



An Analysis of Deixis in the Song 'To The Bone' By Pamungkas

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Abstract. *This study explores the use of deixis in Pamungkas's song "To The Bone" through the lens of Levinson's (1983) pragmatic framework, focusing on how deictic expressions contribute to the song's emotional impact. A qualitative analysis of the lyrics revealed a total of 92 instances of deixis, categorized into three types: personal (83 instances), spatial (8 instances), and temporal (1 instance). Personal deixis dominates the song's lyrics, accounting for 90.2% of all occurrences. Most of these involve first-person pronouns ("I", "me") and second-person pronouns ("you"), which serve to create a direct and personal connection between the singer and the listener. This frequent use of personal deixis supports the song's confessional and intimate tone, making the emotions expressed in the lyrics more relatable and heartfelt. In contrast, spatial deixis (e.g., "that", "there") and temporal deixis (e.g., "now") appear only minimally, indicating that the song prioritizes emotional immediacy over detailed descriptions of time and space. This suggests a deliberate focus on internal, emotional experiences rather than external settings. The findings suggest that deixis in this song functions in three primary ways: (1) as a tool for building emotional intimacy between the artist and the audience; (2) as a marker of sincerity and authenticity in expressing personal feelings; and (3) as a means to encourage listener identification with the emotions conveyed. Overall, this study contributes to the field of music pragmatics by illustrating how deixis can be strategically used in songwriting to enhance meaning, engagement, and emotional resonance in popular music.*

Keywords: *Deixis, Pamungkas, Popular Music, Pragmatics, Song Lyrics*

1. INTRODUCTION

Music is the expression of language using rhythm which is now being much liked to many people in the world (Natalia & Santoso, 2020). A significant number of individuals who appreciate music engage in creating cover versions of songs from various parts of the world, often utilizing either their first or second language. Music is widely regarded as a universal language of human emotion, serving as a medium through which individuals express their inner feelings via songs and vocal performances. It is an artistic form composed of organized sounds and actions, which has evolved into a common hobby or creative activity for many. The fundamental components of music include rhythm, melody, harmony, structural form, and the expressive interpretation conveyed by the performer.

music can be influence to mood and behavior (Natalia & Santoso, 2020). Music plays a significant role in human life, as it can provide enjoyment and influence emotional states, thereby creating a pleasant atmosphere. There is a strong connection between song lyrics and the meanings conveyed, as music often holds personal significance for listeners. The interpretation of a song's lyrics is closely linked to the listener's own experiences and emotions. Lyrics serve as a form of expression through which individuals communicate their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives, often shaped by what they have experienced, heard, or observed. These expressions are conveyed through the creative use of language and wordplay, reflecting the unique style of the songwriter and capturing the interest of the audience.

In line with the unique style of the songwriter and the ability to capture the audience's interest, Rizki Rahmahadian Pamungkas, professionally known as Pamungkas, was born on April 14, 1993, in Jakarta. He is a singer-songwriter best known for his hit song *To The Bone*, which features well-crafted and meaningful lyrics that have inspired and motivated many listeners. Pamungkas is recognized as an independent musician who has successfully gained public attention through his emotionally rich and deeply meaningful works.

To The Bone became one of Pamungkas's most notable and widely recognized songs, achieving viral success both in Indonesia and internationally through various digital music platforms. The song's popularity was further demonstrated by its appearance on the Spotify Global charts and by Pamungkas's participation in numerous prestigious music festivals. These accomplishments provide a strong rationale for selecting Pamungkas's lyrics as the subject of this study. Specifically, *To The Bone* is chosen as the primary object of analysis due to its distinctive use of language, which incorporates various pragmatic elements relevant to linguistic and discourse analysis.

One medium that frequently employs deixis is music. Song lyrics serve not only as a form of emotional expression but also as a means of communication between the singer and the listener. *To The Bone*, performed by Pamungkas, presents an interesting subject for analysis due to its rich use of deictic expressions, including personal, temporal, and spatial deixis. These elements reflect the personal relationship between the speaker (the singer) and the addressee (the listener), making the song a compelling object of pragmatic and linguistic study.

