

DEICTIC EXPRESSIONS IN THE YOUTH PLEDGE DAY SPEECH TEXT DELIVERED BY A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Daniel Binsah Lumban Gaol¹, Selviana Napitupulu²

^{1,2}English Teacher, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of HKBP Nommensen
Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

Corresponden E-mail; danielbinsahlumbangaol@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan ekspresi deiksis dalam teks pidato Hari Sumpah Pemuda yang disampaikan dalam konteks seremoni akademik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis deiksis serta menjelaskan fungsi pragmatisnya dalam membangun makna dan menyampaikan nilai-nilai kebangsaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain deskriptif. Sumber data berupa teks pidato resmi peringatan Hari Sumpah Pemuda ke-97 tahun 2025 yang diterbitkan oleh Kementerian Pemuda dan Olahraga Republik Indonesia dan dibacakan dalam upacara sekolah. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik dokumentasi dengan mengidentifikasi kalimat dan klausa yang mengandung ekspresi deiktis. Data dianalisis menggunakan kerangka pragmatik untuk mengklasifikasikan dan menafsirkan fungsi deiksis dalam pidato. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa teks pidato mengandung tiga jenis deiksis, yaitu deiksis persona, temporal, dan spasial. Deiksis persona berfungsi membangun solidaritas dan identitas kolektif, deiksis temporal menghubungkan peristiwa masa lalu, kondisi saat ini, dan aspirasi masa depan, sedangkan deiksis spasial membangun representasi ruang nasional secara literal dan simbolik. Simpulan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa deiksis tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai unsur kebahasaan, tetapi juga sebagai strategi pragmatis dalam membangun makna dan menyampaikan nilai-nilai kebangsaan dalam pidato seremoni di lingkungan pendidikan.

Kata kunci: Deiksis, Pragmatik, Pidato Seremoni, Konteks Akademik

Abstract

This study examines the use of deictic expressions in the Youth Pledge Day speech text delivered in an academic ceremonial context. The research aims to identify the types of deixis and explain their pragmatic functions in constructing meaning and conveying national values. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The data source was the official speech text for the 97th Youth Pledge Day commemoration in 2025 issued by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Indonesia and delivered during a school ceremony. Data were collected through documentation by identifying sentences and clauses containing deictic expressions. The data were analyzed using a pragmatic framework to classify and interpret the functions of deixis in the speech. The findings indicate that the speech contains three types of deixis, namely personal, temporal, and spatial deixis. Personal deixis functions to build solidarity and collective identity between the speaker and the audience, temporal deixis connects historical events, present circumstances, and future aspirations, while spatial deixis constructs both literal and symbolic representations of national space. In conclusion, this study shows that deixis functions not only as a linguistic feature but also as a pragmatic strategy for constructing meaning and transmitting national values in ceremonial speeches within an educational context.

Keywords: Deixis, Pragmatics, Ceremonial Speech, Academic Context

INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in conveying meaning, particularly in the context of speech. Through speech, speakers not only deliver information but also construct relationships with their audiences and emphasize social and situational meanings. Therefore, the interpretation of meaning in speech cannot be separated from the context in which the speech

is produced and received. The relationship between language and context is the primary concern of pragmatics, which examines how utterance meaning is interpreted based on contextual factors such as the speaker, the listener, time, and place (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996).

Within pragmatics, deixis constitutes a central concept, referring to linguistic expressions whose meanings are dependent on the context of utterance (Levinson, 1983). Deictic expressions function to indicate participants, temporal reference, and spatial location in a speech event, commonly categorized as personal, temporal, and spatial deixis. In spoken discourse, deixis plays a significant role in guiding audience interpretation by clarifying who is being addressed, when the event is situated, and where the speech takes place. Consequently, deixis contributes substantially to meaning construction in speech communication.

