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REFERENCE AND SPATIAL ORIENTATION IN “ORDINARY DISCOURSES”. *HNA* VS. *HNAK*, *TƏMM* AND *L-HĪH* IN ALGERIAN ARABIC¹

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Summary. The access to the referents of spatial deictics jointly proceeds from their inherent semantic meanings and the interlocutory relations of the verbal exchange. This premise is the starting point of the present study whose theoretical framework is Bühler's deixis model that states that the meaning of deictics depends on a “deictic center” determined by the “subjective orientation” of the interlocutors. The taking into consideration of the coordinates of this orientation leads to using one deictic or another. This theoretical viewpoint led us to consider the meaning of deictics not in terms of degrees < PROXIMAL / ± PROXIMAL-DISTAL / DISTAL > as usually done but in terms of a binary opposition between < HERE > and < NOT HERE >: the referents of < HERE > are present and accessible to the interlocutors who share a common perceptive field in a direct or imaginary way, while the reverse holds true for < NOT HERE >.

The analysis of the corpus, a set of “ordinary discourses” in Algerian Arabic, is carried out by using these notions.

Key words: Reference, spatial orientation, spatial deictics, ordinary discourses, Algerian Arabic.

INTRODUCTION

In continuation of a previous study investigating how spatial deictics work in Algerian Arabic tales (Boucherit: to be published) the present paper examines the issue in “ordinary discourses”. The theoretical framework is Bühler's deixis model, which is based on “the system of coordinates of “subjective orientation” in which the partners of a communication are caught and remain caught” (Bühler/Samain 1934/2009: 205).

Section 1 presents the theoretical framework (*deixis and spatial orientation*: § 1.1), the analytical framework (*spatial deictics and referent*: § 1.2) and the corpus (§ 1.3). Section 2 describes how the system of spatial deictics works (§ 2.1) and the role of the *instances of discourse* (§ 2.2). The conclusion reviews the uses of deictics in “ordinary discourses”.

¹ *Conventions*. “Ordinary discourses”, when in brackets, refers to the examined corpus (see § 1.3); narrative and discourse written in small letters refer to the text genres and are to be taken in the usual meaning of the terms; Narrative and Discourse with a capital letter refer to the instances of discourse defined by Benveniste (1974). To make the reading easier, the deictics and their variants are written in capital letters, except for the examples; therefore an abstract form has been retained. In the examples they are spelled phonetically as produced by the speakers. The passages pertaining to the Discourse are italicized; the ones pertaining to the Narrative are in Roman letters.

1. THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. *Deixis and spatial orientation*

According to Bühler, deictic words receive their meaning in the “deictic field of the language” (1934/2009: 175)²; they have a designation function and are related to the sphere of the person, the subject of enunciation. This is why their meaning depends on a deictic center, or *origo* (a benchmark consisting in a subject, a location and a time, namely *I-here-now*), determined by the subjective orientation of the interlocutors. The taking into consideration of this orientation leads the speaker to choose a deictic following two main modes: *demonstratio ad oculos* and *deixis am Phantasma*³.

In *demonstratio ad oculos* (direct, obvious deixis) the referents are present and within the reach of the interlocutors who share a common perceptive field. In *deixis am Phantasma* (the deixis of fiction, of memory, *in absentia*) the referents are not present in a common perceptive field but in a fictional or absent one, “reachable through memory”. The localization process of the referent is basically the same for the two modes – but in *deixis am Phantasma* the deictic field is a mental representation whereas in *demonstratio ad oculos* the deictic field is the immediate situation – hence the use of the same deictics in both modes (Bühler/Samain *id.* : 230 et 231-232).

Bühler distinguishes three large classes of deictics (personal, spatial and temporal) to which he associates manner deictics and demonstratives. These three classes are generally found in languages.

1.2. *Spatial deictics and referent*

The examined deictics are the ones that are commonly used in the Maghreb (Marçais 1977: 248-249). They are HNA [hna, ^hhna, hnāya, hōnnaya], HNAK, TƏMM [təmm, təmm, səmm; təmma, təmma, səmma; təmmak, təmmak, səmmak] and L-HĪH [l-hēh, l-hīh]⁴ for

² As opposed to the “symbolic field”. Deictic words have contextual semantic properties whereas symbolic signs have inherent properties, hence the two reference spheres distinguished by Bühler: the personal sphere, related to the deictic field, and the environmental sphere, related to the symbolic field (see Rousseau 2000 and 2004).

