

DEICTIC FUNCTIONS OF INTERJECTIONS IN CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. This article examines the deictic function of interjections from a pragmatic and cross-linguistic perspective. Interjections are approached not only as markers of emotional expression but also as linguistic signs that index participants, animate entities, and communicative intentions within discourse. Drawing on theoretical frameworks of linguistic sign theory and deixis, the study analyzes emotional, imperative, and vocative interjections in Uzbek, English, and Russian. Special attention is paid to imperative–vocative interjections used to address humans, animals, and birds, as well as to onomatopoeic forms that activate presupposition through contextual interpretation. The analysis demonstrates that interjections function as deictic devices by pointing to the speaker, the addressee, or the sound-producing object, and that their deictic force becomes fully interpretable only within discourse context. Cultural and pragmatic factors influencing the use of interjections are also discussed, revealing language-specific patterns of evaluative and personal deixis. The findings contribute to the understanding of interjections as multifunctional pragmatic units and highlight their role in the interaction between emotion, deixis, and culture.

Keywords: interjections, deixis, pragmatics, discourse analysis, cross-linguistic study.

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается дейктическая функция междометий с прагматической и сопоставительно-лингвистической точки зрения. Междометия интерпретируются не только как средства выражения эмоций, но и как языковые знаки, индексирующие участников коммуникации, одушевлённые объекты и коммуникативные намерения в дискурсе. Опираясь на теоретические положения теории языкового знака и дейксиса, в исследовании анализируются эмоциональные, побудительные и вокативные междометия в узбекском, английском и русском языках. Особое внимание уделяется побудительно-вокативным междометиям, используемым при обращении к людям, животным и птицам, а также онотопозитическим формам, активизирующим пресуппозицию в процессе контекстуальной интерпретации. Анализ показывает, что междометия функционируют как дейктические средства, указывая на говорящего, адресата или объект, производящий звук, и что их дейктическая сила становится полностью интерпретируемой лишь в рамках дискурсивного контекста. Также рассматриваются культурные и прагматические факторы, влияющие на употребление междометий, что позволяет выявить языково-специфические модели оценочного и личного дейксиса. Полученные результаты способствуют более глубокому пониманию междометий как многофункциональных прагматических единиц и подчёркивают их роль во взаимодействии эмоции, дейксиса и культуры.

Ключевые слова: междометия; дейксис; прагматика; дискурс-анализ; сопоставительное исследование

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada undov soʻzlarning deyktik funksiyasi pragmatik va qiyosiy-lingvistik nuqtayi nazardan tahlil qilinadi. Undov soʻzlar nafaqat emotsional ifoda vositalari, balki nutq jarayonida ishtirokchilarni, jonli obyektlarni hamda kommunikativ niyatlarni indekslovchi til birliklari sifatida talqin etiladi. Til belgisi nazariyasi va deyksisga oid nazariy yondashuvlarga tayangan holda, tadqiqotda oʻzbek, ingliz va rus tillaridagi emotsional, buyruq-undov va murojaat (vokativ) undovlar tahlil qilinadi. Xususan, insonlar, hayvonlar va parrandalarga murojaatda qoʻllaniladigan buyruq-vokativ undovlar hamda kontekstual talqin orqali presuppozitsiyani faollashtiruvchi taqlidiy (onomatopoeik) shakllarga alohida eʼtibor qaratiladi. Tahlil natijalari undov soʻzlar soʻzlovchi, tinglovchi yoki tovush manbasiga ishora



qiluvchi deytik vositalar sifatida faoliyat yuritishini hamda ularning deytik kuchi faqat nutqiy kontekst doirasida to'liq namoyon bo'lishini ko'rsatadi. Shuningdek, undov so'zlarning qo'llanishiga ta'sir etuvchi madaniy va pragmatik omillar muhokama qilinib, baholovchi va shaxs deytisining tilga xos modellari aniqlanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari undov so'zlarni ko'p funktsiyali pragmatik birliklar sifatida anglashga xizmat qiladi va ularning emotsiya, deytis hamda madaniyat o'rtasidagi o'zaro aloqadagi rolini yoritadi.

Kalit so'zlar: undov so'zlar; deytis; pragmatika; diskurs tahlili; qiyosiy tadqiqot.

It is well established that a word is not merely a conventional sign expressing a concept, but also a linguistic unit that reflects the national and cultural characteristics of a particular ethnos. Interjections are not an exception in this regard. As linguistic units, they embody both emotional and cultural meanings embedded in language use¹.

Interjections not only convey a speaker's emotional state but also directly point to the experience of that state and, indirectly, to the cultural context in which the utterance occurs. In such cases, interjections perform a **deictic function**, linking language to participants in discourse.

Interjections are signs directly connected with the human subject who produces them. Gorskiy (as cited in Russian linguistic tradition) classifies signs into two major groups:

1. signs that have a causal or determinative relationship with the object they denote;
2. signs that do not possess such a determinative relationship².

Maslova (2008) defines a sign as *"a perceptible entity that provides the perceiver with information both about itself and about another entity beyond the sign itself"* (p. XX).

Similarly, Panfilov (1977) emphasizes that a sign is a materially perceivable object—an event, phenomenon, or action—that functions in cognition and communication as a representative of other objects, their properties, or relations, and serves to transmit information or knowledge³.

