

Bystander deixis*

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1. *Introduction*

The aim of this contribution is to discuss non-standard speech forms of Romani and other languages in the larger context of bystander deixis, a subcategory of social deixis. First I will propose a three-way classification of instances of bystander deixis and illustrate them with examples from Romani and several other languages across the globe. The second part is concerned with the contextual factors that must have a place in a discourse model that wants to be able to handle linguistic manifestations of bystander deixis.

Due the fact that Romani has typically been used for in-group communication, this language presents a particularly rich source of information in the area of secret languages and other forms of bystander deixis. Moreover, as is also made abundantly clear in this volume, many jargons, trade varieties, secret languages and other more or less non-standard speech varieties have borrowed extensively from the Romani lexicon. It will appear that bystander deixis is a universally attested phenomenon which is not restricted to situations in which speakers wish to communicate without being understood by others.

2. *Bystander deixis*

Since linguistic expressions are always used by people at a particular time and place, each language has devices to integrate contextual information. But besides the classical threesome of person, time, and place deixis, two more deictic categories have been introduced in the last couple of decades: [1] discourse deixis (which concerns references to portions of the surrounding discourse) and [2] social deixis, which is concerned "with the grammaticalization, or encoding in language structure, of social information" (Levinson 1987: 93). Bystander deixis is usually regarded as a subcategory of social deixis (Levinson 1987:

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89-94) and subsumes a variety of linguistic phenomena such as hapology, avoidance styles and secret languages.¹

Although speech act theories usually take into account only two parties of the verbal exchange (speaker S and addressee(s) A), there are many situations in which the form of S's utterance is co-determined by the presence of sanctioned or non-sanctioned bystanders who are within earshot of the speaker. Roughly speaking there are three kinds of situations in which bystanders are more or less an integral part of the speech event.²

[a] indirect communication
the speaker's utterance is not so much directed to the (apparent) addressee, but rather to someone else present at the speech situation;

[b] hiding (part of) the message
due to the presence of certain bystanders the form of the utterance is changed so that only the addressee will be able to fully understand its contents; that is, (part of) the message is communicated in such a way that bystanders will not be able to understand the full content of the utterance (negative accommodation);

[c] politeness and deference
the Speaker changes the form of the utterance to show respect or politeness for certain bystanders (positive accommodation).

Each of these situations is illustrated below with examples from various languages, including Romani (mostly taken from Kenrick 1979).

2.1 Type [a] situations: indirect communication

Although forms of indirect communication probably occur in most if not all language societies, it has been argued that there are societies in which they constitute an integrated mode of verbal interaction. For example, Morgan (1991: 424) writes: "Fisher (1976) and Reisman (1974) report that in the Caribbean, ad-

1 On social deixis see also e.g. Fillmore (1975: 76) and Anderson & Keenan (1985: 270-277). Although I will mainly deal with manifestations of bystander deixis in the form of the utterance (i.e. as reflected in the lexicon, the phonology and the morpho-syntax), it is important to emphasize that "how something is said is part of what is said" (Hymes 1972: 59). Issues that are more directly related to the intention and interpretation of speech acts will mostly remain undiscussed.

2 Cf. Hymes (1972: 58-60), Comrie (1976), Brown & Fraser (1979: 45), Clark & Carlson (1982: 332 fn.2), Allan (1986b), Clark (1992), Clark & Schaefer (1992a, 1992b).

dressing remarks to (or about) a person within his/her hearing but through a "sham receiver" is a common practice [note omitted - JR]. The speaker avoids responsibility for the audience's assignment of intentionality by obviously and strategically providing conflicting symbols and signs. In Africa and the Caribbean, indirect communication occurs in contexts and within norms which all members of the society recognize as appropriate or inappropriate."

