

## A Deixis Analysis in Taylor Swift's Anti-Hero

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### Abstract

*The objective of this research is to analyse the kinds of deixis and the types is more dominant used in Anti-Hero song lyrics. This research using qualitative method to analyse the kinds of deixis and the types is more dominant used in Anti-Hero song lyrics. The source of data taken from lyrics of Taylor Swift song lyrics Anti-Hero on the internet website genius.com. The data collected by: First, visiting and reading the music and lyrics platform to find out all the lyrics concerning with the object of the study and read all the lyrics from Anti-Hero song lyrics by Taylor Swift. Second, copy pasting the lyrics and putting all the lyrics in a folder that is formatted as a word documentation and saving it. The result of the analysis is that there are 4 types of deixis, namely, person, spatial, temporal, and social deixis in song lyrics from Anti-Hero and personal deixis is the most dominant used. The conclusion that the Anti-Hero song lyrics uses all different kinds of deixis, including person, spatial, time, and social deixis and person deixis is the most dominant form in the songs according to this study especially first-person deixis "I, me, my" that has 65 data.*

**Keywords:** Deixis, Song Lyrics, Anti-Hero, Taylor Swift.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a way designed with the intention of communication and interaction. Therefore, it is studied formally both from elementary school to entering the lecture level. Language can also help us understand what other words mean. It is impossible without speakers and listeners. Art is one aspect of the existence of language, this is evidenced by the existence of music, novels, films, etc. Music itself is one aspect of art that exists today which fulfils the social reality that is poured out in the form of song lyrics. Many people choose music as an important thing in their life, one of which is the pleasure of listening and creating. However, along with the development of the era, music, which was originally only a commodity, began to be traded and became a profitable thing.

Music is a popular culture that can be heard and enjoyed by everyone. Music is also related to feelings and harmonization that can be described imaginatively. The lyrics in a song usually express a view or opinion that lyricist want to convey to anyone who listens to it and every word or sentence in a song has a different grammatical function. So, lyricists can easily express their feelings and emotions.

Song connoisseurs usually have different definitions in understanding the meaning of the song. One of the linguistic theories emphasizes semantics, which is necessary for one to grasp the meaning of a song. (Palmer, 1981) claims that the term "semantics" refers to the technical study of meaning. One term for the study of language is linguistics. The meaning that a speaker's voice modulation conveys, allowing readers and listeners to connect newly acquired information with previously learned material, is the subject of linguistics. Additionally, some music lyrics or lines inspire people in real life. Therefore, when someone listens to the words of a song, they could try to grasp not just the meaning of the lyrics but also the speaker's or reader's intentions.

Deixis is one of the most fundamental concepts in the formal definition of utterances, according to (Yule G, 1996). The Greek term for pointing or signalling is where the English word "deixis" comes from. (Levinson, 1983) further claims that deixis directly addresses the connection between language and context, which is mirrored in linguistic structures themselves.

This paper aims to investigate deixis in Taylor Swift song entitled Anti-Hero is a main title track from album *Midnights*, she's a well-known American singer with several successes among the best-selling musicians of all time. This album that contains Anti-Hero which was released in 2022 was chosen because despite containing many deixis words in its song lyrics, this album receives a lot of praise, is selected as the number one album on the *Billboard Hot 100*, and is well-liked by a large number of people, particularly teens. The aim of this work is to explore deixis in song lyrics Anti-Hero with descriptive qualitative method. With this study, the listeners should be able to grasp the use and meaning of deixis in those songs with simplicity.

The research in this article focuses on how the different types of deixis and why type of deixis is more dominant are used in song lyrics. The reason why it must analyse about Anti-Hero by Taylor Swift not only because it has many deictic words but also many people especially teenagers are interested in this album, from those reason hope this research can help the listeners easily to understand the use and meaning of deixis.

