DEIXIS AND LOCATION

Deixis

It is generally acknowledged that perception of and orientation in space are determinant factors in human action and interaction. As such, speech heavily depends on knowledge of the context: Where and When is a sentence uttered, and by Whom. These three dimensions are traditionally seen as the so-called deictic centre of all linguistic events, without which no linguistic expression can be properly interpreted. Svorou's (1993) observation, that social and psychological conditions are also relevant factors in the deictic anchorage of language, fully applies to the East-Nusantara Region.

With deixis we mean here all cues provided by a language that localise a speech event and its participants (Speaker, Hearer and narrated participant) in space and time. Anderson and Keenan (1985) distinguish three major categories of deixis: person deixis, spatial deixis and temporal deixis. The category linking social and psychological factors is tentatively labelled 'psychological' deixis at the workshop.

Person deixis usually localises an entity in relation to the position of the Speaker and/or Hearer (a so-called 'positional' system). First and second person pronouns typically refer to the speaking and hearing speech-participant(s), whereas third person pronouns designate the non-speech or narrated participant. Many Austronesian languages in East-Nusantara encode additional information about the referent, for example the number of individuals referred to (singular, dualis, trialis, plural), its classification (male, female, animate, inanimate, edible) or social status (impersonals, deferential pronouns).

Spatial deixis localises both the Speech participants and narrated participants in space. Some languages in East-Nusantara, as for example Ewaw (SE Maluku) only have one term, for which it is very difficult to define its meaning. Many languages, however, may display a two-term or three-term positional system, designating locations in space with reference to the position of the Speaker (cq. 'this'=near the Speaker, versus 'that'=near the Hearer and/or 'yonder'=not-near any of the Speech participants). Not only the relative distance between the object referred to and the Speaker/Hearer may be encoded. Many languages in East-Nusantara are reported to also indicate the level on which the referent is located relative to the Speaker's/Hearer's position. Most non-Austronesian languages on Alor (NTT), for example obligatorily signal whether the object is located above or below the Speaker, or on the same level.

Temporal deixis as it proposed by Anderson and Keenan (1985) localises the speech event in time by means of adverbs ('now', 'then') or nouns ('Tuesday', 'April'). Tense inflection on verbs can also be analysed as temporal deixis in this respect. It is suggested in the literature, that temporal deixis by means of adverbs or demonstratives

is least common in the languages of the world. This workshop intends to investigate this claim for East-Nusantara. Leti (Southwest Maluku), for example, has a set of three determiners clearly originating from a spatial deictic set that locates the narrated event in time with reference to the moment of speech.

'Psychological' deixis encodes information about the referent that is related to the psychological framework of the Speech participants rather than to the localisation of the Speech event in space and time. Leti (Southwest Maluku), for example, has a separate set of person pronouns that signals the Speaker's attitude (acceptance versus rejection versus unacquaintance) toward the referent. In Taba (North Maluku), on the other hand, the acquaintance or unacquaintance of the Speech participants is a semantic extension of the directionals meaning 'upward' and 'downward', respectively. In Blagar (Nusa Tenggara Timur), the Speaker's acquaintance is implied in all deictic morphs connoting 'close to the Speaker', whereas the Speaker's unacquaintance is implied by all morphs meaning 'close to neither the Speaker nor the Hearer'. This workshop intends to investigate and compare the patterns of 'psychological' deixis in East-Nusantara.

Location

Whereas not really implied yet in the types of deixis mentioned above, encoding the location of entities requires that the Speaker has a good orientation and understanding of his/her environment (a so-called 'dimensional' system). At this point, languages may diverge significantly from each other, depending on how the spatial arrangement is construed by their speakers. East and West are cardinal points of orientation for most languages in Southeast Asia, obviously connected with the rising and setting of the sun. The oblong form of Kei Besar (Southeast Maluku) along the North-South axis, however, induces that at this island North and South are rather perceived as the main directions, even though the language does not provide separate words for them. In Southwest Maluku on the other hand, most languages do have a word for South, but not for North. Does this mean then, that, for example on Leti, North is not emic?

In the paragraph on deixis it was suggested, that one of the Speech participants (or both) and the Speech event function as the deictic centre. In other words, they are the ground or landmark against which the referred entity, the figure or trajector is profiled. However, when it comes to locating objects, many languages in East-Nusantara rather prefer an entity in the environment instead of the Speech participants/event. An important directional axis in Austronesian languages is seaward-landward, which has 'overridden' the sunrise-sunset or East-West axis on Kei Besar. Here, a location (f.e. 'in front of the house') is principally perceived in relation to the sea or the mainland ('at the seaside of the house'). On big islands downstream-upstream is another major directional axis. Rivers themselves may often be perceived as landmarks themselves, as for example in Nuaulu (Seram, Central Maluku): this side versus opposite side of the river (comparable to Latin Cisalpina -Transalpina).

Many languages in East-Nusantara compulsorily encode the direction of a verbal act in relation to one of the landmarks that the language-speaker acknowledges. In this workshop we intend to compare the different reference frames (Svorou 1993) that are found in the languages.