The following story (from Morgan 1991: 434) is a typical example of this kind of bystander deixis, in which the person being talked to is not the real addressee:

- (1) I was talking to some close women friends of mine when another close friend of mine they hadn't met, Dorothea, joined us. Well, Dorothea and I have been friends for years, but my other friends don't know her as well as I do. Anyway, we were all sitting around talking about how our lives have changed and Dorothea said "One thing I like about my life is that I don't have to have any babies if I don't want to. I think any woman who has more than two kids is crazy and needs her head examined." Now, no one said anything but two of my friends have four kids a piece and one of them was pregnant with her third child. Well, a little later on, after we had been drinking and laughing a bit, I was talking to one of the girls and Dorothea was sitting nearby. So my girlfriend says very loudly so that everyone could hear "I'm sorry that I have so many kids. I guess women like me just don't have any sense and should just forget it and have our tubes tied!" I was so embarrassed that I didn't say anything.

Consider also the following example (taken from Mulcahy 1979: 16-17), which involves members of the Spanish Gitano community; as a matter of fact this fragment also contains an example of type [b] bystander deixis, *hiding (part of) the message*, which is discussed in more detail below (*Caló* is the secret language of the Spanish Gitanos):

- (2) [In the story in question], a Gitano is pursued into the Gypsy *barrio* by a pair of Guardia Civil, who arrive at his house only moments after he himself has. Upon his arrival, the Gypsy decides to hide temporarily within shouting distance of his home and instructs his wife to meet the police and to advise when and if the coast is clear so he can come out of hiding and return home. With the husband safe in hiding, the wife receives the policeman in front of her house and is asked where her husband is. She replies that he is working. They respond by asking his name, to which she replies, 'Juan, mi marido se llama Juan Najelas'. Juan, my husband is called Juan Najelas'. The officers of the law reply that they would like to speak with him and request that she send someone to fetch him. She shouts to a nearby Gypsy boy and instructs him, '¡u conoces a mi marido "Juan Najelas", pues que vayas a buscarle y dile que los Señores Hundo lo están buscando', you know my husband "Juan Najelas", well go tell him that the Señores Hundo are looking for him'. Now of course the *caló* verb *najelar* means to run or escape, and *hundo* is short for *hundanares* or *hunyunares*, i.e., Guardia Civil, both terms being unintelligible to the police. The husband gets the message and makes himself scarce very quickly.

The point is here, of course, that the woman pretends to talk to the nearby boy, whereas in reality she is telling her husband to escape.

Sometimes instructions can also be categorized as a form of bystander deixis. A case in point is the way Walbiri boys are taught the secret language or *tjiliwiri* speech as part of their integration into ritual life (Walbiri is an Australian language). According to Hale (1971: 474) "[t]he novices are exposed to rapid dialogues between guardians. In these dialogues, one guardian speaks *tjiliwiri* while the other answers, or rather interprets the message, in Walbin."³

There are also communities in which the presence of a third party may be a prerequisite, as when the speaker wants to interact with a person of the opposite sex. Consider this remark about the Cuiva tribe of Columbia (Kerr 1977: 161): "When a conversation is mixed, women speak through their husbands to another man, and men speak through their wives to another woman."

In sum, in situations of Type [a], *indirect communication*, the bystander is the person to whom the utterance is actually addressed and without whom the utterance would be pragmatically marked.

2.2 Type [b] situations: *hiding (part of) the message*

There are several ways to hide (part of) one's message from others who are present at the speech situation: word substitution, the (excessive) use of jargon, a special style or language variant, a secret or foreign language.

The simplest form of word substitution are probably "ad hoc" or "on-the-spot" substitutions, as when certain entities are referred to as "you-know-who/what" ("Is it true that you-know-who has left his wife?"). Kenrick (1979: 118) contains an example of substitution where English Romani is used "as a secret language by Rom to conceal what they are saying from other Gypsies. Thus *you chopped the grai, mush?* which literally means 'did you exchange the horses, mate?' is used, by previous agreement, to mean 'did you steal the chickens?'"

The deliberate and excessive employment of jargon is a slightly more sophisticated strategy that is typically found in certain subcultures and professions (among thieves, for examples, but also e.g. teenagers, medical doctors, car mechanics).