The objectives of this research is to analyze what kinds of deixis used in "Midnights" album by Taylor Swift and what types of deixis is more dominant used in "Midnights" album by Taylor Swift.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Pragmatics**

Pragmatics is the study of the interactions between language forms and their users, according to (Yule G, 1996). (Mey, 2001) asserts that the pragmatics discussion is inextricably linked to the situation. It is about the context in which a circumstance

may have an impact on how people use language. The use of language in social contexts and how it is understood are both considered pragmatics.

Pragmatics is the study of those facets of the interaction between language and situation that are pertinent to the composition of grammars, according to (Levinson, 1983). As a result, pragmatics is related to speech situation and context. It is about the link between meaning and language. It also tackles the meaning behind a speaker's speech. Pragmatics lacks any ability to use and comprehend sentences reliant on the context of the phrase from the definition; it only has a language component. Moreover, it is also known as language use connected to the interpretation in specific contexts.

## 2.2. Deixis

According to (Saeed, 2003), the word deixis is derived from the classical Greek word *deiknymi*, meaning "to show or point out." (Yule, 1996) also points out that the word "deixis" originates from a Greek word that meaning "pointing via language." Deixis, then, is the relationship of reference to the utterance's point of origin. Two divisions separate deictic expressions: proximal and distal terms. Known close to the speaker, proximal terms are this, here, now. Distal word is known away from the speaker; it comprises that, there and then.

Thus, deictic expression is the means by which individuals comprehend the reference of the utterance's context, (Cummings, 2005). (Levinson, 1983) States deixis is a means of seeing how the structures of languages mirror their interaction with context. (Meyer, 2009) also argues often referred to as deixis that words have a pointing quality. Deixis serves to point and name people, objects, events, processes, etc. It also relates to applying a specific verbal referencing device, such demonstrative for instance, this pencil, that person, these books, those children. From the definition above, that deixis is part of speech, which is the clearest approach to explain the interaction between language and context in the structure of language itself. Though they are frequent, deictical words like here, there, this or that, now and then, today or tomorrow, yesterday, you, me, her, him, it, her, I, them, etc. cannot be directly comprehended if the listeners lack the background.

### 2.2.1 Person Deixis

The phrase "person deixis" is used to describe humans. The term "person deixis" refers to the deixis of a conversational participant, including the speaker, spoken, and addressee. Pronouns can be used to grammaticalize the information of person deixis, according to (Saeed, 2016). Generally, the speaker is addressed with a first-person singular pronoun, the addressee(s) with a second-person pronoun, and the category "neither speaker-nor-addressee(s)" with a third-person category. There are three (three) categories in the person deixis: first person, second person, and third person.

#### **First Person (I)**

The term "first-person deixis" can refer to the speaker themselves or to both the speaker and the referent that is grouped with the speaker. It can be stated with single pronouns such as "I," "me," "my," and plural pronouns such as "we," "us," "our," and "ours."

### **Second Person (you)**

A person or people named or addressee is referred to by the second person deixis, which includes terms like you, yourself, yourselves, your, and yours. A second-person deixis is someone who engages with the first-person directly and learns to listen. To put it another way, this person will learn to listen.

### **Third Person (he, she, it, they)**

In the third person Deixis is a deictic reference that typically denotes the gender to which the speech is addressed, either as the speaker or the addressee. The pronouns he, him, himself, she, her, herself, they, their, and it are all included. A person who is conversing in the third person deixis can also be described as being between the first and second person.

### 2.2.2 Spatial Deixis

The spatial position associated with the utterance is connected to the spatial deixis, also referred to as place deixis. (Saeed, 2016) asserts that a speaker is obligated by a language's deictic mechanisms to provide a frame of reference for herself. The relative placement of persons and objects is shown via spatial deixis.

Furthermore, locative phrases (here and there) that indicate space near or far from the speaker (this and these) and (that and those) that indicate beings near or distal from the speaker (that and those) are the main ways that spatial deixis manifests itself. In spatial deixis, which is typically labelled as proximal and distal, the terms "proximal" and "distal" refer, respectively, to an area that is relatively close to the speaker and a place that is relatively far from the speaker.

