

## Analysis of Deixis in *Lavender Haze* Taylor Swift's Song Lyrics

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### ABSTRACT

Deixis is a linguistic phenomenon that is very important in the study of pragmatics. This research aims to identify types of deixis and references in Taylor Swift's song *Lavender Haze*. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method and a pragmatic approach. Data collection is carried out by searching, selecting, reading, identifying and coding, then analyzing the data by presenting, describing, interpreting and concluding. The author found types of deixis, namely person deixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis, and discourse deixis. The author concludes that the song lyrics use types of deixis where personal deixis, especially first person deixis, always appears in the five song lyrics which tell the life story of the songwriter himself. In other words, the use and meaning of deixis based on the context of the song lyrics as a whole can provide information about people, places, times and discourse. As well as, connecting utterances with time and space relationships and is useful for capturing referential meaning which includes who, where and when the utterance was uttered. This research provides an important contribution in understanding the use of deixis in song lyrics, as well as revealing the referential meaning and broader context in the song "*Lavender Haze*" by Taylor Swift.

**Keywords:** *Deixis, Pragmatics, Song Lyrics*



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### INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential requirement for individuals to convey their thoughts and emotions, serving as a conduit for daily interactions. Language functions as a tool for communication, utilizing symbols and frameworks to enhance our connections and interactions, as posited by (Hartle et al., 2022). Individuals make use of language to share information, articulate their thoughts, feelings, and wants, whether orally or in written form. Language is the primary tool through which humans communicate complex ideas, emotions, and information (Herman & Pardede, 2020). It enables us to express thoughts, coordinate actions, and build relationships. Furthermore, language not only acts as a vehicle for communication but also as a platform for expressing artistic elements and human grace through the medium of literary works, as observed in advertisements and popular media forms like a song. Both language and song are powerful tools for expressing human emotions, experiences, and perspectives. The melodic and rhythmic aspects of song can often convey emotional nuances and subtleties that may be more challenging to express through spoken language alone.

Songs play an indissoluble role in our day-to-day existence. A prevalent belief held by individuals is that songs serve as a mode of conveying messages. Individuals have the capability to articulate their emotions, intentions, and significances through songs. Songs are not solely appreciated for leisure activities or personal preferences, but are also perceived as companions that accompany individuals during a variety of tasks such as work, study, relaxation, and contemplation. The song serves as a societal or cultural instrument embodying human contemplations, concepts, viewpoints, and sentiments conveyed through song verses. It encompasses more than just the organization of words into sentences; it also serves as a manifestation of the composer's sentiments and emotions, conveying a range of feelings including desire, conflict, affection, thoughts, and emotions (Sitorus, 2019). The lyrics of a song constitute part of the dialogue from the sender to the recipient and from the speaker to the listener. Through crafting song lyrics, an individual can readily exhibit their sentiments and feelings to others.

The lyrics denote the textual content of a song, particularly a popular song, or a concise poem that articulates the individual reflections and emotions of its author. Song lyrics typically function as a platform for the songwriter to convey their sentiments and emotions, encompassing desires, challenges, affection, reflections, and perceptions. Lyrics also pertain to the structuring of words into phrases that encompass a communication from the originator to the audience that pertains to a distinct circumstance or framework. Listeners derive pleasure from song lyrics when they hold personal significance, prompting songwriters to exercise caution in composing them. Taylor Swift, a prominent vocalist and composer, adeptly employs songs as a conduit for her emotions, as evidenced by her accomplishments in the realm of music. Hence, it is unsurprising that the author has opted to focus on Taylor Swift.

When composing song lyrics, Taylor Swift draws inspiration from personal life encounters and societal issues prevalent in existence. *Lavender Haze* song as a part of "Midnights" album represents one of Taylor Swift's musical compilations unveiled on October 21, 2022, delving into the myriad emotions she experiences during sleepless nights or bouts of insomnia. Within the album lie compositions that resonate with a wide array of individuals. The eloquent and ingenious lyrical compositions captivate the audience, immersing them in the sentiments and passions encapsulated in the verses. Nevertheless, not all listeners grasp the contextual nuances and allusions embedded in the lyrical content. The intricate sentence structures found within Taylor Swift's songs pose a challenge for literal comprehension. Consequently, a comprehensive examination is imperative to decipher this complexity, with one scholarly investigation focusing on deixis.