A more elaborate and systematic strategy to prevent bystanders from partly or fully understanding the propositional content involves the use of secret languages, which are often found in the context of ritual events such as rites of passage, hunting expeditions, and religious ceremonies. Consider, for example, this citation from Foley (1986: 42):

3 For the way Romani English is learned, see Kenrick (1979: 118-119).

(3) While hunting, the Yimas prohibit the uttering of words denoting the animals being hunted, for fear that the latter will hear the hunter's plans and conceal themselves. Laycock (1969) reports a similar prohibition and rationale among the Buin of Bougainville. Clans among the Kuman are also said to have secret languages which are used in hunting expeditions (Laycock 1977). The justification provided here is that men of other clans must not learn of the hunters' plans.

The special language of initiated Walbiri men (*tjiliwiri* or 'up-side-down Walbiri') mentioned above may also serve as an example here. In this language each noun, verb and pronoun is replaced by an antonym to disguise the contents from uninitiated bystanders. Thus, the expression 'I am short' would actually mean 'You are tall'.⁴

However, one can also find examples of such languages in less exotic places (from the author's perspective). For instance, the fishermen from Imuiden (a small fishing port on the coast of North-Holland) use a special language in the presence of e.g. competing fishermen from nearby villages such as Katwijk. To keep these people in the dark about the size of the catch they pronounce the syllables backwards while leaving the inflectional ending of the verb in tact. Thus, *vang-en* catch-Inf 'to catch' becomes *gnav-en*. This secret language, referred to as *omgekeerd praten* 'reverse talk', is now on the decline but it was very popular between the late 19th century and the end of the second world war.

Notice that in more "exotic" cultures bystanders may also include animals (see Foley's citation above) and supernaturals. The Chinese and the Marsh Arabs, for instance, are reported to call their young children by such names as "Mud" or "Pig" to avert the attraction of evil spirits that could harm their children's health (Maxwell 1983: 182).

Due to the in-group character of Romani and the often marginal status of Romani life and culture, it is not difficult to conceive why Romani words and phrases have made their way into secret languages and other forms of non-standard speech variants. Indeed the Romani language as such often serves as a secret language and many Roma believe it is important that the Romani language itself should be concealed, since "for them the language is so secret that they cannot use it in public to say something that they do not want the Gajé present to understand" (Kenrick 1979: 117). Since the relationship between (Para-)Romani and secret languages is discussed in great detail elsewhere in this volume by Peter Bakker, I will only give one other example in which Romani (or rather a Romani word) is used to hide the meaning for a non-sanctioned bystanders (from Kenrick 1979: 117):

4 It is appropriate to mention here that the Walbiri strongly requested "... that none of the knowledge be discussed with uninitiated Walbiri men or with Walbiri women and children" (Hale 1971: 472).

- (4) [...] the Gypsy concerned was in the town hall applying for planning permission to place his trailer on some land he had bought. Stumped by a question from the council solicitor, he turned to his wife for prompting. She said just one word, *ker*, and her husband spoke out: 'I want to settle down and build a bungalow!' Even those who heard the prompt, probably thought the woman was saying 'care' and not the Romani word for a house. [note omitted - JR]

The fact that the woman uses a word that was probably not recognized as a "foreign" word brings in another aspect of this type of bystander deixis, namely that it may be the case that the speaker does not want the bystander to realize that (part of) the message is communicated in a secret code. According to Bakker & Van der Voort (1991: 39), this is precisely the reason why various forms of Para-Romani came into existence (i.e. languages in which a Romani lexicon is used with the phonology and morpho-syntax of the host language): the speaker uses Romani words, but since grammar and sounds are familiar to the bystander, the latter may still believe that he is listening to (a peculiar dialect of) the local language. Notice, incidentally, that Jenisch, like other secret languages, has a special term to refer to bystanders who are not supposed to hear what is being communicated (Mairas, this volume).

