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DEIXIS IN DIGITAL MONOLOGUE DISCOURSE: A PRAGMATIC STUDY

Dwi Indarti
Bina Sarana Informatika University Jakarta
dwi.diw@bsi.ac.id

Andika Putra Arbiyansyah
Bina Sarana Informatika University Jakarta
andikaarbiansyah@gmail.com

Adistiara Assyifadina
Bina Sarana Informatika Universtity Jakarta
Adistiara2004@gmail.com

Abstract: This study investigates the use of deixis in digital monologue discourse, focusing on a YouTube commentary video entitled "Nobody is Talking About This Huge Flop" by Penguinz0. The study is significant because research on deixis in informal digital monologues remains limited, despite the growing influence of online spoken media in shaping public communication. Drawing on Levinson's (1983) pragmatic theory of deixis, the study examines five categories of deixis: person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. Employing a qualitative descriptive method supported by quantitative frequency analysis, the data were collected from the video transcript through close reading and manual identification of deictic expressions. The data were analyzed using Levinson's (1983) framework for deixis classification and interpreted through qualitative contextual analysis to examine their communicative functions. The findings reveal that all five types of deixis, occur in the monologue, with person deixis being the most dominant category, accounting for 56,2% of the total occurrences. Discourse deixis ranks second (28.1%), followed by social deixis (5.9%), time deixis (4.4%), and place deixis (3.4%). The predominance of first-person pronouns demonstrates a highly speaker-centered and subjective narrative style, while second-person references promote audience engagement. Furthermore, discourse deixis contributes to textual cohesion, whereas time, place, and social deixis help establish temporal, spatial, and interpersonal relationships. The study concludes that deixis functions not only as a contextual reference system but also as a strategic pragmatic resource for constructing meaning, expressing stance, and enhancing audience interaction in digital discourse.

Keywords: Deixis; Monologue, Pragmatics, YouTube discourse

1. Introduction

Deixis is one of the central concepts in linguistic pragmatics because it explains how language users connect linguistic expressions to the context in which communication occurs. Pragmatics itself examines how meaning is conveyed in real contexts, specifically how speech is understood based on who speaks, who listens, when, where, and how communication situations unfold (Abdulameer, 2019). Deixis helps us understand the meaning of contextual speech. In other words, deictic words or phrases can only be understood clearly if we know reference point or deictic center where the communication occurs. Deixis refers to linguistic expressions whose interpretation depends on contextual information about the speaker, listener, time, place, and social relationships (Levinson, 1983). Deictic items including *I, you, here, now, that*, and *sir*, act as indexical expressions that point to participants, objects, or relation within the immediate situation of utterance, thereby grounding meaning in interaction. Since deixis is commonly used in both spoken and written communication, understanding its various types is essential for examining how meaning is organized and interpreted in authentic texts. Beyond identifying participants, deixis

also plays a significant role in shaping speaker stance, temporal perspective, spatial organization, discourse coherence, and social positioning (Alkhawaldeh, 2022).

The study of deixis is important because deictic expressions are pervasive in everyday communication and play a significant role in meaning construction. Beyond serving as contextual reference points, deixis helps speakers express personal stance, establish interpersonal relationships, organize discourse, and guide audience interpretation (Alkhawaldeh, 2022). Through the strategic use of deictic expressions, speakers can position themselves in relation to their audience, indicate temporal and spatial perspectives, and create coherence across discourse. Consequently, deixis provides valuable insights into how language functions in authentic communicative settings.

Despite the growing body of research on deixis, most previous studies on deixis have primarily focused on traditional spoken or written discourse, including classroom interaction, speeches, and academic texts and have examined deixis in structured or semi-formal contexts. However, there is still limited research on deixis in informal digital monologues, particularly YouTube commentary videos that combine spontaneous speech, strong personal stance, and mass audience engagement. Unlike scripted discourse, this genre reflects a hybrid communicative style that blends narration, persuasion, and entertainment. Unlike face-to-face communication, YouTube monologues involve an imagined audience, requiring speakers to employ linguistic strategies that maintain engagement while expressing personal opinions and evaluations. Such characteristics make digital monologue discourse a rich site for pragmatic investigation.

