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SPATIAL DEIXIS AND INTERLOCUTION SPACE IN ALGERIAN ARABIC TALES

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Summary. Spatial deictic words are analyzed following Bühler's deixis model, taking into account their basic semantic meaning, the interlocution space and the text genre. The analysis reveals that these deictics articulate a binary opposition: < HERE > vs < NON HERE > and that their use is determined by the instances of discourse.

Key words. Spatial deixis, interlocution, narrative/discourse, tales, Algerian Arabic.

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with spatial deictic words in Algerian Arabic tales. The theoretical framework is the deixis model developed by Bühler in which *demonstratio ad oculus* and *deixis am Phantasma* are differentiated, considering the "system of coordinates of "subjective orientation" in which the partners of a communication are caught and remain caught"¹.

We first recall the principles Bühler's model are based on (§ 1.1) and characterize the text genre and the interlocution space it implies (§ 1.2). Then we present the examined spatial deictics (§ 2.1), apply the proposed framework and tools to the analysis of the tales (§ 2.2) and show that the use of spatial deictics is determined by the instances of discourse (§ 2.3). The Conclusion recaps the main points.

1. THEORY AND TERMINOLOGY: PRELIMINARY REMARKS

1.1. *The deixis model*

According to Bühler, deictic words (such as *here*, *now*) are used for designation and are to be related to the sphere of the person who is the "subject of enunciation"². The meaning of the signs thus depends on a deictic center or *origo* (a benchmark made up of a subject, a location, and a time, namely *I-here-now*) determined by the subjective orientation of the interlocutors. The taking into consideration of the coordinates of this orientation leads the speaker to use a deictic word or another according to three main modes: *demonstratio ad oculos*, *deixis am Phantasma* and anaphoric and cataphoric deixis.

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 – the expression *deixis am Phantasma* does not mean that the object the deictic refers to does not exist. As pointed out by Bühler, when a "narrator guides a listener in the realm of what is absent and reachable through memory"

¹ Bühler/Samain 1934/2009, 205 (Our translation).

² About the "theory of enunciation" and the terminology ("subject of enunciation", "instance of discourse", "énoncé", etc.) used here see Benveniste, 1974.

he does so in such a way that the listener perceives the object by using the same deictics as in *deixis ad oculos*: “in the case of the visual description of an absent object, the speaker and the listener have at their disposal the same means and resources that make it possible for an actor to render present an absent object and for a spectator to interpret what is present on stage as a mimesis of an absent object”³.

As for anaphora and cataphora (not studied in this paper) they refer, by transposition, to “something that has already been mentioned” or, “by anticipation, to something that is about to be mentioned”⁴.

Bühler distinguishes three large classes of deictics: personal, spatial and temporal, to which he associates manner deictics and demonstratives. These classes are present in most languages because of the “needs for communications”⁵.

1.2. Text Genre and Interlocution Space

The text genre examined here is composed of tales, i.e. fiction texts in which narratives and reported speech alternate.

The *narrative* is the text that results from the narration by the storyteller of a story (a series of events linked together, caused and sustained by the characters involved); it is delimited by opening and closing formulas that indicate the boundaries between fiction and reality. In this instance the storyteller transposes the narrated objects, events and processes into the space and temporality of fiction whose reference points are set by the énoncé and not by the speech act.

The characters’ interactions constitute the *reported speech*; it is part and parcel of the narrative and depends on it as regards the referents of the deictics it includes. The characters, the subjects of enunciation, are located in a unique space and temporality whose referent points are set by their speech act.

The *direct speech*, namely the interactions between the storyteller and the listener, is to be added to the fictional text; it is the link between fiction and reality. In this case, the storyteller and the listeners are located outside the fiction, in a unique space and temporality defined by their speech act.

1.1.1. The Interlocution Space

It is the space where a verbal exchange, determined by the spatio-temporal location of those who participate to the act of enunciation (whether real or fictional) is built. It implies the joint presence of the interlocutors (storyteller and listeners) in a space. This joint presence is correlated to one or several spaces where the characters or the events are to be found. Thanks to the narrative, the frameworks of participation, even if they intertwine, remain different, as well as the spatio-temporal coordinates that determine the interlocution space considered.

³ Bühler/Samain *idt.*, 230 et 231-232 (Our translation).

⁴ Bühler/Samain *id.*, 226 (Our translation).

⁵ About the “needs for communication” see Cohen & Boucherit 2010.

2. USES OF DEICTICS

2.1. SPATIAL DEICTICS AND LOCALIZATION

The deictics considered pertain to the North African Arabic language⁶. They are HNA [hna, ³hna, hnāya, hannaĵa], ʔƏMM [təmm, təmma] and LĪH for static localization; when preceded by *l-* or *mən* they refer to a localization that entails a motion (change of places).