Sometimes the (non-foreign) secret language has morphological and phonological rules that are not part of the standard grammar. For instance, the secret language of teenagers of the Western Torres Straits involves "inserting after each syllable in a word an additional syllable beginning with *k* and repeating the vowel of the preceding syllable. Thus *yawo* 'goodbye' becomes, in this teenager secret language, *yakawoko*. ..." (Dixon 1980: 68). And to give an example concerning the phonological component: the secret language of the Lardil tribe *Damin* has four nasalized clicks that are not part of the conventional inventory of everyday Lardil (Dixon 1980: 66).

2.3 Type [c] situations: politeness and deference

In situations of Type [c] the form of the utterance is changed out of respect or politeness for persons who are within earshot. The so-called *avoidance styles* in Australian languages are a case in point. In all Australian aboriginal cultures there are certain kin relations that require special respectful linguistic and non-linguistic behavior. These relations typically involve a man's in-laws (with the notable exception of a man's wife's sisters), especially a man's mother-in-law, with whom he has to avoid all contact (at least traditionally).⁵

5 Notice that in many cultures across the globe it is more respectful to be silent than to speak (see, for instance, Basso 1970 and Darnell 1991).

For instance, in Guugu Yimidhirr society a man and his mother-in-law do not sit in one another's presence, do not look at each other, approach one another, or stand face to face. Verbal interaction with other taboo-relations such as brother-in-laws is allowed, but then the man has to use the special *avoidance style*, which involves the use of an entirely distinct vocabulary. Furthermore the respectful language of the Guugu Yimidhirr is characterized by "a deliberately subdued voice, drawing out words and dropping into a near whisper. At the same time it is impolite to attempt physical proximity with one's in-laws; instead one *diili yirrgaalga* or *wurrin yirrgaalga* — that is, speaks "sideways" or "crosswise," neither facing one's interlocutor nor, if it can be avoided, addressing him or her directly" (Haviland 1979: 217, 234).

The point to be made here is that this avoidance style is not only used in direct communication (say between a man and his father-in-law), but also in the presence of a taboo relative. Thus the strictly defined respectful style of the Australian aboriginal communities is another example of the effects bystanders may have on the form of the utterance. In this case the polite variant is rather strictly defined, but in many cultures it is much more difficult to draw a hard and fast line between the "normal style" and the polite variant.

Cases of this kind of bystander deixis, where the form of the utterance is changed to show respect for certain people present in the speech situation, can of course also be found among the Rom. For example, it is offensive to use explicit sexual terminology in the presence of the older generation. It was already noted that in many cultures across the globe not to speak is in fact one of the most common ways to show respect (cf. footnote 5). This is also what we find, for instance, in the Romani-English speaking community, where children are hardly permitted to talk in the presence of adults (Kenrick 1979: 118).

As a final example of positive accommodation, let us take a situation in which a monolingual Englishman joins a group of Dutch colleagues who are having a conversation in their own language but who can also speak English. When it is clear that the Englishman wants to join the conversation, the Dutch will soon switch to English. A somewhat different yet related kind of situation is described by Kenrick (1979: 115), who writes: "If a Gypsy is in, e.g. a cafe and thinks that someone at the table is also a Romani, he will slip a word of Romani into the conversation. For this purpose, he will often use a Romani word that is identical with an English word so that if the other person is a Gajo, he can rephrase the remark as an English sentence and not give away that *he* is a Gypsy."

2.4 Summary

The situations described in sections 2.1-2.3 clearly demonstrate that bystanders can play a significant role in speech events. In situations of Type [a] — *indirect communication* - bystanders are the actual addressees; in situations of Type [b] — *hiding (part of) the message* — their presence causes S to resort to one of various strategies to hide the propositional content from them; and in situations of Type [c] — *politeness and deference* — bystanders are the reason why S changes the form of his or her utterance to show respect or politeness. This three-way typology of bystander deixis gives only a rough characterization, of course; further research will undoubtedly prove that finer distinctions can or should be made.