³ Bühler adds a third mode (not studied as such in this paper) that he considers as a subclass of the two others: *anaphora and cataphora* which refer, by transposition, to “something that has already been mentioned or, “by anticipation, to something that is about to be mentioned” (Bühler/Samain *id.* : 226).

⁴ The morphological change of deictics will not be discussed here, in particular the one concerning the augmentative form *-ya* of HNA to which an expressive value is often granted – the “ponderousness” of the sound might correspond to “an expression of corroboration and emphasis” (Marçais 1956: 483). Our data do not

static localization; when preceded by *l-* or *mān* they refer to a localization that implies a motion.

On the distance axis (that organizes the < PROXIMAL > vs. < DISTAL > opposition) they are described as regards the distance between the “cible” (the entity to be localized or moved) and the “site” (the reference entity)⁵. The distance may be apprehended:

- in an objective way: measurement of the absolute distance between the cible and the site, assessed by a norm whose properties are difficult to define since they vary;

- in a functional way: reachability of site from cible, or from cible to site, which is to be linked with other factors such as prehension and time;

- in a subjective way: expressive uses that reveal the implication or the distancing of the speaker from his interlocutor or from his utterance.

As a rule the deictic referents are distributed in a tripartite way on the axis (in reality, fictionally or by transposition). According to this distribution HNA sets the referent close to the deictic center while HNAK, TƏMM and L-HĪH set it at an undermined distance. Thus, on the distance axis only HNA is set on the < PROXIMAL > localization pole, whereas the others share the < DISTAL > localization, often according to vague criteria⁶. This leads to the < PROXIMAL > - < ± PROXIMAL > - < DISTAL > tripartition, in other words: *here, there* and *over there*.

make it possible to conclude on this point. The four cases in which an utterance including HNA could be considered as expressive (emphasis, involvement of the speaker) illustrate instead the decisive role played by intonation, since, in these cases, HNA is spoken out either in a “light” or “heavy” form.

⁵ For convenience sake I have kept the words « cible » and « site » (Vandeloise, 1986) that I usually use in my research work in French. The English words for “cible” and “site” (Vandeloise, 1986) are “figure” and “ground”, respectively (Talmy, 2000).

⁶ For example, in his description of the Arabic language spoken in Djidjelli, Marçais (1956: 578) writes that “for distal localization, spoken language uses both *l-hêh* et *l-təmm*. It seems that the former situates, without much precision, at a rather big distance while the latter indicates a more precise and closer distance, but a point that cannot be seen” (our translation). On top of the semantic differences “without much precision”, “rather big”) Marçais tries to differentiate the use of these two deictics with, the vision criterion must be retained (“a point that cannot be seen”) – however, in reality, when examining the actual uses in their linguistic context, it turns out it is not really relevant. Yet, a criterion permitting to justify the tripartite use of deictics may be singled out. Thus, Grigore (2012: 80) clearly evidences that in the system he describes for Bagdad the two deictics that share the < DISTAL > pole do not differ by their smaller or bigger distance from the deictic center but by the < LATERALITY > feature. “The meaning of *gād* is vaguer than that of *hnāk* because it indicates not only a more distal location but also a location situated laterally of the benchmark”. Note that the use of *gād* as spatial deictic is not common in the Maghreb (Marçais 1977: 249) and that it has not been collected throughout our corpus.

However, the distinction between *here* and *there* is not significant as regards their uses. For example, from a spatial point of view what would the difference be between the two adverbs in “Mister Bülher is not *here*” and “Mister Bülher is not *there*”⁷? Is it reasonable to say that the signifié of *here* is “PROXIMAL location” and the one of *there* “DISTAL location”, when both can be used even if the localization of the cible to the site does not differ? Therefore the facts will not be considered *here/there* (?) in terms of degrees, which would imply relying on an insufficiently documented semantic tripartition, but in binary terms, articulating an opposition between < HERE > vs. < NOT HERE > or, what is equivalent, between < THERE > vs. < NOT THERE >.

