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The relevance of deixis in the local and anaphoric expressions in Korean and German

The significance of deixis in natural language is undeniable. According to Peirce, a sign vehicle is an index if it is “really affected” by its referential object. “The index is physically connected with its object; they make an organic pair, but the interpreting mind has nothing to do with this connection, except remarking it, after it is established”. Not only are all languages indexical, but so are over 90% of the sentences produced by humans. Since indexicality turns out to be a crucial characteristic of natural language, many relevant studies (e.g. Levinson 1983) consider deixis as one of the plausible candidates for a pragmatic universal. In this paper I will try to look at the linguistic deictic systems in a comparative perspective regarding German and Korean. The aim of this study is to investigate the nature of the demonstrative and local deictic systems of German and Korean from the point of view of their universality. In doing so, I will question some aspects of the deictic universality forwarded by previous research traditions. In this presentation, for reasons of brevity, I restrict my analysis to the demonstrative expressions and deictic adverbs. It will be demonstrated that the deictic differences investigated for the two languages are not just variations of the basic proximal/distal dichotomy. It will be argued that the differences involve local deictic expressions and anaphoric expressions respectively in Korean and in German.

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