Music is a form of art that possesses the ability to convey emotions and feelings through the combination of melody, rhythm, and lyrics (Ilmiah, 2025). Song lyrics, as an integral part of music, do not merely deliver messages but also have the ability to create emotional experiences for listeners. A wide range of emotions—such as happiness, sadness, anger, or tranquility—can be embedded in song lyrics, depending on the choice of words and the context in which they are expressed. Lyrics often contain pragmatic elements that contribute to the effectiveness and clarity of the language used. Pragmatics is the study of meaning in context and includes key concepts such as entailment, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and deixis. According to linguistic experts, pragmatics is a fundamental aspect of language that explores how meaning is conveyed and interpreted based on context. These five components are essential for analyzing how language functions in real communication, including how meaning is constructed and understood in song lyrics. (Natalia & Santoso, 2020).

Deixis refers to expressions that rely on contextual information—such as the speaker, location, and time of the utterance, to determine their meaning. It is a linguistic feature that

anchors reference to the situational context in which the communication occurs. Deixis is commonly categorized into five types: personal deixis, spatial (or place) deixis, temporal (or time) deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis. Deixis is frequently employed in utterances to refer to objects, places, and times. Its use illustrates a linguistic phenomenon in which many expressions derive their specific meanings based on the context in which they are spoken. This indicates that the interpretation of deictic expressions is highly dependent on situational factors, such as the speaker's position, the time of the utterance, and the intended reference within a particular discourse. Here are preview study that match with the research.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the crucial role of deixis in creating interpersonal connections through song lyrics. Kusumadewi & Anggraeni, (2020) analysis of "One Only" revealed that personal deixis accounted for 92.6% of all deictic expressions, establishing an intimate singer-listener relationship. This finding aligns with (Fadilah & Resmini, 2021) study of "Lover," where personal deixis constituted 76.5% of total deixis, primarily through first-person pronouns that reinforce the singer's perspective. The predominance of personal deixis is further supported by research across diverse musical genres, including (Hidayah, 2019) work on Selena Gomez's "Back To You" (89.6% personal deixis), (Herdiyanti, 2020) analysis of Adele's "Someone Like You" (93.3%), and (Kurniati & Haryudun, 2021) examination of Queen's "I Want to Break Free" (94%).

Beyond contemporary pop music, deixis maintains its significance in traditional forms. (Muklas & Kuspiyah, 2022) study of Palembang's traditional songs found person deixis representing 41.5% of occurrences, while (Anggara, 2016) research on keroncong music highlighted how personal deixis fosters intimacy between performers and audiences. The affective power of deictic expressions extends to their interaction with other linguistic features, as shown by (Cahya et al., 2021) semiotic analysis of Sheila On 7's lyrics, where deixis combines with figurative language to convey complex emotions.

Cross-cultural studies like (Awom, 2018) analysis of Bob Marley's "No Woman, No Cry" emphasize how deixis interpretation depends on cultural context, while (Yuliani & Muflihah, 2022) work on "Takut" demonstrates deixis's role in expressing psychological experiences. Collectively, these studies establish that personal deixis dominates musical discourse across genres and cultures, serving as the primary linguistic mechanism for creating emotional connections. However, they also reveal significant gaps in understanding how deictic patterns vary between musical styles and how listeners process these linguistic features cognitively - gaps this study aims to address.

While existing studies have established the predominance of personal deixis in song lyrics (Kusumadewi & Anggraeni, 2020). (Fadilah & Resmi, 2021). (Hidayah, 2019), several critical gaps remain in the literature. First, prior research has primarily focused on quantitative analyses of deixis frequency, with limited exploration of how deictic choices function pragmatically to enhance listener engagement and emotional resonance. Second, most studies have examined Western pop music or traditional genres, leaving a gap in understanding deixis usage in contemporary Asian popular music, particularly in independent music scenes. Third, while the dominance of personal deixis is well-documented, little attention has been paid to how its strategic deployment—such as shifting deictic centers or ambiguous spatial references—contributes to a song's commercial success and cross-cultural appeal. Cross-Genre Pragmatic Analysis Unlike previous studies that focus on single genres, this research examines deixis in Pamungkas' *"To The Bone"*, an Indonesian indie-pop song with global reach, offering insights into deixis in non-Western contemporary music.

2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORKS

Deixis

Deixis, derived from the Classical Greek term 'deiknymi' meaning 'to show' or 'to point out' (Saeed), represents a linguistic phenomenon that establishes referential connections between utterances and their situational context. Farahmand and Hatami further conceptualize deixis as the analytical study of how words, phrases, and linguistic features relate to their extralinguistic circumstances when articulated within specific communicative situations. As a fundamental component of language, deixis functions as a contextual referencing mechanism that anchors meaning to particular elements in the speech environment, including interlocutors (person), locations (space), and temporal coordinates (time). The standard typology of deixis comprises three primary categories: personal deixis (e.g., "you"), spatial deixis (e.g., "here"), and temporal deixis (e.g., "now"), each serving to identify specific participants, places, or moments relative to the speech event.

