

## A Pragmatic Analysis of Deixis in Olivia Rodrigo's Song "Driver's License"

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**Abstract.** Deixis is one of the pragmatic aspects that refers to words, phrases, or expressions that have different meanings depending on the contexts of who is speaking and the time and the place where the utterance is expressed. This study aims to analyze the types of deixis found in Olivia Rodrigo's song, "Driver's License". This song is one of the most popular songs today and is widely heard around the world. The research method used is a mixed method through a descriptive approach. The data were obtained by observing the lyrics of the song, which were then analyzed by content to determine the types of deixis in this song. Then, data analysis by using (1) generating the natural unit, (2) classifying, categorizing, and ordering the unit, (3) structuring the content, and (4) interpreting the data. The results of the study show that there are 119 deictic expressions in this song and can be categorized into three types of deixis, namely: person deixis, which refers to the character or noun in an utterance; spatial deixis, which refers to the place or location spoken; and temporal deixis, which refers to the time when the speaker is speaking. By knowing the types of deixis, students can distinguish deixis information through categories that are appropriate based on the types so that they can distinguish the use of deixis based on the situation of the object used.

**Keywords:** *Deixis, Song, Olivia Rodrigo, Driver License*

<http://jos.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/jes>

### INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool that has an infinite variety of studies that can be explored and developed continuously to get an update on its use. Language is also an object of science that has parts in their respective fields, which can be studied separately based on particular knowledge. Then, language also consists of

various forms, starting from spoken language spoken through the human mouth, written language, which can be in the form of descriptions, expressions, or descriptions through written media such as books, newspapers, comics, and so on, as well as sign language, which is carried out with various kinds of movements, certain codes, or symbols. Language must be well studied for every human being because by having good language skills, good communication will also be created so that the interactions that occur give impressions and understanding that are mutually acceptable and understandable for the communicators earlier. Apart from being expressed directly to represent a condition or condition experienced by the language's speaker, it can also be expressed in a variety of forms, such as pictures, murals, poetry, symbols, or symbols, and even songs. The various forms of conveying the meaning of the language above are an attempt to be able to provide meaning, both explicit and implied, to the reader regarding the message to be conveyed, either in a way that is easy to understand directly or must go through a deeper effort to get the meaning of what is to be conveyed. In the use of language, there are also reference words that refer to who, where, and when the utterance was delivered. This reference is commonly referred to as deixis. Deixis is one aspect of pragmatics that explains the use of words based on the object being referred, to understanding deixis will explain what was discussed, who was discussed, and when it happened. Interesting ways are needed to make deixis learning easy for students to understand, one of which is through songs. Prayudha and Malik (2021) state that the use of songs can be used as a means of conveying messages. This study focuses on the use of songs in conveying an intention or purpose to be conveyed to readers where in learning a language it is also necessary to understand the elements that exist in that language both the big elements that are often encountered in conducting a communication or even the elements smaller languages like deixis. Deixis itself has a meaning as an indicating word or phrase whose reference is not fixed. This means that the word or phrase will change meaning based on the situation and conditions experienced and spoken by the speaker.

According to Sunarwan, (2014), deixis is a word that has a reference that can only be identified by taking into account the identity of the speaker and the time and place of the utterance that contains the element in question. Sometimes, in linguistics are often found pronunciation of the language the context that is experienced and what occurs when the utterance is spoken will also provide a different understanding for the listeners of the speech, so it is very necessary to study the meaning of the sentence to get a clear intention in understanding it. Nadar (2009) said that pragmatics examines the relationship between language and the context experienced by the speaker. She also added that pragmatics is a study that studies language in a particular social context. Thus, someone who is studying a language to be able to understand and master pragmatics must be able to clearly understand the intent and purpose of what is conveyed by the speaker. It concludes that deixis is a study that can be used to find out the references or references of what the speaker is talking about based on the place, time, and subject being talked about, so that it will give an idea of the true meaning of the speaker wants to convey in his utterance. Currently, teaching about deixis is rarely

taught to students, only a handful of students understand the meaning of deixis, so not all students can understand it. It is necessary to teach and provide an understanding of deixis material in a way that is more fun and easily accepted by the students so that not only language students understand the meaning of deixis learning, but other people can also be interested in understanding the intent of learning deixis material.

