A Corpus-Based Analysis of Person Deixis as Subjects in Edgar Allan Poe's Short Story 'The Black Cat'

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Abstract:
    The text, through the use of' Deixis', can be linked directly to the surroundings such as the people, topic, time, and so on. Person deixis, which is one of the deixis types, concerns the role of participants in the speech event. For the purpose of the study, three of Edgar AllanPoe's short stories have been selected; 'The Black Cat'[1], 'Eleonora' [2], and 'The Purloined Letter'[3] .The current paper mainly carries out a descriptive analysis of person deixis as subjects in Poe's 'The Black Cat'. The other two short stories are used as corpus for comparison.

دراسة تحليلة في علم لغة العينة للاشاريات الشخصية كفواعل في قصة (القطة السوداء) لأيدكار الن بو

المدرس

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الملخص

يمكن للنص ان يرتبط ارتباطا مباشراً بالبيئة المحيطة كالأشخاص والموضوع والوقت وغيرها وذلك من خلال استعمال الإشاريات. تعنى الإشاريات الشخصية - وهي إحدى أنواع الإشاريات - بدور المشاركين بفعل الكلام . لغرض الدراسة اختيرت ثلاث قصص قصيرة للكاتب ايدكار الن بو وهي القط الأسود والينور أو الرسالة المسروقة. يركز البحث بصورة رئيسة على التحليل الوصفي للإشاريات الشخصية كفواعل في قصة القط الأسود بينما استعملت القصتان الأخريتان للمقارنة.

1. Introduction

Communication is not only sharing something, but also delivering a message or meaning. "[It]… depends on not only [the] recognizing [of]the meaning of words in an utterance, [but] also recognizing what speakers meant by their utterances" (Yule, 2010: 127). When people say something, they may not only intent to say it, but also mean something behind the utterances they say."The actions performed via utterances are called speech acts" (Yule, 1996: 47). Therefore, people not only produce strings of words as sentences, but also utterances intended to achieve their intentions.

Person deixis is an integral kind of deixis. It connects people involved in the communication and indicates a certain relationship between them. In practical applications, person deixis is greatly influenced by physical and psychological distance and language environment. Even the same person deixis may refer to different meanings due to different language environments and different psychological distances between the two sides of communication.When people get along with others, they use deixis to clarify the meaning.

2. Deixis
2.1 Definitions

Deixis is a term used to denote "pointing expressions" like this, that, here, andthere. Deictic expressions are speaker-related. Being so, they can easily be used to indicate a particular and changing viewpoint (Short, 1996: 271).

Deixis is the name given to uses of items and categories of lexicon and grammar controlled by certain details of the interactional situation in which the utterances are produced (Fillmore, 1982: 35). For Yule (1996: 9), deixis is a technical term (from Greek) which means pointing via language.

Lyons (1977:637) defines deixis as:

the location and identification of persons, objects, events,
  processes and activities talked about, or referred to, in relation to
  the spatio-temporal context created and sustained by the act of
  utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a single speaker
  and at least one addressee.

In addition, Cruse (2000: 319) states that deixis signifies different things to different people.Lyons (1977:636) uses the term deixis to cover the function of personal and demonstrative pronouns, tense and a variety of other grammatical and lexical features.

Levinson (1983:54) shows that deixis as follows:

Deixis concerns the ways in which languages encode or grammaticalize features of the context of utterance or

 speech event, and thus also concerns ways in which the

 interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of that

2.2 Types

Deixis is systematized in egocentric way considering the speaker as central point that relates everything to his point of view and also considering the deictic centres that are supposed to be "(a) the central person is the speaker, (b)the central time is the time at which the speaker produces the utterance, (c)the central place is the speaker's location at utterance time, (d) the discourse centre is the point which the speaker is currently at in the production of his utterance, and (e) the social centre is the speaker's social status and rank, to which the status or rank of addressees or referents is relative" (Levinson, 1983: 63-4). The important point is that deixis has to do with the predetermination of many different aspects of the circumstances surrounding the utterance inside the utterance itself (Levinson, 1983: 55).