3. Other contextual factors

Although the presence of a sanctioned or non-sanctioned third party (besides S and A) is an essential element of bystander deixis, it is by no means the only factor that needs to be taken into consideration to account for linguistic manifestations of bystander deixis. I will argue below that we must have a description of the speech situation which not only includes a specification of the relevant sociocultural properties of bystander B, but also those of speaker S and addressee(s) A. Furthermore such a description should also contain information about the setting in which the speech act takes place and the topic of discussion. The following simplified model of a speech event may be helpful for a better understanding of the sections below (cf. also Rijkhoff 1995, which formed the basis for this contribution and which contains a somewhat more elaborate version of this model):

Speech_Event: Discourse + Purpose + [P₁ & P₂ ... P_n]
 Discourse: Turn₁ - Turn₂ ... Turn_n
 Turn₁: Speech_Act₁ - Speech_Act₂ ... Speech_Act_n
 Speech_Act₁: Sentence + [S=P .. & A=P B=P ..]
 Sentence: predicate + arguments +
 adverb(ial)s

In this model the speech event is characterized by a particular kind of discourse (e.g. lecture, small talk, interrogation, sales talk), which has a purpose and which involves a number of people (P). For the sake of the argument we will assume that each discourse simply contains a series of turns, which consist of one or more speech acts, involving at least Speaker S, Addressee(s) A and possibly Bystander(s) B. Speech act participants can be identified at the highest

level, which contains a description of all entities (including their sociocultural properties) that are somehow relevant for the form and proper interpretation of the utterance. At the deepest level we find a formal representation of the sentence which consists of a verbal or non-verbal predicate plus argument(s) and possibly one or more sentence adverb(ial)s.

3.1 Sociocultural properties of the Bystander

To account for all three major types of bystander deixis we must of course first of all specify the bystander's pragmatic role in the speech event and/or B's relevant features that cause speaker S to change the form of his or her utterance.

The first type of bystander deixis, *indirect communication*, seems least problematic in this respect in that B's sociocultural properties are usually not very important, so that only B's role in the non-linguistic context of the utterance should be specified. The main reason to include bystanders in the description of the speech situation in the case of indirect communication is that, although the speaker is facing one party when uttering his/her message (the apparent addressee or "sham receiver"), (s)he is actually directing his or her utterance to another party (the apparent bystander), who is the addressee in the pragmatic sense.

In cases of bystander deixis of the second type, *hiding (part of) the message*, B's sociocultural properties do play an important role, but the actual reason why S chooses to express (part of) the utterance in an unintelligible form for B can be due to one of a wide variety of sociocultural factors, such as whether or not B is a Gajo (ethnicity) or belongs to a different age group (as in the case of the secret language of teenagers); also e.g. whether B is regarded as a threat to the business interests of S and/or A (as in the case of the fishermen from Ilmuiden) or has been initiated (as in the case of *fjilwiri speech*), in which case sex and age play a prominent role. Note that age and sex also play an important role in the acquisition of a secret or ritual language. Romani English (also known as Angloromani; see Grant, this volume), for example, is not taught to young children until the age of six, at which point the girls learn the language from the younger women and the boys from the younger men (Kenrick 1979: 118).

In sum anything that places B outside a certain in-group may be a reason for the speaker to employ some form of bystander deixis. Future typological research may produce a more or less exhaustive listing of all the relevant B's features and show to what extent they can be more economically or systematically captured in the form of a typology or hierarchy.

Recall, however, that the secret language of the Yimas is only used among males of certain age who are on a hunting expedition (where the "bystanders" are the animals in the forest) and that Romani English is taught in the absence of persons of the opposite sex. These examples already show that we must also indicate certain sociocultural properties of S and A and provide additional information about the kind of speech event so as to be able to account for various forms of bystander (and social) deixis.

