ABSTRACT

Deixis in English and Arabic: A Semantic–Pragmatic Study and its Pedagogical Implications.

Deixis has always been at the heart of reference research as widely known literature in semantics and pragmatics demonstrates. All natural languages do have indexicals and the task of linguistic analysis is to model these directly in order to capture the ways in which these are used. So far, many scholars such as Levinson, Wales, Anderson, Pierce, Fillmore, Lyons, Keenan and others have tackled the problem under investigation with reference to English and some other languages. However, Arabic, as a Semitic Language, has not been investigated with respect to deixis of person, time, and place.

The present study has examined the semantic features and pragmatic uses of personal, spatial and temporal deixis of English and Arabic with a view to pinpointing the similarities and differences that can be of pedagogical uses.

As an initial work of its kind, it is of twofold uses: i) it establishes the framework of deictic system in Arabic, and ii) it brings out the similarities and differences between English and Arabic for pedagogic purposes.

The objectives of the current study are outlined as under:

i) To establish a framework of deictic system of person, time and place in Arabic;

ii) To pinpoint the similarities and differences of the deictic systems in
English and Arabic. This comparison has three advantages:

a) It throws some light on language universals.

b) It serves to bring out the peculiarities of the two languages.

c) It gives us a better tool for establishing translation rules between English and Arabic.

iii) To contribute something to the study of Arabic Linguistics in the light of modern perspectives.

iv) To find out how deixis of person, time and place is marked in Arabic.

v) To explore whether Arabic is two-term system of space or three-term system.

The present study is limited to the discussion and investigation of deixis of person, time and place in English and Arabic in terms of their semantic features and pragmatic manifestations. Arabic examples for discussion are mainly taken from The Noble Qur'an (the Holy Book of Muslims), the Hadīth (the Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessing Be Upon Him), and the published materials in Standard Arabic. The current study posits the following hypotheses:

Firstly, the deictic systems of English (Germanic language) and Arabic (Semitic language) demonstrate great differences.

Secondly, semantic features of the deictic expressions in the two languages would be extremely different.
Thirdly, the pragmatic uses of deictic expressions between English and Arabic would be prominently different.

Finally, the differences between the two languages would affect the process of teaching and learning English deiosis to Arab learners and the translation of deictics from English to Arabic and vice versa.

The comparison of two or more languages calls for a description of the concerned languages. Accordingly, the current study is descriptive in nature. This investigation explores answers to questions arisen in favour of verifying the above-mentioned hypotheses as under:

(i) Is deixis realized and expressed in Arabic? If so,

(ii) Which types of deixis are present in Arabic?

(iii) What are the deictic expressions used to realize them?

(iv) What are the semantic features and pragmatic uses of personal, spatial, and temporal deixis in Arabic?

(v) How are deictics marked in Arabic?

(vi) What type of spatial system does Arabic have? i.e. is Arabic a two-term or three-term system of demonstratives?

(vii) What are the restrictions imposed on the usage of the demonstratives?

and finally,

(viii) What are the similarities and differences between the deictic systems of English and Arabic in terms of their semantic features and pragmatic uses?
Outline of the thesis:

The present study consists of six chapters and each ends with a concluding remarks. Chapter 1 (Introduction) deals with the problem under investigation, the procedures and methods used to carry out the research, hypothesis of the study and the questions of the study. It points out the significance and purpose of the study. In addition, it contains a brief sketch of the two languages, namely, English and Arabic.

Chapter 2 (Review of Related Literature) gives a brief account of the systematic discipline of contrastive linguistics or analysis. In addition, it displays the two fields of semantics and pragmatics and their distinctions as reviewed in literature. Furthermore, it presents a review of the literature about deixis as well as its different uses.

Chapter 3 (Deixis in English) provides various definitions of deixis by different linguists. Moreover, it deals with concepts such as pronoun, person, indexical, anaphora, sentence, utterance, context, text, and discourse that are related to deixis. It provides a descriptive survey on personal, spatial and temporal deictics in English in terms of their semantic features and pragmatic uses.

Chapter 4 (Deixis in Arabic) deals with the deictic system of Arabic. In a parallel description to that of English, this chapter establishes the framework of Arabic deictic system in terms of their semantic properties and pragmatic uses. Arabic personal, spatial, and temporal deixis are analyzed and discussed.
with reference to data taken from The Noble Qur'an, Hadith and Arabic published materials.

**Chapter 5 (Deixis in English and Arabic: A Contrastive Analysis)** is the core of the study. It is the contrastive analysis of the two languages, English and Arabic. As a result of the preceding two chapters, it discusses the semantic and pragmatic similarities and differences of the deictic systems of English and Arabic. It localizes and highlights these similarities and differences for pedagogic uses.

**Chapter 6 (Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications)** is the conclusion of the study. It settles the discussions in the foregoing chapters to shape the findings and pedagogical implications that will be of use in learning and teaching English to Arab learners as a foreign language and Arabic to non-Arabic speaking learners. Furthermore, it includes suggestions and recommendations for further future investigations and researches.