Deixis used to be divided into three categories: person, place and time deixis. In addition, there are two more deixis categories, that are social and discourse deixis (Levinson, 1983: 62).

2.2.1 Person Deixis

Levinson (1983:68) states that person deixis deals with the predetermination of the role of participants in the speech event in which the utterance in question is uttered and it is reflected directly in the grammatical categories of person.

Person deixis that can be considered as 'truly' deictic are personal pronouns, first and second person pronoun. Cruse(2000: 319) states

Other than first person, known as speaker and second person, known

 as addressee, another important participant in the speech situation,

 neither speaker nor hearer are also included to person deixis, that

 are known as third person.

Pronominal systems can be considered deictic. They are; for first person, speaker inclusion(+ S); for second person, addressee inclusion (+ A); and for third person, speaker and addressee exclusion (− S, − A)(Burling and Ingram, as cited in Levinson, 1983: 69). Besides, there aretwo first person pronouns plural known as exclusive and inclusive we. Exclusive we includes the speaker and other, but excludes the addressee (+S, −A), whereas inclusive we includes the speaker, other and addressee or /+S, +A/ (Levinson, 1983: 69).

2.2.2 Place Deixis

Place deixisis defined as "the encoding of spatial location relativeto the location of the participants in the speech event". It deals with proximal (close to speaker) or distal (close to addressee) dimension (Levinson, 1983: 62).

Besides, place deixis also deals with coding time or CT and also receiving time or RT. Thus, the word there that basically means "distal from speaker's location at CT", can also be interpreted as "proximal to addressee at RT" (Levinson, 1983: 80).

Therefore, it is true that the pragmatic basis of place deixis is a psychological distance meaning physically close objects will tend to be treated by the speaker as psychologically close, and reverse (Yule, 1996: 13).

There are some pure place-deictic words in English that are differentiated by proximal and distal dimension, i.e. the adverbs here and there, demonstrative pronouns this and that, and also the verbs come and go and bring and take (Levinson, 1983: 79-84).

2.2.3Time Deixis

The predetermination of temporal points and spans relative to the time at which an utterance was spoken (or a written message inscribed) is called time deixis.As place deixis, time deixis also deals with CT and RT (Levinson, 1983: 62).

Time deixis is generally grammaticalized by the form of adverbs of time, like now, then, yesterday and of tense.Present and past tense in time deixis differentiate proximal and distal form (Yule, 1996: 15).

2.2.4 Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis deals with 'the encoding of reference to portions of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance (which includes the text referring expression) is located' (Levinson, 1983: 62).

Discourse deixis is often compared to anaphora. However, discourse deixis and anaphora are quite different from each other since discourse deixis is located in a pronoun which refers to a linguistic expression or part of the discourse itself, while anaphora is located in a pronoun which refers to the same entity as a prior linguistic expression refers to.However, discourse deixis does

not show proximal or distal, like place deixis does, but it is more like showing the token-reflexivity of a sentence (Levinson, 1983: 86).

2.2.5 Social Deixis

Levinson (1983: 63) describes social deixis as the predetermination of social differences that arerelative to participant-roles, mainly aspects of the social correlation that is possessedbetween the speaker and addressee(s) or speaker and some referent.

Social deixis is divided into two basic kinds: relational and absolute. The relational social deixis is manifested through certainrelationship: speaker and referent (addressee honorifics by referring him), speaker and addressee (addressee honorifics without referring him), speaker and bystander (bystander or audience honorifics), and speaker and setting (formality levels or social activity).On the other hand, absolute social deixis is in the form ofauthorized speaker (forms reserved for certain speaker) and authorized hearer (restriction of most title, e.g. Your Honor) (Levinson, 1983: 90-91).

3. Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Black Cat','Eleonora', and 'The Purloined Letter'

'The Black Cat' is a short-narrative of Edgar Allan Poe, which has gloomy atmosphere from the beginning up to the end. Many critics agree that it is Poe's masterpiece. It is published in 1843, and can be categorized as symbolic crime story.

