

## **Distance in Discourse. Evidence from Polish, Russian and German**

Imke Mendoza (University of Salzburg)

The concept of distance is not only a spatial and temporal concept, but also one of discourse. The fact that many languages use the same expressions to mark deictic as well as endophoric reference is a clear manifestation of the interrelation between these domains.

In my presentation I will compare the deictic and the endophoric functions of adjectival and substantival demonstrative pronouns of Polish, Russian and German. My analysis shows that the deictic opposition "proximity vs. distance" cannot be transferred directly from space to discourse, and that different languages use different strategies in utilizing demonstrative pronouns for endophoric purposes.

My general assumption is that demonstratives have two different functions, which I call "contrastive" and "non-contrastive" functions. Contrastive demonstratives select a referent out of a set of referents that share most of their features with the selected referent, and show contrast in regard to at least one feature. Non-contrastive demonstratives can have several sub-functions. Relevant here is only the indication of coreference. Deictic demonstrative pronouns are always contrastive. Endophoric demonstratives are mostly indicators of coreference, although occasionally they also fulfill a contrastive function.

The connection between distance and deixis is self-evident. In languages with binary deictic systems, a proximal pronoun indicates that the referent is close to the speaker and a distal pronoun signals that the referent is located farther away from the speaker.

The relation between distance and coreference is not as straightforward. The different demonstratives do not only compete with each other, but also with the definite article (in languages with articles) and zero marking (in languages without articles). From a purely quantitative point of view, establishing coreference by a demonstrative is rather the exception than the rule. The presence of a demonstrative requires certain conditions, and only some of them can be related to the notion of distance, like the actual distance between antecedent and anaphoric expression, or the "semantic distance" between the two noun phrases in question.

Polish, Russian and German have quite similar deictic systems. Their systems are binary; the proximal elements are the unmarked members and the distal pronouns are the marked members of the opposition. The deictic and contrastive endophoric uses of demonstrative pronouns show a certain, although not complete isomorphism in Polish, Russian and German. The deictic and the coreferential function, however, seem to form two completely independent systems. The use of pronouns in their non-contrastive capacities display a great deal of cross-linguistic variation. There is no uniform mapping of the deictic functions to certain endophoric tasks. Moreover, there are also differences in how the languages use the syntactic opposition of substantival vs. adjectival pronouns for endophoric reference.

To conclude, my findings further support the aforementioned assumption of demonstratives having two fundamentally different functions that cannot be derived from each other.

## References

- Apresjan, Jurij D. 1986a. Dejksis v leksike i grammatike i naivnaja model' mira. In: Semiotika i informatika 28: 5-33.
- Berger, T.; Weiss, D. 1987. Die Gebrauchsbedingungen des Anaphorikums "tot" in substantivischer Verwendung. In: Freidhof, G.; Kosta, P. (eds.), Slavistische Linguistik 1986. München, 9-93.
- Fontański, H. 1986. Anaforyczne przymiotniki wskazujące w języku polskim i rosyjskim. Katowice.
- Mendoza, Imke. 2004. Zur Nominaldetermination im Polnischen. Die primären Ausdrucksmittel. [http://www.uni-salzburg.at/portal/page?\\_pageid=625,740063&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://www.uni-salzburg.at/portal/page?_pageid=625,740063&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)
- Mendoza, I. 2005. Polish demonstrative pronouns as "markers of value". In: Glossos 6, 1-20.
- Weiss, D. 1988. Zum substantivisch-anaphorischen Gebrauch von russ. *étot*. In: Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie 48, 249-269.