

# A DEIXIS ANALYSIS OF SONG LYRICS IN DRIVERS LICENSE BY OLIVIA RODRIGO

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## Abstract

In this research, the researchers would like to analyze the use of deixis in one of the songs of Olivia Rodrigo's Drivers License song lyrics. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method to analyze and classify the types and meanings of the types of the deixis. This research uses descriptive qualitative research because the research data are words or speech and will be analyzed by explaining the data descriptively. In this study, the researcher used a pragmatic approach to identify the type and to explain the meaning of the type. The results of this research are as follows: (1) Deixis is the most dominant type in the songs. (2) Deixis is used to describe the singer's personal feelings, to refer to relationships with other people, or to express a particular time and place. (3) The research results found that the frequency of occurrences of person, time, and place in the song lyrics is higher than that in the lyrics.

**Keywords:** *song, lyrics, deixis*

## Abstrak

*Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti ingin menganalisis penggunaan deixis dalam salah satu lagu dari lirik lagu Surat Izin Mengemudi Olivia Rodrigo. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisis dan mengklasifikasikan jenis dan makna dari jenis-jenis deixis. Penelitian kualitatif deskriptif digunakan dalam penelitian ini karena data penelitian berupa kata-kata atau ucapan dan akan dianalisis dengan cara menjelaskan data secara deskriptif. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti menggunakan pendekatan pragmatis untuk mengidentifikasi tipe dan menjelaskan makna dari tipe tersebut. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah sebagai berikut: (1) Deixis merupakan tipe yang paling dominan dalam lagu. (2) Deixis digunakan untuk menggambarkan perasaan pribadi penyanyi untuk merujuk pada hubungan dengan orang lain, atau untuk mengungkapkan waktu dan tempat tertentu. (3) Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa frekuensi kemunculan orang, waktu, dan tempat dalam lirik lagu lebih tinggi daripada lirik.*

**Kata Kunci:** *lagu, lirik, deixis*

## 1. Introduction

Communication is a tool for interacting between humans. Through communication, humans find it easier to convey their goals and get what they need. Communication is defined as "the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or actions to express or exchange information, or to express one's ideas, thoughts, or feelings to others". According to this description, communication can be characterized as anything. It can be used to convey messages and knowledge from one person to another. Communication helps people function orderly and productively. Without communication, the development of religion, government, art, clothing, etc. was impossible. For this reason, communication is the main reason for the development of

human societies with a single purpose. Inform others and pass on new information. Communication allows us to perceive information and gain knowledge and understanding. Communication is impossible without language, and "language can convey even the most complex messages." Various forms of communication have taken place since human beings first appeared on Earth. Even if you start from scratch, there is still plenty of room for improvement. From the invention of spoken language to communication by smoke, forms of communication developed rapidly ahead of our time. Communication can be done in two ways, namely directly by speaking and indirectly by writing. Every act of communication is seen as a transmission of information consisting of discriminatory stimuli, from a source to a recipient (Abdullah, 2015; Anugrah, 2018; Bouk, 2016). Communication is a process that allows a person (communicator) to convey stimuli commonly using verbal symbols to change the behavior of others for communication affairs (Cohen, 2007; Cruse, 2000; Dylgjeri, 2013).

Language is very important in communication. With the existence of language, humans become easier to interact with each other or communicate with one another. Besides that, through existing language it can make it easier for humans to achieve their goals by understanding each other's intentions of communication with one another. Language is an arbitrary vocal system and allows all people in a particular culture or other people who have studied that cultural system to communicate with each other (Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N, 2003; Gay, 1992; Gee, 2011). Language is also interpreted as a method that is owned by humans and is instinctive to communicate ideas, emotions, and desires using various symbols made for certain purposes (Herman, 2015). Language is part of culture because language and culture are related to each other. Language is included in one of the elements of culture, and that is it is created because of a culture.

There are many words and expressions in communication that can only understand depending on the situation. Misunderstandings can occur, which often lead to problems between speaker and listener or the writer and reader. To understand the meaning clearly, the listener or the reader needs to understand the context (Levinson, 1983, Lyons, 1983). Moreover, communication that is poor in appropriate cultural content is often a source of miscommunication and misunderstanding (Martin, 2005, Irwandi, 2017). Practical research is needed in this case. Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics that studies how people produce communicative acts and interpret them in context. It's about interpreting what people mean and how it affects others.

Deixis is the part that describes the relationship between dependent words or expressions. In general, deixis helps clarify the meaning or intent of a sentence. Both delivered orally and in written form. This designated thing can show objects, people, places, and can also show time. So it depends on the context in the sentence and need to check the sentence before and after it to determine what and who is meant in the sentence. Deixis is a linguistic unit (sound, word, phrase, clause) with reference or meaning determined by the context with reference to the language user. Meanwhile, a word is said to be deictic if the reference or reference changes or changes depending on who is the speaker and depending on when or where the word is spoken. Deixis can be found in daily communication, literary works, song lyrics, movie script, etc. Deixis is an important field of study in the fields of pragmatics, semantics, and linguistics (Horn, 2006, Herman, 2015). Deixis refers to the phenomenon that understanding the meaning of certain words and phrases in an utterance requires contextual information (Cruse, 2026). Words or phrases that require contextual information to convey any meaning are deictic. Deixis concerns the way in which language encodes the characteristics of the language context and thus also the way in which language interpretation depends on the context in which language is analyzed (Hatch, 1992, Sholihah, 2022). Deixis does not only act as a grammatical element, but also expresses different meanings of words, even if they are used in the same way in different situations (Mahmudova, 2021).