The first person narrator has decided to present the facts of the past event that have terrified and destroyed him. Although he claims that he is not mad, his deeds indicate to be so. He loves and keeps animals, including a large black cat named Pluto. His wife often refers to the superstition that black cats are actually disguised witches.

The narrator becomes increasingly moody and irritable due to alcoholism. One day, when he was drunk, he seizes the cat, which bites him on the hand, in fear. In response, the narrator loses control and cuts one of Pluto's eyes out with a pen-knife. Then the narrator hanged Pluto on a tree.

After the house of the narrator set on fire, a new cat resembles Pluto appeared. When the cat tries to approach him, the narrator starts to take an axe to the cat; but he strikes his wife dead by her intervention. He hide the corpse inside the wall, thinking that no evidence of the dead.

When the policemen come to investigate, the narrator calmly cooperates; even though the police men search the cell multiple times they find nothing. Finally, a cry of the cat heard behind the wall, which disclosed the secret (www.gradesaver.com).

'Eleonora' is a short story written by Edgar Allan Poe. This story is first published in 1842 and is a romance story, though one with some supernatural elements in it, though as the narrator states in the beginning these could be madness and so the supernatural elements could simply be his madness.

The narrator lives in an isolated valley with Eleonora, his cousin and his aunt. This valley is named the valley of the many coloured grasses and is a paradise. They live there for fifteen years before 'love entered'. The conflict of the story is that Eleonora is sick and is afraid that when she leaves the valley the narrator will leave and fall in love with someone else, so he takes an oath to never marry another.

After her death though he leaves the valley and eventually falls in love with a woman. At this point Eleonora appears and gives the couple her blessing.

At the time of writing this, Poe's wifewas sick and he was living with a cousin who he would someday marry. This sort of reversal of the situation he was in seems to be a clear sign that he was at least in some way struggling with the morality of loving another. This is solved in this story, as the character is absolved of his guilt through supernatural elements (www.humanities360.com).

In the 'The Purloined Letter', the unnamed narrator is discussing with the famous Parisian amateur detective C. Auguste Dupin some of his most celebrated cases when they are joined by the Prefect of the police, a man known as G__. The Prefect has a case he would like to discuss with Dupin.

A letter has been stolen from the private sitting room of an unnamed female by the unscrupulous Minister D__. It is said to contain compromising information. D__ was in the room, saw the letter, and switched it for a letter of no importance. He has been blackmailing his victim.

The Prefect makes two deductions with which Dupin does not disagree. A month later, the prefect returns, still bewildered in his search for the missing letter. He is motivated to continue his fruitless search by the promise of a large reward, recently doubled,upon the letter's safe return, and he will pay 50,000 francs to anyone who can help him.Dupin asks him to write that check now and he will give him the letter. The Prefect is astonished but knows that Dupin is not joking. He writes the check and Dupin produces the letter. The Prefect determines that it is genuine and races off to deliver it to the victim.

Along together, the narrator asks Dupin how he found the letter. Dupin explains the Paris police are competent within their limitations, but have underestimated who they are dealing with. The Prefect mistakes the Minister D__ for a fool because he is a poet. For example, Dupin explains how an eight-year old boy made a small fortune from his friends at a game called "Odds and Evens." The boy was able to determine the intelligence of his opponents and play upon that to interpret their next move. He explains that D__ knew the

police detectives would have assumed that blackmailer would have concealed the letter in an elaborate hiding place, and thus hid it in plain sight (www.princeton.edu).
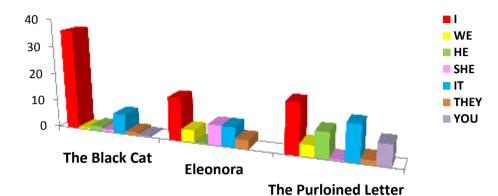
4. Analysis and Discussion of Results

The corpus of the paper is composed of three short stories; 'The Black Cat', 'Eleonora', and 'The 'Purloined Letter'. The three short stories have much in common. First of all, they all belong to Romantic Movement. Secondly, they are written by the same author; Edgar Allan Poe. Thirdly, they are told from the first person point of view. Meantime,the three texts do not share the same theme;horror for 'The Black Cat, love for 'Eleonora', detectionfor 'Purloined Letter'. The current paper focuses mainly on the study of person deixis as subjectsin Poe's 'The Black Cat'. The other two texts are only used as corpus for comparison.