Consistent with the pragmatic perspective that emphasizes context in meaning-making, a number of studies in Indonesia have examined the use of deixis in political speeches, particularly presidential addresses. Ritonga (2023), for instance, analyzed personal deixis in President Joko Widodo's speeches during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that inclusive pronouns such as *we* and *our* were employed to emphasize unity and empathy. Similarly, Safi (2025), in *Deixis in Prabowo's Religious-Themed Speeches*, identified personal, temporal, spatial, and social deixis as pragmatic strategies used to construct solidarity, convey patriotic values, and reinforce authoritative positioning. In addition, Manik et al. (2023) demonstrated that deixis in presidential ceremonial speeches functions not merely as a grammatical feature but as a pragmatic resource reflecting leadership style and persuasive intent. Collectively, these studies indicate that deixis serves as an effective pragmatic device in political discourse aimed at influencing public perception and audience alignment.

Despite these contributions, existing studies on deixis have predominantly focused on political speeches delivered by national leaders within formal state communication contexts. Such research tends to emphasize persuasion, authority, and political legitimacy. In contrast, the use of deixis in ceremonial speeches within educational institutions remains underexplored. Official speeches delivered during school ceremonies such as Youth Pledge Day serve a different communicative function: they operate as pedagogical and ceremonial discourse intended to transmit national values, foster collective identity, and shape students' character within an academic setting. Although these speeches often use texts authored by state officials, their delivery and reception in schools situate them within an educational discourse context rather than a purely political one.

In this study, the Youth Pledge Day speech text issued by the Ministry of Youth and Sports is analyzed as it is performed by a school principal during a school ceremony. The analytical focus is not on the principal as the author of the text, but on the speech as an institutional ceremonial discourse enacted in an educational environment. This perspective allows the study to examine how deictic expressions function pragmatically in conveying national values and collective identity to students.

To address this research gap, this mini research aims to identify and analyze the types and pragmatic functions of deictic expressions used in the Youth Pledge Day speech delivered in a school context. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of deixis are used in the Youth Pledge Day speech text delivered in an academic ceremonial context?

2. What pragmatic functions do these deictic expressions serve in constructing meaning and conveying national values to students?

By extending deixis analysis from political discourse to academic ceremonial speech, this study contributes to pragmatic research by highlighting how deictic expressions function not only as tools of political persuasion but also as pedagogical resources for value transmission in educational institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatics and Meaning in Context

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the study of meaning in relation to context. Unlike semantics, which examines meaning at the level of words and sentences in isolation, pragmatics emphasizes how meaning is interpreted based on situational factors such as the speaker, the hearer, time, place, and social context. Levinson (1983) defines pragmatics as the study of the relations between language and context that are relevant to the understanding of meaning. This perspective highlights that meaning cannot be fully interpreted without considering who is speaking, to whom, and under what circumstances.

Similarly, Yule (1990) explains that pragmatics is concerned with how speakers communicate more than what is explicitly stated and how listeners infer intended meaning from contextual clues. In this sense, meaning is not solely embedded in linguistic forms but is constructed through interaction between language users and their shared knowledge of the context. (Thomas, n.d.) further emphasizes that pragmatic meaning arises from the dynamic interaction between speaker intention and hearer interpretation, making context an essential component in discourse analysis.

In spoken discourse, particularly in formal and ceremonial speeches, pragmatic analysis becomes highly relevant. Speeches are produced within specific institutional and social settings, where meaning is shaped by the relationship between the speaker and the audience. According to Cutting & Joan (2002), pragmatic analysis allows researchers to examine how contextual elements influence interpretation in spoken texts, especially in public and institutional discourse. Therefore, a pragmatic approach provides a strong theoretical foundation for analyzing meaning in ceremonial speeches, including the use of deictic expressions that depend heavily on context for interpretation.

Deixis: Definition and Types

Deixis is a key concept in pragmatics, closely related to context-dependent meaning. Levinson (1983) explains that deixis is a linguistic expression whose reference cannot be determined without considering the context of the utterance, such as who the speaker is, when, and where the utterance is delivered. In other words, the meaning of a deictic expression can only be accurately understood if the context of the situation is known. Therefore, deixis is an important aspect of analysis in spoken discourse, especially speech, which is highly dependent on the communication context.