Generally speaking they appear to organize the opposition between < PROXIMAL > vs < DISTAL > according to the distance between the *cible* (the entity to be localized or moved) and the *site* (reference entity)⁷. 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: attainability of site from cible, 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 énoncé.

About this, Philippe Marçais writes that LĪH “places without precision, at a relatively large distance” and ʔƏMM “indicates a more precise and closer point that cannot be seen”⁸. Here/there (?) is outlined the tripartition regularly retained between < PROXIMAL > - < ± PROXIMAL/DISTAL > - < DISTAL >, in other words between HNA “here”, ʔƏMM “there” and LĪH “over there”. But which value may be assigned to *here* and *there* in “Aziza is not here, and in Aziza is not there? The signified of *here* is not “near place” and that of *there* “far away place”. From a spatial point of view we must admit that they both have the same value or at least that the semantic difference is so small that either one can be used. This is why, rather than considering facts in terms of degrees leading to a ternary opposition which is not precisely determined, we have considered that spatial deictics articulate a binary opposition: < HERE > vs < NOT HERE >.

Therefore we retain that the referents of < HERE > are present and reachable *ad oculos* or *am Phantasma* for the interlocutors who share a common perceptive field. The reverse holds true for < NOT HERE >; the meaning of the deictics, built within the verbal exchange, depends on the spatial coordinates of the respective locations of the people/objects they denote relatively to a “deictic center” determined by the situation of enunciation and the context.

2.2. Illustration and explanation

The examined corpus consists in some thirty tales collected in the west of Algeria in ^cAyn-ed-Defla⁹ and Algiers¹⁰. Due to the text genre selected, the number of examples collected, about twenty, is rather small in spite of the importance of the corpus.

⁶ Marçais P. 1977, 248-249.

⁷ I have kept Vandeloise’s terminology, which I usually use in my work in French. The English words commonly used for *site* and *cible* are *ground* and *figure* respectively (see Levinson, 2003 and Talmy, 2000).

⁸ Marçais P. 1956, 578.

⁹ Boucherit & Hadj Sadok 1998-99, 113-195 et 2000-2002, 55-113.

¹⁰ Boucherit 2002, 211-223.

To illustrate how the meaning of deictics builds up we first present two tales *Lundja* (§ 2.2.1) and *Mḥamd the concern* (§ 2.2.2) where the examples are introduced in context, following the unfolding of the narrative; then we recap (§ 2.2.3) the whole set of data. In the examples the discourse is *italicized*, the narrative is in the Roman alphabet and only the parts that contain deictics (in bold types) are written in Arabic.

2.2.1. Lundja

This tale is one of the many versions of Snow White. Here, Lundja, the heroin leaves her father's house to escape her stepmother's thousand and one torments. An ogress, who has sons, adopts her. The sons want to eat her alive and she runs away. Her younger brother finds her. She goes back to her family. Again the stepmother torments her. Again, she leaves her father's house and reaches the sultan's city. He falls in love with her and marries her. Again, the father finds his daughter. Again, the stepmother interferes and makes her violate the sultan's ban of the entrance to a particular house. Lundja enters the house with her stepmother who, then, throws her into the well. Again, her brother rescues her. She returns home and things get back to the way they were ... except for the stepmother.

1) Lundja crossed the river and walked until she found a café. She stepped in and *ṣābət būha **ṭəmm** u **ḥūha** sḡir* [She met with her father and her younger brother].

ṬƏMM refers to the place [the café], previously specified in the narrative, where the characters are: meeting (verbs of motion) of the cible, Lundja, and the site, the café.

2) Then she left. She walked and walked and walked until she reached the sultan's city. The sultan let her in. He fell in love with her and married her. She spent many years there. Everything was fine until the day *ṛāḥ būha yəṭlob ḥatta oṣal **ṭəmma** liha* [her father, who had gone begging, came to her home].

ṬƏMM refers to the place, point of arrival, where the cible, the father, and the site, Lundja, meet. (verbs of motion)

3) The servants came to her and said: *waḥd ^əlmaḥlūq ṛāḥ ^əhna ...* [there is a poor wretch who is < here >].

HNA refers to the place where the speakers (the servants) and the interlocutor (Lundja) are at the same time. It refers to a static localization (noun phrase).

4) The sultan heard them and asked her: *mm^uālək yā ḡ^uziyyəl / rak təbki **hna*** [What's the matter, *Ghuziyyel* ? Why are you crying? < here >?]

HNA refers to the place where the speaker (the sultan) and the interlocutor (*Ghuziyyel*) are at the same time. It refers to a static (imperfect and "concomitant"¹¹) localization.