Furthermore, the rapid growth of online media has transformed the way individuals communicate and construct meaning (Indarti, 2023). YouTube commentators frequently rely on deictic expressions to establish personal authority, refer to events and entities, organize narratives, and create a sense of closeness with viewers. However, the distribution and communicative functions of deixis in this form of discourse remain underexplored. Investigating deixis in digital monologues can contribute to a deeper understanding of how contextual meaning in constructed in contemporary online communication. Therefore, this study addresses the gap by analyzing how deixis operates in contemporary digital media discourse, specifically in a critical monologue discussing a video game industry failure. The present study examines the use of deixis in a YouTube commentary video entitled "*Nobody is Talking About This Huge Flop*" by Penguinz0. Drawing on Levinson's (1983) framework, the study analyzes the occurrence and functions of person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis in the selected monologue. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of deixis are employed in the YouTube monologue "*Nobody is Talking About This Huge Flop*?"
2. How are the different types of deixis distributed in the monologue?
3. How do deictic expressions contribute to the construction of meaning, audience engagement, and speaker stance in the online discourse?

2. Literature Review

Levinson (1983) argues that deictic expressions cannot be interpreted independently but require reference to a contextual anchor, known as the deictic

center, which is typically the speaker. Deixis can be classified into five types as follows. First, person deixis identifies the participants involved in communication. It generally distinguishes the first person, referring to the speaker (*me, us*), the second person, referring to the addressee (*you*), and the third person, referring to individuals or entities being talked about (*he, she, they*). Though these distinctions, person deixis signals the speaker's identity, established narrative perspective, and fosters a sense of involvement or intimacy with the audience. Second, place deixis denotes spatial location in relation to the speaker and listener, using expressions such as *here, there, up*, and *down*. This type enables interlocutors to interpret spatial orientation within a communicative event. Third, time deixis concerns temporal reference, including terms like *today, yesterday*, and t*omorrow*, and functions to clarify when an event takes place. Fourth, discourse deixis points to other parts of an ongoing text or conversation through expressions such as *it*, *before*, and *next*, serving to ensure cohesion and continuity across segments of discourse. The last is social deixis reflects the social relationship between speakers and addressees by means of honorifics forms of address, and expressions of family or respect, such as *sir* or *brother*. This category plays an important role in managing social interaction and conveying the speaker's attitude toward the listener.

Plethora studies of deixis have been conducted by scholars, such as Indarti (2023) who investigates and compares the use of person deictic expressions in six videos produced by Indonesian food vloggers, consisting of three male and three female creators with the highest number of subscribers. The results reveal a noticeable difference in the linguistic choices of male and female vloggers. Indonesian male food vloggers tend to use the informal first-person pronoun *gue* (English: I, informal), whereas Indonesian female food vloggers more frequently employ the more formal and polite pronouns *aku* dan *saya* (English: I, formal). In addition, both groups use *kita* (English: inclusive we) to reduce the perceived distance between themselves and their viewers, suggesting a shared experience with the audience. Mayori, et al. (2020) examine the types of deixis used by foreign and local English teachers based on Levinson's theory, identifies the most dominant types, and explores the reasons underlying their use. The data sources consisted of utterances produced by both foreign and local English teachers. Data were collected through classroom observations and interviews, and they were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings revealed that five types of deixis appeared in the teachers' utterances: person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis. Among these, person deixis was found to be the most frequently used type in the utterances of both foreign and local English teachers. Hartati, et al. (2025) explore the use and functions of various types of deixis in student-written research proposals, aiming to uncover how these expressions contribute to academic positioning and interaction with readers. The findings indicate that although students show a basic ability to use deictic expressions, their use is not yet highly strategic in terms of constructing stance, fostering reader engagement, or strengthening argumentative claims. Meanwhile, Manalu & Sirait (2024) examine the types of deixis found in Taylor Swift's speech at New York university in 2022. The research focuses on how deixis is used in public speeches and how it contributes to the interpretation of contextual meaning in discourse. The data were taken from the transcript of the speech and analyzed to identify the contextual meanings expressed through deictic elements. The

findings indicate that deixis plays a significant role in conveying nuanced meaning in discourse.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach supported by quantitative frequency analysis to examine the use of deixis in a YouTube monologue. The data source is a transcript of the video title "*Nobody is Talking About This Huge Flop*" by Penguinz0, which presents a critical commentary on a video game's failure. The transcript was selected because it represents a natural, spontaneous form of digital spoken discourse that reflects authentic language use in online media.

Data collection was conducted through close reading and careful identification of deictic expressions within the transcript. All utterances containing deixis were manually coded based on their forms and contextual meanings. The analysis adopts the theoretical framework proposed by Levinson (1983), which classifies deixis into five categories: person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. This framework was chosen due to its comprehensive and widely accepted categorization of deictic expressions in pragmatics studies.