Sources and suggested background reading

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Questionnaire

1. Which language is this questionnaire on and where is it spoken?

2. Are this language and its speech community indigenous to the region? If not, where do they originally come from?

3. Describe the pronominal system of the language. Does it distinguish singular from plural (cq Leti does, but Maccassarese does not). Does it have separate forms for dualis or trialis? Does it display an exclusive-inclusive distinction (as in Malay kami-kita)? Are there separate deferential pronouns (as for example Malay Beliau). If not, does one of the pronouns have a deferential or honorific function (f.e. ita 'we inclusive' in Tetun for 'you'). Does it use special nouns as deferentials (f.e. Leti aanmu 'your child' instead of 'I', or Classical Malay hamba 'slave' instead of 'I'). Does it use lexical parallelism, for example for honorific address (see the section on parallelism in the questionnaire on oral traditions)? Does it have a special set of possessive pronouns relating to the categorisation of the possession noun (f.e. alienable nouns have a preposed pronoun, whereas inalienable nouns are suffixed; in some languages, f.e. Buli (North Maluku) and Selaru (SE Maluku), nouns referring to food have separate possessive pronouns).

4. Is the language's deictic system related to the environment in which this language is spoken (coastal, mountainous, riverain)? Is the system maintained or modified when the language is spoken outside its indigenous location. Motion verbs in Ewaw on Kei (SE Maluku) require a directional indicating whether motion is seaward (=downward) or landward (upward). This is not encoded by Ewaw speakers in Zwolle (The Netherlands) where the environment lacks sea and mountains. Meher speakers in The Netherlands rely on the deictic terms meaning 'left' and 'right'. In the original setting on Kisar Island (SW Maluku) they prefer the seaside-land-side axis, using 'left' and 'right' exclusively for left-handedness and right-handedness, respectively.

5. How many sets of deictic terms does the language have (1, 2, 3 or more?). Do they encode number and/or noun class? Are the deictic categories (person, spatial, temporal and 'psychological') encoded by separate sets (as in Leti), or are they combined (f.e. Tetun ne'e (East-Timor) indicates the referent's proximity to the Speaker in space and time (discourse) and its being known to the Speaker).

6. If the deictic categories are encoded by means of separate sets, do they co-occur in stacks of separate morphemes (f.e. Leti Kus-dó-di 'cat-there-discussed now' versus Kus-dó and Kus-di.) Is this feature preserved when the speakers switch to local Malay (f.e. SW Malukan Malay itu kucing ni nya 'that cat here once discussed', see the questionnaire on language contact)?

7. How is location encoded, by means of prepositions, postpositions or so-called

'circumpositions': prepositions and postnominal location nouns (as in Ewaw and Leti). What is the origin of the 'spatial grams'? Some may be linked to body-parts (f.e. Leti üò:ne 'its face' = 'in front'), others may not (f.e. Ewaw ratan 'top' = 'on' from the verb rat 'to go up').

8. What landmarks does the language prefer in its spatial expressions. In how far is it deictically anchored to the Speaker/Hearer? Does it also use landmarks in the environment, for example a mountain or a mountain ridge (Kedang, Lembata, NTT), rivers (Paulohi, Seram, Central Maluku).

9. Does the language distinguish separate levels or dimensions (f.e. Leti uses vavna for the notion 'on' if the referent is on the same level with the Speaker, but uses vuvnu (actually meaning 'skull') if the referent is located above the Speaker)?

10. Which cardinal directions (North, South etc.) exist in the language? How does it encode the direction if it does not exist in the lexicon (f.e. on Leti one says eastward or westward depending on one's position on the island; on Pura (NTT) the island of Alor to its east is 'up', whereas Ujungpandang (Sulawesi) is 'down'). Is it encoded in the language franca?

10a. Are the cardinal directions linked to other axes? (f.e. In Leti (SW Maluku): East=front - West=back, Ewaw (SE Maluku): South=up - North=down, Paulohi (C. Maluku): towards Ambon (w-sw)=up, Buli (N. Maluku) towards Ternate (w-nw)=up.

11. Does the language have a deictic and/or an inherent reference frame? Is the front or back region of an object always determined with reference to a landmark in the environment (f.e. the eastside of a house on Leti is always perceived as the front) or with reference to the Speaker (f.e. the front of a tree in Dutch is the side the Speaker looks at). Do all or some objects have a front and back region of their own that is not related to the Speaker and/or an environmental landmark. Are there objects that lack a front or back region (f.e. speakers of Indonesian, but not necessarily speakers of Dutch, perceive the labelled side of a bottle as its frontside). For more details, see Levinson 1996.

12. How does the language encode direction in motion events: by means of serial verb constructions (f.e. Ewaw (SE Maluku): *Noit in **lek watuk** kokat* 'The wind **blew away** (lit. blow throw) the rice), deverbal or denominal adverbs (f.e. Leti (SW Maluku): *N-**vaul-seri** vatu* 'He **threw** (lit. throw-side) the stone aside') or other devices (f.e. prepositions or postpositions)? Which axes must be encoded (f.e. on Pura (NTT) both seaward-landward and up-down seem obligatory: *qana hu **met ma bakung da*** 'he lifted (lit. take come.on.same.level rise come.upward) his spoon'). Which axes are complementarily distributed (f.e. on the Leti coast seaward-landward is preferred over the East-West axis, whereas outside the island or on sea the latter is preferred).

13. Are the deictic and locative expressions in the first language copied into the contact language? Is the 'social' or temporal deictic function of lexical parallelism, if any in the indigenous language, pursued maintained in the contact language?

If any of these questions needs elaboration for the language you work on, or if its deictic and directional system is radically different from what is proposed here, do not hesitate to contact me on a.van.engelenhoven@hum.leidenuniv.nl