### 2.2.3 Temporal Deixis

The phrase for deixis used to indicate a time is called temporal deixis. Time deixis is a type of deixis used to display the speech's time unit. To put it another way, time deixis is the concept of time in relation to a certain point in time, which is typically the instant of someone speaking. Specifically, it differentiates between the moment of speech, which is coding or time, and the moment of reception, which is receiving time. In the deixis of time, today, yesterday, tomorrow, and now are the time markers.

"I have a now" and "me and my sister went to the mall yesterday" are two instances of temporal deixis. Because it takes place in the speaker's present situation, the first utterance is in the present tense and it is proximal. It is perceived as distant as the second sentence uses the past tense, which is not the case for the speaker's present circumstances.

Based on the explanation above, it draws the conclusion that deixis is one area of pragmatics in which the examination of the utterance context affects how utterances are interpreted. There are three categories inside the deixis: temporal, spatial, and personal. When a deixis is used, it can be used to refer to individuals or groups of people (I, we, you, they, he, she, and it), points of location or places (that, here, there, this), or points of time (then, now, last week, tomorrow, and yesterday). It is necessary to interpret each deixis statement in light of the speaker's intended recipient, location,

and time. This is due to the fact that certain words in the language cannot be understood at all if the context is unknown.

#### 2.2.4 Social Deixis

Two further types were recognized by (Fillmore, 1997) discourse and social deixis. Whereas the discourse deixis indicates or alludes to a particular piece or characteristic of the present discussion, the social deixis shows the social interaction between the speakers and classifiers used with human referents. To encode destinations that are related to participant roles, social deixis is utilized. Put simply, it illustrates the social interaction that occurs in the utterances between the speaker, addressee, and other referents. Social deixis examines the ways in which sentences capture certain aspects of the social context in which they are spoken. To make the relationships between the characters more clear, deictic expressions such as boss, mother, father, sister, Mr., and Mrs. might be used (Levinson, 1983).

### 2.3. Previous Study

Relevant research could give benefit for next study. As for research that is relevant to research this as following. The study "A Deixis Analysis of Song Lyrics in Back to You by Selena Gomes" was carried out by (Hidayah, 2019). Here are the lyrics of "Back to You," complete with every kind of Deixis, based on the analysis and discussion results and the study's conclusions. A persona deixis may be seen in almost Back to You. The result is 45 persona deixis, including the first, second, and third persona deixis. There will be more time and location-related problems in Back to You. First-person singular pronouns like "I" and "me" are used often in Back to You lyrics. The speaker is referred to largely in the first-person plural deixis. The fact that both (Hidayah, 2019) and this study look at deixis analysis of music lyrics is a commonality. The other factor is that both employ qualitative techniques. Nonetheless, the following is the topic matter difference between (Hidayah, 2019) study and this study: The lyrics of Selena Gomez's song "Back to You" are investigated with three types of deixis of person, spatial, and temporal, whereas this research investigated with four types of deixis of person, spatial, temporal, and social deixis.

(Rahani, 2022) carried out more study under the heading "The Meaning of Persona Deixis and Time Deixis in the Aura Album". The analysis and discussion findings support the study's conclusion, which states that Type The song "Die Zeit ist Reif und Sonnenschein" is playing on the loudspeaker. First Person Deixis Single and Plural Persona Deixis are the terms used to describe the lyrics. The speaker and their opposite are mentioned in the song "Next to you" lyrics. The lyrics of "Die Zeit ist Reif und Sonnenschein," the second Persona deixis single after Persona deixis, allude to the speaker's closest friends and family members as reported by the other side. While the line "Die Zeit ist Riif" alludes to a friend's intimate family of speakers, the third persona deixis in "Sunshine" relates to pronouns. The lyrics to the song "Die Zeit ist Reif und Sonnenschein" also mention Deixi's period. The phrases "now," "this day," "today," and "someday" all contain dates. (Rahani, 2022) only investigated with two

types of deixis of person and time, this study looks at the four types of deixis and the more dominant in “Midnights” album.