The same more or less holds for the third type of bystander deixis, concerning expressions in which S wants to show respect for the bystander. To be able to account for the various linguistic manifestations of deference and politeness, it is usually not enough that we only specify features of B, since social deixis is often triggered by the social-cultural distance *between* S and B (or *between* S and A for that matter; see below). For example, in the case of the *avoidance style* in Australian aboriginal cultures it is not sufficient to state that B is S's mother-in-law, because this leaves open the possibility that S is B's daughter-in-law. Since the *avoidance language* is only used when S is a man and B (or A) are his in-laws, we must also state that S is male. Properties of S and A are discussed in the next section.

3.2 Sociocultural properties of Speaker and Addressee(s)

We saw above that, if we want to explain the occurrence of the so-called *avoidance style* in Australian languages, we must not only specify properties of B, but also those of S and A, since it is the kinship relation between B and S or A and S that is important here (recall that the avoidance language is used when S is a man and A or B are his in-laws). The same point is also illustrated in the language of the Abipon of Argentina, in which "-*in*" is added to the end of each word if any participant (*whatever his role*; my emphasis - JR) is a member of the *Hocheri* (warrior class)" (Hymes 1972: 61).⁶ And to explain why the woman in (4) above uses the Romani word *ker* 'house', we must know quite a lot about all

6 Notice though that certain properties of S, notably his or her sex, are always reflected in the form of the utterance, either categorically (as in Japanese, where the form of 'I' depends on S's sex (Brown & Fraser 1979: 37); see also e.g. Hoff (1994) on Island Carib), or as a tendency. For instance, in Samoan "women use subject-initial word order far more often than men (four times as much overall)" and "men use verb-subject-object word order more than women (nearly twice as much overall)" (Ochs 1987: 66). On the other hand, differences in the use of ergative case marking also depend on features of A: "For ergative case marking, it was found that men use this marking as often as women do in family interactions but much more often than women in interactions involving nonfamily members" (ibid. 66). For a cross-linguistic overview of men's and women's speech, see Bodine (1975).

the persons involved, as well as the topic of course (see below): the magistrate might refuse bail if he found out that the man lives in a trailer.

The importance of having access to contextual information regarding various elements of the speech situation (such as persons, place, topic) so as to be able to explain the form and meaning of linguistic expressions can be illustrated by examples from many languages. Although social deixis may effect all levels of grammar (including phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon; Levinson 1987: 93; cf. also Levinson 1988), the sociocultural features of S and A are generally speaking most typically expressed in the lexicon. For instance, Javanese has six levels of speech styles (coding the social rank of S and A, or the social distance between S and A) that are expressed through a system of honorific lexical alternatives (Errington 1988: 90-91; respect vocabularies are found in many languages across the world; see also e.g. Anderson & Keenan 1985: 274; Irvine 1992: 253):

- (5)
- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| a. | <i>menapa</i> | <i>mandalem</i> | <i>mundhut</i> | <i>sekul</i> | <i>semanten</i> |
| b. | <i>menapa</i> | <i>panjenengan</i> | <i>mendhet</i> | <i>sekul</i> | <i>semanten</i> |
| c. | <i>napa</i> | <i>sampeyan</i> | <i>njupuk</i> | <i>sega</i> | <i>semonten</i> |
| d. | <i>napa</i> | <i>sampeyan</i> | <i>njupuk</i> | <i>sega</i> | <i>semonten</i> |
| e. | <i>apa</i> | <i>stranitu</i> | <i>mundhut</i> | <i>sega</i> | <i>semono</i> |
| f. | <i>apa</i> | <i>kowe</i> | <i>njupuk</i> | <i>sega</i> | <i>semono</i> |
| | QM | you | take | rice | that much |
- 'Did you take that much rice?' (QM = question marker)

To give another example, Thai is reported to have over 20 first person forms, the use of which is determined by various properties of S and A. Here is an illustration of the nature of the features of S (and A) that must be specified in the underlying representation to yield the correct first person form (from Anderson & Keenan 1985: 271; based on Cooke 1968). Thus different first person forms are used, for instance, when

- S is an adult or adolescent male and A is an inferior or female intimate;
- S is an adult female speaking and A is a superior;
- S is a male commoner and A belongs to royalty or royalty of any but the highest ranks;
- S is male and A is high-ranking non-royalty;
- S is a child or a young woman and A is an intimate;
- S is male and A is equal or superior;
- S is a Buddhist Priest and A is a non-intimate layman or low-ranking priest.