Keeping this in mind we can state that:

1) the referent of < HERE > is present and reachable *ad oculos* **or** *am Phantasma* for the interlocutors who share a common perceptive field. The reverse holds true for < NOT HERE >.

2) the meaning of deictics, built up within the interlocution space in which the verbal exchange takes place, depends on the spatio-temporal coordinates of those who participate in the communication and on a deictic center set by the enunciation situation and the co-text.

Those are the criteria used to analyze the tales in our previous study and the “ordinary discourses” in the present paper. The conditions in which the discourse is produced in these two text genres differ⁸ but, present in both genres, the distinction between the instances of enunciation of the Narrative and of the Discourse remain relevant. Indeed, as their “contextual semantic properties” place the deictics in the “sphere of the person” (see note 2) determining their meaning requires taking into account the enunciation instance in which they appear.

1.3. *Corpus*

Most of “the ordinary discourses” of the corpus are recordings made during field investigations carried out by myself or other researchers (see the Sources in the bibliography). They are narratives that relate daily life events and dialogues taped in situations of live communication either private (talks between interlocutors) or public (radio broadcasts based on phone-in audience participation). On top of that, two types of local

⁷ These two examples and the ensuing development are taken from Danon-Boileau (1992: 13)

⁸ Thus, the tales, which comprise very few communication situations, display few enunciative marks whereas the “ordinary discourses” rely more on the implicit conveyed by the communication situation and constantly refer to the enunciation. Yet there are no impenetrable barriers between the two text genres as shown by the monologues in the “ordinary discourses” or the dialogues in the tales.

artistic productions (a comic sketch and a film) in which, as in real life, narratives (monologues) alternate with dialogues between the protagonists, have been included in the corpus. As regards the instances of enunciation these “ordinary discourses” include some sequences that pertain to the Narrative and some that pertain to the Discourse (direct or reported).

Few spatial deictics have been found in spite of the size and diversity of the corpus. Fifty-five spatial deictics of all types were uttered by fifteen different speakers and, among those, the low use of L-HIH (two occurrences) and HNAK (three occurrences) is to be pointed out. Of note: no speakers used more than two different deictics HNA and HNAK (one speaker), HNA and L-HIH (two speakers), HNA and TƏMM (twelve speakers). In other words, when demonstrated, the spatial opposition between < HERE > and < NOT HERE > is expressed mostly by HNA vs. TƏMM

2. HOW DEICTICS WORK IN “ORDINARY DISCOURSES”

2.1. *Bipartite distribution of the system of spatial deictics*

The first fact that emerges from the study is that throughout the corpus no speakers use a system of deictics that would allow them to measure up the distance between the site and the cible in a tripartite way (see § 1.2). Whatever the instance of discourse, when a speaker uses in the **same text** more than one deictic, the distance is signified in a bipartite way, either by the pair HNA vs. TƏMM, or by the pair HNA vs. HNAK, but very seldom by the pair HNA vs. L-HIH.

2.1.1. Where it appears clearly that HNA contrasts with TƏMM

The narrative relates the trip of the speaker⁹ towards Sétif (270 km east of Algiers, the point of departure) the city her family comes from. On her way there, before reaching her final destination, she had to stop at Tizi-Ouzou (110 kms east of Algiers) because her car had broken down. Once in Sétif she spent a few days there, moved in and around the city and drove back to Algiers.

(1) ruħt f-əṣ-ṣtīf / ruħna **mənnə** b-l-əħmīs l-əṣṣəyya fə s-səyyāra – “I went to Sétif. We left **here** [Algiers] on a Thursday...”

(2) ġəwwəzna līla **təmma** u ġədwa mən dāk dəlīna **təmma** – “We spent the night there [Tizi Ouzou] and the next day we stayed **there** [Tizi-Ouzou].”

⁹ Born in Algiers (Casbah) and having lived there ever since; approximately forty years old at the time of the interview.