The third study came from (Indriani, 2023) with her title “A Deixis Analysis of Song Lyrics of Shania Yan “Nothing’s Gonna Change My Love for Your””. She used descriptive qualitative method to analyse about deixis on Shania Yan “Nothings’s Gonna Change My Love for You” song lyrics. Then, she found out that there is several deixis employed, including discourse, spatial, temporal, and personal deixis, all of which are included in every song lyric. Not every deixis type in the research is present in every song lyric; social deixis, for example, is absent from the lyrics. The final results of both studies found four other types of deixis, the difference is that Shania Yan researched about person, spatial, temporal, and discourse deixis, while this research is about person, spatial, temporal, and social deixis.

### **3. METHODS**

The descriptive qualitative approach is being used in this study. This research examines deixis in the lyrics of the chosen song from Taylor Swift's album *Midnights*. Additionally, according to (Santosa, 2012), data is the reality that is created for the purpose of the research. This research used (Saeed, 2016) to solve the problems in this study. In the first question, which is about what kinds of deixis are featured in “Midnights” by Taylor Swift, the function of deixis is to point and identify persons, place, time etc. To answer the second question, this research also used (Saeed, 2016) theory which is about what types of deixis is more dominant used in Anti-Hero song lyrics. The theory is very suitable to be used in this research because it can solve both research problems well.

The primary source of the data for this study is Taylor Swift's main title Anti-Hero lyrics in *Midnights* album from 2022. The detail of this research is the form of phrases containing deixis. The song was released on October 21, 2022, through Republic Records.

The data source of this research is song lyrics Anti-Hero by Taylor Swift. Which contains person deixis that is categorized into 4 types. Data collection is gathering process of information from relevant source purposing to answer the research question. This research collects data by doing steps, as follow: first, visiting and reading the music and lyrics platform from genius.com to find out all the lyrics concerning with the object of the study and read all the lyrics Anti-Hero by Taylor Swift. Second, after visiting and reading, in this step, copy paste the lyrics and put all the lyrics in a folder that is formatted as a word document and save it.

After collecting the data from the script of lyrics, the researcher analyzed the data as follows: First, Deep reading to understand the lyrics that contains deixis on *Midnight's* album. Second, Highlighting the utterance that contains deixis, starting with personal deixis, followed by spatial deixis, then temporal deixis, and finally social deixis. Third, Finding and classifying the types of deixis used in all the lyrics from Anti-Hero by Taylor Swift.

### **4. RESULTS**

The outcome of the research is revealed in this chapter. As mentioned, the objectives of this research are to analyse what kinds of deixis that featured in the album, and the dominant types that used in album. The deixis data, which includes the four deixis theories: person, spatial, and temporal, social deixis in Anti-Hero song lyrics.

#### 4.1 Types of Deixis and Dominant Types of Deixis in Song Lyrics Anti-Hero

##### 4.1.1 Person Deixis

**Table 4.1.1** Data of Person Deixis in Anti-Hero song lyrics

No	Lyrics of <i>Anti-Hero</i>	Personal Deixis		
		First Person (I, me, my, we, us, our, ours)	Second Person (You, your, yourself, yourselves, yours)	Third Person (He, him, himself, she, her, herself, they, their, and it)
1	I have this thing where I get older but just never wiser	I, I		
2	Midnights become my afternoons	My		
3	When my depression works the graveyard shift	My		
4	All of the people I've ghosted stand there in the room	I've		
5	I should not be left to my own device	I, my		
6	They come with prices and vices			They
7	I end up in crisis	I		
8	I wake up screaming from dreaming	I		
9	One day I'll watch as you're leaving	I'll	You're	
10	'Cause you got tired of my scheming	My	You	
11	It's me, hi, I'm the problem, it's me	Me, I'm, me		It's, it's
12	I'll stare directly at the sun but never in the mirror	I'll		
13	It must be exhausting always rooting for the anti-hero			It
14	Sometimes I feel like everybody is a sexy baby	I		
15	And I'm a monster on the hill	I'm		
16	Too big to hang out, slowly lurching toward your favorite city		Your	
17	Did you hear my covert narcissism I disguise as altruism	My, I	You	
20	And life will lose all its meaning			Its

