ANALYSIS PRAGMATICS OF DEIXIS IN CONVERSATIONS IN INSTANT MESSAGING APPLICATIONS: *A Case Study On WhatsApp*

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Abstract

This study investigates the pragmatics of deixis in conversations conducted through instant messaging applications, with a focus on WhatsApp. Deixis refers to linguistic expressions that require contextual information to be understood, such as pronouns, temporal markers, and spatial references. The study aims to explore how these elements affect communication dynamics and reflect social interactions in digital environments, contributing to a deeper understanding of language usage in instant messaging. The research employs a qualitative methodology, collecting data from individual and group chats within WhatsApp. The findings indicate that discourse deixis plays a dominant role in structuring interactions on WhatsApp. Social deixis is also notable in maintaining politeness and showing respect, especially in academic conversations. This study highlights the importance of deixis in facilitating effective communication through digital platforms and suggests implications for better understanding language practices in technology-mediated environments.

Keywords: Deixis, Instant Messaging Applications, Meaning Construction, Communication Dynamics, Social Interactions

Introduction

Communication involves the exchange of information from one location, individual, or group to another. Furthermore, communication pertains to the mutual understanding shared between two or more parties. Additionally, communication occurs not only during in-person discussions but also through reading or writing text messages, engaging in online chats, or sending emails. Related to this, (Williams, 1962)stated in his book titled “communications” that new methods of sharing ideas, information, and attitudes among individuals are also referred to as communication.

In every instance of communication, we humans must organize our thoughts clearly in our minds, subsequently expressing them in a manner that is easy to comprehend. This clarity is essential in order to prevent misunderstandings between

the speaker and the listener. Moreover, it is important to understand the context and subject matter to effectively engage in a conversation, particularly in serious situations like meetings. Therefore, context is closely tied to Pragmatics.

In this context, Pragmatics is the study of the meanings conveyed by a speaker (or writer) and how they are interpreted by a listener (or reader). Pragmatics also deals with the meanings communicated through language, rooted in the context of the interaction, which involves the speaker, the audience, the time, and the location of the conversation. According to (Yule, 1996), Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that explores the speaker's intentions or the objectives behind their statements. This indicates that Pragmatics examines the relationship between linguistic expressions and their users. For effective communication to occur, speakers (or writers) must rely on a variety of shared assumptions and expectations (Ramasari, 2021)

(Cruse, 2001)Among these aspects, a specific area of study within pragmatics, known as deixis, is highlighted for investigation in this research. Deixis plays a crucial role in facilitating communication. The study of pragmatics involves interpreting what individuals mean in particular contexts and how that understanding is expressed (Yule, 1996) Furthermore, deixis is recognized as a technical term representing fundamental communicative actions (Yule, 1996)People must grasp what to incorporate to articulate their statements effectively. (Cruse, 2001) asserts that deixis signifies distinct meanings for different individuals. When conversing or discussing with friends, topics often shift. One person may have a different perspective while the discussion covers another subject. In this regard, a term is considered deixis if its reference changes based on time and location (Rosmawaty, 2013) According to (Ogeyik, 2007) , deixis expressions assist readers or listeners in visualizing or imagining the fictional situations presented in conversational texts. This implies that the listener or reader can discern when and where the narrative occurs, who witnesses the events, who is speaking, and to whom they are addressing their words.

Deixis involves understanding who is speaking and the audience to whom their words are directed. It is divided into five categories: person, time, place, discourse, and social deixis. Person deixis pertains to the appropriate identification of grammatical persons referring to the speaker and listener, and it relates to the roles of the participants in the speech event during which the utterance is made (Levinson,

1983) First, it includes first-person deixis (I, me, myself, my), second-person deixis (you, your, yours, yourself, we, our, us, ourself), and third-person deixis (he, him, his, himself, she, her, herself, they, their, them, themselves). Second, time deixis refers to expressions that point to specific periods relevant to when the speaker produces their utterances. The deictic expressions can only be interpreted concerning the time of the utterance itself. Examples include: this/last/next Monday/week/month/year, now, then, ago, later, soon, before, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Tenses also fall under time deixis, as the timeline is divided into three segments: present, past, and future.

