Ella es una perra ‘Believe me about this, Guido. She’s a bitch’). Yet, in oral discourse, pronouns (mostly esto) are frequently used anaphorically to retrieve proximal preceding discourse (84.5%) and rarely for human antecedents (6%) (González, 1994).

(47) Pero hacen estadísticas. Esto sirve para cuántos trabajos del . . . del gobierno, no? (as cited in González, 1994, Habla Culta, Ciudad de México)
‘But they do calculations. This serves for so many jobs of . . . of the government, right?’

Adjectival demonstratives are dominantly used in written genres, fulfilling anaphoric functions:

(48) Los indígenas estaban lejos de las explicaciones científicas que se daban en el occidental. La llegada de los españoles cambió esta situación cultural (CREA, Ciencia, México, 2000).
‘Indigenous people were far from the scientific explanation of the occidental world.
The arrival of the Spaniards changed this situation.’

However, they tend to be used for one mention only. While pronouns may occur more than once, recovering a focused antecedent along the text, adjectival demonstratives tend to appear in only one mention, as they either select, introduce, or highlight a specific property of their referent:

(49) Una vez que conseguí este coche, lo cuidé, lo consentí y lo mantuve conmigo hasta que, por viejo, lo tuve que vender.
‘Once I got this car, I cared for it, I pampered it, and I maintained it until it was too old and I had to sell it.’

This goes along with the idea that demonstratives involve a change in topic. If the speaker assumes that the hearer is familiar with the referred element, a pronoun is to be used. Otherwise a demonstrative may introduce a new topic (Cornish, 1999, 2018). Consequently, demonstratives are not particularly frequent in anaphoric use.

Pronouns and adjectival demonstratives also contrast in scope. In text, it is difficult to determine the size of the segment of discourse being indexed. It may range from a single clause to a whole story. Pronouns tend to refer to a proximate antecedent within the clause. On the other hand, for demonstratives in non-contrastive or emphatic situations, the scope of demonstratives is open and unlimited. Himmelman (1996) hypothesizes that this is due to the fact that the referent is first created at the very moment the demonstrative is used. This is particularly the case for presentational demonstratives. Esto, in (50), refers to a whole discourse chunk previously uttered:

(50) Tome –al decir esto entregó a la viuda la bolsa que contenía los donativos–, estoy segura que le servirá de algo (CREA, Novela, México, 1992).
‘Take it,’ as she said this she gave the widow a bag that contained the donations, ‘I’m sure it will do you some good.’

Finally, differences exist depending on the semantic content of the deictic form. While esto may serve cataphoric presentational functions (51), ese and aquello take care of anaphoric ones (52–53):

(51) Quiero que entiendas esto. Tú eres lo más parecido a Mariana (CREA, Novela México, 1995).
‘I want you to understand this. You are the one who better resembles Mariana.’
Tus imprudencias no pueden solucionarse con pedir perdón. ¡Lo que cuenta son los hechos! Es hora de que entiendas eso y de que cambies (CREA, Novela México, 1994).

‘Your reckless actions cannot be solved by saying you are sorry. Actions are what count. It is about time that you understand that and that you change.’


‘No. It was impossible to understand that.’

Unlike English, Spanish cataphoric uses are quite sporadic, in contrast with anaphoric ones (Cuenca & Ribera, 2013).

To sum up, in text deixis, personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and adjectival demonstratives serve the purpose of keeping track of entities along the discourse chain. Yet each one represents different aspects. Predominantly, personal pronouns help keep track of elements well established in the text. Pronouns are better anaphor markers than demonstratives. Demonstratives are used for tracking referents of lower topicality. Adjectival demonstratives introduce topics or topic shifts. As compared to adjectival demonstratives, pronominal demonstratives are seldom used in text deixis. They can be used for proximate anaphors as well as for cataphoric purposes. Pronouns tend to refer to a proximate antecedent within the clause, while the scope of demonstratives is open and unlimited. Yet, distance not only works along discourse lines, but also in the realm of emotions. Demonstratives and adverbial forms help establish an ample set of views with which the speaker relates to some referent.

3 Methodological considerations

Data considered for this chapter come from two basic types of sources, experimental and textual. Given the extralinguistic nature of locative deixis, different types of research methods are created to detect the value of deictic expressions. Speaker and hearer initially share the location with respect to the object, which varies in distance from the deictic center. Then, participants are located in different places varying for distance (close, medial, distal) with respect to the referential object. Speaker and hearer may either share the deictic center or they may occupy different locations (side-to-side close, side-to-side distal, face-to-face, face-to-face lateral, etc.) to check if the deictic markers adjust to the local relationship between the deictic center and the referential object. Either speaker or hearer may be seen as potential reference points to calculate the distance between origo and the referenced object; thus, different deictic forms may be used (Holst, 2019; Stradioto, 2012; Stradioto & Maldonado, 2018). Non-experimental ways to obtain data for extralinguistic deixis are also seen in the use of corpora for written and oral Spanish (CREA, CSCM, social media), where deictic forms in the text are used to refer to objects in a variety of contexts in the world.

For text deixis, data normally come from a wide variety of written sources. Well-known corpora of written Spanish have been used to compare different genres (journalistic, scientific, and creative writing from CREA), as well as specific novels (as in Delbecque, 2013; García Salido, 2011; Richardson, 1996, and many others). An important analytic strategy is to focus on specific genres such as narrative, testimonial, or parliamentary discourse (Cuenca & Ribera, 2009, 2013; Ribera, 2007), either selectively or comparatively. Moreover, the behavior of deictic forms has been compared among oral and written forms of discourse, particularly dialogue and expository discourse (Cuenca & Ribera, 2013; Marcovecchio, 2015).