The data analysis was carried out in two stages. First, a quantitative analysis was conducted to calculate the frequency and percentage of each type of deixis in order to identify dominant patterns. Second, a qualitative analysis was performed to interpret the contextual functions of the identified deictic expressions, focusing on how they contribute to meaning construction, audience engagement, and discourse organization. By combining these approaches, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of both the distribution and communicative roles of deixis in the selected YouTube monologue.

To ensure systematic reporting, the research results are presented using both tabular and descriptive methods. The quantitative findings are displayed in frequency and percentage tables to illustrate the distribution of each type of deixis. The quantitative analysis was not conducted merely to identify the frequency of deictic expressions. Rather, the frequency and percentage distributions were used to reveal the relative prominence of each deictic category and to identify discourse patterns within the monologue. The percentages indicate which contextual dimensions, such as speaker identity, audience orientation, temporal reference, spatial reference, discourse organization, or social relation are most strongly emphasized by the speaker. By examining the distribution of deixis types, the study seeks to explain how linguistic choices reflect the communicative characteristics of digital monologue discourse. Meanwhile, the qualitative findings are presented through descriptive explanations accompanied by representative excerpts from the transcript. Each excerpt is analyzed contextually to explain the referential meaning and communicative function of the deictic expression. Through this combination of quantitative and qualitative presentation, the study provides a comprehensive account of the occurrence and functions of deixis in YouTube monologue.

4. Result and Discussion

This section reports the types, frequency, and referential functions of deixis identified in the analysed transcript. Drawing on the theoretical framework of deixis (person, time, place, discourse, and social deixis), the analysis reveals how the speaker strategically employs deictic expressions to construct authorial presence, manage discourse coherence, and position social relationships with the audience and other participants.

Table 1. Frequency of deixis types in the transcript

Deixis type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Person deixis	190	56.2%
Discourse deixis	95	28.1%
Social deixis	20	5.9%
Time deixis	15	4.4%
Place deixis	12	3.4%
Total	**332**	**100%**

As can be seen in Table 1 above, person deixis is the most frequently occurring type in the YouTube monologue of *Nobody is Talking About This Huge Flop*. First-person pronouns, *I, me, we* are used extensively to foreground the speaker's personal involvement, evaluations, and experiential authority. The dominance of person deixis (56.2%) indicates that the monologue is highly speaker-centred. The speaker relies heavily on references to self and audience, suggesting that personal evaluation, subjective experience, and direct audience engagement are central features of this genre. Therefore, the high percentage is not only a numerical finding but also evidence of the interpersonal orientation of YouTube commentary discourse.

4.1. Person Deixis

Table 2. Frequency of person deixis

Person category	Forms identified	Frequency
First person	I, me, my, we, us	132
Second person	You, your	38
Third person	They, them, he, she, it	20
Total		**190**

Table 2 shows a clear dominance of first-person deixis in the transcript, with 132 instances, far exceeding second person (38) and third person (20). This suggests the speaker relies heavily on a personal, subjective perspective, reinforcing a conversational and opinion-driven tone. The frequent use of first-person forms positions the speaker as deeply involved in the narrative, often emphasizing personal experience and judgement. For example, excerpts such as "***I hadn't heard a peep about this until I just happened to stumble across an article***" and "***I did spend $30 to play King of Meat to see if it really is just fucking terrible***" highlight this personal engagement. Second-person deixis is used to directly address and engage the audience, creating an interactive and sometimes confrontational tone, as seen in "***You think you're so slick, huh?"*** and ***"You thought you could bury that information without me unearthing it***." Meanwhile, third-person references are mainly used to discuss external subjects such as companies or individuals, contributing to the informational aspect of the discourse. For examples, "***they put their hand up, I know is a liar***" and "***they were expecting this game to be pulling 100.000 concurrent players***." Overall, the distribution reflects a strongly speaker-centred narrative style, with occasional audience engagement and minimal distancing through third-person reference.

4.2. Discourse deixis

Table 3. Frequency of discourse deixis

Discourse marker	Forms identified	Frequency
Proximal	This, these	48
Distal	That, those	22
Anaphoric cues	It, like I said, earlier	25
Total		**95**

Table 3 indicates that proximal discourse deixis is the most frequently used

category (48), followed by anaphoric cues (25) and distal deixis (22). This distribution suggests that the speaker tends to anchor ideas close to their immediate discourse context, using markers like "this' and "these' to emphasize points as current or directly relevant. For instance, proximal usage can be seen in excerpts such as "***this flop we're about to discuss is a really catastrophic one***" and "***this is a project that had presumably millions of dollars poured into it***," where the speaker brings the topic into sharp and focus. Distal deixis is employed to create some distance or contrast, often referring to ideas perceived as removed or already established, as in "***that is how under the radar this one has managed to fly***" and "***that's what I paid in order to play this***." Meanwhile, anaphoric cues play a key role in maintaining cohesion by referring back to previously mentioned information, helping the discourse flow logically. Examples include "***Like I said, this is a project that had presumably millions of dollars poured into it***" and "***it's actually pretty interesting, because now I'm really wondering***", where prior statements are recalled or summarized. Overall, the pattern reflects a highly interactive and cohesive narrative style, with strong emphasis on immediacy supported by consistent reference back to earlier points.

