



An Analysis of Deixis in Song 'Popular' & 'Yes, And' for Teaching and Learning Practice for ELT Student

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abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the utilization of deixis in song lyrics. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research focuses on the lyrics of two songs, "Popular" and "Yes, and," performed by Ariana Grande. The analysis of these songs revealed the presence of various deixis types, with distinct frequencies observed in each song. Specifically, the identified deixis categories include personal deixis, temporal deixis, spatial deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis. The findings for "Popular" show 55 of personal deixis, 2 instances of spatial deixis, 7 of temporal deixis, 2 of discourse deixis, and 1 social deixis. In contrast, the analysis of "Yes, And" revealed 63 instances of personal deixis, 17 instances of spatial deixis, 1 temporal deixis, 2 of discourse deixis, and 3 of social deixis. Based on these results, it can be concluded that personal deixis is the most frequently used type in both songs. The result of this research shown how deixis analysis in song lyrics contribute in teaching and learning for ELT students.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a distinctly human, non-instinctive means of communicating thoughts, emotions, and intentions through a system of symbols that are consciously and voluntarily produced (Lyons, 1983). As a fundamental aspect of human existence, language plays a crucial role in facilitating communication and the exchange of ideas, desires, and goals. Each individual possesses their own unique linguistic repertoire, enabling them to engage in communication through both spoken and written forms. These forms of language are expressed in various mediums, including poetry, songs, drama, and more. In the context of this research, the researcher aims to analyze the language used in song lyrics, exploring how songs can convey and transform ideas, emotions, and narratives. This research is significant as it contributes to the broader understanding of how language shapes and reflects human thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

A song, by definition, consists of lyrics that go beyond arrangements of words and sentences; they serve as a medium for expressing emotions and sentiments that the writer intends to share, such as love, conflict, anger, jealousy, peace, and even anti-social feelings (Purba et al., 2023). Through the lyrics, the singer or songwriter communicates specific messages, depicting particular situations or contexts to the listener. As mentioned earlier, lyrics provide an engaging and dynamic way to communicate, offering an accessible means of connecting with others. To fully grasp the depth of this communication, it is essential to

understand the principles of linguistics, as they form the foundation for effective and meaningful expression.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. As described by Herman and Pardede (2020), linguistics is a discipline that explores and analyzes the complexities, structures, and origins of language. It can also be understood as a universal human attribute, serving as a fundamental means of communication across cultures. From a scientific standpoint, linguistics encompasses various subfields that investigate different dimensions of language. These include phonetics, which studies sounds; phonology, which examines sound patterns; semiotics, which focuses on signs and symbols; sociolinguistics, which looks at the relationship between language and society; and pragmatics, which analyzes language use in context. In addition to these well-known areas, there are numerous other branches of linguistics that remain less explored or understood, all contributing to a broader understanding of how language operates and evolves.

In this study, the researcher focuses on one specific aspect of linguistics, namely pragmatics. As Yule (1996) explains, pragmatics involves the study of the meaning conveyed by the speaker or writer and how it is interpreted by the listener or reader. In simpler terms, pragmatics examines the meaning of language from the perspectives of both the speaker and the writer. This field encompasses a range of communicative forms, including speech acts, gestures, instructions, directions, and politeness strategies. In this research, the focus is placed on one particular pragmatic feature: Deixis. According to Levinson (1983), deixis refers to linguistic structures that serve to reference persons, locations, times, discourses, and social distinctions. Deixis can be categorized into five primary types: Personal Deixis represents the speaker and the audience, ex: first, second, and third person. Spatial Deixis indicates location, ex: here, there. Temporal Deixis refers to time, ex: now, then, tomorrow, this week. Social Deixis highlights social distinctions between speakers within the same language variety. Discourse deixis refers to parts of a discourse that are either given or being developed, including anaphora and anaphora.

The song “Popular” and “Yes, and” by Ariana Grande were chosen to be the data sources in this study due to their wide popularity. More specifically, the song “Popular” is a collaboration between Ariana Grande and MIKA. MIKA composed this song in the musical drama entitled “Wicked (2024)” so that many people know this song, not only that, because this song highlights social pressure, physical appearance, and conformity making this song accepted in the middle of society. As well as the song “Yes, and” which was written by Ariana Grande herself this song tells the story of how Ariana learned not to think too much about other people’s negative opinions and focus on her own happiness and growth. This song is also the title track of Ariana Grande's seventh album, AG7 so it is in great demand by music lovers, especially Arianators.