Person Deixis

Person deixis is the term of deixis to point to people. Person deixis is deixis with the role of participants in the conversation, such as speaker, spoken, and addressee (Wulandari, 2022). Person deixis refers to a category that can be explained through the roles of participants in an utterance. Anderson and Keenan explain that this type of deixis functions to indicate the position of an entity based on the roles of the speaker and/or the listener. Generally, first and second person pronouns refer to individuals directly involved in the conversation, while third

person pronouns are used to refer to individuals or parties who are not present in the speech context.

The three primary forms of person deixis include the first person, second person, and third person. The first person refers to the speaker, typically represented by the pronouns I or we. The second person denotes the listener, commonly marked by the pronoun you. In contrast, the third person is used to refer to someone or something being discussed, usually indicated by pronouns such as he, she, or they.

Table 1

Person	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1 st Person	I/me	We/us
2 nd Person	You	You
3 rd Person	He/him, She/her, It	They/them

Spatial Deixis

Spatial deixis refers to expressions that indicate the location or spatial relationship between the speaker and the listener. It is also commonly known as place deixis. According to Yule, spatial deixis involves the concept of distance, highlighting how language can reflect proximity or remoteness. In other words, spatial deixis refers to the relative positioning of individuals or objects, often marked by terms such as here and there. Lyons further explains that spatial deixis involves specifying location in relation to reference points within a speech event. The importance of spatial specification is evident in the fact that objects can generally be identified either by naming or describing them, or by indicating their location.

Temporal Deixis

Temporal deixis refers to expressions that indicate time within a speech context (Erdianto & Arifin, 2024). It involves references to points in time that are relative to the moment of the utterance. In other words, temporal deixis is concerned with how time is anchored to the moment a statement is made. The reference point is typically the time at which the speaker delivers the utterance. Temporal deixis distinguishes between the time of speaking and the time of reception by the listener. Common examples of temporal deixis markers include now, tomorrow, today, and yesterday.

In general, there are three main types of deixis: person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. Person deixis refers to individuals using pronouns such as I, you, we, they, he, she, and it. Spatial deixis relates to location, marked by expressions like this, that, here, and there. Meanwhile, temporal deixis points to specific times, using words such as now, yesterday,

tomorrow, last week, and then. These three types of deixis must be interpreted within the context of the conversation, including who is speaking, where the speech takes place, and when it occurs (Sebastian et al., 2019).

3. METHOD

Research method

This study employs a qualitative method. Qualitative research is grounded in post-positivist philosophy and is used to examine objects in their natural settings. The researcher serves as the primary instrument, with data collected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data collection employs triangulation, and the analysis is conducted inductively. The main focus of qualitative research lies in interpreting meaning rather than producing generalization.

Data Collection

Data in this study were collected through document analysis. Document analysis is a qualitative research method in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic (nouval). The data may include public records, textbooks, letters, films, tapes, diaries, themes, reports, or other relevant documents. Document analysis involves coding content into themes, similar to the way focus group discussions or interview transcripts are analyzed. Rubrics may also be used to evaluate or score the documents.

Data Analysis Technique

Data reduction is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data obtained from written field notes (Purba & Hasanah, 2023). In this study, the researcher employed document analysis of song lyrics as data collection tools. The collected data were then categorized to sort and organize the relevant information. The final stage involved analyzing the organized data to draw meaningful conclusions.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Result In this section, the writer presents the findings obtained from analyzing the song lyrics of *"To the Bone"* by Pamungkas through the framework of deixis analysis. The analysis focuses on identifying and classifying the types of deixis found in the lyrics. The writer categorized the deixis into three main types: personal deixis, spatial (place) deixis, and temporal (time) deixis.