It is perhaps useful to point out, however, that not all the information that is coded in person pronouns relates to S and A's social rank or relationship. This holds especially for number distinctions in pronouns. Although number distinctions can be used to express respect or social distance (e.g. French *vous* [2Pl])

versus *tu* [2Sg]), 'number' as such, unlike e.g. sex or age, it is not a sociocultural property of S or A.⁷

3.3 Topic and speech situation

In the previous sections we saw that we need to have access to sociocultural properties of Speaker, Addressee(s) and Bystander(s) in order to account for manifestations of social and bystander deixis. In this section I will say a few words about the topic of the utterance and the setting in which the speech act occurs, i.e. the speech situation, which relates to the level of formality.⁸

Notice first of all that both forms of politeness and secret languages are often closely tied to certain settings, such as business meetings, religious ceremonies, hunting expeditions, or cattle markets. Louter-Lekhoris, for instance, was the language of the Jewish cattle traders in Germany (Matras, this volume) and Romani English is used in the horse trade (Kenrick 1979: 115). Now consider this example from Allan (1986a: 17):

- (6) ... at lunch before a board meeting Ed and Max might be on casual christian name terms; but when conducting official business in the board-room Ed would address Max as 'Mr. Chairman' if Max were chairman of the board, because the official business of a board meeting is customarily conducted in a frozen style.

This example shows that the formality level of the speech situation must be coded separately to explain manifestations of social deixis in the utterance that are not (necessarily) due to sociocultural properties of S, A, and B. It remains to be investigated, however, (i) whether a single dimension ('formality') is enough to capture all the relevant properties of the setting, (ii) how many distinct levels (styles, genres) are to be recognized within each dimension, and (iii) to what extent properties of the setting can always be separated from the features of S, A, and B, the other components of social deixis. For instance, it is not immediately clear whether rituals (hunting expeditions, rites of passage, religious events) can always be characterized as constituting a 'frozen style' at some level

7 Note further that number distinctions are also coded in third person pronouns, which often serve as anaphoric rather than deictic elements. Other ways of coding social distance in pronouns are (a) person distinctions, as German *Sie* [3Pl] vs. *du* [2Sg], (b) proximity, (c) inclusiveness, and (d) definiteness (cf. Head 1978; Levinson 1987: 92; Mühlhäusler & Harré 1990: 19).

8 It may be useful to distinguish between *settings per se* and *settings-associated-with-purpose*, since "it appears to be rare that speech choice is actually determined by the setting *per se*. But settings imbued with cultural import [...] are associated with the activities which customarily take place in them: sermons in church, football on the playing field, buying and selling in the market place" (Brown & Fraser 1979: 44; cf. also Hymes 1972: 60).

on a single scale of 'formality', or whether they constitute distinct dimensions by themselves.⁹ Irvine (1978: 16) has argued that "formality and informality represent not poles on a one-dimensional continuum, but a complex of interrelated factors concerning many facets of the speech event. [...] Formality, [...], is largely a process of focusing, which can operate along various dimensions. Where societies differ is in what they focus on -- and what are the consequences of doing so."

Obviously this is a matter of great complexity. Since current proposals in this area are based on a rather restricted number of languages, definite statements can only be made after a representative sample of the world's languages and cultures have been investigated.

Let us return the example in (6); Allan's description of the board meeting continues as follows:

- (7) Note that it is not simply their presence at the board-meeting which demands use of the frozen style: if Ed were to utter an unofficial aside to Max during the course of the meeting, he would quite properly use a casual style.