24	I have this dream <u>my</u> daughter in-law kills <u>me</u> for the money	I, my, me		
25	<u>She</u> thinks <u>I</u> left them in the will	I		She
26	The family gathers 'round and reads <u>it</u> and then someone screams out			It
27	" <u>She's</u> laughing up at <u>us</u> from hell"	Us		She's
<b>Total</b>		42 (52,5%)	5 (6,25%)	18 (22,5%)
<b>Total All Person Deixis</b>		65 (81,25%)		

#### 4.1.2 Spatial Deixis

**Table 4.1.2** Data of Spatial Deixis in Anti-Hero song lyrics

No.	Lyrics of <i>Anti-Hero</i>	Spatial Deixis	
		Proximal (this, here, these)	Distal ( <u>that</u> , <u>there</u> , <u>those</u> )
1.	I have <u>this</u> thing when I got older but just never wiser	This	
2.	All of the people I've ghosted stand <u>there</u> in the room		There
3.	I have <u>this</u> dream my daughter in law kills me for the money	This	
<b>Total</b>		2 (2,5%)	1 (1,25%)
<b>Total All Spatial Deixis</b>		3 (3,75%)	

#### 4.1.3 Temporal Deixis

**Table 4.1.3** Data of temporal deixis in Anti-Hero song lyrics

No.	Lyrics of <i>Anti-Hero</i>	Temporal Deixis (then, now, last week, tomorrow, yesterday, and today)
1.	-	-
<b>Total</b>		-
<b>Total All Temporal Deixis</b>		-

#### 4.1.4 Social Deixis

**Table 4.1.4** Data of social deixis in Anti-Hero song lyrics

No.	Lyrics of <i>Anti-Hero</i>	Social Deixis
1.	I have this thing where <u>I</u> get older but just never wiser	I, I
2.	It's <u>me</u> , hi, <u>I'm</u> the problem, it's <u>me</u>	Me, I'm, me
3.	<u>I'll</u> stare directly at the sun but never in the mirror	I'll
4.	<u>I'll</u> be there directly at the sun but never in the mirror	I'll
5.	Sometimes I feel like <u>everybody</u> is a sexy baby, and <u>I'm</u> a monster on the hill	Everybody, I'm
6.	Did <u>you</u> hear my covert narcissism I <u>disguised</u> as altruism	You
7.	<u>I</u> woke up screaming from dreaming	I
8.	One day I'll watch as <u>you're</u> leaving, 'Cause you got tired of my scheming	You're
<b>Total</b>		12 (15%)
<b>Total All Social Deixis</b>		12 (15%)



## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1.1 Person Deixis

In Anti-Hero song lyrics, the first-person deixis mostly alludes to Swift. As a composer, Taylor often expresses her thoughts, emotions, and experiences in the first-person deixis. Words like "I", "me", "my", "we", "our" in this context usually refer to Taylor Swift's particular viewpoint as she lives and tells the stories of the situations she portrays in her songs. But interpretations may differ, just as with many other works of art. Taylor Swift sometimes uses first person deixis while taking on a certain character or persona to communicate a deeper narrative or subject in her songs. This implies that even if the speaker is "I" or "me," the figure being discussed might be made up or serve as a metaphor for a situation or feeling that is more universal.

### 5.1.2 Spatial Deixis

In Anti-Hero song lyrics, the term "proximal spatial deixis" describes the usage of words or phrases that denote spatial closeness or proximity to the narrator (either herself or the character she assumes in the song). According to (Levinson, 1983), the purpose of spatial deixis is to characterize the separation between a place and the locations of the speaker and listener during a speech act. Terms like "here," "this," and "these" are among them.

### 5.1.3 Temporal Deixis

In Anti-Hero song lyrics, the term "temporal deixis" describes the usage of words or phrases that allude to a certain period in connection to the speaker or storyteller. This comprises terms like "now," "then," "today," "yesterday," "tomorrow," and so on that denote both proximal and distal time.