Table 2. The Results of Personal Deixis

Types of Personal Deixis	Number of Words	Lyrics Examples	Explanation
I	40	<i>Have <u>I</u> ever told <u>you</u></i>	The deictic expression “I” refer to song writer itself
You	25	<i>“Have <u>I</u> ever told <u>you</u>”</i>	refers to the listener
Your	1	<i>There's <u>your</u> presence that grown</i>	refers to the listener
Me	7	<i>Take <u>me</u> home</i>	refer to song writer itself
My	1	<i>What <u>I</u> feel through <u>my</u> <u>bone</u></i>	refer to song writer itself
Yours	4	<i>Mind to for sure, I'm already <u>yours</u></i>	refers to the listener
We	5	<i>Maybe <u>we</u> choose the only</i>	refer to song writer and listener
Total	83		

Table 3. The Results of Temporal deixis

Types of Temporal Deixis	Number of words	Lyrics examples	explanation
Now	1	<i>Listen to <u>me now</u>, babe</i>	Refers to time
Total	1		

Table 4. The Result of Spatial Deixis

Types of spatial Deixis	Number of Words		
That	7	<i>Maybe we seek for something that</i>	Refers to location
There	1	<i>There's your presence that grown</i>	Refers to location
Total	8		

Table 5. Deixis used in song “to the bone” by Pamungkas

Types of Deixis	Number of Words
Personal Deixis	83
Temporal Deixis	1
Spatial Deixis	8
Total	92

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, the writer identified the use of personal deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis in the song lyrics of *"To the Bone"* by Pamungkas. This section discusses how each type of deixis appears in the utterances or sentences within the lyrics. Personal deixis involves references to participants in the speech act—namely, the speaker and the listener. It plays a role in identifying who is speaking, who is being addressed, who the message is intended for, and the origin of the utterance. These elements help to distinguish the types of person deixis used in the lyrics. From the analysis, the writer found that all forms of personal deixis are present in the lyrics. These include pronouns such as *I*, *you*, *your*, *yours*, *me*, and *we*. As shown in Table 1, the total number of personal deixis occurrences is 83 words, making it the most dominant type of deixis found in the song.

From the song lyrics, the personal deixis used by the songwriter includes *"I"* as a singular first-person pronoun, *"my"* as a first-person possessive pronoun, *"you"* as a singular second-person pronoun, and *"your"* as a second-person possessive pronoun. These deixis expressions are illustrated in the following lyrics.

"Have I ever told you"

"What I feel through my bone"

"There's your presence that grown"

"Maybe we choose the only"

From the lyrics above, it can be seen that the songwriter uses the deictic expression *"I"* to refer to themselves, while *"you"* refers to the listener. *"Your"* and *"my"* function as possessive pronouns, indicating ownership by the listener and the speaker, respectively. The songwriter also uses the plural first-person pronoun *"we"*, which identifies the speaker together with the hearer. Additionally, the deictic expression *"me"* appears as an object pronoun referring back to the speaker. *"Listen to me now, babe"*. The writer also finds temporal deixis are used by the song writer; it is *"now"* used to refer to the time of the hearer feel shame on the speaker.

"Of all the ones that begged to stay"

Next, types of deixis are used by the song writer is spatial deixis. From the tabulated data above, the author uses spatial deixis *"that"* are include as demonstrative adjective.

Temporal deixis is the term of deixis that used to point to a time (Wulandari, 2022). Based on Table 2, the writer found only one instance of temporal deixis in the lyrics, which is the word *"now."* This can be seen in the lyric: *"Listen to me now, babe."* The word *"now"* in

this sentence refers to the present moment, indicating that the singer, Pamungkas, is urging his girlfriend to listen to him at that very moment.

Pamungkas' strategic use of deixis in *"To The Bone"* transforms the lyrics from some words into an emotionally immersive experience. The dominance of *"I"* and *"you"* fosters intimacy, while spatial and temporal references (*"there," "the only"*) create an open-ended emotional space for listeners to inhabit. This technique explains the song's widespread resonance it feels both deeply personal and universally relatable, a key factor in its viral success.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of deixis in Pamungkas's song *"To the Bone"* reveals a significant reliance on personal deixis, which dominates the lyrical structure with 83 occurrences, compared to only 1 instance of temporal deixis and 8 instances of spatial deixis. This overwhelming prevalence of personal deixis underscores the song's introspective and relational nature, as it primarily focuses on the singer's direct emotional engagement with the listener. The frequent use of first-person pronouns (I, me, my, we) and second-person pronouns (you, your, yours) establishes an intimate dialogue, reinforcing themes of personal reflection, longing, and emotional vulnerability.

The minimal use of temporal deixis (now) suggests that the song emphasizes immediate emotional presence rather than a reflection on past or future events. Meanwhile, spatial deixis (that, there) subtly situates the narrative within a shared emotional space, allowing listeners to project their own experiences onto the lyrics. The dominance of personal deixis aligns with previous studies on song lyrics, indicating that music often serves as a medium for personal expression and emotional connection between the artist and the audience.

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