(3) u mən ba^cd rəht / q^cat:¹⁰ šwəyya fə-l-bər: / ya^cni h̄arəğ şīf / fə-l-bər: / q^cat: wāhdə təmn əyyām **təm̄ma** ... u wəllit l^ə-dzayər – “Then I left, I stayed for a while in the country, that is to say outside Sétif, in the countryside. I stayed **there** for about eight days... and I went back to Algiers. (Georgin, 219-227)

This sequence clearly shows the successive changes of the reference points of the deictics (Alger, Tizi-Ouzou, Sétif). With *mənna* < mən hna (1), the reference point is the place where the speaker stands, the point of origin of the movement signified jointly by *mən* and the verb “to leave” with its initial polarity. In the rest of the narrative, it is from this original location that the speaker reaches the point of reference referred to by *təm̄ma* (2) and (3).

2.1.2. Where it appears clearly that HNA contrasts with HNAK

In the following instance of Discourse (ex. 4), the events are described by the speaker¹¹ in relation to a deictic center consisting in the subjective orientation of the child the narrative is about. The locations the deictics refer to are situated in relation to the place where the child is when the speaker offers to take him for a walk in a garden, far away from where he is. The excerpt that follows is the child’s answer.

(4) ... u huwa sidna qal *la la ma-nroh-š / cala ġal cal h̄amsa candi televizjō nšuf waħd mike* ... qal *iyay nroħo h̄ēr lə-hna* ... qultlu *kima h̄abbit* ... qal *ndiw l-hobz əl-yabəs baš na^ctew l-hnək l-cašāfər yaklo u l-brakət*

“And Mister, he says: *No, no, I’m not going because at five o’ clock there’s the TV, I’m watching Mickey[a cartoon]...* He says: *You come, let’s go here [around here]...* I told him: *As you wish...* [Before we left for a walk] he said: *let’s take some stale bread so that **over there** we can feed the birds of the world and the ducks.*” (Boucherit, 2002 : 229-230).

In both cases the deictics, preceded by *lə-* and by motion verbs with initial polarity (“to leave”, “to take”), express a movement with the child as point of origin (site). With *lə-hna* the site and the cible coincide: the point of destination of the movement that leads the speaker to the child (cible) matches the point of origin, the signified of the deictic < HERE >. Conversely, with *l-hnək* the point of origin (the place where the child and the speaker are) and the point of destination of the movement (the garden) do not coincide and the deictic

¹⁰ For *q^cad-t*: frequent assimilation of the dentals [d] and [t] in final position, which phonetically amounts to a long consonant. In the word [bər:] “countryside” in which the final consonant is also long, the lengthening applies to the gemination that would have occurred had the consonant been intervocalic: [bər̄ra].

¹¹ She is from Dellys, a city on the coast, about one hundred kilometers east of Algiers and she had been living in Algiers for about thirty years at the time of the recording.

refers to a place outside the sphere of the speakers who are the deictic centers of the utterance. Its signified is < NOT HERE >.

2.1.3. Where it seems less clear that HNA contrasts with L-HIH

The opposition between HNA et L-HIH, it is not as clear cut, on the one hand because L-HIH is used only twice throughout the corpus by two different speakers, and on the other hand because the use made of HNA and L-HIH in the same sentence does not appear to articulate the opposition < HERE > vs. < NOT HERE >.

In one of the cases (ex.5) the speaker's use of spatial deictics (bi- or tripartite mode) cannot be determined since only L-HIH has been found in his narrative.

(5) *w rūhī l-hīh / tsammā lə ... l-ǧānūb / mā kāš lī yət^caššā bə ... maḥsūb mā-ydīr-š t-tcām*
“Go **there**, that is to say in ... in the South, no one is having diner with..., that is to say no one is making couscous” (= “Go there and you will see that what I am saying is true!” (Bergman, 208).

In this text the speaker¹² describes to his interlocutor the way of life of the people of the south of Algeria where, according to him, a dinner without couscous is impossible. The deictic, preceded by *lə-* and by a verb of motion refers to the arrival point (cible) of the imaginary movement whose starting point is the speakers' position (site) at the time of enunciation; it refers to a location situated outside the sphere of the interlocutors who are the deictic centers of the utterance and its signifié is < NOT HERE >.

In the other case (ex. 6), HNA and L-HIH are used in the same sentence to describe the respective position of men and women in a procession organized for the “visit the saints” during the Henna ceremony of a wedding¹³.

(6) *yəddū-hum bə-l-məzwəd wə t-tbəl wə kaḏā, wə n-nsāwīn hum yəšṭhū mənhi wə-r-rǧāl*
yəšṭhū mənnā, fārīq mənnā w fārīq mənnā w rāyhīn.