Deixis is a branch of pragmatics that delves into the interpretation of language with the aim of enhancing organization and efficacy, thereby averting confusion and divergent interpretations among language recipients. Pragmatics focuses predominantly on the utilization of language in communication, rather than on establishing rules for grammatically correct sentences or the essential meanings of symbols. According to Kreidler (1998), Pragmatics is a component of linguistics that revolves around conveying significance within a specific context. As posited by Collins (2018), deixis is subject to varying construal depending on the individual. Consequently, the selection of specific deixis elements within a sentence is contingent upon the contextual or situational backdrop. Deixis is a term (coming from Greek) for the most basic things we do with utterance. It means 'pointing' via language" (Yulfi, 2017). Deixis serves as a tool for scrutinizing dialogues, expressions, or statements since each utterance is intertwined with the identification of a person, entity, location, or time frame. Clarity in meaning hinges on the audience or reader's knowledge of the speaker, setting, and timing of the discourse. As with other closed class type, deictics are semantically imperfect (Fadlilah & Septyani, 2018). Consequently, deixis emerges as a pivotal mechanism for resolving linguistic ambiguities.

The author realized that the use of deixis in song lyrics can help listeners understand the referential meaning that the songwriter wants to convey. Anggara (2017) stated that the lyrics of a song are linked to the examination of deixis, as they convey the sentiments or emotions of the vocalist or songwriter, encompassing various manifestations of human cognition, concepts, and viewpoints. Based on the facts, some listeners will not understand the reference meaning in these songs because the physical context of the song lyrics is not clear. Many words in the song lyrics are not clear about who, where, and when the song lyrics are addressed. This needs to be studied more deeply through this research. Hence, the author endeavours to dissect deixis, its classifications, and its connotative significance. The author focused on the Taylor Swift's song lyrics entitled *Lavender Haze*.

## METHODS

This research employs descriptive qualitative method. According to McMillan & Schumacher (2001) dalam (Ngozwana, 2018), the qualitative research uses a case study design, which means that the data analysis concentrates on one phenomenon that the writer chooses to understand in detail regardless of the number of sites or participants for the study. The data are gathered, categorized, and analyzed and conclusions are then drawn from the data analysis. The author of this study wants to categorize the different deixis forms utilized in the Taylor Swift's song lyrics entitled *Lavender Haze* in order to explain the various deixis kinds as well as the spatial, person, and temporal deixis employed in the song. The song lyrics serves as the research's data source. The author employs the document method to get data. Here are the steps involved in gathering data: (1) listening Taylor Swift's entitled *Lavender Haze*; (2) reading the song lyrics; (3) choosing and gathering data; (4) categorizing the different kinds of deixis in the data; (5) coding the data; and (6) formulating conclusions and recommendations based on the data analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Lavender Haze* tells the story of Taylor Swift and her boyfriend's struggle to escape the attacks of haters and gossipers. They try to bring up Swift's past who has many exes. The true meaning of the word *Lavender Haze* is the fog of love. This word is a 50s term to describe love, affection, and so on. This song is addressed to her lovers who are always overwhelmed with the fog of love so that they can ignore whatever people or hater say. Through this song, we can see how the use of deixis helps reinforce the message of Taylor Swift and her lover's resilience in the face of haters and negative gossip.

### Person deixis in *Lavender Haze* song lyrics

Person deixis is the linguistic phenomenon that involves the first person, known as the speaker, the second person, known as the addressee, and other significant participants in the communicative setting who are neither the speaker nor the addressee. Person deixis refers to the linguistic phenomenon where language is used to refer to the participants (usually the speaker, the listener, and others mentioned) in a conversation or discourse. It involves the use of words and expressions to indicate who is speaking, who is being spoken to, and who or what is being referred to. (M'Rithara et al., 2023) noted that person deixis words include pronouns (I, you, him, mine, yours, hers, yourself, herself), possessive pronoun (my, your, her). However, the expressions of person deixis are analyzed using the form of singular and plural. For example, a single speaker speaking for a group typically uses the first-person plural *we*. In the song lyrics *lavender Haze*, it is found that the singer uses pronoun of the first and second person as illustrated below.