This paper is conducted for identifying how deixis in song can be analysed to help ELT students in understanding language features. By focusing on the relationships between speakers, the social roles they perform, and the broader societal values reflected in language helps to illuminate the deeper meanings behind deictic expressions. In the case of song “*Popular*” and “*Yes, and*”, this study aims to provide valuable insights into deixis in song lyrics, contributing to teaching and learning for ELT students to get deeper understanding of this linguistic feature. Based on the explanation above, the research questions made in this study are what types of deixis (person, temporal/time, spatial/place, discourse, and social) are found in the song “Popular” and “Yes, and”? and How is the role of deixis in the song “Popular” and “Yes, and” can contribute in teaching and Learning for ELT students?.

METHOD

The descriptive qualitative methodology was used for this investigation. According to Creswell (2012) qualitative research is a research stage that produces data in the form of writing or speech, as well as the behavior of the people observed. The purpose of research is to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon by concentrating on the phenomenon as a whole rather than dissecting it into its component parts. In this case, it is said to be descriptive because the aim is to describe thoroughly the various kinds of deixis used in the song “*Popular*” and “*Yes, And*”. Because the data for this research comes from words, phrases, and sentences organized according to deixis theory, researcher classifies this research as descriptive qualitative research. The findings of this research are based on an analysis of the words, phrases, and sentence structures that are included in the lyrics. This study uses data from lyrics of the song “*Popular*” and “*Yes, And*” by Ariana Grande. This study uses a survey script of the song “*Popular*” and “*Yes, And*”. The research instrument is described further down. Then, check-up the words, phrases, and sentences that are categorized as deixis in the language’s dictionary.

The following procedures are carried out in order to get the necessary information for this research. The first thing need to do is go through the lyrics of the song “*Popular*” and “*Yes, and*” then, read them slowly and carefully, so that can obtain a general idea of any information that is dispersed throughout the lyrics. The next thing that need to do is locate the words, phrasings, and sentences that have the potential to be dissected utilizing deixis theory.

Following the completion of the data collection from the source, undergo analysis using the procedures outlined below. First, it is necessary to determine the circumstances around the deixis idea. Second, doing an analysis in accordance using Levinsons’ deixis, which were divided into person, time, place, discourse, and social. The third step is to locate the problematic terms that are being examined in the dictionary. And lastly, drawing a conclusion on the preceding discussion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This paper focuses on the analysis of deixis in song and how it contribute to teaching and learning for ELT students. Deixis plays a central role in shaping the meaning as it anchors the referent to specific points of view, such as the speaker’s position in space, time, or social relationships. According to Levinson (1983), deixis is a language structure that highlights individuals, locations, times, and social distinctions. Deixis can be categorized into five types. First is personal deixis. Personal deixis is expressed through personal pronouns (Khoirot, 2017). The speaker refers to themselves using the first person singular “I,” addresses the listener using the second person plural “you,” and may refer to someone else using third person pronouns such as “he” or “she.” Therefore, personal deixis can be categorized into three types: first person, second person, and third person. And according to Noerrofi’a & Bahri (2019), first person deixis focuses on the speaker or the speaker along with other participants. Sari (2015) explains that second person deixis directly refers to the listener, using pronouns like “you,” “your,” and “yours.” On the other hand, third person deixis refers to someone or something that is neither the speaker nor the listener, third person pronouns include singular forms like “he,” “she,” and “it,” and the plural form “they.” These pronouns are mostly used to refer to people or things already mentioned in the conversation, rather than indicating a new referent (Fadilah & Resmini, 2021). Second is spatial deixis. This type is deictic reference to a location that is spatially relevant to the position that a participant in the speaking event will take, most

