

CONTRASTIVE PRAGMATIC STUDY OF ENGLISH AND BETE PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND DEICTICS

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Abstract

Personal pronouns are treated as substitutes of nouns and in relation with sex or gender. Although these assumptions hold some truth, pragmatic studies have shown that they can be antecedentless or impersonal (Gardelle & Sorlin 2015). Moreover, the sociological concept of gender has no direct relation with linguistic realities such as pronouns (Creissels 2004:2). We have it for certain that deictics and personal pronouns can be impersonal (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990) or express solidarity and empathy (L. Deringer et al 2015).

The present study is a pragmatic contrastive analysis of personal pronouns and deictics in ENGLISH and BETE, an African NIGER-CONGO KORDOFANIAN language of the KRU group spoken in Côte d'Ivoire. The corpus of the study is a compilation of utterances collected from various ENGLISH and BETE books and articles. The analysis reveals that in both languages, personal pronouns can be impersonal, anaphoric, cataphoric, generical, etc. However, contrary to ENGLISH, BETE personal pronouns (a, ε, ɪ/ɔ, wa, wà) and deictic operators (n, ò, à) hold human, non-human discriminations. Moreover, their morphological structures depend on the morphological features of the nouns or the extralinguistic realities these (nouns) refer to. That contrast seems essentially culturally determined and the subjectivity of the speaker appears as a key element in both construction and interpretation of the operations.

Keywords: contrastive, gender, personal, pragmatic, pronoun