Meet **me**<sup>1</sup> at midnight

Staring at the ceiling with **you**<sup>2</sup>

Oh, **you**<sup>3</sup> don't ever say too much

And **you**<sup>4</sup> don't really read into  
**My**<sup>5</sup> melancholia  
**I**<sup>6</sup> been under scrutiny  
 You handle **it**<sup>7</sup> beautifully  
 All this shit is new to **me**<sup>8</sup>  
**I**<sup>9</sup> feel  
 The lavender haze creeping up on **me**<sup>10</sup>  
**I'm**<sup>11</sup> damned if **I**<sup>12</sup> do give a damn what people say  
 The 1950s shit they want from **me**<sup>13</sup>  
**I**<sup>14</sup> just wanna stay in that lavender haze  
 All they keep asking **me**<sup>15</sup>  
 Is if **I'm**<sup>16</sup> gonna be your bride  
**I**<sup>17</sup> find **it**<sup>18</sup> dizzying (Yeah, oh, yeah)  
 They're bringing up **my**<sup>19</sup> history (Yeah, oh, yeah)  
 But **you**<sup>20</sup> weren't even listening (Yeah, oh, yeah)  
**I**<sup>21</sup> just need this love spiral

From the lyrics above, it can be seen that there are 21 data containing person deixis with the words "I, me, my, you, and it". The first-person deixis, there are "I, me, my". The word "I and me" has the same referent which is lavender haze. "I" as the first singular person and can be interpreted as a person who has a role as the main subject of the song, then "me" as the objective case for first singular person, and the word "my" as the possessive pronoun of first singular person. In this song "my" has different references, in data 5 it refers to the emotional state of the main subject. Data 19 refers to the history of the main subject, in this context the history in question is the past of the main subject that is always brought up. Furthermore, the word that indicates second person deixis is "you". In this song, the word "you" is the second singular person or subject and refers to the addressee or someone who has direct contact with the main subject, in the context of this song the person in question is her lover. Then, the third person deixis is "it". The word "it" in data 7 refers to the gossip that happens to the main subject, in this context the gossip is handled beautifully or ignored by the other subjects involved in this song. Data 15 refers to the same thing but in this context, the gossip makes the main subject dizzy. The pronouns have different forms based on the position as described below.

Table 1. Person Deixis

Person Deixis	Position
I	Subject
Me	Object
My	Possessive mark
You	Subject
You	Object
Your	Possessive mark
It	Object

In the song *Lavender Haze*, the person reference is Taylor Swift in the lavender haze. In this song, the pronouns used represents the first dan second person and the non-personal mark; that is "it". The situation in this song describes her struggle to get out of the haters' attacks with her lover. In this song, a haze of love (likened to lavender haze) envelops the two, symbolizing freedom and happiness. Like the soothing scent of lavender flowers, the song invites listeners to love and appreciate themselves, without caring too much about the unconstructive ramblings and criticisms of others.

### **Spatial deixis in Lavender Haze song lyrics**

Spatial deixis refers to deixis that denotes the spatial relationship between the speaker and the addressee. It is also recognized as place deixis or locative expressions. The term spatial deixis specifically denotes the position in space in relation to the speaker. Spatial deixis is alternatively referred to as place deixis or locative expressions. The term spatial deixis denotes the indication of a location in space with respect to the speaker. Kendong et al. (2023) posited that proximal terms are commonly understood by reference to the spatial position of the speaker or in relation to "near speakers". Place deixis refers to the linguistic phenomenon where language is used to refer to spatial relationships between the speaker (or writer), the hearer (or reader), and the entities being talked about. It is a crucial aspect of language that helps in locating objects, persons, or events in relation to the context of the discourse

*The lavender haze creeping up **on me**<sup>1</sup>*

*Get it off **your chest**<sup>2</sup>*

*Get it off **my desk**<sup>3</sup>*

From the lyrics above, it can be seen that there are 3 data that contain spatial deixis, namely with the words "on me, your chest, and my desk". The word "on me" as a specific location and refers to location or position of the main subject. In this context, "on me" indicates that the effects of the "lavender haze" are physically felt by the main subject, showing the location or position of the speaker (lavender haze) in relation to the phenomenon being described. Next, the word "your chest" as the specific location of the addressee and refers to the hearer's chest, in this context the feeling of being burdened is in one's heart. Last, the word "my desk" as the specific location of the speaker (lavender haze) and refers to the physical location of the speaker's desk, in this context overcoming problems or removing burdens in the mind or heart.