According to Silvi, Rina, and Aa (2021), it is very necessary to understand deixis in the relationship between communication and language because understanding the meaning of a language is not just knowing the true meaning but there are sometimes hidden meanings that also need to be known. Because it is important to know the implied meaning of an utterance, it is necessary to teach about deixis to students because by knowing deixis students will also understand how a language has its meaning based on the types of deixis. Teaching deixis then should be done in a fun way, one of which is through a famous song.

In this study the song to be examined to determine the number and types of deixis is a song sung by the United States singer Olivia Rodrigo entitled "*Driver License*". This song has become one of the most favorite songs since 2021 and has been listened to and watched 430 million times on YouTube. Meanwhile, knowing the deixis contained in the song can provide information to readers about the type and number of deixis in the song "*Driver License*" so that the listeners while listening to the lyrics of the song can also understand the meaning referred to in the form of words or phrases that are referenced in the lyrics. Therefore, this study analyzes the type and number of deixis contained in the song "*Driver's License*" as a form of providing information and learning to readers regarding the types of deixis and the number of deixis that are one part of language learning that must be mastered and understood by language learners to understand the true meaning based on the speaker's situation. Through deixis learning, students will be able to distinguish the types of deixis based on the category of uses and functions of each deixis in a sentence. Language learners need to know and understand how the message conveyed in a song can be properly interpreted, especially in referring to the meaning used based on the deixis in the song.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

Furthermore, in pragmatics, there is a study that can provide information about words or phrases whose references have changing meanings based on the context experienced by the speaker. Gee (2011) said that deixis is a word that has a reference that is not fixed or changing. In carrying out language activities the spoken words or phrases sometimes refer to references that move or change depending on who is the speaker, and when and where the words are spoken. Words or phrases such as "I, he, there, there, yesterday, two days ago" are words or phrases whose designation can change or change according to the context. Deixis is also a way to refer to something that is closely related to the context of the speaker (Rahardi, 2005). According to Lyons (1995), deixis is a way to identify the person, object, time, and place being talked about or referred to based on the time and context experienced by the speaker. Thus, studying deixis will provide knowledge

about how to understand the references or references that are discussed in an utterance or sentence. Furthermore, deixis itself is divided into several types where these types have their characteristics that can be distinguished from the others. There are three main categories in studying deixis according to Levinson (1983). They are person deixis, spatial deixis and temporal deixis.

### **Person deixis**

Sometimes some words or phrases show intent or refer to people or individuals in expressing words or utterances. Words like "I, he, you, they", and so on are terms to describe persona deixis. Persona deixis has a meaning as a word or phrase where when a sentence is spoken it has its meaning (description of the person being spoken about) based on the context experienced by the speaker. So a word or phrase that states the existence of a person in a sentence is a deixis, in this case, it is a persona deixis. Many people are still confused about the meaning or purpose of what is conveyed which refers to the person or subject. Personal deixis, is divided into three types, the first is the first-person pronoun "I". Second, "you". Third, "he", is the name of objects, animals, and so on. Persona deixis shows the role of each character in the utterance mentioned, so it is very necessary to understand the division of roles in the utterance to find out who the meaning refers to so that people can understand the clarity of the meaning conveyed. So, persona deixis can be interpreted as a subject involved in or playing a role in the speech sentence conveyed. For example, who is being discussed, who is speaking, or what subject is included in their conversation.

### **Spatial deixis**

In a sentence or utterance, sometimes there are several names of places or locations mentioned by the speaker to describe a location where the place is spoken of. In pragmatic studies, place or location in a sentence is included in spatial deixis. Spatial deixis refers to the location or places involved in the conversation where the location or place is adapted to the context experienced by the speaker of the language. Knowing the location or place in an utterance or sentence will make it easier for people to understand where an utterance is conveyed either by looking at the condition or situation in the sentence. Knowing the location or place of an utterance will also make people understand when the event occurred based on the location where it occurred. In English, the most frequently seen example is "here", or "there" which refers to the situation of the place or location being discussed. Thus place deixis refers to the location conditions that occur where the speaker and the interlocutor speak.

