

A Study of Deixis in Pinter's *The Caretaker Act I*

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Abstract:

*This research paper is an attempt to identify the deictical expressions in Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker*. Deixis is used to refer to those elements in language that referred directly to the situation. The single most obvious way in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structure of language themselves, is through the phenomenon of Deixis. It is a technical term for one of the most basic things to do with utterances. It means pointing via language. The study examines the dialogues of the characters from pragmatic perspective especially concerned with deixis. The study seeks to give more insights on those assumptions in the existing critical literature which insists on the devaluation of language and meaninglessness in *The Caretaker Act -I*. The analysis in this study is based on the kinds of deixis i.e. person, place, time, social and discourse deixis.*

Key words: Language, Context, Deixis, Person Deixis, Place Deixis, Time Deixis.

Introduction:

Human necessarily lives in society to communicate one to another. Communication represents the essential social process

in human life. Communication is the exchange of information, ideas, attitudes, thought and opinions. A language is used to communicate among people, and it represents the personality and behavior of people itself.

Communication will be realized if the target of language used is appropriate with the situation or condition of the speaker and the discourse that is done. This situation is related to determine factor in speech act such listener, goal, and utterance, problem of utterance and situation. Those factors are mostly discussed in pragmatic. Pragmatic is study about meaning that uttered by the speaker and interpreted by the listener. Pragmatic is study about meaning and has connection with utterance. It means that this study concerns with how the listener concludes or interprets what the meaning of utterance that uttered by the speaker is.

Hansen and Visconti stated pragmatic concerned with the redefinitions of the respective roles of speaker/writers and address/readers in the process of innovation (Hansen and Visconti 2009:5). Moreover, when the speaker says something, it is important to the listener respect to make redefinition what the speakers meant by the utterance. Because there is some interpretation by the listeners or readers, it needs to be aware what the speaker means exactly.

Deixis:

The word deixis is derived from the Greek word 'Deicticos' means to show or to indicate. Deixis is used to refer to those elements in language that referred directly to the situation. The single most obvious way in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structure of language themselves, is through the phenomenon of Deixis. It is a technical term for one of the most basic things to do with utterances. It means pointing via language. Any linguistic form used to accomplish this pointing is a called a 'Deictic expressions'. When you see a strange object and ask "What's

that?" you are using a deictic expression 'That' to indicate something in the immediate context.

According to Levinson "Deixis concerns the ways in which language encode or grammatical features of the context of utterance or speech event. It also concerns the way in which interpretation of utterance depends on the analysis of that context of utterance". (Levinson 57)

Kinds of Deixis

Levinson identified five major types of deictic markers: Person Deixis, Place Deixis, Time Deixis, Discourse Deixis and Social Deixis. (Levinson 63)

A) Person Deixis –

Person deixis is a word that has functions as personal pronoun. Person deixis related with personal pronouns, if its reference which is used appropriate with the context is being used. Personal deixis is deictic reference to the participant role of reference, such as, the speaker, the addressee, and referent that are neither speaker nor addressee. According to Yule (1996:10) Personal deixis clearly operates part division; there are first person like I, me, myself, mine, me, we, us etc., second person like you both singular and plural and third person like he, she, his, him, her and the form of plural third person includes: they, their and them. (Yule 10)

B) Place Deixis –

According to Levinson, "place deixis concerns the encoding of spatial locations relative to the location of the participants in the speech. Place or location can be deixis if that place or location is being seeing from the location of the people who are doing communication in language use in speech event" (Levinson 62). Place deixis can be seen from the use of demonstrative pronouns such as: 'this' and 'that', and also can

be seen from demonstrative adverbs of place such as: 'here' and 'there'.

C) Time Deixis –

According to Levinson, "time deixis refers to the time which relative to the time of speaking or an utterance spoken" (Levinson 73). In English for example the use of 'now', 'then', 'yesterday', 'today', 'tomorrow'. Here, the word 'morning', 'afternoon', and 'night' cannot be categorized as time lexeme. It is caused by the planet position in the earth toward with the position of sun.

D) Discourse Deixis –

A word can be said as discourse deixis if that word refers to certain part of that text. According to Levinson "discourse deixis means use of expression with some utterance to refer to some portion of the discourse that contains the utterance (including the use of the utterance itself)" (Levinson 85). It is where reference is being made to the current discourse.

E) Social Deixis –

"Social deixis is use to code social distinctions that are relative to the participant role in social relationship between speaker and addressee or speaker and some reference" (Levinson 63) Hatch states that "social deixis is code to know social relationship between speaker and addressee or audience" (Hatch 220).

Analysis of Deixis in Pinter's *The Caretaker Act I*:

The analysis of characters' conversational behaviour on the basis of deixis shows that characters are following the deictic expression from the beginning of the play. In the first exchange, for example, between Aston and Davies, the use of deictic words like 'here' and 'them' can find. The play begins with when Aston brought to Davies in his home and offers him a chair to sit

down. In the following extract of Aston, he uses the deictic word 'Here' to indicate the chair to Davies. Aston is using the place deixis word where he shows the chair to Davies. Here the word 'here' refers to the place where the chair is. In the extract of Davies, he also makes use of third person deictic expression word 'them' referring the people from Poles, Greeks, Blacks and many more. Here the word 'them' has earlier reference from his own speech.