frequently that of the speaker, is known as spatial deixis. As an illustration, take this, that, here, and there. Yule (1996) argues that when thinking about in order to understand spatial deixis, It is necessary to bear in mind the location from the perspective of the speaker. Place, or spatial deixis specifies location in relation to anchorage points in speech occurrences, according to Lyons in Levinson (1983) Locational specification is important because there appear to be primary techniques of referring to items by describing or identifying them and by locating them. “This,” “these,” not “that,” “those,” is how a speaker using location deixis can refer to neighboring objects. Third is temporal deixis. Temporal deixis relies on the relevant time or moment of utterance. Levinson (1983) states that measuring and counting time in language have to be important cycles of day and night, month, season and years. “Today” as one of temporal deixis refers to present time, while “last night” refers to past time. Readers are able to understand when the event occurs through temporal deixis (Muthmainah & Chandra, 2021). Fourth is discourse deixis. It refers to deictic reference within a discourse, relative to the speaker’s current position in the conversation. It includes terms like above, below, last, previous, proceeding, next, or following (typically used in texts), and this, that, there, next, or last (usually found in utterances). While discourse deixis is sometimes compared to anaphora, they are distinct concepts (Ekowati & Sofwan, 2014). Fifth is social deixis. According to (Ekowati & Sofwan, 2014) social deixis does not focus on the three main components (person, place, and time) of the subjective orientation coordinate system. Instead, it illustrates how individuals within different social hierarchies and the participants in communication express their relationships in society through language. In essence, social deixis pertains more to the nature and level of interpersonal relationships than to the exchange of specific information.

Nurhikmah (2019) analyse how is the function of deixis in classroom setting. He focuses the analysis on how teacher uses deixis in the interaction. The finding are the use of deixis to refer to first person , second person and third person in a speech event. It showed how deixis is used to refer to teacher or students and it helps them to understand the message of the text in the conversation. Further, Jumaedah, et.al, (2020), in the paper also showed the use of deixis in the classroom setting. There are some types deixis use by teachers” on students” understanding, namely person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis and social deixis. This paper is aiming to analyse the use of deixis in a song helps students to practice close reading and analysis skills as they consider the impact of language on listener. The previous research on the studies of language and song found from the paper of Ulya Muflihah, et, at (2021) and Syamsu and Weda (2023). Both of the researches focus on the style of the language use. Different from the previous study, this paper focus to show how lyric of song can help ELT student to get deeper understanding on the use of deixis.

Songs, like other forms of discourse, are rich in deixis. they often utilize deixis to create coherent, emotional connections, highlight personal experiences, and convey subjective perspectives. The lyrics of songs frequently use person deixis to invoke identities, both personal and collective. Time and place deixis may be used to place the narrative within specific contexts or evoke certain moods. In the case of musical theatre, where songs are an integral part of the narrative, deixis helps to advance plot and character development.

The total words lyrics of “*Popular*” by Ariana Grande are 347 with five types of deixis. the detail finding of deixis in the song can be seen in the Table 1.

Table 1. Type of Deixis of Lyrics of Song “Popular”

NO.	TYPES OF DEIXES	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1.	Personal Deixis	$\frac{55}{347}$ 100%	15%
2.	Spatial/Place Deixis	$\frac{2}{347}$ 100%	0.5%
3.	Temporal/Time Deixis	$\frac{7}{347}$ 100%	2%
4.	Discourse Deixis	$\frac{2}{347}$ 100%	0.5%
5.	Social Deixis	$\frac{1}{347}$ 100%	0.2%

In the second song entitle “Yes, And”, there are 386 words and five types of deixis. The detail finding of lyric of “Yes, and” by Ariana Grande, can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Type of Deixis of Lyric Song ‘Yes, And’

NO.	TYPES OF DEIXES	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1.	Personal Deixis	$\frac{63}{386}$ 100%	16%
2.	Spatial/Place Deixis	$\frac{17}{386}$ 100%	4%
3.	Temporal/Time Deixis	$\frac{1}{386}$ 100%	0.2%
4.	Discourse Deixis	$\frac{2}{386}$ 100%	0.5%
5.	Social Deixis	$\frac{3}{386}$ 100%	0.7%

According to the findings of the research or based on the table above in the song “Popular”, researcher find 55 out of 15% fall under the category of the Personal Deixis (first person, second person, and third person). Then, researcher discovered with regard to the Spatial Deixis, that the percentage was equivalent to 0.5%. And in terms of the Temporal Deixis, the researcher discovered 7 instances that accounted for 2%. And, it follows with 2 out of 0.5% fall under the category of the Discourse Deixis and 0.2% find in Social Deixis.

The research on identifying deixis in the song “Popular”, approached through the lens of discourse analysis, reveals several key insights into how deixis operates within this context. The song is primarily a comedic piece delivered by the character Glinda, and it portrays her perspective on what it means to be “popular.” The research examines how various deictic expressions words whose meaning is dependent on context are used throughout the lyrics, and how these expressions reflect the dynamics of power, identity, and social relationships.

