

Questions on Deixis

Introduction to Pragmatics, Fall 2010

Due: Friday, December 10th

Reading: From Charles Fillmore, *Lectures on Deixis*: Deixis I (pp. 59-75).

1. Fillmore gives the example of finding a message in a bottle afloat in the ocean which reads: "Meet me here at noon tomorrow with a stick about this big." What are the deictic expressions in this sentence? What information is needed to interpret them, but missing in this context?
2. What are the five categories of deixis that Fillmore lists? Give one example of each in Swedish and explain how the example fits.
3. Here are gestural, symbolic, and anaphoric uses of *there*. Which is which?
 - (i) How's it going over there?
 - (ii) [pointing to a bird] Look over there!
 - (iii) John was home, so I went over there.
4. *I'll do it in an hour* is ambiguous in a way that *I did it in an hour* is not. What are the two readings of the former? Why isn't the latter ambiguous?
5. Why do Russian tour guides often make the mistake of saying "We'll visit the mausoleum just now" when they mean "...right away"?
6. Theorize a bit. Why is *this finger* more likely to have a gestural interpretation than *this room*?
7. In English, the demonstrative "this" is used in time expressions indicating the time of an event as occurring within the same time unit as the moment of the speech act (the *coding time*). Is there an equivalent in Swedish? Why or why not?
8. Here are some deictic *nonpositional* calendric terms in English.

-2	-1	0	1	2
the day before yesterday	yesterday	today	tomorrow	the day after tomorrow
the week before last	last week	this week	next week	the week after next
the month before last	last month	this month	next month	the month after next
the year before last	last year	this year	next year	the year after next

There are some rules, and some specific lexicalizations, highlighted in bold. Translate this table into Swedish. What are the regular rules for producing deictic nonpositional calendric terms in Swedish? What are the exceptions?

9. Here are some deictic *positional* calendric expressions in English. Again there are rules and specific lexicalizations.

	-1	0	1
SPRING	last spring	this spring	next spring
SUMMER	last summer	this summer	next summer
WINTER	last winter	this winter	next winter
FALL	last fall	this fall	next fall

	-1	0	1
MORNING	yesterday morning	this morning	tomorrow morning
AFTERNOON	yesterday afternoon	this afternoon	tomorrow afternoon
EVENING	yesterday evening	this evening	tomorrow evening
NIGHT	last night	tonight	tomorrow night

Translate these tables into Swedish. What are the rules, and what are the deictic positional calendric expressions for which there are separate lexicalizations in Swedish?

- Fillmore says (p. 72), “Assuming that I know today is Wednesday, I would not say *I am planning to have dinner in Santa Cruz this Wednesday*. The reason seems to be that the deictic day words, namely *today*, *tomorrow*, *yesterday*, seem to have priority over these other expressions when you are locating the time of some event... There is one set of conventions followed by many speakers of English by which the dating expression of the form *this* followed by a weekday name are used only of times which follow, within the same week, the coding time. For speakers of this dialect, because of the priority of deictic day names, there is never any need for the expression *this Monday*.” [I am one of these speakers.] Why wouldn’t you need the expression *this Monday* if you are a speaker of this dialect?
- The word for ‘needle’ in Moroccan Arabic is deictic. How so?