ASTON: (*Placing the chair*). **Here** you are?

DAVIES: Ten minutes off for a tea break in the middle of the night in that place and I couldn't find a seat, not one. All them Greeks had it, Poles, Greeks, Blacks, the lot of **them**, all **them** aliens had it. [...] when he come at me **tonight** I told him. (*The Caretaker* 8)

Davies also makes use of time deixis in his expression where he makes use of the word 'tonight' indicating the particular time. So the use place deixis, third person deixis and time deixis can be observed in the above conversation between Aston and Davies.

Davies was very curious to know who the neighbours of Davies are. When Davies was coming into the room along with Aston, he notices that some people were living the next door of Aston. The following example shows the conversation regarding it between Davies and Aston, where Davies was strongly using the third person deixis and place deixis in his speech.

DAVIES: Yes, I noticed **them** heavy curtains pulled across next door as we came along.

I noticed **them** heavy big curtains right across the window down **there**. I thought there must be someone living **there**.

ASTON: Family of Indians live **there**. (*The Caretaker* 12-13)

Here, Davies uses the deictic expression 'them' twice in his dialogue. The deictic expression 'them' refers to the people who are neighbours of Aston across the next door. Davies strongly telling that he has noticed those neighbours while coming into the room. So, Davies uses the third person deictic expressions

word 'them' instead of repeating the word 'neighbours'. We can find another example of deixis in their conversation. The deictic expression 'there' is used in both of character's dialogue, indicating place deixis. Here the deictic expression 'there' refers to the next door of Aston's room.

Another example of place deixis can find in the example given below where both Aston uses the same deictic expression 'here' in their conversation. Aston shows the particular place to put the sink by using the deictic expression 'here' in the following conversation. Davies tries to help him to lift the sink, which is quite heavy. Both of them lift the sink and put it under the bed. The deictic expression 'here' is used instead of under the bed, indicating the place.

ASTON: I think that'll fit in under **here** as well.

DAVIES: I'll give you a hand. (*They lift it.*) It's a ton weight, en't?

ASTON: Under **here**?

DAVIES: This in use at all, then?

ASTON: No. I'll be getting rid of it. **Here.** (*The Caretaker 18*)

Davies use of deictic expression can find the extract given below where he trying to adjust in Aston's room. Though Davies finds some kind of problem in the bulb, still he tries to adjust it. The use of discourse deixis and social deixis can be identified in the extract given below.

ASTON: I'll have to fix a proper shade on that bulb. The light's a bit glaring.

DAVIES: Don't worry about **that**, **mister**, don't you worry about **that**. (*The Caretaker 21*)

The discourse deictic expression 'that' is used by Davies in his conversation, which has reference of earlier speech of Aston. Aston says that he has to fix a shade on that bulb so that light doesn't glare. Davies replies to it and uses the deictic expression 'that' instead of repeating the problem of bulb. The deictic expression 'that' has a reference with earlier utterance of Aston. Davies also uses the social deictic expression 'mister'

in his utterance addressing it to Aston. Davies uses two deictic expressions discourse deixis and social deixis in his utterance.

The use of time deixis can find the example given below in which Davies gives the reference of fifteen years ago. Davies said that he had put the papers with the man from Sidcup and now he has to collect those papers for getting new job. Aston surprisingly asks him about how long you have kept the papers with him. Here Davies gives the answer by using the deictic expression 'fifteen years ago'. The deictic expression 'fifteen years ago' indicates the use of time deixis in Davies's utterance.

ASTON: How long's he had them?

DAVIES: Oh, must be ... it was in the war ... must be ... about near on **fifteen years ago**. (*The Caretaker* 21)

The deictic word 'fifteen years ago' indicates the particular time period in which the man from Sidcup kept the papers of Davies. Davies is continuously using the deictic expressions in his utterances. Another example of Davies's use of social deixis can find in the example given below, where he uses the social deictic expression 'mister' twice in his utterances. Aston gives the proper guidance to Davies regarding the plug and light, if Davies needs to switch on the button. Davies understands the instruction given by Aston and uses the deictic expression 'mister' in his utterance, which is an example of social deixis.

ASTON: (*going to below the fireplace*). See this plug? Switch it on **here**, if you like. This little fire.

DAVIES: Right, **mister**.

ASTON: Just plug in **here**.

DAVIES: Right, **mister**. (*The Caretaker* 26)

In the above conversation, we can also find the use of place deictic expression 'here' which Aston uses in his utterance. The deictic expression 'here' refers to the place called plug in the room. Here, we can find the use of place deixis and discourse deixis in the utterances of both the character.

Conclusion -

Harold Pinter's play entitled *The Caretaker* is story that contain of deixis in almost each utterances. Therefore, researchers assume that every language has deictic words which points to person, place, time, discourse and social. However, it is relation of deixis reference in a language point to the speaker and hearer or addressed.

These five types of deixis more are happened in all utterances. Furthermore, mostly occurred the deixis in this Pinter's play is place deixis. It is based on the result of this research with of place deixis. Based on the result of this research, deixis in the play was useful approach to deitic language applied in the pragmatic approach.

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