The analysis shows that deixis in song “Popular” is primarily marked through personal deixis, temporal deixis, spatial deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis. Personal deixis is represented in the use of first and second person pronouns like “I,” “you,” and “we,” which function to establish the relationship between Glinda and the listener or the character Elphaba. For instance, Glinda uses “you” frequently to directly address Elphaba, positioning herself as an authoritative figure. This usage emphasizes Glinda’s self-perceived role as the one who holds knowledge about how to become “popular” and implies a teacher student dynamic in their relationship.

The research also highlights how deixis contributes to the construction of identity for both Glinda and Elphaba. Glinda’s repeated use of “I” and “you” helps construct her identity as a self-assured, outgoing, and confident individual who has mastered the art of popularity. Glinda use of personal deixis serves as a way to assert her identity and reinforce her role in the narrative. Meanwhile, Elphaba, who is often the recipient of Glinda’s advice, is depicted through the deictic expression “you” as someone who is being shaped by Glinda’s perspective.

This usage reflects the tension between the two characters Glinda's adherence to social norms and Elphaba's rejection of them.

Deixis in the song also highlights the social divisions between the two characters. Glinda, who uses deixis to establish her social status, presents herself as an authority figure, while Elphaba's position is somewhat undermined through the deictic expressions that place her in a subordinate role. The way deixis operates here shows how language constructs and reinforces identities based on social power and perceptions of belonging.

Meanwhile, according to the findings of the research in the song "Yes, and", researcher find 63 out of 16% fall under the category of the Personal Deixis (first person, second person, and third person). Then, researcher discovered with regard to the Spatial Deixis, that the percentage was equivalent to 4%. And in terms of the Temporal Deixis, the researcher discovered 1 instance that accounted for 0.2%. And 2 out of 0.5% fall under the category of the Discourse Deixis. And 0.7% find in Social Deixis.

The research on identifying The song's use of person deixis like "I" and "you" highlights a conversation about personal autonomy and self-assertion. The speaker addresses others, including "you," but consistently maintains a position of authority over their own self-expression. And the temporal deixis "now," and spatial deixis "this way" reflect the ongoing movement within the song, both in terms of time (the present moment and future actions) and space (metaphorical journeys).

Based on the findings of the analysis conducted on the songs "Popular" and "Yes, And," there are several key differences and similarities regarding the frequency and types of deixis used in the lyrics of each song.

a. Personal Deixis:

In "*Popular*", there are 55 deixis personal deixis or 15% of the total words of the lyric of the song. This category includes the use of first, second, and third person pronouns, which are prominently featured throughout the song. In "*Yes, and*", a slightly higher number with 63 of personal deixis was found, representing 16% of the total occurrences. Despite the difference in the number, personal deixis remains the most dominant category in both songs, showing its significance in personal expression and identity within the lyrics.

b. Spatial Deixis:

"*Popular*" includes 2 spatial deixis, which makes up only 0.5% of the total occurrences. Spatial deixis is used sparingly in this song. On the other hand, "*Yes, and*" contains 17 of spatial deixis, accounting for 4%. This is a more significant proportion in comparison to "*Popular*," suggesting that spatial references (such as directions or locations) are more prevalent in the second song, possibly to create a sense of movement or journey.

c. Temporal Deixis:

In "*Popular*", there are 7 temporal deixis, which account for 2% of the total occurrences. This indicates that time-related references (e.g., "now," "then") are present but not overly frequent in the song. Conversely, "*Yes, And*" features only 1 of temporal deixis, which accounts for a mere 0.2% of the total occurrences. This suggests that temporal references are less significant in this song compared to "*Popular*," where time is more explicitly mentioned.

d. Discourse Deixis:

Both songs show relatively similar findings in terms of discourse deixis. In "*Popular*", 2 of discourse deixis were found, accounting for 0.5%. Similarly, in "*Yes, and*", there are 2 discourse deixis as well, making up 0.5%. This consistency indicates that discourse deixis,

which helps structure the conversation or argument in the lyrics, is used similarly in both songs.

e. Social Deixis:

“*Popular*” contains 1 social deixis, accounting for 0.2% of the total occurrences. This suggests that the social relationships or power dynamics expressed in the song are not as prominent. In contrast, “*Yes, And*” includes 3 social deixis, accounting for 0.7%. This reflects a stronger emphasis on social relationships, as the lyrics deal with themes of self-empowerment and independence, which may require more explicit social referencing.

