Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Humaniora

ISSN 3025-8820 (Online) | 2301-5004 (Print) Volume 14, No. 3, 2025, pp. 240-246

Published by: Insan Akademika Publications



An Analysis of Deixis in "Die With A Smile" By Bruno Mars And Lady Gaga

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Abstract: Language shows a significant part in social interaction, not only as a means of communication but likewise as a medium to express identity, emotion, and perspective. One of the pragmatic features that reveals how language relates to context is deixis. This research purposes to examine the categories and functions of deixis in the lyrics of "Die With a Smile", a collaborative song by Bruno Mars and Lady Gaga. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the research focused on identifying and categorizing deictic expressions based on Levinson's (1983) and Yule's (1996) typology: person, spatial, and temporal deixis. The data were collected through documentation and examined through content examination to interpret the contextual implication of each deictic term. The findings revealed a total of 30 deictic expressions in the lyrics, dominated by personal deixis with 22 occurrences (73.33%), mainly through the pronoun "I." Temporal deixis, such as "tomorrow" and "last night," added emotional depth, while spatial deixis like "the world" and "wherever" conveyed abstract or symbolic locations. These deixes not only clarified the speaker's intentions but also strengthened the emotive linking between the vocalist and listener. The study contributes to pragmatic linguistic analysis in music by highlighting how deixis shapes meaning and perspective. However, the study is inadequate to a single song and three types of deixis. Future studies are encouraged to analyze other songs, genres, or types of deixis, as well as explore multimodal elements such as music video visuals to increase a more inclusive thoughtful of meaning construction in popular music.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Deixis, Song Lyrics

1. Introduction

Language is not only custom as communication tools, moreover a custom to explain the utterer's point of view, identity, and feelings. The type of linguistics that functions as a bridge that conveys contextual meaning is called deixis, namely an expression that has a meaning that is adjusted to the context of the situation, including who the speaker is, the person they are talking to, when and where the utterance is delivered. Deixis is used to allow the person they are talking to (the auditor) and the reader to comprehend the utterer's intentions more clearly.

The language expressions used in communication carry a certain meaning so that they can be understood by the other person. Communication is an important part of human life because language acts as a bridge in everyday interactions (Ahmad et al., 2024; Kurniati & Haryudin, 2021; Nisa et al., 2020; Nurkhasanah & Sapan, 2024). Language is not only used in everyday communication, but also works of art that are part of human culture, one of which is music. Music is an art form that combines elements of language, aesthetics, and emotion, so that it has the ability to arouse feelings and form relationships between songwriters and listeners (Fadilah & Resmini, 2021; Kurniati & Haryudin, 2021; Saputra & Apsari, 2021; Sitorus & Herman, 2019).

In linguistic studies, music can be analyzed through a pragmatic approach because song lyrics contain meanings that are not only explicit but also implied. These meanings are often conveyed through pragmatic elements such as deixis, speech acts, implicatures, and presuppositions (Agatha & Inayah, 2022; Herdiyanti, 2020; Kartika, 2022; Sitorus & Herman, 2019; Sukmarini & Agung, 2023). Pragmatic studies, as a branch of linguistics, focus on the meaning intended by speakers in certain contexts. One important study in pragmatics is deixis, which includes personal, timeplace, discourse, and social deixis

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Received: Jun 22, 2025; Revised: Jun 30, 2025; Accepted: Jul 17, 2025; Published: Sep 04, 2025;



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(Yule, 1996). Deixis can be seen in the use of personal pronouns, place indicators, and time markers, all of which depend on the speaker's position and perspective.

In pop music lyrics, personal deixis often dominates as a way to directly convey emotional identity and personal experience. This is especially evident in first-person pronouns like "I" or "we," which reflect the speaker's internal emotions, narrative stance, and subjectivity. In collaborative songs, such as duets or multi-vocalist performances, the deictic system becomes more complex because it involves multiple points of view. Each singer may take on a different narrative role—sometimes as separate individuals, other times as a unified voice—which can shift the reference of pronouns like "I", "you", and "we" throughout the song. This layered deixis offers a richer pragmatic analysis compared to solo songs.

Several previous studies have observed the custom of deixis in literary texts and song lyrics. For example, Indriani & Widianingsih (2023) and Hamdani (2023) highlighted how songwriters convey messages through the use of deixis, while other studies have shown that song lyrics can be considered a form of conversation because they contain linguistic structures that resemble everyday speech (Rohaili & Syaputri, 2024). However, little attention has been given to how dual perspectives in collaborative songs influence the shifting roles of deixis. Collaborative songs introduce alternation and overlap in deixis usage, allowing listeners to engage with a dynamic interaction between speakers. This is particularly important in analyzing narrative depth and relational cues within a pop culture context. This song is interesting to study because there are many strong deictic expressions and have emotional content that can be studied with a pragmatic approach, besides that there are only a few studies that specifically examine deixis in the Bruno Mars and Lady Gaga song "Die With a Smile", which is a contemporary collaboration. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill the gaps or shortcomings of previous studies with a contextual analysis of the custom of deixis in the lines of collaboration songs, as well as to give to the expansion of pragmatic researches in the realm of current song, namely to recognize and investigate the categories and functions of deixis in the "Die With a Smile" song lines.