### **Temporal deixis**

An utterance and sentence sometimes have a word or phrase indicating time. The time in a sentence or utterance refers to the description of when an utterance was uttered so that when one can understand and know the utterance, one can understand the implementation of the utterance when it is uttered in a certain context. Temporal deixis can be a time indication of "12 AM, tomorrow,

yesterday, now, recently” and so on. Temporal deixis refers to when the utterance is uttered by the speaker so that one can understand the time in the situation or context in which it is spoken. Some sentences sometimes have time indicators or temporal deixis so that the interlocutor can easily understand them or also understand the context of when an utterance occurs. For example, in the following sentence "Only today you can get free food, but pay tomorrow", in the context of the sentence the words "today" and "tomorrow" are words that refer to adverbs of time in sentences. "I will go to America in the next two days", so the word indicating the time in the sentence is "the next two days". In conclusion, time deixis is a word or phrase that refers to the adverb of time mentioned in a sentence or utterance.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a mixed method to analyze the types of deixis contained in Olivia Rodrigo's song entitled "*Driver License*". This song was chosen because it is one with the largest number of music listeners around the world, as well as making it in the top five on Billboard. The singer is also one of the top artists who has issued many other best-selling songs. The "*Driver License*" song was chosen because it has more than 452 million listeners on YouTube and the lyrics contain various kinds of deixis which can serve as examples for teaching deixis. The type of approach used is descriptive through content analysis. The mixed method is a combination of quantitative and qualitative to find out the data of the research. The research can be used to find out the number of deixis types in Olivia's song. In addition, mixed-method research can also be used to obtain more detailed information about what is being studied in a more comprehensive manner (Arora, R., & Stoner, 2009). Meanwhile, Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana (2013) state that content analysis is a method that can be used to identify meaning in the form of documents, texts, or other archives. Thus, it can be concluded that this research tries to examine the lyrics of the song "*Driver's License*" to obtain and know the deixis and its types.

The data were obtained by collecting "*Driver License*" song lyrics on the internet which were then analyzed based on the type of deixis. After the data were collected, they were analyzed through the following stages proposed by Cohen (2007) they are; (1) generating the natural unit, (2) classifying, categorizing, and ordering the unit, (3) structuring the content, and (4) interpreting the data. In carrying out this research, the researcher used two main steps to understand the intent and find the types of deixis from the song, namely by listening to the song several times and then using the taking notes technique to determine the type of deixis through content analysis cards.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzes the types of deixis in one of the most popular songs sung by Olivia Rodrigo entitled "*Driver License*". Deixis itself has a meaning as a word, phrase, or expression that has a meaning that moves or changes depending on the condition of the speaker who utters the utterance. Understanding deixis in a song can provide information to listeners and readers about the types of deixis

contained in the song so that listeners and readers can understand words, phrases, or expressions that refer to something different according to the conditions that affect the song when it is spoken. The results of research on deixis contained in the "Driver's License" song can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Deixis Analysis

No	Lyric of song	Types of deixis
1	Person deixis	86
2	Spatial deixis	17
3	Temporal deixis	16
<b>Total</b>		<b>119</b>

We often find words or phrases related to changing meanings in utterances and sentences. This word or phrase will explain to the reader the true meaning based on the situation or context in which the utterance is said. Someone can understand and know a real meaning when he/she can analyze and understand the real meaning through a deixis situation or condition so that the meaning will provide clarity according to the real meaning. In the lyrics of a song sung by American singer Olivia Rodrigo entitled "Driver License," there are several deixes that can be explored further so that readers and connoisseurs of the song can understand the true meaning of the lyrics of the song they like. Broadly speaking, there are three main categories of deixis offered by Levinson (1983) they are persona deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. Each of these deixis can be classified based on the characteristics and uses of each so this research will be the object of in-depth research.