Conventional grammar has neither the ability nor the means to show the difference in such cases. It is time, place, messenger that are important in the communication process. Furthermore, modern linguistics takes a different approach. Pragmatics analyzes the words and concepts of language depending on the situation, referring to the cultural, temporal, spatial, social context, etc. from participants in the communication process (reference to dictionary), enabling better understanding of thinking (Yule, 1996, Griffiths, P., 2006).

Language is not just an association of words. Each word cannot and cannot be described at the same time (Thomas, 1995; Martin, 2005). Unless a language is pragmatic about itself, it will not necessarily evolve, change, adapt to present or future forms. Linguistic studies do not differentiate true or false a sentence, but analyzing the function of a sentence refers to a word with a deictic function as an index (Sinaga, et al., 2020; Saputra, 2021). Not only that, indexical has a wider field of word choice and interpret words that have a deictic function. Deixis helps semantics to better analyze a context saying (Martin, 2005; Mahmudova, 2023). From another point of view, predicative expressions, adverbs of place and time, and pronouns are just specific articulations of general facts about language in context.

In terms of traditional categories, deixis is categorized into three categories, which are person deixis, place or spatial deixis, and time or temporal deixis. These categories are understood in the following way.

a) Person Deixis

In every language, there is a first-person pronoun and second-person pronoun. the first person pronoun is used by the speaker as a means to refer to himself, while the second person pronoun is used to refer to the recipient or viewer. In many languages (not all) we notice the third person pronoun, which is used to refer to the different entities of speaker and receiver. Because this pronoun is indirect engaging in their speech is not considered deictic. For example: The person Deixis is usually referred to by pronouns such as: "I", "my", "mine", "you", "your", "your", "our", "our", "our", etc. These pronouns require speaker-listener identification for interpretation. In addition, other expressions such as this person, this man, these women, these children, etc. are also descriptive. This is because listeners need practical information to relate and understand meaning.

b) Place or Spatial Deixis

In any language, speakers create a frame of reference around themselves. Another sentence this category includes the adverbs here/there and some prepositions in/on (in class, on a chair. Deixis expression of place requires contextual information from utterances such as here, there, this place, that place, this city, etc. In addition, Yule (1996) states in considering spatial deixation, however, it is important to remember that location from the speaker's perspective can be improved mentally or physically. For example:  
Proximal term of here means the location of the speaker.

c) Discourse Deixis

Due to the use of expressions (linguistic utterances) that are similar to pronouns to refer to the previously mentioned entities, generally with more complete expressions, deixis discourse is judged to be anaphoric. It refers to one sentence backwards or forwards to another, e.g. "there is a great race" and "strength can be known as: great job done!" Since the enumerated entities are omitted by expressions such as pronouns (linguistic utterances),

most of the more complete, deixis discourses are considered anaphoric. For example:  
- I know you've already known that. - This is important, remember it!

This research analyzes the use of deixis in one of the song lyrics. The song lyrics has the terms of textual meaning which makes the listener have a different interpreted. In addition the use of Deixis is important to analyze because there are many people that listening to the songs. so the researchers decided to analyze Deixis in Drivers License's song lyric by Olivia Rodrigo.

## 2. Method

This study focuses on song lyrics, so this research uses a qualitative descriptive method. The researcher uses a pragmatic approach to identify and classify deixis based on its type and to explain the meaning of deixis in song lyrics. To answer this research question, the researcher will describe the data obtained and will not use any statistical procedures. And this study uses descriptive qualitative research because the research data are words or speech and will be analyzed by explaining the data descriptively.

This study uses documentation and literature methods to collect data referring to the analysis of documents that contain information about the scenario or event under consideration. Researchers collect data with the following steps: first, the researcher listens to the song *Drivers License by Olivia Rodrigo* to understand the lyrics in detail. Meanwhile, the researcher used an accurate version of the original practice when listening to the song. Second, the researcher looked for lyrics on the internet with an accurate version of the lyrics for Olivia Rodrigo's Drivers License lyrics. Third, the researcher chose the lyrics to be analyzed from the song Drivers License by Olivia Rodrigo. Fourth, the researcher identified by marking all the selected lyrics for analysis. The data are analyzed through determining the number of words or phrases that indicate the use of deixis, and classifying them based on the type of deixis used.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The researcher found that the lyrics tend to use such types of deixis include person deixis, time deixis, and place deixis in *Drivers License* song lyrics. The types of deixis used are various and have different references and meanings. This research finds that person deixis, time deixis, and place deixis occur in songs of in *Drivers License* song lyrics.