Table 1demonstrates the frequency of person deixis as subjects in the corpus. It shows the number of occurrences of person deixis and their occurrences per 1000:

Table 1: Person Deixis as Subjects in the Corpus

Person Deixis	The Black Cat		Eleonora		The Purloined Letter	
	No. of Occurrences	Occurrences per 1000	No. of Occurrences	Occurrences per	No. of Occurrences	Occurrences per
I	145	36.29	38	15.57	156	18.16
WE	3	0.75	11	4.51	37	4.31
HE	7	1.75	1	0.41	80	9.31
SHE	4	1.00	18	7.37	4	0.47
IT	69	17.27	18	7.37	112	13.04
THEY	5	1.25	9	3.39	15	1.75
YOU	2	0.50	_	_	66	7.68
Total	235	58.81	95	38.62	470	54.72

Person Deixis as Subjects in the Corpus

'The Black Cat' consists of 3996 words. Itcontains 145 occurrences of the first person singularI (36.29), 3 of we (0.75), 7 of he (1.75), 4 of she (1.00), 69 of it (17.27), 5 of they (1.25), and 2 of you (0.50).'Eleonora' consists of 2441 words. It has38 occurrences of I (15.57), 11 of we (4.51), 1 of he (0.41), 18 of she (7.37), 18 of it (7.37), and 9 of they (3.39). 'The Purloined Letter' consists of 8590 words. It has156 occurrences of I (18.16), 37 of we (4.31), 80 of he(9.31), 4 of she (0.47), 112 of it (13.04), 15 of they (1.75), and 66 of you (7.68).

In the corpus,1stperson singular pronouns are overused whereas1stperson plural pronouns are underused.The frequency of the 1stperson singular Icorresponds to 36.29 in 'The Black Cat', 15.57 in 'Eleonora', and 18.16 in 'The Purloined Letter', whereas the 1stperson plural we corresponds to 0.75, 4.51, and 4.31 respectively.The frequency of 1stperson singular I is the highestin 'The Black Cat'. This high frequency could be due to the fact that 'The Black Cat' is a first person narrative. However, I is revealed to be the highly used pronoun in 'The Black Cat' when the story is compared to Poe's other two short stories.

The first paragraph of the story is an example of the high frequency counts of personal deixis I:

FOR the most wild, yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not — and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburthen my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world, plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere household events. In their consequences, these events have terrified — have tortured — have destroyed me. Yet I will not attempt to expound them. To me, they have presented little but Horror — to many they will seem less terrible than barroques. Hereafter, perhaps, some intellect may be found which will reduce my phantasm to the common-place —

some intellect more calm, more logical, and far less excitable than my own, which will perceive, in the circumstances I detail with awe, nothing more than an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects. (The Black Cat)

From the very beginning of the story, the narrator wants to show that his story is strange. It is to catch the reader's attention, to make him eager to know what wild and homely narration is. This strengths the narrator's intention that he doesn't try to persuade. The 1stperson singular I presents a highly subjective judgment of the events. Similarly, the narrator persuades the reader of his sanity and soberness[…] mad am I not - and very surely do I not dream.This reflects the narrator's tendency to be unusually focused on himself, and, more specifically, his own actions and thoughts, which contributes to the impression that he has a disorder.

Additionally, the frequency of the 1stperson plural we is found to be underusedin 'The Black Cat', and it is the lowest frequency of the three short stories. The use of 1stperson plural pronouns suggests some degree of alienation from others.This could be taken as an indication that the narrator's sense of commonality with others is less evident in the story than is the case in the other two short stories.Table 1 also shows that the occurrence of the 1st person plural pronoun we is(0.75).We is only used three times in the story. It is used inclusively as in:

We had birds, gold fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a   cat. (The Black Cat)

This is the only occasion the narrator makes use of the inclusive we with the referent I and my wife. Moreover, the second use of we is also inclusive as in the rhetorical question:

Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is Law, merely because we understand it to be such?(The Black Cat)

In the above extract, we refers to the readers, where the narrator seeks the readers' approval and tries to get in contact with them. The underuse of we indicates that the narrator doesn't express solidarity with his wife, for the togetherness of the narrator and his wife is disturbed throughout their unfortunate experience.