“They take them with the mezoued¹⁴ and the drum and such. The women dance on **one side** and the men dance **on the other**, one group **here** and one group **here**, as they go off”. (Bergman, 172).

¹² He is from the wilaya of Béchar region (western Algerian Sahara), about 1,150 km south west of Algiers.

¹³ One step of the traditional wedding ceremony in Algeria consists in applying henna, which symbolizes happiness, on the bride's hands (sometimes on the groom's too) and in some regions, to go to a saint's mausoleum to do so. About the use of henna see Vonderheyden (1934) and about the cult of the saints see Dermenghen (1954).

¹⁴ A traditional music instrument, a sort of bagpipe.

The different location of the two groups is first expressed by *mānhī* vs. *mānnā* then, when rephrasing to clarify the situation, only *mānnā* is used. Therefore if, as first hypothesized, *mānhī* vs. *mānnā* makes it possible to express the distance between the site and the cible by referring the deictics to < HERE > vs. < NOT HERE >, we may wonder why, in the same situation the two adverbs are not maintained. In fact if we agree that the localization process of the deictic referents relies on the interlocutor's acceptance of a point of view located inside the fiction world introduced by the speaker's narrative, we must also admit that this interpretation is made from this point of view, which then becomes the deictic center (site). Thus, the locations (cibles) of this fiction world take shape in the interlocutor's imaginary representation of the scene, engendered by the speaker's descriptions. Consequently, from this point of view, *mānhī* and *mānnā* operate in opposition not to distinguish a < HERE > from a < NOT HERE > to be referred to the deictic center, but to signify that, in the procession, the women and the men make up two separate groups – an interpretation supported by the fact that only *mānnā* is then used in the rephrasing in which two identical clauses [fārīq mānnā] are coordinated. In (6) *mānhī* et *mānnā* each indicate “a set of individuals, different one from the other” without with no need to refer one group to a < HERE > and the other to a < NOT HERE > as regards the deictic center. And this seems to be a stylistic use rather than an opposition on the distance axis. This stylistic use “neutralizes” the < HERE > vs. < NOT HERE > opposition and is similar to the one found in idiomatic expressions such as [min hna wa min hnak] that can be translated, according to needs, by “anywhere and everywhere”, “here and there”, “on the one hand, on the other hand”, “near and far” “with bricks and blocks”, where the deictics operate as synonyms as regards the < HERE > vs. < NOT HERE > spatial opposition.

Thus, when it has been possible to highlight it, the speakers' deictic system really appears to rely on a bipartite opposition.

2.2. *Instances of discourse: reference point and access to the referent*

In so far as the meaning of deictics results from the spatio-temporal coordinates of the protagonists of the communication and from the deictic center determined by their location at the time of enunciation it is important to take into consideration the instance in which the deictics occur in order to determine its role. For illustrative purpose three examples have been retained: the first pertains to the Narrative instance (ex. 7), the two others pertain to the direct and reported Discourse (ex. 8 and 9, respectively); these three examples, the preceding examples (1 to 6) and the whole of the corpus highlight the same uses.

- *Example 7* (Bergman, 350, 352). It is a narrative in which the speaker, a native of Oran (a city in western Algeria) takes his interlocutor through a virtual tour of the city – as is often the case in “ordinary discourses” more particularly in an urban environment the speaker switches between Arabic and French¹⁵.

(7_a) ... le quartier ḥamrī / anā zətt¹⁶ **təmmak** / nwurrī-l-ək wīn skənt / wīn wīn zətt ... – « ... the Hamri neighborhood. I was born **there**. I’ll show where I lived, where, where I was born ».

(7_b) ... w nrūhū l-Gambetta / Gambetta, c’est un beau quartier / ... fə nord ... nord-est d’Oran w la vue **mən təmmak** šbab / très beau ... – “ ... and we will go to Gambetta. Gambetta **it’s a nice neighborhood** ... to the north ... northeast of Oran and the view from there is beautiful, very beautiful ...”