DISCUSSION

A popular songs by Ariana Grande use several types of deixis that can be seen on the analysis above. Previous study on Ariana Grande lyric of song conducted by Simatupang, Jayanti, and Resen (2023) focus on the finding of figurative language in the lyric. Lyric of song define as works of art in literature. A lyric has a set of lyrics with imaginative words and expressions to convey to the listener (Simatupang, Jayanti, and Resen 2023). Furthermore, McKenzie (2016) defined figurative language as a language that is used to express concepts beyond the literal meaning of words. Figurative language enable people to express complex thoughts while also creating tone and communicating emotional content.

Previous research of lyric of song usually focused on the figurative language apply in the lyric while different from the previous study, the current research focuses on the use of a song for ELT students for understanding how the use of deixis in creating the meaning in the lyric of song. Using songs in the English classroom benefits learners in many areas, including linguistic development, exposure to culture and diversity, and experience with multiple ways of human expression and communication (Mobbs, A., & Cuyul, M, 2018). Furthermore, based on the analysis above, it can also be concluded that deixis helps students to know the relation between speaker and hearer. The detail contribution of this analysis to study of language for ELT students are as follow:

1. Previous research conducted by Yulfi (2017), Nurhikmah (2019), and Jumaedah, et.al, (2020), highlighted the use of deixis by teacher and students with five types of deixis. This finding supports the previous finding, which also showed similar deixis used in the song. There are five types of deixis found in the lyric of song entitled “*Popular*” and “*You, And*”. Here, in lyric of song entitled “*Popular*”, the total number of personal deixis 15% and this includes the use of first, second, and third person pronouns. Meanwhile in “*Yes, And*”, a slightly higher number with 63 of personal deixis is found, representing 16% of the total occurrences. Despite the difference in the number, personal deixis remains the most dominant category in both songs, showing its significance in personal expression and identity within the lyrics. By analyzing the type of deixis found in lyric of the songs enable students to understand clearly a form of referring that is tied to the speaker’s context.
2. Indriastuti, Mutia Olivia, et.al, (2023) analyse the use of deixis in student’s writing. This paper mentioned that the use of deixis in student’s writing are to indicates a specific location, chronology of events, convey a personal point of view, incorporate cultural and social signifiers, and to create a strong coherent connection. The analysis of deixis in songs showed similar finding such as in term of addressing specific time and location,

the analysis of deixis in song showed that time-related references (e.g., “now,” “then”) are present but not overly frequent in the song. And, as it has been mentioned above, conversely, “*Yes, And*” features only 1 of temporal deixis, which accounts for a mere 0.2% of the total occurrences. This suggests that temporal references are less significant in this song compared to “*Popular*,” where time is more explicitly mentioned. Moreover, the analysis of deixis in song “*Popular*” showed the use of spatial references (such as directions or locations) are more prevalent than in the song “*You, And*”. And this is possibly to create a sense of movement or journey. By analysing the type of deixis in the song, students have deeper understanding of how deixis used in creating meaning. It means the study of deixis can also contribute to increase student’s competencies in term of writing for making meaningful and strong coherent text. This finding shown the use of a song as an effective media for the study of deixis for ELT students.

CONCLUSION

Both songs primarily rely on personal deixis, with similar percentages indicating its central role in conveying the speaker’s perspective and relationships with others. Spatial deixis is notably more frequent in “*Yes, And*” than in “*Popular*”, possibly suggesting a thematic difference in how movement or location is represented in the two songs. Temporal deixis is used much more prominently in “*Popular*” compared to “*Yes, And*”, indicating a stronger focus on time in the former. The use of discourse deixis remains consistent in both songs, showing its role in structuring the message without a significant variance. Social deixis appears more frequently in “*Yes, And*”, which aligns with its stronger focus on themes of social independence and self-expression. In summary, while both songs share the dominance of personal deixis, “*Yes, And*”, employs more spatial and social deixis, highlighting it is focus on movement, independence, and social interaction.

The analysis of lyric of song contributes in teaching and learning for ELT students since the role of deixis provides the tools to explore how language features operate in context. It help students to understand clearly a form of referring that is tied to the speaker’s context. By focusing on the relationships between speakers, the social roles they perform, and the broader societal values reflected in language, the analysis of deixis helps to illuminate the deeper meanings behind deictic expressions. In the case of “*Popular*” and “*Yes, And*”, these reveals how the use of deixis referring to people, places, and times. By analysing the type of deixis in the song, students also have deeper understanding of how deixis used in creating meaning. It means the study of deixis in lyric of song can also contribute to increase student’s competencies in term of writing for making meaningful and strong coherent text. In conclusion, this finding also shown the use of a song as an effective media for study of deixis for ELT students.

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