As a rule, formal occasions invoke formal speech, which is characterized by constraints on topic, continuity, and relevance.¹⁰ But the side address in (7) demonstrates that S may indicate (by verbal and non-verbal behavior) that he is aware of the irrelevance or inappropriateness of the contents of his utterance in a particular setting (S leans over to A, speaks in a low voice, calls the chairman by his proper name). Although one could argue that the propositional content of an utterance (and by extension: the topic of the conversation) is perhaps in itself not a sociocultural variable (but rather a *function* of features of the speech event and the persons involved, it is obvious that on certain occasions the relevance or appropriateness of a propositional content must be known and specified to account for manifestations of social deixis. Such is the case in the example above, in which a particular form of address does not fit the setting. In other words, so as to be able to explain why Ed may suddenly call the chairman 'Max' at a board meeting, it seems essential that we not only specify (i) the relationship between S and A, and (ii) the setting of the speech act, but also (iii) whether or not S regards the contents of his utterance as appropriate or relevant in a given context

9 Cf. e.g. Joos (1962: 11), who identified five levels of formality: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate (see also Allan 1986a: 17). Some other possible dimensions along which the setting can be classified are: public-private, sacred-secular, serious-trivial, impersonal-personal, polite-casual, high culture - low culture, open network - closed network (Brown & Fraser 1979: 45).

10 Some generally observed coding properties of formal speech are: elaboration of syntax and lexicon, phonological precision and rhythmicity, redundancy, increased structuring and predictability, reduction of variability and spontaneity of speech (Levinson 1978: Irvine 1978: 2; Brown & Fraser 1979: 46).

(cf. also Ervin-Tripp 1972: 243; Irvine 1978: 9). As a matter of fact, the importance of the topic or subject matter has been recognized many years ago and is a distinct component in several models of the speech situation (Fishman 1972, Hymes 1972, Goffman 1964). For Brown & Fraser, for instance, the notion 'purpose' ('end', or 'goal', which in turn is closely tied to notions of task and topic) "is the motor which sets the chassis of setting and participants going [...]. [W]e find it necessary to consider at some length the intersection of setting and purpose in order to deal with a wide range of linguistic markers related to levels of formality" (Brown & Fraser 1979: 34).

4. Final remarks

I have talked in rather general terms about the kind of information that is needed to explain instances of bystander deixis, but there are several reasons why it is currently not possible to be more specific (cf. also Hymes 1972: 49ff.; Goffman 1964). First of all, although a considerable amount of research has been devoted to secret languages (cf. Plénat ed. 1991: 118-125) and probably even more to politeness phenomena in language (e.g. Brown & Levinson 1978, 1987; Mühlhäusler & Harré 1990, Watts et al. 1992), this has not resulted in a taxonomy of features concerning social deixis that is based on a systematic investigation of a representative sample of the world's languages. Secondly, existing studies in this area show that the relevant features of the components of the speech situation (such as sex, age, class, caste, country of origin, generation, region, schooling, ethnicity, kinship relation and degree of intimacy with other speech participants, occupational status; the physical and psychological setting of the speech act; topic and purpose of communication) are often intricately connected, and that their relative importance varies from language to language. For instance, certain features are largely or entirely predictable from others (e.g. sex and kinship/taboo relations); and whereas the social significance of sex is primary in one language, social rank may override all other features in another language (see e.g. Ervin-Tripp (1972: 224-225) on such differences in the systems of address in Bisaya and Korean). Furthermore, features that determine the social distance between participants in the speech event (S, A, and B) can be in conflict, in which case we need some kind of calculus to determine the outcome (see Allan 1986a: 11). This is the case, for example, when a young teacher has to deal with an older pupil (i.e. age versus professional status; cf. Blocker 1976).

Ultimately the study of bystander and social deixis in linguistic expressions should not only result in a taxonomy of the relevant dimensions, features and

coding devices, but also contribute to the integration of a theory of grammar into a theory of verbal interaction; eventually it may even lead to a new, *functional* classification of languages in which languages are classified according to the interaction between social deixis and grammar (as more or less envisaged by Hymes (1972) in the context of sociolinguistic research).

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