4.3. Time deixis

Table 4. Frequency of time deixis

Time expression	Forms identified	Frequency
Present reference	Now, right now, today	6
Past reference	Two months ago, earlier, after	7
Extended time frame	Of the year, anytime	2
Total		15

Table 4. shows that past time references (7) slightly exceed present references (6), while extended time frames are minimal (2), indicating that the speaker primarily situates the discourse around recent events, with occasional grounding in the immediate moment. This balance suggests a narrative that blends real-time commentary with reflection on recent developments, particularly in discussing the game's performance. Present-time deixis helps create immediacy and engagement, as seen in excerpts like "**it's $30 right now and that's what I paid"** and "**now I'm really wondering what kind of return do companies see,"** where the speaker draws the audience into the current moment of evaluation. However, past references are slightly more dominant and are used to recount events or provide background information, illustrated by "**I hadn't heard a peep about this until I just happened to stumble across an article today**" and **"he posted it two months ago and it's all to promote King of Meat."** Meanwhile, extended time frames appear rarely and serve to generalize or broaden the scope of discussion beyond specific moments, as in "one of the biggest flops of the year" and "anytime I have a chance to be a part of history for these kinds of unbelievable bombs". Overall, the distribution reflects a discourse that is largely retrospective but still anchored in present evaluation, with limited use of broader temporal generalizations.

4.4. Place Deixis

Table 5. Frequency of place deixis

Place expression	Forms identified	Frequency
Proximal	Here, in here	4
Distal	There, in sight	3

Metaphorical	Under the radar, on the ground	5
Total		12

Table 5 shows that metaphorical place deixis (5) is the most frequent category, followed by proximal (4) and distal (3), suggesting that the speaker often conceptualizes "place" in abstract or figurative terms rather than referring strictly to physical locations. This reflects a highly expressive and evaluative discourse style, where spatial references are use to convey visibility, prominence, or involvement. Metaphorical deixis is evident in excerpts such as **"that is how under the radar this one has managed to fly**" and **"put boots on the ground to experience it,**" where "place' conveys levels of awareness or engagement rather than literal position. Proximal place deixis, though slightly less frequent, helps create a sense of closeness to the action, as seen in **"I'll go ahead and put that footage here**" and "**he has an entire like dungeon in the game that you can play here,**" drawing the audience into the speaker's current perspective. Distal deixis is the least used and serves to indicate distance or separation, either physically or conceptually, as illustrated by "there is no motion in sight" and **"I couldn't even get enough people in a game to play",** where the sense of "there" implied absence of activity. Overall, the distribution highlights a preference for figurative spatial framing, reinforcing the speaker's interpretive narrative style.

4.5. Social Deixis

Table 6. Frequency of social deixis

Social reference	Forms identified	Frequency
Power hierarchy	This, these	7
Occupational	That, those	6
Solidarity	It, like I said, earlier	4
Public figures	Mr. Beast, Jimmy Beast	3
Total		20

Table 6 shows that power hierarchy references are the most frequent (7) followed by occupational (6), solidarity (4), and public figure references (3). This distribution indicates that the speaker often frames social relationships in terms of authority, responsibility, and institutional roles, while still incorporating elements of shared understanding and recognizable figures. Power hierarchy deixis is reflected in the way the speaker critiques those in charge, as seen in excerpts like "**some of the executives here at the higher level of the studio"** and **"I think a lot of that falls onto leadership's shoulders,"** which emphasize authority and accountability. Occupational references also appear prominently, highlighting roles within the industry, for example "**Glow made Games, the studio behind King of Meat"** and **"there's been word of layoffs confirmed by multiple Glow made employees on LinkedIn,"** pointing to professional identities and structures. Solidarity deixis, though less frequent, helps create a sense of shared perspective or alignment with the audience, as illustrated by **"like I said, this is a project that had presumably millions of dollars poured into it"** and **"like I said, I can't even imagine**

how much this must have cost," where the speaker builds rapport through repetition and inclusion. Finally, references to public figures are used to ground the discussion in recognizable individuals, such as **"He did an entire YouTuber challenge… on MrBeast Gaming"** and **"they thought by getting Jimmy Beast on the horn for a dedicated video."** Overall, the pattern reflects a discourse that is strongly evaluative of authority and professional roles, while maintaining some connection with the audience and anchoring the discussion in well-known personalities.