Remarks

- In the narrative the reference point of the deictic is a place specified by the énoncé: the café (ex. 1), the city (ex. 2); in the discourse it coincides with the speaker's time of speech: the servants (ex. 3), the sultan (ex. 4).

- In the discourse the deictic refers to a place present and reachable *ad oculos* for the interlocutors (characters) who share a common perceptive field; in the narrative, the access to the referent is developed, as the narrative unfolds, by the audience who pictures the fictional world by adopting the storyteller's point of view – Therefore the places take shape

¹¹ About this notion see Cohen 1989.

through the audience's representation, *am Phantasma*, following the descriptions provided by the storyteller.

- In the four examples, the different deictic centers make it possible to refer HNA and FƏMM to an < HERE > and their use is to be related to the instances of discourse.

2.2.2. Mḥamd the concern

Mḥamd and his companions go fetch wood in the forest. They find a mule lying on the ground. Mḥamd wants to lift it up to sell it. But nothing is more stubborn than a mule, especially if it turns out to be an ogress. There ensues a series of events. Mḥamd manages to escape the ogress. She runs after him and overwhelms him with ordeals. In order to stop them, Mḥamd marries the ogress. He has a daughter, an ogress too. He manages to free himself from their grip by killing the daughter, then the mother. But in the end the ogress takes her revenge post-mortem.

- 1) They went and cut six bundles of firewood and came back to it [the mule] and went on beating her unceasingly; but she refused to stand up. *tta l ʔllil rəgdu təmm* [They spent the night < here >].
FƏMM refers to the place (the wood) where the participants [the mule, the woodcutters] are before the énoncé. Static localization. Perfect.
- 2) They slept close to it [mule]. *gālu nbātu hna ḥatta l ʔṣṣʔbāḥ ʔnnawdōha* [They said: *Let's sleep < here > and tomorrow morning we'll put it back on its feet*].
HNA refers to the place where the speakers (Mḥamd and his companions) are at the time of the énoncé. Static localization. Imperative.
- 3) In the morning they said: *ʔggu^cdi hnāya ya baḡḡālti ...* [*Stay < here > ô my mule. Tomorrow morning I will bring a bundle of wood and lift you up*].
HNA refers to the place where Mḥamd and the mule are. Static localization. Imperative.
- 4) *ʔddāu mšaṭ o ḥarṇoṣ w ʔltām ḥəzmūhum f ʔṣ-ṣaḡra u ḥallāuhum təmm u ḡabūh huwa* [They had brought with them combs, a burnous and a turban. They tied them to a tree and brought back Mḥamd the concern with them].
FƏMM refers to the place where the events described in the énoncé unfold. Static localization. Perfect.
- 5) *raḥ yəmla hūwa u waḥd ʔlgəndūz ṣḥabōha təmm* [When he [Mḥamd] and another pupil went to fetch water, they found her [the ogress] < here >].
FƏMM refers to the place (arrival point) where the participants to the described events are when they move to meet (verb of motion) from the cible, Mḥamd/Pupil, to the site (the well), previously specified in the story.
- 6) *hiya ṣābtu təmm ḥəsbātu kəbš ḍarḃātu ʔrrzāma* [When she found him < here >, she thought it was a sheep and she hit him].
FƏMM refers to the place (arrival point) where the participants to the described events are.
- 7) *rāḥat / hiya waṣlat līh u hiya ṣābət ḡi lḥarṇoṣ, gālət ...* [She left. When she arrived over there < not here >]
LĪH refers to a place that is not the < here > of the énoncé but the arrival point of the ogress's move. Perfect.
- 8) She walked towards him and said: *ʔrwāḥi ʔrwāḥi lḡāši rāh ʔhna ...* [*Come, come this way. People are < not here >. I am going to put you in a silo and, when I leave I'll take you with me*].

In this context, the ogress must be kept out of people's sight. Mḥamd and the mule he is talking to are situated in the same place; thus, HNA refers to a place that is not the place of the énoncé. It is indeed a < not here >. Static (noun phrase).

- 9) He then lived happy for a few years. When he came back to that place [where he had killed the ogress] he said: *ḥna ḥragt ḡgūla* [It is < here > that I burnt the ogress].

Remarks.

Most of the remarks made in the analysis of *Lundja* remain valid. In the narrative the reference point is a place specified by the énoncé (ex. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7); in the discourse it coincides with the time of speech (ex. 2, 3, 8, 9). The same goes for the distinction between the *deixis ad oculos* noted in the discourse and the *deixis am Phantasma* pointed out in the narrative as well as for the distribution of deictics between the instances of enunciation: HNA (discourse) vs ḤMM and LĪH (narrative). However the opposition between < HERE > and < NOT HERE > is not expressed in the same way in the two instances. In the discourse, where only HNA is used, HNA refers to < HERE > when site and cible coincide (ex. 2, 3, 9) and to < NOT HERE > when the two entities do not coincide (ex. 8). Therefore the opposition is not explicit. Conversely, in the narrative, the opposition is formally realized by ḤMM, which stands for < HERE > (ex. 1, 4, 5, 6) and LĪH, which stands for < NOT HERE > (ex. 7).

