

Cheyenne Deixis and Sound Symbolism
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In this paper I would like to use the term 'deixis' rather informally and broadly to refer to several categories, all of which have to do, in some way, with linguistic pointing. Speakers of the Cheyenne language make extensive use of deictic categories. I would like to illustrate several of these categories and attempt to tie them together in terms of their semantics and pragmatics. Finally, I would like to show some interesting patterns of sound symbolism which can be seen in Cheyenne deictic systems.

Cheyenne demonstrative pronouns are differentiated for animacy and a binary distinction of distance, near vs. farther, or proximal vs. distal, if you prefer, as seen in 1) on your handout:

1) Demonstrative Pronouns

PROXIMAL	DISTAL
INAN. hé'tóhe 'this/these'	há'tóhe 'that/those'
AN. tsé'tóhe 'this/these'	tá'tóhe 'that/those'

(A brief word on the orthography: ' represents glottal stop; š here is the same as English -sh-; a dot over a vowel indicates voicelessness; and all phrase-final vowels are automatically voiceless)

The demonstrative pronouns are differentiated for distance and animacy.

Parallel to the demonstrative pronouns there is a set of, for want of a better term, "discourse" pronouns, 2) on the handout.

EVOKED	UNUSED
INAN. héne 'that, those'	háne 'that, those'
AN. néhe 'that, those'	náhe 'that, those'

Like the demonstrative pronouns, the discourse pronouns are differentiated for two parameters, animacy and a parameter which I believe to be conceptually similar to the proximal/distal parameter of the demonstrative pronouns. The discourse pronouns only refer to anaphoric entities, that is, to entities which are assumed (by the speaker) to be already established in the shared mental space between speaker and hearer. So, for instance, once an animate entity has been introduced into a Cheyenne discourse it is appropriate to refer to him with the discourse pronoun néhe seen in 2).

The terms evoked and unused are taken from an article by Ellen Prince (CLS 15) which discusses given vs. new distinctions. An evoked topic (or entity) is one which has been previously mentioned in a text under consideration. An unused topic is one which has not been mentioned previously in a discourse but which is (assumed to be) familiar to the hearer.

Evoked discourse pronouns are used extensively in Cheyenne. They are used often in texts once the identity of a referent has been established.

The unused topic discourse pronouns are not nearly as common, but they can still be used appropriately by Cheyennes today. For instance, if I am speaking to another about a man who was singing at a powwow, and if I know that my hearer knows this person, but I do not know or remember his name, I may refer to the singer as 3):

- 3) náhe tsé-néméné-stse 'the one (known to you and me) who sings'.
 THAT ONE conjunct relative-SING-3sg.

It is interesting to me that recently when I was working on discourse pronouns with my usual Cheyenne coworker, a man listening in said that the difference between héne and háne was "something like near and far". He is probably right. From a conceptual viewpoint, that which has been mentioned in a discourse is in some sense "nearer" than something which has not been mentioned but which is "in the closet" of shared knowledge available for me to refer to in this discourse.

The next deictic category which I would like to mention is that of locatives. Here I am referring to full locative words like 'here' and 'there', not the locative suffixes which attach to Cheyenne nouns. In 4) on the handout we can see a Cheyenne locative paradigm:

2) Locatives

PROXIMAL	DISTAL
NEW ? tséhéóhe 'here'	táháóhe 'there (far)'
OLD néhéóhe 'there (nearer)'	náháóhe 'there (far)'

It was only recently that I came to believe that Cheyenne locatives have only a binary distinction with respect to spatial distance. It now seems to me that there are two distinct parameters involved with the Cheyenne locatives, first the proximal/distal distinction noted for several other Algonquian languages, then a parameter of something like old vs. new information.

I realize that the terms old and new have been used rather loosely in the literature, and I am going to do the same here, at least until I can understand the issues more precisely. There is also some justification in using the broader labels because, for instance, I want to be able to capture all of the aspects of old type information (e.g. each of the subtypes mentioned by Prince) under a single label. For the locatives, as well as for the other Cheyenne categories throughout this paper it seems that as soon as there is anything somehow "old" about some information use of an anaphoric deictic is triggered.

I was led to this view of the locatives when my coworker told me that if I used táháóhe, instead of náháóhe, to refer to a "known" place (it was a spot on the reservation called "C. C. (for Civilian Conservation Corps) Camp" which everyone knows about) it would sound like I didn't know where the C. C. Camp was or that I was talking about a different C. C. Camp (and to Cheyennes there is only one, a favorite spot for picnics and berrypicking). This explanation is supported in the writings of the late missionary linguist, Rodolphe Petter. (e.g. Petter's Dictionary 1915:1047).