Third, place deixis informs about the location of the subject being discussed. The terms indicating place deixis can appear as adverbs (here, there) or demonstrative pronouns (this, that). Additionally, terms like CT (coding time), RT (referential time), proximal, and distal are utilized in place deixis. Next, discourse deixis refers to a specific part of a discourse in relation to the speaker's current position within that discourse, using terms such as above, below, last, previous, proceeding, next, or following (typically found in texts) and this, that, there, next, last (commonly used in spoken language). Sometimes, discourse deixis is compared to anaphora, but they are not the same. Lastly, social deixis does not relate to the three primary components (person, place, and time) of subjective orientation, but instead illustrates how different social hierarchies and the relationships between communication participants are conveyed through language. In summary, it focuses more on the relational dynamics between individuals than on conveying information.

Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

Deixis pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that examines meaning in particular contexts. (Yule, 1996) states that pragmatics is concerned with how speakers or writers communicate meaning and how listeners or readers interpret that meaning. (Chaer, 2010) points out that deixis relates to the connection between words and their referents, which can be fluid and vary depending on the context. Originating from the Greek word for "pointing," deixis involves employing language to indicate or refer to specific elements within a given situation.

(Levinson, 1983) notes that deixis encompasses linguistic phenomena where certain expressions need contextual information for accurate interpretation. In a similar vein, (Yule, 1996) describes deictic expressions as linguistic tools that indicate or "point" to something within a specific context. For example, if someone comes across an unknown object and asks, "What is it?" the word "it" acts as a deictic expression, directly pointing to the object in question. This interaction between language and context highlights the significance of deixis in communication, as it enables speakers and listeners to effectively anchor meaning within their immediate surroundings.Types of deixis is supported by Brown and (Levinson, 1983) defining the deixis into five types, they are: person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, social deixis and discourse deixis.

a) Person Deixis

It fundamentally involves three main components, illustrated by pronouns for the first person (I), second person (You), and third person (she, he, it). Person deixis pertains to both the speaker (I) and the listener (You). During a conversation, each individual frequently shifts from being 'I' to 'you.' The preference for one form over another, influenced by the surrounding social context, is often referred to as social deixis.

b) Place Deixis

Place or space deixis pertains to identifying locations relative to the context of the speech event. The significance of specifying locations can be understood by noting that there are essentially two primary methods for referring to objects: either by describing or naming them, or by placing them in context regarding their location.

c) Time Deixis

Time deixis, also known as temporal deixis, serves to position points or durations on the timeline, using the moment of utterance as a reference point. Examples of temporal deixis can be observed in time indicators such as: now, soon,

recently, then, and yesterday. Additionally, it commonly appears in the use of verb tenses.

d) Social Deixis

Social deixis conveys the social identities of participants (specifically, the roles of the individuals involved), or the social dynamics between them, or between one of the participants and the entities referenced. The application of social deixis (as noted by Levinson, 1983) emphasizes the use of polite pronouns and forms of address, reflecting the social relationships between conversation participants, which can influence the choice of honors or levels of politeness, intimacy, or rudeness; this also includes informal names, nicknames, and titles of respect.

e) Discourse Deixis

It is widely recognized that words falling under discourse deixis possess a meaning component that is not easily captured by truth conditions. These words seem to indicate how an utterance is linked to or follows from some earlier part of the conversation. In English, expressions that qualify as discourse deixis include terms like: but, therefore, in conclusion, to the contrary, still, however, anyway, well, besides, actually, all in all, so, and after all..