2. Literature Review

An important aspect of human life is a multifunctional language, namely, as a means of communication and a medium for self-expression. Language has various forms and functions, as a material for daily interaction, and also as a form of art and culture, such as music, literature, and entertainment (Agatha & Inayah, 2022; Alkhawaldeh, 2022; Kurniati & Haryudin, 2021; Nurkhasanah & Sapan, 2024). In the context of music, language has a special role, namely as the main element that conveys messages literally and also evokes emotions and interpretations based on the listener's experience through song lyrics (Asmarita & Haryudin, 2019; Fadilah & Resmini, 2021; Prayudha.S, 2023; Rohaili & Syaputri, 2024).

Linguistic studies, as the scientific study of language, include numerous subfields like phonology, syntax, phonetics, morphology, pragmatics, and semantics (Indriani & Widianingsih, 2023). Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, concentrations on how implication is assumed in the perspective of its custom. In this case, pragmatics not only analyzes the literal meaning of an utterance, but also pays attention to the speaker's intention, implicature, presupposition, discourse structure, politeness, and, of course, deixis (Ahmad et al., 2024; Caca, 2024; Sinaga et al., 2020; Sukmarini & Agung, 2023).

Deixis is a linguistic phenomenon that mentions to words or phrases whose implications rest on on the perspective of the utterance. Yule (1996) states that deixis includes expressions such as personal pronouns (I, you, they), place indicators (here, there), and time indicators (now, then), whose meanings change depending on who is speaking, to whom, when, and where. Deixis shows a central part in conveying the speaker's perspective in an utterance. In line with Levinson (1983), there are three main types of deixis, namely: (a) personal deixis, which refers to participants in the speech (such as I, you, he), (b) place deixis, which refers to location or position in space (here,

there), (c) time deixis which refers to a point or duration of time in the context of speech (now, yesterday, tomorrow).

Further explanation is also put forward by Gee (2011) that deixis is a word or phrase whose implication reference changes depending on the perspective of speech, such as "I", "he", "yesterday", and "two days ago". Rahardi (2005) and Hamdani (2023) added that deixis is strictly linked to the utterer's ability to point to something in the context of speech. Thus, analysis of deixis allows for a deeper understanding of the implicit meaning in a speech.

Numerous earlier studies have emphasized the significance of deixis in the analysis of song lyrics. Agatha & Inayah (2022) stated that song lyrics contain many messages conveyed by songwriters to their listeners through the use of deixis. Rohaili & Syaputri (2024) also stated that song lyrics often resemble a form of conversation or narrative that implicitly involves the roles of speakers and listeners. In this case, deixis becomes a linguistic tool that unites meaning and context, and helps listeners enter the world built by song lyrics. However, most previous studies have only focused on the analysis of certain popular song lyrics, and not many have discussed collaborative songs in depth from a pragmatic perspective. One of the shortcomings in previous studies is the lack of focus on how the perspectives of two singers or characters in a song form a complex and dynamic deictic system. This is where this study comes into play.

This study will examine the use of deixis in the "Die With a Smile" song lines performed thru Bruno Mars and Lady Gaga. This song was chosen because it contains many deictic expressions and conveys a strong emotional message. By using a pragmatic approach, this study is expected to provide new contributions to linguistic studies, especially in understanding how deixis is used to form meaning, perspective, and emotion in song lyrics. In addition, this research purposes to copmplete the gap from previous studies by offering an analysis of collaborative song lyrics from the perspective of deixis use.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method because it purposes to define and examine the use of deixis in the "Die With a Smile" song lines performed thru Bruno Mars and Lady Gaga. This approach was chosen because the data studied were in the form of verbal and contextual lyric texts, without intervention or manipulation of the variables. This study uses a text analysis design by examining in depth the language structure and context of the custom of deixis in song lyrics. The study data were gained from the "Die With a Smile" song lines downloaded from a trusted online source. The researcher then read and observed the song lines and then identified the deictic expressions confined in it. These expressions are categorized into three main types according to the philosophies of Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996), namely individual deixis, place deixis (spatial), and time deixis (temporal).

A descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to explore the contextual meaning behind deictic expressions as they appear naturally in the text. This method is suitable for capturing the interplay between language and meaning in song lyrics, where emotional nuance and point of view are embedded in the utterances. However, unlike semantic analysis which focuses on denotative meaning or discourse analysis which emphasizes broader narrative and turn-taking patterns, this approach may not fully uncover layered social dynamics or intertextual relationships. The decision to focus on three main deixis categories—personal, temporal, and spatial—is based on their prominence in song lyrics and their relevance to the emotional and narrative structure of the text. Personal deixis reveals identity and relationships, temporal deixis provides sequencing of events or states, and spatial deixis helps locate the speaker's reference point. While discourse and social deixis are also important, they often require more dialogic or interactional data, which may be limited in the monologic nature of lyrical texts.

The data collection technique was carried out through documentation studies, namely by reading and recording parts of the lyrics containing deixis, then copying them into an analysis table. The composed data were examined by content examination techniques, which involve the process of classifying and interpreting meaning based on the context of use in the lyrics. Through these stages, this study not only identifies the categories of deixis but also reveals how these deictic expressions play a role in conveying meaning, emotion, and perspective of the speaker in the song. The stages in this study were carried out systematically so that they can be replicated by other researchers by following the same procedure, starting from collecting song lyrics, identifying deixis, classifying based on theory, to contextual analysis of its meaning.

4. Result and Discussions

This research purposes to classify and investigate the forms of deixis in the "Die With a Smile" song lines thru Bruno Mars and Lady Gaga. Based on the results of the analysis of the song lines, three main types of deixis were found, namely person deixis, temporal deixis, and spatial deixis. Every type of deixis takes a specific function and meaning in the context of the song, which contributes to the delivery of emotional and narrative messages from the songwriter to the listener. The structure of deixis in this song does not merely locate people, times, or places literally, but constructs a symbolic space where emotional bonds unfold across imagined timelines and flexible locations. This symbolic deixis flow allows the lyrics to reflect a psychological journey rather than a physical narrative.

The lyric	Types of deixis		
-	Personal	Spatial	Temporal
"I just woke up from a dream"	I	-	-
"Where you and I had to say goodbye"	You, I	-	-
"And I don't know what it all means"	I, it	-	-
"But since I survived, I realized"	I	-	-
"Wherever you go, that's where I'll follow"	You, I	Wherever	-
"Nobody's promised tomorrow."	-	-	Tomorrow
"So I'm going a love you every night like it's	I, you, it	-	Every night, last
the last night"	-		night
"Like it's the last night"	It	-	Last night
"If the world were ending, I'd wanna be next	I, you	The world	-
to you"			
"If the party was over and our time on Earth	Our	On earth	-
was through"			
"I'd wanna hold you just for a while and die	I, you	-	For a while
with a smile"			
"Oh, lost, lost in the words that we scream"	We	-	-
"I don't even wanna do this anymore"	I	-	-
"Cause you already know what you mean to	You, me	-	-
me"			
"Our love's the only war worth fighting for"	Our	-	-

Table 1. Deixis Categories in "Die with a Smile" Song Lines

4.1. Subsection

One form of deixis that refers to participants in speech, namely the utterer (first person), the interlocutor (second person), or a third party (third person), is called personal deixis. Researchers have found 22 forms of personal deixis, consisting of the pronouns "I", "me", "you", "we", "ours", and "it". Examples of lyrics such as "I just woke up from a dream" and "Where you and I should say goodbye" show the presence of "I" as the first person and "you" as the second person, which creates a special intimate atmosphere between the two people in the song "Die With a Smile". The words "we" and "ours" are also found in the lyrics "Oh, lost in the words that we scream" and "And our love's the only war worth fighting for", which represent a strong emotional connection between two people. These forms of deixis, especially personal pronouns, function as emotional

anchors rather than mere grammatical subjects, revealing the speaker's vulnerability and desire to connect. This is in line with the findings of Indriani & Widianingsih (2023), who said that personal deixis often builds an emotional connection between the singer as the first person and the listener through personal narratives.

4.2. Temporal Deixis

Another type of deixis is deixis that refers to time markers that mention information about when an event occurs, which is called temporal deixis. The researcher found five forms of time deixis, including "tomorrow", "every night", "last night", and "for a while" in the song lines. The words in the lyrics not only represent a sense of time but also enrich the emotional meaning of the song by representing the dimensions of time, namely the past, present, and future. As in the following lyric excerpt, "Nobody's promise tomorrow" contains the word "tomorrow" which describes the uncertainty of the future, while "So I'mma love you every night like it's the last night" means two contradictory forms of time deixis which include "every night" as a recurring time and "last night" as a possible end. The use of temporal deixis here is not linear; it collapses time into an emotional moment-juxtaposing future uncertainty with present affection and past longing, creating a timeless emotional space. This creates emotional tension about loving someone as if today is the last day, which is the message of the song. Kurniati & Haryudin (2021) and Rokhmah & Santoso (2022) states that temporal deixis in the song reflects the emotional journey of time felt by the speaker, from hopes for the future to memories of the past.