### 5.1.4 Social Deixis

The song "Anti-Hero" by Taylor Swift contains various forms of social deixis that help describe the social relationships and roles between individuals in the song's narrative. Here is the social deixis in the lyrics of the song "Anti-Hero": "I have this thing where I get older but just never wiser". "I" refers to the narrator (Taylor Swift), marking herself in her personal reflections. "It's me, hi, I'm the problem, it's me". "Me" and "I" are used to show that the narrator identifies herself as the source of the problem. "I'll stare directly at the sun but never in the mirror". "I'll" refers to the narrator, indicating an action taken by herself. "I'll be there directly at the sun but never in the mirror". In this context, the narrator shows her role in facing problems or challenges.

"Sometimes I feel like everybody is a sexy baby, and I'm a monster on the hill". "Everybody" refers to other people around the narrator, while "I'm" referring to the narrator, showing the contrast between the narrator's feelings and general social perceptions. "Did you hear my covert narcissism I disguised as altruism". "You" here refers to listeners or others recognized by the narrator, indicating social interactions with those who are aware of the narrator's behaviour. "I woke up screaming from dreaming". "I" indicates the narrator's personal actions, while this context could indicate social awareness of how his actions are perceived by others. "One day I'll watch as you're leaving, cause you got tired of my scheming". "You" here refers to

another person, most likely a partner or someone close to the narrator, indicating a dynamic in their interpersonal relationship.

In the song "Anti-Hero," Taylor Swift uses social deixis to highlight the relationship between herself and other people, be they the public, friends, or partners. This use of pronouns and social references helps depict feelings of isolation, self-reflection, and how the narrator views herself in a larger social context.

The table above illustrates how frequently different personal deixis appear and how much data there is overall 65 data. First-person deixis displays 42 data points with a 52,5% percentage. In the "Midnights" album, the second person deixis appears in 5 data with a percentage of 6,25%, followed by the third person deixis appearing in 18 data with a percentage of 22,5%. Drawing from the aforementioned explanation that the Anti-Hero employs personal deixis, which is then followed by the three categories of personal deixis. Person deixis serves the purpose of highlighting instances in song lyrics when personal pronouns are used.

From the spatial table, this study observes that there are 3 data with a 3,75% percentage of spatial or location deixis in "Midnights" album. Here, these, that, there, those in "Midnights" album, the lyric with place deixis of distal phrase is this. Place deixis is a location. Spatial deixis serves to signal in the song lyrics the usage of the distance or place. While in temporal deixis we find 0 data. Temporal deixis is evident from the "Midnights" album based on the chart above. Temporal deixis serves to mark the usage of the timing in the song lyrics. In social deixis appear the data with overall 12 data with 15% percentage.

## 6. CONCLUSION

After going over the previous points, it eventually comes to the conclusion that the Anti-Hero song lyrics uses all different kinds of deixis, including person, spatial, time, and social deixis. In this song, personal deixis is the most common sort of deixis to emerge. 81,25% percent of the 65 data had personal deixis. Furthermore, in Anti-Hero song lyrics, social deixis appears in 12 data with a percentage of 15%, spatial deixis appears in 3 data with a proportion of 3,75%, and temporal deixis appears in 0 data with a percentage of 0%.

The dominant deixis that frequently arise are personal, social, and spatial. Personal deixis frequently used because the singers use their own deixis to appropriately express their identities as subjects, objects, or possessives in songs, as well as their relationships with other people as recipients of the song. In addition, they share details about their lives, feelings, and emotions. Secondly, social deixis also frequently appears as it discusses social interactions extensively. All in all, pronouns, allusions to social connections, and a mode of address are used by social deixis to convey the intimacy and closeness of interpersonal relationships. And lastly, spatial deixis, which frequently occurs since its purpose is to illustrate how location or distance are used in song lyrics. However, because the song's lyrics focus more on a person, their lives, their sentiments, and their emotions than they do on time, temporal deixis isn't employed very often.

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