Based on the results presented in Table 1 regarding the total number of deictic expressions, there are around 119 deixis words including the following division: 86 person deixis, 17 spatial deixis, and 16 temporal deixis. Each of these deixis types describes information about the subject, place/location, and time which shows the story in the sentence or utterance that is conveyed so that we can learn more about how Olivia Rodrigo's true meaning is conveyed in her song. We can see that in the lyrics of the song "Driver License", the highest number of deixis is in the persona deixis which refers to the depiction of the subject in the lyrical story being sung. Words like "I", and "you" have a lot of repetition in the lyrics of the song so they have a very large portion when compared to other deixis. "I" and "You" refer to persona deixis. Furthermore, spatial deixis has the second largest number, around 17, where the place in the lyrics of the song describes the atmosphere and location related to the condition of the song in the story of the song's lyrics. Lastly, the number of temporal deixis in the song is around 16 which is more likely to describe or show the time of events based on the story that happened to singer Olivia. The conclusion is that what must be considered is how the meaning refers to or represents what is supposed to be understood in the lyrics of the song so that carrying out this research can provide a broad picture of the meaning contained in deixis. The examples of deixis contained in the song lyrics can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Song Analysis

No	Song Lyrics
1	I got my driver's license last week
2	Just like we always talked about
3	'Cause you were so excited for me
4	To finally drive up to your house
5	But today I drove through the suburbs
6	Cryin' 'cause you weren't around
7	And you're probably with that blonde girl
8	Who always made me doubt
9	She's so much older than me
10	She's everything I'm insecure about
11	Yeah, today I drove through the suburbs
12	'Cause how could I ever love someone else?
13	And I know we weren't perfect but I've never felt this way for no one
14	And I just can't imagine how you could be so okay now that I'm gone
15	Guess you didn't mean what you wrote in that song about me
16	'Cause you said forever, now I drive alone past your street
17	And all my friends are tired
18	Of hearing how much I miss you, but
19	I kinda feel sorry for them
20	'Cause they'll never know you the way that I do, yeah
21	Today I drove through the suburbs
22	And pictured I was driving home to you
23	And I know we weren't perfect
24	But I've never felt this way for no one, oh
25	And I just can't imagine how you could be so okay now that I'm gone
26	I guess you didn't mean what you wrote in that song about me
27	'Cause you said forever, now I drive alone past your street
28	Red lights, stop signs
29	I still see your face in the white cars, front yards
30	Can't drive past the places we used to go to
31	'Cause I still fuckin' love you, babe (ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh)
32	Sidewalks we crossed
33	I still hear your voice in the traffic, we're laughing
34	Over all the noise
35	God, I'm so blue, know we're through
36	But I still fuckin' love you, babe (ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh)
37	I know we weren't perfect but I've never felt this way for no one
38	And I just can't imagine how you could be so okay now that I'm gone
39	'Cause you didn't mean what you wrote in that song about me
40	'Cause you said forever, now I drive alone past your street
41	Yeah, you said forever, now I drive alone past your street

Note: Red : Person deixis  
Yellow : Spatial deixis  
Green : Temporal deixis

The table above is the sum of each type of deixis in the "Drivers' License" song. The deixis contained in the lyrics of the song "Drivers' License" has its reference meaning where there are three types of deixis including, person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. The red color shows the person's deixis. Person deixis refers to a person or individual expressing words and an utterance. According to Saputra & Apsari (2021), deixis person is a meaning that refers to the actor, meaning that this meaning shows the subject who is the character in the song lyrics. Person deixis in the lyrics of the song "Drivers' License" consists of words (I, we, you, your, me, the blonde girl, someone, no one, and so on). The number of person deixis in the lyrics ranges from 86 deixis and it is the most deixis in the lyrics of this song. Sitorus (2019) revealed that several songs show the meaning of the subject to refer to person deixis. Prayudha (2023) said that person deixis refers to the character being talked about in a certain context. In the lyrics of the song "Driver's License" sung by Olivia Rodrigo, person deixis is the actor or subject discussed in a romantic relationship, where there are subjects I, You, We, and a blonde girl who are the main characters in the relationship of the story of the song's lyrics. This means that when a statement is expressed and has words that refer to the "actor" which shows involvement in the story, it is called person deixis. The role of person deixis is used to find out who is involved in someone's speech, whether it is the meaning, treatment, or role that the speaker wants to convey. Herdiyanti (2020) says when the speaker expresses a sentence and then refers to the subject, the subject has a role as a person deixis which has a role performed by him. Therefore, person deixis is a word that refers to or expresses a subject involved in a narrative or conversation that has a role in it.