Yule (1996) states that deixis functions as a linguistic indicator that links utterances to specific elements in the speech situation. Deixis allows speakers to refer to themselves, listeners, time, and place efficiently without having to explicitly mention the referent. In formal speech, the use of deixis helps speakers build rapport with the audience and emphasize the positions and roles of each party in the speech event.

According to Levinson (1983), deixis is generally divided into several types, including person deixis, temporal deixis, spatial deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis. However, in the context of ceremonial speeches, the most dominant and relevant types of deixis are person, temporal, and spatial deixis, because all three are directly related to the speaker, the audience, and the time and place of the speech. Personal deixis is used to refer to the speaker, listener, or other parties discussed in the speech, usually through pronouns such as "I," "we," and "you." Temporal deixis relates to indicating time, such as "today," "now," or "this year," which links the utterance to a specific moment. Meanwhile, spatial deixis functions to indicate location or place, for example through the expressions "here" or "there." These three types of deixis play an important role in constructing contextual meaning and helping the audience understand the message conveyed in the speech.

Deixis in Speech and Ceremonial Discourse

Speeches are a form of oral discourse delivered within specific social and institutional contexts, so the meanings they construct are highly dependent on the speech situation. In ceremonial speeches, such as those commemorating national days, speakers not only convey information but also instill ideological values, build collective identity, and strengthen the relationship between speaker and audience. Therefore, pragmatic analysis is a relevant approach to examining how meaning is constructed through language in ceremonial speeches. One of the most prominent pragmatic elements in speech is deixis. Deixis functions as a linguistic tool that connects speech to the context of the speaker, listener, time, and place. According to Levinson (1983), the use of deixis allows speakers to adapt their messages to the current speech situation. In ceremonial speeches, personal deixis is often used to build closeness and solidarity with the audience through the use of inclusive pronouns such as "we" or "us." Meanwhile, temporal deixis plays a role in linking speech to historical moments and actual time, so that the message conveyed has symbolic and emotional relevance for the audience. In addition, spatial deixis also plays an important role in ceremonial speeches by marking the physical and symbolic location where the speech is delivered. Spatial expressions can be used to strengthen a sense of togetherness and national identity by referring to a shared space, such as a homeland or a particular region. (Cutting & Joan, n.d.) states that in public and institutional discourse, the use of deixis not only functions referentially, but also has a pragmatic function to emphasize the speaker's position and actively involve the audience in the speech event.

In the context of education, ceremonial speeches delivered at schools have a specific function: conveying national and moral values to students. The use of deixis in such speeches helps adapt national messages to the academic context, making them more easily understood and accepted by the audience. Therefore, examining deixis in ceremonial speeches in schools is crucial for understanding how collective meanings and values are constructed through language in educational contexts.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. A qualitative approach was selected because the research aims to examine context-dependent language use and meaning, which is central to pragmatic analysis. Qualitative research enables an in-depth interpretation of linguistic phenomena based on natural data rather than numerical

measurement (Creswell, 2014). This approach is therefore appropriate for analyzing deictic expressions in speech texts.

A descriptive design was applied to systematically identify and describe the types of deixis found in the speech text without manipulating the data (Sugiyono, 2019). This study is grounded in a pragmatic framework, drawing on Levinson's (1983) theory of deixis to interpret the meanings of deictic expressions in relation to contextual elements, including the speaker, the audience, the time, and the place of speech delivery. The data source of this study is the complete official speech text for the 97th Youth Pledge Day commemoration in 2025, issued by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Indonesia. The speech text was authored by the Minister of Youth and Sports and distributed as the official script for national commemorations. In the context of this research, the speech was delivered by a school principal during a Youth Pledge Day ceremony in a school setting. The analysis focuses on the speech as it is performed within an educational institution, rather than on the personal authorship of the speaker, positioning the text as an academic ceremonial discourse. The data consist of all sentences and clauses in the speech text containing deictic expressions. The entire script was analyzed to ensure comprehensive coverage of deictic usage. A total of 41 clauses were examined, from which deictic expressions were identified.