4.3. Spatial Deixis

Spatial deixis is a form of deixis that indicates a place or location in the context of speech. Although the words "here" or "there" are not found explicitly in this song, there are other forms of place deixis such as "the world", "on Earth", and "wherever". For example, in the lyrics "If the world was ending, I'd wanna be next to you", the word "the world" is a spatial reference that is broad and imaginative. Meanwhile, "on Earth" in "our time on Earth was through" refers to a more specific but still symbolic place. The word "wherever" in the lyrics "Wherever you go, that's where I'll follow" functions as an indicator of an unlimited place, which strengthens the impression that the speaker is willing to follow the interlocutor wherever he goes. These spatial references serve metaphorically to highlight relational closeness and emotional distance rather than actual geography. The fluidity of space in these lyrics allows listeners to emotionally locate themselves within the relationship dynamic, not a physical world. Rohaili and Syaputri (2024) explain that in song lyrics, place deixis is often used not only as a location marker but also as a metaphor for emotional or spiritual attachments between individuals.

The use of the three categories of deixis in the lyrics of this song illustrates a strong relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor, both in terms of role (person), time, and space. Person deixis dominates the lyrics and emphasizes the intimacy of personal relationships. Time deixis provides an overview of the emotional dynamics of the past, present, and future. Meanwhile, place deixis fills the spatial dimension and expands the meaning space symbolically. Thus, deixis in this song functions not merely as structural linguistic elements but as emotional instruments that express the speaker's attachment, longing, and existential reflection.

When compared to previous studies, this finding complements the study of Agustina & Hendar (2022), who examined deixis in the "Driver's License" song lines thru Olivia Rodrigo, where the main focus was still on person deixis. In this study, the involvement of place and time deixis enriches the interpretation of the lyrics and shows that collaborative song lyrics such as "Die With a Smile" have a broader complexity of meaning. This research shows that the examination of deixis in song lines not only helps to reveal the literal meaning but also interprets the emotions, perspectives, and intentions that the songwriter wants to convey. Thus, this study not only contributes to the study of

pragmatics but also strengthens the understanding of song lyrics as a form of emotional and aesthetic communication.

5. Conclusions

This research purposes to examine the custom of deixis in the "Die With a Smile" song lines thru Bruno Mars and Lady Gaga through a pragmatic approach. Based on the results of the analysis, three main deixis categories were initiate that appeared in the song lines, namely individual deixis, place deixis, and time deixis. Of the three types, individual deixis is the foremost form, by a total of 22 out of 30 deictic words found. This shows that the song has a strong personal and emotional nuance, marked by the custom of the chief-person pronoun "I" as the center of the narrative. Meanwhile, there are two deictics that strengthen the emotional and spatial context in the song lyrics, which also convey the message and mood of the speaker of the song, namely time and place deixis. These findings underline how deixis in song lyrics functions not just as a grammatical device but as a cultural discourse strategy that builds a personal bridge between the singer and the audience. Through the use of personal pronouns, shifting time references, and symbolic space, the lyrics invite the listener into the emotional world of the speaker, shaping intimacy, empathy, and shared sentiment.

This study proves that deixis can be an important tool in understanding hidden meanings, interpersonal relationships, and speaker perspectives in musical texts, which also supports the expansion of pragmatic studies, especially in the linguistic analysis of works of art such as song lyrics. However, this study is still limited to one song and three types of deixis studied. Therefore, further new research can be conducted by expanding the object of analysis to more songs, different genres, or additional deixis categories, for instance textual, social, and discourse deixis. To deepen the understanding of meaning-making in musical discourse, future research should incorporate multimodal pragmatics-integrating the analysis of song lyrics with visual storytelling in music videos. This approach would reveal how facial expressions, gestures, setting, and cinematic techniques visually reinforce or expand the deictic and emotional cues in the lyrics, offering a more holistic interpretation of the song's intended message. Such research is vital for capturing how meaning is conveyed across multiple modes verbal, visual, emotional and how these modes interact to create richer communication between performer and audience in contemporary pop culture. In addition, multimodal analysis of visual aspects in music videos can also be the direction of further research to enrich the understanding of the context more thoroughly.

6. Patents

This article may serve as a reference for future researchers seeking a deeper insight into the role of the younger generation within the patriarchal system. It is recommended that future studies expand the range of samples or informants and carry out more detailed analyses or case studies on similar topics.

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