Thus, language as a system of signs not only denotes referents but also describes and points to them. This pointing function constitutes the essence of **deixis**⁴.

The deictic nature of interjections becomes especially evident in emotional discourse. Consider the following example:

– Ой, я так беспокоилась! ... Вы мой спаситель.

(Vishnevsky, *Repetition of Fate*)

In this passage, the interjection *Oй* not only expresses an emotional reaction but also points to the experiencer of the emotion—a human participant in the discourse. The interjection thus functions as an indicator of **personal deixis**.

According to Davlatova (2018), emotive interjections such as *oh, eh, e, voy, ohho, ura, dod, and aw* directly express the speaker's emotional state. Their deictic function is determined by the type of emotion they index⁵.

This is also evident in English discourse:

"Aw, honey," said Stanton. (Furnas, *Primary Colours*)

¹ Худойберганава Д. Матнинг антропоцентрик тадқиқи. –Тошкент: Фан, 2013. – Б. 48.

² Горский Д.П. Логика. – М., 1963. – С. 14–15.

³ Qarang. Nurmonov A. Struktur tilshunoslik: ildizlari va yo'nalishlari. – Andijon, 2006. – 182 b.

⁴ Панфилов В.З. О гносеологических аспектах проблемы языкового знака // Вопросы языкознания. – М., 1977. – № 2. – С. 3–14.

⁵ Давлатова Р. Ўзбек тилининг дейктик бирликлари. Филол.фан.докт. (DSc) ... дисс. автореф. Тошкент, 2020. – Б. 85.



Here, *aw* indicates emotional involvement and indexes the speaker's subjective stance toward the addressee.

Babaytseva (2010) distinguishes three major types of interjections:

1. **emotional-evaluative** (e.g., *Ух мы!*, *Бот ме на!*);
2. **emotional-imperative** (e.g., *Т-и-и!*, *Цыц!*);
3. **etiquette formulas** (e.g., *Спасибо!*, *Не за что*).

Imperative interjections demonstrate a particularly strong deictic function, as they not only express emotion but also regulate behavior:

-III-и-и, whispered Mariam. (Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*)

The interjection *и-и-и* indexes both the speaker as an intentional agent and the addressee as the target of the command, signaling the need to stop an action.

In languages of different typological systems—Uzbek, English, and Russian—the deictic function is especially salient in imperative–vocative interjections used to call or drive away animals and birds:

- **Uzbek:** *beh-beh*, *tu-tu*, *chu*, *cho'*, *qurey-qurey*, *ma*
- **English:** *baa*, *bow-wow*, *quack*, *moo*, *meow*, *oink*, *cock-a-doodle-doo*
- **Russian:** *кис-кис*, *давай*, *но*

These interjections possess deictic force because they directly index the intended target of the utterance (animal or bird). For instance, Uzbek *tu-tu* points to a chicken, while English *cock-a-doodle-doo* indexes a rooster. In literary discourse, onomatopoeic interjections may simultaneously activate deixis and presupposition:

Dupur-dupur-dupur... (Murod, *Ot kishnagan oqshom*)

The reduplicated form conveys the sound produced by galloping horses. From the context, the presupposition “*The horses’ hooves produced a ‘dupur-dupur’ sound*” is inferred. While the presupposition disappears outside the context, the interjection itself continues to index the sound-producing object, thus retaining its deictic function. When imperative–vocative interjections are used to address people, they create **personal deixis**, which becomes fully interpretable only within context:

–*Menga*, *o'rgatma*, *o'v!* (Hoshimov, *Dunyoning ishlari*)

– *Эй, мы!* (Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*)

“*Hey! Why you got to put cuffs on me?*” (Major, *Dirty Bird Blues*)

In these examples, interjections such as *o'v*, *эй*, and *hey* index the addressee and simultaneously express the speaker's evaluative attitude, often carrying a negative pragmatic coloring. In Uzbek linguistic culture, interjections such as *ey*, *hov*, *hoy*, *hay*, *hey*, and *huv* may function as substitutes for personal names in spousal communication. This usage reflects traditional norms of politeness and speech etiquette. As noted by G'ulomov (1996), such interjections may either precede vocatives or function independently as forms of address, thereby assuming a deictic role⁶.

Importantly, the use of these interjections does not necessarily imply negative evaluation; rather, their pragmatic interpretation depends on context and communicative intent. Karimova's (2015) observations indicate cross-cultural differences in the use of curses and vulgarisms. In English, vulgar expressions such as *Damn!* and *Hell!* are classified as interjections and frequently replace traditional curse formulas. In Uzbek, by contrast, curses and insults often appear as sentence-like units or in combination with interjections (e.g., *Voy la'nati!*, *He bachchag'ar!*)⁷.

These forms also perform a deictic function by indexing the target of negative evaluation.

⁶ Гуломов А., Асқарова М. Ҳозирги ўзбек адабий тили. – Тошкент: Ўқитувчи, 1987. – Б. 151.

⁷ Karimova Z.G'. Ko'rsatilgan tadqiqot. – Б. 16-17.



Conclusion. The analysis demonstrates that interjections in discourse generate multiple types of deixis:

1. **personal deixis**, referring to human participants;
2. **animate deixis**, referring to animals and birds through imperative–vocative forms.

Thus, interjections function not only as markers of emotional expression but also as pragmatic devices that anchor utterances to participants, objects, and cultural norms within communicative contexts.

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