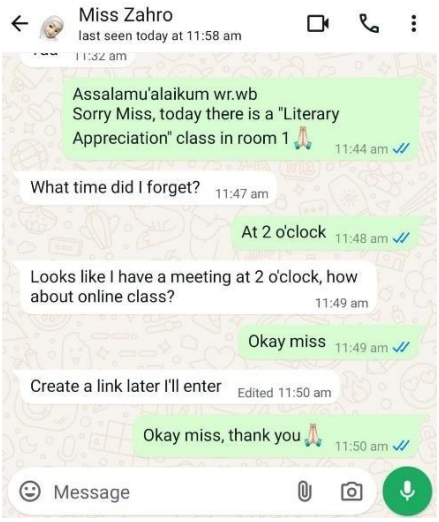
A. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach to analyze deixis in WhatsApp conversations. Data collection involved gathering a diverse range of conversations from WhatsApp groups and individual chats. The analysis focuses on three primary types of deixis: personal deixis (e.g., pronouns), temporal deixis (e.g., time references), and spatial deixis (e.g., location references). Each instance of deixis is examined for its pragmatic function and contextual significance within the conversation.

B. Discussion

This portion aims to address the research question. According to the findings from the data analysis, the categories of deixis are as follows::

Result of observation



Picture 1. …….

The researcher carried out this study to examine the deixis in conversations between a student and lecturers through WhatsApp chats. The student is enrolled at UMNU University, a state university. In total, there was 1 lecturer and 1 student involved. Additionally, the researcher observed their frequent communications via WhatsApp chats with the lecturers. The details can be found in Table 1 below:

Table 1. The Uses of Deixis Communication Between Student and Lecturers

NO	Name of lecturer and student	Types of deixis	Frequencies	Specifications
1.	Student	Social deixis	1	Assalamu'alaikum wr.wb, Sorry Miss
		Time deixis	1	Today
		Discourse deixis	1	There is "Literary Appreciation" class

		Place deixis	1	In room 1
2.	Miss Zahro	Discourse deixis	1	What time did, forget
		Person deixis	1	I
3.	Student	Time deixis	1	At 2 o'clock
4.	Miss Zahro	Discourse deixis	1	Looks like, have a meeting, how about online class?
		Person deixis	1	I
		Time deixis	1	At 2 o'clock
5.	Student	Social deixis	1	Okay miss
6.	Miss Zahro	Discourse deixis	1	Create a link later, will enter
		Person deixis	1	I
7.	Student	Social deixis	1	Okay miss, thank you

Based on the information in Table 1 above, we can see the total counts for each type of deixis used in communication between students and lecturers. First, there are 3 instances of person deixis. Second, place deixis appears once. There are 3 instances of time deixis. Discourse deixis totals 4. Finally, social deixis also has 3 occurrences. From the totals of each deixis type, it is evident that discourse deixis is the most frequently used in interactions. This is because discourse deixis does not concern the three main elements (person, place, and time) of the subjective orientation coordinate system; rather, it illustrates how various social hierarchies and the relationships among communication participants are expressed through language within society. In summary, this type of deixis tends to reference the nature of relationships between individuals more than conveying specific information. Thus, it can be concluded that the type of deixis most commonly employed by the lecturer and the students is

discourse deixis, which is the most prevalent in their communication via WhatsApp Chat.

Conclusion

Analyzing the pragmatics of deixis in WhatsApp conversations provides insight into language use in digital communication, social interactions, and the impact of technology on how we communicate. This research is valuable not only for linguistic theory but also for enhancing communication effectiveness in digital contexts. As (Crystal, 2008)explains, understanding pragmatic concepts like deixis is crucial for facilitating clearer communication in the digital era, enabling a deeper comprehension of how language functions in technological environments.

For researchers examining deixis in instant messaging, expanding the theoretical framework, selecting diverse conversation samples, and employing discourse analysis are recommended. It is also essential to consider the social and technical aspects of platforms like WhatsApp, maintain ethical standards, and clearly report findings. Lastly, researchers should remain open to new insights that may arise.

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