2nd person pronoun You is used twice, only one of them as subject:

I wish you all health, and a little more courtesy. (The Black Cat)

These walls — are you going, gentlemen? (The Black Cat)

The underuse ofyou (0.50) contributes to the impression that the narrator is unusually self-focused, and that he has little awareness of others' mental states.

Although 'The Black Cat' is told from the first person point of view, there are no personal pronouns referring back to antecedents other than the narrator. The

sparser proportions of the feminine personal pronounshe, 4 occurrences (1.00),as subject in 'The Black Cat' indicates that responsibility on the female participant's side is more or less disclaimed, for she is the object (victim) of the male narrator's cruel deeds, as in:

I suffered myself to use intemperate language to my wife. At length, I even offered her personal violence.(The Black Cat)

Goaded, by the interference, into a rage more than demoniacal, I withdrew my arm from her grasp and buried the axe in her brain. She fell dead upon the spot, without a groan.(The Black Cat)

According to Table 1, 'The Black Cat' has a high frequency of the 3rd person singular pronounit, 69 occurrences (17.27).The referents of the pronounit in 'The Black Cat' are varied, but where the personal pronoun ithas 'the cat' as its antecedent is interesting. The narrator, firstly, uses he to refer to the black cat formerlypersonified as his faithful friend, Pluto (named after 'the god of the dead'), as in:

Pluto...was my favorite…playmate…he attended me wherever I went(The Black Cat)

In the end, whenthe beast becomes the object of the domestic violence, the narrator uses non-human reference to refer to the same antecedent; by the personal pronounit as in:

One morning, in cool blood, I slipped a nose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree: --hung it with the tears streaming from my eye: hung it because I knew ithad loved me, and because I felt it had given me no reason of offence: --hung it…(The Black Cat)

Table 2 shows the dispersion of person deixis as subjects in the corpus:

Table 2: Dispersion of Person Deixis as Subjects in the Corpus

Story	Person	Dispersion
The Black Cat	I	
	WE	
	HE	
	SHE	
	IT	
	THEY	
	YOU	
Eleonora	I	
	WE	
	HE	
	SHE	
	IT	
	THEY	
The Purloined Letter	I	
	WE	
	HE	
	SHE	
	IT	
	THEY	
	YOU	

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Though the three stories are told from the 1st person, Table 2 shows that 'The Black Cat' is the richest in the use of singular 1st deixis. The occurrences of the singular 1st deixis are through of the whole story. This supports the idea thatthe narratorisunusually focused on himself, his own actions, and thoughts. Itexpresses the impression that he has a disorder.

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5. Conclusions

Person deixisas subjects in 'The Black Cat'especially Iare overused to a statistically significant extent as compared with the corpora of the two short stories'Elorona' and 'The Purloined Letter'. The use of deixis in 'The Black Cat' suggests an exclusive focus on self and its immediate environment, with no clear evidence of any attempt to engage with the others.

The high frequency of first-person pronouns in 'The Black Cat'could simply be due to the fact that 'The Black Cat'is a first-person narrative. However, Iis revealed to be the top key word even when 'The Black Cat'is compared with the other two short stories which are also first-person narratives. This reflects the narrator's tendency to beunusually focused on himself, and, more specifically, his own actions and thoughts, which may contribute to the impression that he has a disorder. In addition, his underuse of plural first-person pronouns suggests some degree of alienation from others.The narrator tends to talk unusually frequently about what he does and thinks, rather than about how other people affect him.This may further contribute to the impression that he is unusually self-focused, and that he has little awareness of others' mental states.

It could be argued that, in 'The Black Cat', the combination of the overuse of singular first-person pronouns and underuse of both plural first-person pronouns and second-person pronouns contributes to the creation of an impression of a particular kind of egocentricity.

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