### **Temporal deixis in Lavender haze song lyrics**

Temporal deixis refers to the linguistic phenomenon of using deixis to specify a particular time. The term "temporal deixis" serves to signal the temporal position of an event in relation to the moment of speaking. Temporal deixis refers to the linguistic phenomenon where language is used to refer to different points in time, establishing temporal relationships between events, actions, or states. It allows speakers to locate events or situations in time relative to the time of speaking or other reference points. This linguistic concept serves the purpose of pinpointing specific points or durations along the temporal continuum, with reference to the moment of utterance. The time deixis is divided into three major segments: (i) pre-utterance, (ii) present-utterance, and (iii) post-utterance. SP & Cahyono (2023) postulated that verb tense can function as a type of deixis word, as seen in examples like "*I washed the dishes,*" "*I am washing the car,*" and "*I will wash the car.*" It proves beneficial to delineate three temporal points: the moment the event transpired (past), the time of utterance (present), and the reference time (future).

*Meet me **at midnight**<sup>1</sup>*

*The **1950s**<sup>2</sup> shit they want from me*

*Is if I'm **gonna**<sup>3</sup> be your bride*

From the lyrics above, it can be seen that there are 3 data containing temporal deixis, namely with the words "at midnight, 1950s, and gonna". The word "at midnight" refers to the time where the speaker (lavender haze) asks to meet someone in the middle of the night, in this context "midnight" is often associated with darkness, mystery, and secrecy, making it a symbolic time for a meaningful meeting or date. Therefore, the word "1950s" refers to a period of time that occurred in the past with norms, culture, or behaviors commonly associated with that period. In this context, women would be despised by society if they changed partners. Lastly, the word "gonna" is future tense (going+to) and refers to a time in the future where the speaker will be the "bride" of the subject being spoken to.

### Discourse deixis in Lavender Haze

Text deixis is another name for discourse deixis. Discourse deixis is the usage of phrases like "listen to this, it will kill you!" to allude to future discourse elements and "that" to allude to past discourse elements like "that was not a very nice thing to say." Discourse deixis refers to the linguistic phenomenon where language is used to refer to elements within the discourse itself, such as referring to previous or upcoming parts of a conversation or text. It involves the use of linguistic devices to establish coherence, continuity, and cohesion within a discourse. The function alludes to something that has already happened and something that will happen in the future. Some mention of discourse deixis may also function as anaphoric, as noted by (Syafryadin et al., 2021). Anaphora involves retrieving a specific reference to an entity outside of language and reiterating it. It constitutes a form of indirect reference wherein a prior mention is evoked through the employment of particular function words.

*I been under scrutiny (Yeah, oh, yeah)*

*You handle it beautifully (Yeah, oh, yeah)*

*All **this**<sup>1</sup> shit is new to me (Yeah, oh, yeah)*

*I feel*

*The lavender haze creepin' up on me*

*Surreal*

*I'm damned if I do give a damn what people say*

*No deal*

*The 1950s shit they want from me*

*I just wanna stay in **that**<sup>2</sup> lavender haze*

From the lyrics above, it can be seen that there are 2 data containing discourse deixis, namely with the words "this and that". The word "this" is demonstrative pronoun and refers to the previous lyrics, namely the speaker feels under surveillance and the listener or other subject in the song can overcome this beautifully or well and this is a new thing for the speaker (lavender haze). Furthermore, the word "that" is demonstrative pronoun and refers to the previous lyrics, namely the atmosphere of lavender haze.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the findings above, the author found several types of deixis in the five songs. In the song *Lavender Haze*, the person reference is Taylor Swift in lavender haze. There are 31 data containing deixis, namely person deixis 21 data (I, me, my, you, and it), spatial deixis 3 data (on me, your chest, and my desk), temporal deixis 3 data (at midnight, 1950s, and gonna), social deixis 2 data (your, and they), and discourse deixis 2 data (this and that). The situation in this song describes her struggle to get out of the haters' attacks with her lover. In this song, a haze of love (likened to lavender haze) envelops the two, symbolizing freedom and happiness. Like the soothing scent of lavender flowers, the song invites listeners to love and appreciate themselves, without caring too much about the unconstructive ramblings and criticisms of others. This research can be further developed by analyzing deixis in other songs by Taylor Swift or other artists to see if there are similar or different patterns of deixis usage. This can provide broader insights into how deixis is used in popular music in general.

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