The findings of this study reveal that deixis plays a central role in shaping meaning, engagement, and discourse organization in YouTube monologue content. The dominance of person deixis, particularly first-person forms, reflects a highly subjective and speaker-centred discourse style. This result is consistent with recent studies showing that personal deixis is the most frequent type in spoken discourse. For instance, a study on political and public speech contexts found that personal deixis accounts for the majority of deictic expressions, functioning to establish speaker identity and audience engagement (Nisa, et al., 2024). Similarly, research on sermons and spoken discourse indicates that personal deixis is predominantly used to structure communication and maintain interaction between speaker and audience (Al-Hamzi, et al., 2023). These findings align with the present study, where first-person pronouns are used extensively to express evaluation, authority, and personal experience in digital commentary.

Discourse deixis also emerges as a significant feature, particularly through proximal markers such as "this", which serve to emphasize immediacy and guide audience interpretation. This supports the argument that deixis functions as a cohesive device in discourse, helping speakers organize information and maintain coherence. A recent literature review on deixis highlights that discourse deixis plays a key role in linking segments of text and ensuring interpretive continuity (Hartati, et al., 2025). The present study shows that similar mechanisms operate in informal digital monologues, though in a more spontaneous and conversational manner.

Time and place deixis in this study reveal a flexible use of contextual anchoring. The balance between past and present references indicates that the speaker constructs meaning though both immediate evaluation and retrospective narration. This pattern reflects findings from contemporary discourse studies, where speakers frequently shift temporal frames to contextualize opinions and events (Dwitama, 2025). Additionally, the use of metaphorical place deixis, such as "under the radar" supports the idea that deixis extends beyond literal spatial reference. According to recent discourse-pragmatic perspectives, deictic expressions can encode abstract or conceptual meanings, contributing to evaluative and expressive language use (Dancygier, 2021). Social deixis in this study highlights the role of hierarchy, professional identity, and public figures in shaping discourse. The frequent reference to authority, such as executives, leadership, reflects how speakers position responsibility and critique within institutional contexts. This is supported by recent research on social deixis, which shows that deictic expressions can signal social status, formality, and relational dynamics in communication (Fatmah, et al., 2024). In digital discourse, such references are often combined with informal tone, creating a hybrid style that blends critique with entertainment.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the use of deixis in the YouTube monologue "Nobody is

Talking About This Huge Flop" by Penguinz0 using Levinson's (1983) framework of person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. The findings demonstrate that all five types of deixis are employed in the monologue, confirming that deictic expressions play a central role in constructing contextual meaning in digital discourse**.** Quantitative analysis revealed that person deixis was the most dominant category (56.2%), followed by discourse deixis (28.1%), social deixis (5.9%), time deixis (4.4%), and place deixis (3.4%). The predominance of person deixis indicates that the discourse is highly speaker-centered, emphasizing personal experience, evaluation, and direct audience engagement. Meanwhile, the substantial presence of discourse deixis highlights the speakers' effort to organize information and guide audience interpretation throughout the monologue. The study also shows that deictic expressions serve functions beyond simple contextual reference. Person deictic expressions serve functions beyond simple contextual reference. Person deixis contributes to the construction of speaker identity and audience involvement, discourse deixis promotes textual cohesion, time and place deixis provide temporal and spatial anchoring, and social deixis reflects interpersonal and institutional relationships. These findings suggest that deixis functions as an important pragmatic resource for expressing stance, managing interaction and enhancing communicative effectiveness in contemporary digital media.

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. First, the analysis was restricted to a single YouTube commentary video, which limits the generalizability of the findings across different creators, topics, and digital genres. Second, the study focused exclusively on deictic expressions and did not examine other pragmatic features that may interact with deixis in meaning construction, such as stance markers, evaluation, or audience-address strategies. Based on these limitations, future researchers are encouraged to analyze larger corpora consisting of multiple YouTube channels, content creators, or digital discourse genres to obtain more comprehensive findings. Comparative studies across platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Podcasts, and livestreams may also provide deeper insights into how deictic expressions vary across online communication contexts. Furthermore, future studies could combine deixis analysis with other pragmatic or discourse-analytic approaches to develop a more comprehensive understanding of meaning-making processes in digital media discourse.

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