3. SYNTHESIS

The set of data collected in the corpus is summarized in the table below and illustrated by a few examples taken from other tales.

LOCALIZATION	NARRATIVE	DISCOURSE
< HERE >	HNA (ex. 1)	HNA (ex. 2)
	ḤMM (ex. 5)	
< NOT HERE >	LĪH (ex. 6)	HNA (ex. 3, 4)

- 1) *yā šāri lhamm b ḡddārḥam* - Who wants to buy concern with dirhams?¹²

My daughter, it is no longer possible for me to live with you. Here, take this, so that you do not die of starvation. w ḥḡar l ḡblād mā hi **hna** [And he emigrated to a far away country.]

HNA refers to the place where the speakers (the king and his daughter) are and from where the king leaves (verb of motion) for a place which is not the place where the characters are. Perfect. Negative sentence.

- 2) *lfūl* - The beans¹³.

ḥatta lwaḥd ḡnnḥār, rāḥ ḡlwaḥd ḡḡiḥa fīha lfūl mazīrūc ḡntāc ḡnnās u ḡāl fī ḡalbo : nḡibhum ḡhna w ḡrriyyaḥ mənhum [Until the day he walked by a place where there was

¹² Boucherit & Hadj Sadok 1998-99, 168.

a field of beans that belonged to other people. He thought: *I'll take them < here > and thus I'll be safe*].

HNA refers to the place, previously specified in the narrative, where the speaker-interlocutor is when he speaks and towards which he will lead (verb of motion) his wife and his children. Imperfect.

3) *ʿAziza's legend*¹⁴.

naḍet sbahh yimma-h u t-ḥaus fə **d-dar**. qatlu / ya bəlgasəm qatlu / moḥammed l-bareh mathelš qalhā / man^carf qalhā / əstənnay mba^cd qalhhā / **roḥo** ^cand l-ḡiran **hənnaya** nəsaqsiwa [In the morning, her mother got up and looked for him [Mohamed, her son] in the house. She told him: *Ô Belgasem* [her husband and Mohamed's father]. She told him: *Mohamed did not come back home yesterday*. He told her: *I don't know*. He told her: *Wait*. Then he said to her: "*Let's go to the neighbors' < not here > and ask.*"

At the time of speech the interlocutors are in the same place [the house], previously specified in the narrative; **hənnaya** refers to another place, the one where the neighbors are. It refers to a < not here >, which is confirmed by the verb of motion before the deictic.

4) *mḥamd ʿlhamm - Mhamd the concern*.

HNA = < NOT HERE > - Discourse (see § 2.2.2, ex. 8).

5) *ššīh w ʿlʿḡūz – The old man and the old woman*¹⁵.

ḡī ya^ctək gāl ʿlha huwa mā tqīsīš ʿr^omād ʿla šaṭṭ ʿššə^cba wəllāt ma tqīsu ḡī **təmm** [He only had to tell her not to throw the ash on the edge of the ravine for her to resolutely keep throwing it **there**]

FƏMM refers to the spatial landmark previously introduced in the narrative, and is equivalent to a < HERE >.

6) *mḥamd ʿlhamm - Mhamd the concern*.

LĪH = < NOT HERE > - Narrative (see § 2.2.2., ex. 7).

Note that for LĪH only one occurrence has been collected throughout the corpus.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the examined data allows us to conclude that:

- the distinction between the variants is not relevant: the use of heavy forms (*hnāya*, *hənnaja*, *təmma*) does not subjectively indicate that the speaker is distancing himself from the interlocutor or the interlocutor's speech.

- having to deal with a noun phrase or a verbal phrase (whether the latter includes a verb of motion or not) is not relevant;

- the verbal aspect is not relevant; as expected, in the narrative, the verb is perfective, in the discourse it is imperfective or in the imperative form.

- the opposition < HERE > vs < NOT HERE > appears in the discourse when HNA is used but it is not made explicit formally; in the narrative it is expressed through the opposition between FƏMM < HERE > et LĪH < NOT HERE > but, given the unique occurrence of LĪH, this may be due to the examined corpus.

¹³ Boucherit & Hadj Sadok 2000-02, 78.

¹⁴ Boucherit 2002, 213.

¹⁵ Boucherit & Hadj Sadok 1998-99, 122.

- the relevance pertains to the instance of enunciation and, indeed, it appears that HNA is used (except once § 3, ex. 1) in the discourse while FƏMM and LĪH are only used in the narrative.

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