4 Future directions and conclusion

The referential value of demonstratives still requires further research. Medial demonstratives ese/eso are defined either as high focus (Delbecque, 2013) or as low focus (Kirsner, 1990; Stradioto &
Deixis in Spanish research

Maldonado, 2018; Strauss, 2002). The discourse functions of shared knowledge and focality could be applied to obtain a deeper analysis.

Further research is necessary to define if distance in abstract representations always determines a lack of involvement. For example, the evocative function of distal markers may imply higher degrees of speaker involvement than traditionally acknowledged (Lo hice con aquel gusto ‘I did it with such a (that) pleasure’).

Another area of further research pertains to the use of medial deictic markers ahí ‘there’ and ese ‘that’ whose lack of specificity may be exploited in discourse evidential and epistemic marking. Vague evidential ‘hearsay’ uses of por ahí (Por ahí se dice que no tendría que haber ido ‘They say (there) she shouldn’t have had to go’), as identified by Marcovecchio (2015, in press) may extend to diminish assertiveness, in attenuative and probabilistic uses: Nunca sabremos qué pasó, por ahí tenía problemas (see Chapter 6 on evidentiality, this volume) ‘we will never know what happened, thereabouts she may have had problems.’ Also, verbs of perception, such as mira ‘look’ that have deictic uses (¡mira, un avión! ‘look, there’s an airplane’) may be used in discourse to signal situations where the hearer is prompted to share the speaker’s view: Mira, si hacemos esto nos iría mejor ‘Look, if we do this things will go better for us’ (Maldonado & De la Mora, in press).

A major topic of study are the functions of deictic forms in different discourse genres: oral and written narratives, political discourse, news reports, journal articles, and scientific writing are but a few topics to be considered (Cuenca, 2010; Gelabert, 2004; Ribera, 2007). Verbs of motion show crucial subtleties in concrete or abstract displacement (Richardson, 1996). The relationship between the deictic center and some reference point may vary depending on lexical specifications: ir ‘go’ seems to be less flexible than regresar ‘return’ and volver ‘come back’ (Adrián regresó/ llegó a la casa y ahí lo veré ‘Adrian returned/arrived home. I’ll see him there’; Por fin Vale regresó de la oficina. La estábamos esperando ‘Finally Vale returned from the office. We were waiting for her’).

Another avenue of research is the cognitive status of deixis and anaphor (Ariel, 1990; Cornish, 1999, 2018; García Salido, 2011; Kleiber, 1992). It has been questioned whether the referent of an anaphoric expression needs to be the previous text, implying its extralinguistic reference, or it may respond to the mental representation that the speaker and hearer may already share in some context (Ariel, 1990). The contrast between anaphor and deixis may also be observed in terms of discourse functions. Rather than having a contrast between extralinguistic and textual reference, it may respond to focus of attention and topic continuity (Cornish, 1999; Givón, 1983; Kleiber, 1992). Under scrutiny are issues involving anadeixis (Ehlich, 1982), which are indexical-referring procedures determining content and discourse-functional structures. Anadeictic and discourse-deictic references may signal content structures and discourse-functional structures, which may help in introducing discourse units or predicting transitions between them (Cornish, 1999, 2018).

I have highlighted the more salient features of exophoric and endophoric realms. Involving joint attention (Diessel, 2012) on shared indexical ground (Hanks, 1992), deixis involves a category that normally constitutes the diachronic basis for pronouns in many languages (Diessel, 2006; Langacker, 2000) and appears early in language acquisition processes (Diessel, 2012). This basic quality explains its functional diversity. Deixis signals objects and events, as referred to in person, distance, time, and even social representation. Given the ample array of linguistic forms (verbs of motion, pronouns, demonstratives, or adverbials), deictic forms impose different types of conceptualizations. Spanish departed from the three-way system of Latin and developed a more complex system that involves space in binary contrast and degrees of subjectivity and focality. Ese/a, like the locative ahí, represents a flexible area of common access for speaker and hearer, which overlaps with distal and proximate forms. With important differences regarding subjectivity, aquí and acá relate to referring proximal to the speaker. Distal demonstratives (e.g., aquel/la)
and adverbs (e.g., allá) may be far not only in space, but in mental/emotional access with important subtleties. In text, deictic forms serve the purpose of referring to entities along the discourse chain. Each form imposes different profiles. Typically, personal pronouns help track elements well established in the shared context and adjectival demonstratives introduce new topics, while pronominal demonstratives can be used both for proximal anaphoric and cataphoric purposes. All these uses are further subject to project mental and emotional overtones with which speakers impose their view about the world in specific contexts.

**Further reading**


This book introduces a new theory of anaphoric reference in discourse from both psychological and linguistic perspectives. Anaphoric and deixis are seen as parts of integrative discourse procedures that facilitate the linking of representations held in working memory. The analysis is based on experimental work on a variety of corpora of different genres in French and English.


This book introduces basic notions of text structuring and cohesion based on grammatical cues (deixis, anaphor, cataphor, ellipsis) and lexical cohesion mechanisms (repetition, iteration, association), as applied to three literary texts and three newspaper articles in order to identify mechanisms that provide coherence and adequacy in text structuring.


This book presents the analyses of demonstratives from a cross-linguistic and diachronic perspective (85 languages). Demonstratives are analyzed from a synchronic point of view (morphological, semantics, syntactic functions, and pragmatic uses in spoken and written discourse), as well as the diachronic development of demonstratives into grammatical markers. The book describes the different mechanisms by which demonstratives grammaticalize and argues that the evolution of grammatical markers from demonstratives is crucially distinct from other cases of grammaticalization.

**Corpora**


**References**


Deixis in Spanish research


71
Maldonado