Furthermore, the yellow color is a spatial deixis which refers to the location or place involved in the conversation where the location or place is adapted to the context experienced by the speaker of the language. Based on Tomy et al (2017) explanation, spatial deixis is a reference in a sentence or utterance that refers to the location or place being addressed. This place or location is mentioned because it is involved in the sentence conveyed, so it is involved in giving the meaning of a place that occurs in an event to the reader or listener. There are around 17 spatial deixis in the lyrics of this song, making it the second most deixis. The spatial deixis in the lyrics of this song include (house, the suburbs, street, home, place, and so on). Spatial deixis explains a meaning that refers to location, this location will explain specifically where a speech occurs. Research conducted by (Nurhikmah, 2019) reveals that spatial deixis is a description of the location involved in detail in a conversation or utterance that explains the occurrence of an event. Spatial deixis sometimes must be understood so that the reader can know in detail where the location of a speech is clearly expressed which has involvement in a conversation. Nurvagian & Herlina (2021) also added that it is necessary to understand and analyze in depth the location or place conveyed by someone in a speech to avoid misunderstanding the purpose of going somewhere. So, the spatial deixis contained in the lyrics of "Driver's License" describes and tells the place where the incident happened that happened to Olivia on the way to her love story.

Then, the temporal deixis in the lyrics of this song consists of 16 deixis. Temporal deixis is a word that shows when an utterance occurs, for example (today, now, gone, forever, and so on). According to Patmo (2017), temporal deixis explains the time description of an event that is told in a story. Temporal deixis is



related to when an event occurs. Each deixis provides information to readers and listeners regarding the reference to the meaning of a sentence which explains in detail who, when, and where the utterance occurs. This will provide information related to pragmatics that students will learn, especially in deixis studies. In understanding a sentence or utterance, sometimes it is very necessary to know when an event or incident occurred so that it can provide very detailed information about the incident. Aprilia et al. (2022) said that temporal deixis is closely related to the atmosphere in which an event occurs, both the time of the event and the circumstances that influenced the event to occur. Ekawati, Argian, and Sofwan (2014) added that temporal deixis is a component that is always present in describing an event's atmosphere to get a feeling for the event. In the lyrics of the song "*Driver's License*" temporal deixis consists of several references to types of time and circumstances that tell of events that happened to him in a state of heartbreak. By understanding temporal deixis, readers will get a clear and detailed picture of the atmosphere and time when an incident or incident occurred.

The number of deixis contained in the song can provide information and understanding about the meaning of the types of deixis both from examples of words in the lyrics of the song. Studying the references to meaning in a song, can provide an overview of what and who the speaker is talking about so that someone can provide broader insights regarding the implied meaning. Prayudha and Pradana (2023) said that It is very important to understand how a sentence has the actual meaning so that a language learner can find out the true meaning based on the reference to its meaning. The findings of this study can provide an overview of examples of the types of deixis that exist in a song which will encourage students to better understand the differences and functions of each type of deixis. Then, understanding deixis will train students to be able to digest and understand one of the pragmatic sciences, namely deixis where students will understand well the meaning of an utterance related to characters, place, and time so that it will provide extensive information and knowledge related to the use language in everyday life.

## CONCLUSION

Understanding deixis can provide knowledge to readers about one of the studies in pragmatics where studying it will provide new knowledge about words, phrases, and expressions that refer to meanings that move around based on situations that affect speakers or sentences that pronounce them. Thus, language learners must understand how a word or sentence can influence giving a change of meaning so that when someone is in a problem, he can understand the scope of pragmatics, which in this case is deixis. Furthermore, the deixis contained in the song lyrics also provide new insight for listeners and readers to understand the meaning of the sentences conveyed. In this case, deixis provides information regarding what the spoken word refers to, when it was spoken, and in what situations. Furthermore, the lyrics of the *Driver's License* song sung by Olivia Rodrigo have various types of deixis, including person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. Each of these deixis has its section and portion in the song lyrics

that readers can learn and understand. Readers can understand the types of deixis based on the function and the categorization of the word refers.

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