In a Cheyenne text about an afterbirth (placenta) which was thrown into a river and grew up to be a child, there are some interesting cycles of childhood disobedience and repair. The father in the story tells his two sons (one is the afterbirth) not to go táháóhe 'there (far)' to places he (but not they) knows about. But the mischievous boys disobey, go to these places, and return. In two of these cycles, upon the boys' return, the places they went to are referred to by náháóhe because they are now known to all parties.

I would not be fully honest with you if I neglected to say that tséhéóhe 'here' does not perfectly fit the old vs. new scheme (hence the question mark preceding it in 4)). Is reference to the 'here' location always new? Probably not. It is almost as if tséhéóhe is in a paradigmatic box by itself. Cheyennes usually feel that spatial distance involved with néhéóhe is farther away than that involved with tséhéóhe. It may be that I will eventually have to admit a three-way distance distinction. But at this point I am hesitant to do so since it seems to me that a differentiation of distance is not the primary parameter separating tséhéóhe from néhéóhe. It is, rather, the matter of old vs. new.

Parallel to the locative paradigm given in 4), there is a so-called local locative paradigm, given in 5). For lack of time I cannot discuss these forms in the spoken version of this paper.

Predicative pronouns are inflected for animacy, number, and obviation (a strategy in Algonquian languages of removing all but one third person within a discourse span from syntactic focus). The inanimate set is given in 6) on the handout and the animate set in 6a). Some meanings are heta'háanéhe 'here it is, this is the one'; nea'háanéhe 'there he (given) is, he's the one'; naa'háanevóho 'there they (given) are'; etc.

The same question as to whether or not the immediate deictics heta'háanéhe (inan.) and tsea'háanéhe (an.) should be labeled "new" or not exists here as it did with the locatives.

Let us now turn our attention to deixis expressed within Cheyenne verbs.

The formula for an independent Cheyenne verb is given in 7):

7) PRO-TNS-(DIR)--(PREVERB(S))--((REFERENCE) RELATIVE)-ROOT-(MEDIAL)-FINAL-MODE

There is insufficient time to define each verb category. I simply want you to be able to see where deictic categories which we touch upon are morphologically expressed in verbs. The relative preverb heše- and root he(t)- are cognate with the relative preverb or root of other Algonquian languages and can be translated as 'thus' or 'in that way', relating the verb at hand to something preceding in the discourse. If there was a phoric (cover term for both anaphoric and cataphoric) reference morpheme there must be a relative morpheme at this point.

Present and near past tense is simply a zero morpheme. Far past is indicated by h- and its allomorphs. Future tense is htse- (phonemic /hte-/). An example with future tense is in 8) on the handout:

8) nê-stse-ana'o 'you'll fall off (e.g. so be careful)'

I will not comment on tense further here. However, I do want us to notice that the future tense morpheme looks suspiciously like the cataphoric reference preverb tse- which we will shortly look. Both are involved with pointing forward. In this matter of pointing, in fact, there are several Cheyenne verbs having to do with actual physical pointing which contain the sequence tse-.

Directionals are rather straightforward in Cheyenne. They, of course, give deictic information. The two Cheyenne directionals are /neh/ 'toward' and /ta/ 'away'. A few examples are given in 9) on the handout.

We see from the verb formula 7) that the reference morphemes occur after other preverbs and precede a relative preverb or root. The morphemes are anaphoric ne- and cataphoric tse-.

The anaphoricity may relate to an event which just occurred. For instance, parents typically tell their children 10):

10) né-vé'-nê-hešéve 'Don't do that (something the child may just have done)!'
YOU-DON'T-anaph.-DO

Backward referral may be to an immediate linguistic context as in 11):

11) a'e méave'ho'eno nexa taoheone é-ta-nê-he'éhoma'o'e
NEAR LAME DEER TWO MILES IT-AWAY-anaph.-IS THAT FAR
'It is near Lame Deer, about two miles away.'

The referencing of ne- in 11) is back to the specification of two miles.

An interesting use of both the cataphoric and anaphoric preverbs can be seen in the conversational interchange of 12) and 13) which my wife recently recorded:

- 12) Oregon ná-ta-o'se-tse-he'òhtsé-me néstóxétse nexa ma'-ta-éšeeve
Oregon 1-AWAY-GOING TO-cat.-GO-pl. ALL OF US two cj.-AWAY-DAY
'We're going to go to Oregon next Tuesday (lit. next 2nd day of the week).'
- 13) Hénáá'e tsé-ta-o'sè-hése-nè-he'òhtsé-se?
WHAT cj.-AWAY-GOING TO-REASON-anaph.-GO-2pl.
'Why are you (pl.) going there?'

Note that the destination 'Oregon' was first referred to in 12) with the cataphoric preverb tse- (because it was a destination unknown to the addressee). Then the second speaker appropriately used the anaphoric preverb ne- in 13) because the destination was at that point given (or old) information.

Phoric preverbs commonly occur in quote margins. As an example, in the afterbirth text, we have 14):

- 14) Then their father és-tse-hetaevósesto (said to them), "Wherever did you go?"