### 1. Person Deixis

Person deixis designates the basic roles in a speech event, the speaker (*first person*), addressee or the person(s) spoken to (*second person*), and the person or persons who are neither speaker nor addressee (*third person*). In this song of *Drivers License* there are person deixis. It can be seen in this table:

Table 1. Number of Person Deixis

Song	Personal deictic words		
	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Drivers License	I (32 data), We (8 data), My (2 data),	You (21 data), Your (7 data)	She (6 data), Them (1 data), They (1 data)

From the table above, it can be seen the total of person deixis is 84 data from song of *Drivers License*. The lyric which contain person deixis is “cause *you* were so excited for *me*”. There are two data of person deixis in that lyric. First data is second person deixis *you*. *You* refers to the boy. The function of second person deixis *you* is as subject of singular pronoun. Second data is first person deixis *me*. *Me* is included as first person deixis. *Me* refers to the singer Olivia Rodrigo. *Me* is first person deixis because it includes the speaker as singular possessive pronoun object. The lyric which contain third person deixis is “*She’s* so much older than me”. *She* refers to another girl. The function of third person deixis *is* as object of singular pronoun. The explanation above indicates that, the researcher notes that from *Drivers License* song, the use of personal deixis in *Drivers License* that is followed by the three types of personal deixis occurs. The function of person deixis is to indicate the use of personal pronoun in the song lyrics.

## 2. Place Deixis

Spatial or place deictic word indicates location in space relative to the speaker. From the song of *Drivers License*, the researcher found and classified the songs which show the use of spatial or place deixis.

Table 2. Number of Place Deixis

Song	Spatial or Place Deixis
	Distal and Proximal Term
Drivers License	That (4 Data), This (3 Data)

From the table above, it can be seen that in song *Drivers License* there are 2 data of spatial or place deixis. The lyric which contain place deixis of distal term is *that* in lyrics “And you’re probably with *that* blonde girl”. *That* refers to someone. The lyric which contain place deixis of proximal term is *this* in lyrics “And I know we weren’t perfect but I’ve never felt *this* way for no one”. *This* in the lyrics refers to Olivia’s feeling. The function of spatial deixis is to indicate the use of the distance or location, similarly to personal deixis, the locations may be either those of the speaker and addressee or those of persons or objects being referred in the song lyrics.

## 3. Time Deixis

Temporal or time deixis word indicates the timing of an event relative to the time of speaking. From the song *Drivers License*, the researcher found and classified the song which shows that the temporal deixis or time deixis occurs. The researcher uses the table to make it easier and clearer.

Table 3. Number of Time Deixis

Song	Temporal or Time Deixis
Drivers License	Pure deictic word and specific time
	Last Week (1 data), Today (1 data), Now (2 Data)

From the table above, the researcher found 3 data of time deixis. First data is *Last week* in the lyric “I got my drivers license *last week*”. Second data is *Today* in the lyric “But *today* I drove through the suburbs”. Third data is *Now* in the lyrics “And I just can’t imagine how you could be so okay, *now* that I’m gone” and “You said forever, *now* I drive alone past your street”. *Last week*, *today*, and *now* refers to time. Based on the explanation above, the researcher includes that from the song *Drivers License*, the use of temporal deixis occurs. The function of temporal deixis is to indicate the use of the timing in the song lyrics.

After analyzing and determining the types of deixis and also interpreting the references meaning that are used in *Drivers License* song lyric, the findings of frequency of deixis types which are used in the songs of Olivia Rodrigo are presented as follows:

Table 4. Number of Types of Deixis

Num.	Types of Deixis	Frequency
1.	Person Deixis	84
2.	Place Deixis	7
3.	Time Deixis	4

From the table above, it shows that the number or frequency of deixis which is taken from the song *Drivers License* are person deixis, place deixis and time deixis appear in *Drivers License* song lyric. The most dominant types of deixis that are used in songs of *Drivers License* are person deixis (84 data). Thus, the dominant words of person deixis in *Drivers License* song lyric use first person deixis which are *I, We, My, Me*.

#### 4. Conclusion

The *Driver's License* songs use all kinds of deixis as the person, place, and time the deixis occurred in the Driver's License song. The personal deixis used include three types of human deixis namely first person deixis, second person deixis and third person deixis. In addition, the other types are time deixis and place deixis which appear in the song *Driving License*. Most of the personal deixis in *Driver's License* lyrics refer to the speaker himself, encoded by the first person singular deixis as *I, My*. While for the first person plural deixis, *we* are mainly referring to the speaker.

In this study, the deixis were the most dominant type in the songs. It is because the singer recounts the feeling of being in love with the boy in her song that the use of people of the deixis type is more frequent than others. The researcher notes that by using deixis, it is easier to describe the function of the person, pronoun, tense, and signifier connecting the utterance with human, space and time relationships. It is also useful to capture reference meanings including who, where, and when the utterance is spoken.

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