(7_c) ... ndərbū dawra le front de mer / le front de mer nğəmməū **təmmak** barra ... - « ... we’ll do a tour of the seafront. The seafront, we’ll get together there outside ... »

- *Example 8* (Boucherit, 261). In the dialogue this excerpt is taken from, the interlocutors, both from Algiers, are discussing the socio-economic and political situation of Algeria. In the passage that includes the deictic the speaker questions his interlocutor directly.

(8) ... **hna** ... rağ^{cət} ḥukuma dahəl ḥukuma / fhəmt-ni – “... **here**... *It has become a State within the State! Do you get me?*”

- *Example 9* (Boucherit, 269). The exchange occurs between the presenter of an Algerian radio station and a listener who is calling in. The caller, a 22-year-old woman who has always lived in Bab-el-Oued (a popular district of Algiers) reports what a member of the administration said about a request made by her mother-in-law.

(9) qalu / ruḥu **təmma** ya^ctekum wəlla kayin endroit win thattu kiosque – “ They said: **go there**, if a space is available to put up a booth, they will give it to you”¹⁷.

2.2.1. Reference point and instances of discourse

Generally speaking, in the Narrative, the reference point of the deictic is a location previously mentioned in the utterance. Thus, in (7) TƏMM successively indicates three places in the city of Oran: the ḥamrī district (7_a), Gambetta (7_b) and the seafront (7_c). In

¹⁵ In examples (7) and (9), the Arabic language is written in phonetics, the French language in ordinary letters and underlined. In the translation the words originally spoken in French are underlined.

¹⁶ For [zədt] (see note 9).

¹⁷ These are small booths set up on the roadside, awarded by the administration to the widows and families of veterans, where they can sell trinkets, tobacco and newspapers.

relation to the deictic center (site) determined by the spatio-temporal location of the interlocutors at the beginning of the tour TƏMM refers to the different stops (cibles) made during the virtual tour and stands for a < NOT HERE > (the site and the cibles do not match). In contrast, in the Discourse, the reference point of the deictic is determined by the situation of enunciation. In (8) HNA refers to the place where the interlocutors stand physically and mentally at the time of enunciation; HNA stands for a < HERE > (the site and the cible match) and its referent, Algeria (taken as a geographic, social, economic and political space) can be deduced from the spatio-temporal coordinates of the location. In (9) TƏMM refers to a place known by the speakers at the time of enunciation, the office of the administration in charge of awarding booths. This place is not mentioned in the utterance and is not the place where the speakers stand: it is a < NOT HERE > (the site and the cible do not match).

2.2.2. Access to the referent and instances of discourse

The deictic referent is identified either directly by the situation of enunciation (*deixis ad oculos*), or indirectly by mentioning in the utterance an imaginary world, absent or reachable through memory (*deixis am Phantasma*). Thus, in the Narrative, as shown in example 7 where the city of Oran and the different places mentioned during the tour are not visible at the time of enunciation, the speaker reaches the referent through his memory and the interlocutor through his “constructive imagination” (Bühler/ Samain 1934/2009: 230). Conversely, in the Discourse (ex. 8 et 9), the access to the referent depends directly on the situation of communication (*deixis ad oculos*) and the localization of the referent pointed to by the deictic is determined by the “subjective orientation” of the interlocutors who share the same field of perception.

CONCLUSION

As previously indicated, the access to the referents referred to by spatial deictics proceeds both from their inherent meanings and from the interlocutory relations of the verbal exchange. This is why we emphasize the need to place the examined deictics in their original contexts and situations of enunciation in order to determine the factors that induce the speaker to use one deictic or another. Moreover, relying on Bühler’s *deixis* model led us to examine the meaning of spatial deictics in terms of the binary opposition < HERE > vs. < NOT HERE >.

The analysis has confirmed our original hypothesis on the following points:

- the system of spatial deictics highlighted by the study of the corpus is a two-term system that opposes HNA vs. TƏMM, HNA vs. HNAK, HNA vs. L-HIH – of note: the very rare occurrence of L-HIH in the corpus.

- the instance of enunciation determines the reference point of the deictic. In the Narrative the reference point is a place previously mentioned in the utterance; in the Discourse, the reference of the deictic is determined by the situation of enunciation.

- the instance of enunciation also determines the mode of access to the referent. In the Narrative, the speaker reaches the referent through deixis *am Phantasma* and in the Discourse through deixis *ad oculos*.

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