The cataphoric preverb tse- is used in the prequote margin because the content of the quote is about to follow. The anaphoric preverb ne- will be used in a quote margin if some kind of backward pointing is called for, for instance, when the content of the quote is the same as or similar to the content of a quote made previously by someone else.

Anaphoric reference may refer to an entire story. Many stories are ended with the anaphoric predicative pronoun hena'háanéhe 'that's it' or with the word in 15) on the handout:

- 15) é-nè-he'éstósése 'that's the way it (anaph. e.g. story) is (lit. lies)'

reminiscent of the way Walter Cronkite used to end the CBS Evening News!

While the anaphoric preverb may refer back to various sized entities and the referencing may skip over other intervening material, it appears that use of the cataphoric preverb tse- requires immediate statement of the referent. In this case the referent is usually statement of content of a quote, verbalization of an event or attribute, or actual physical acting out of something, as when one might say 16):

- 16) é-tse-heše-néméne 'he sang this way'
HE-cat.-THUS-SING

and then immediately illustrate by singing the way 'he' had sung.

The last area I want to cover is that of sound symbolism promised by the title of this paper. Probably most of you by now have noticed an interesting correlation between distance and sound symbolism in Cheyenne deictics. Throughout the deictic paradigms we can see that the front vowel e- (usually close to a phonetic ɪ as in English 'pin') is found in deictics of the near distance category. And the low back vowel a- (close to the a- of English 'father') correlates with the far distance category.

So we have in 1) hé'tóhe and há'tóhe, in 2) néhe and náhe, in 4) tséhéóhe and táháóhe, in 6) hena'háanéhe and hana'háanéhe, etc. (The appropriate /e/ and /a/ vowels are underlined on your handout.)

Such a finding should not be at all surprising to those who have seen similar distance or size correlations with sounds in other languages. We can note a similar phenomenon in English where, for

instance, we see sound-symbolized smallness in words such as 'teeny', 'teensy', 'itty-bitty', 'itsy-bitsy', etc. I would guess that the e/a contrast of Cheyenne parallels oral cavity space values, hence, /e/ tongue up front and relatively close for near deixis and /a/ tongue back in the mouth with the oral cavity fairly wide for far deixis.

This is exactly the e/a contrast symbolism for size, degree, and distance found in some other Cheyenne forms. For example, note 17) through 19) (the contrasting /e/ and /a/ vowels are again underlined):

17) étšěšké'o /étehke'ón/ 'it is small'

18) étàhpé'o /étahpe'ón/ 'it is big'

19) háá'ěše /háéš/ 'far away'

In the locative paradigms, 4) and 5), note the doubling up of /e/ and /a/ vowels in a single form. For instance, tséhéóhe 'here (i.e. near)' has two /e/'s while táháóhe 'there (i.e. far)' has two /a/'s. And the 'over there (given)' local locative hánáhóhe not only has /a/'s in the basic part of the form nánáhóhe but it also gets an /a/ in the first syllable which makes it local, giving a full form of hánáhóhe. I suggest that there is something close to vowel harmony occurring in these forms.

In addition to the e/a symbolism of near/far, there appears to be symbolism with the deictic use of the consonants /n/ and /t/. Deictic /n/ is used to show anaphoric reference, and deictic /t/ is used for cataphoric reference. I cannot presently see how this might be an instance of sound symbolism; my guess is that it is simply a kind of segmental symbolism which has become pervasive throughout expressions of Cheyenne deixis. I do not think it is coincidental that the discourse pronoun néhe, the locative néhéóhe, the predicative pronoun ne'háanéhe, and the anaphoric preverb ne- all begin with the same two letters. It may be that the 'toward' directional /neh/ patterns here also. A case could be made that something coming toward a speaker comes from a previous location (something conceptually similar to what is involved with anaphoric reference).

Many of the deictic forms mentioned in this paper which begin with /t/ have to do with pointing forward or away, whether in space or time. Hence we have the future tense morpheme htse-, the cataphoric preverb tse-, the 'away' directional ta-, the locative táháóhe meaning 'there (new)', etc. In conclusion, I believe I am closer to understanding Cheyenne deixis today than I was a year or so ago. Along the way I have learned or relearned some lessons which I need to hear again periodically, things such as don't force a native speaker into a box of my own theoretical choosing. For example, I believe I was simply using the wrong question when I asked native speakers to rank the locatives and predicative pronouns solely on the basis of distance relative to one another. My hypotheses have been wrong in the past and I can tilt the scales too far in working with a native speaker who wants to see me happy.

I feel that study of Cheyenne deixis confirms that it is important to study linguistic phenomena in a broad context. Every language analyst should ultimately be concerned with issues of participant introduction, identification, topicality, tense, and location within discourse.

Enéhe'estóséše 'That's the way it is.'

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