Data were collected using a documentation technique. The speech text was carefully read several times to identify words, phrases, and clauses functioning as deictic expressions. The inclusion criteria were expressions referring to participants (personal deixis), time (temporal deixis), and place (spatial deixis), as defined by Levinson (1983). Expressions that did not rely on contextual reference for interpretation were excluded from the analysis.

The unit of analysis in this study is deictic expressions in the form of words, phrases, or clauses containing personal, temporal, and spatial deixis. Each deictic expression was analyzed based on its contextual reference to the speaker, the audience, the time, and the place of the speech delivery.

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach. The analysis involved three stages: (1) classifying deictic expressions according to their types personal, temporal, and spatial deixis; (2) interpreting each expression based on its contextual reference; and (3) describing its pragmatic function in constructing meaning and conveying national values within an academic ceremonial context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study on deictic expressions identified in the Youth Pledge Day speech delivered in an academic ceremonial context. The analysis focuses on three types of deixis: personal, temporal, and spatial deixis based on their forms and pragmatic functions in constructing meaning and conveying national values. Selected examples of deictic expressions are presented in Table 1, followed by an integrated discussion.

Table 1. Deictic Expressions in the Youth Pledge Day Speech

Type of Deixis	Example from Speech	English Gloss	Pragmatic Function
Personal Deixis	<i>Saudara-saudaraku sebangsa dan setanah air</i>	my brothers and sisters of the same nation	Positions speaker as part of the collective
	<i>Hari ini kita berdiri di bawah langit merah putih</i>	today we stand under the red-and-white sky	Constructs inclusive identity
	<i>Kita tidak boleh takut karena kita harus percaya</i>	we must not be afraid because we must believe	Strengthens unity and shared responsibility
Temporal Deixis	<i>Hari ini kita berdiri di bawah langit merah putih</i>	today we stand under the red-and-white sky	Anchors speech to present ceremonial moment
	<i>Hari ini tugas kita berbeda</i>	today our task is different	Highlights present generational responsibility
	<i>Namun semangatnya tetap sama</i>	remains the same	Emphasizes continuity of national values across time.
Spatial Deixis	<i>Kita berdiri di bawah langit merah putih</i>	under the red-and-white sky	Symbolizes national unity
	<i>Di setiap kampung, di setiap kota</i>	in every village, in every city	Expands national scope
	<i>Bangsa Indonesia adalah bangsa yang besar</i>	the Indonesian nation	Refers to shared national space

The findings indicate that personal deixis plays a central role in constructing collective identity within the speech. The frequent use of inclusive first-person plural pronouns such as *kita* and possessive suffixes such as *-ku* positions the speaker and the audience as members of a shared national community. This inclusive strategy fosters solidarity and collective responsibility, aligning with previous findings by Ritonga (2023) and Safi (2025), who observed similar functions of personal deixis in political speeches. However, in this study, personal deixis operates within an educational context, emphasizing moral encouragement and character formation among students rather than political persuasion.

Temporal deixis in the speech functions to situate the message within the present ceremonial moment while emphasizing continuity of national values. Expressions such as *hari ini* highlight the immediacy of the Youth Pledge commemoration and underscore the responsibilities of the current generation. The use of expressions indicating continuity, such as *tetap*, reinforces the idea that the spirit of nationalism transcends time. In an academic setting, this temporal framing supports students' awareness of their role in sustaining national values, complementing Manik et al.'s (2023) findings on the role of temporal deixis in linking history with present identity.

Spatial deixis is employed both literally and symbolically to construct a shared sense of national space. Expressions such as *di setiap kampung, di setiap kota* expand the spatial

reference beyond the physical setting of the ceremony, while *di bawah langit merah putih* symbolically represents Indonesia as a unified nation. Similar to Safi (2025), spatial deixis functions to evoke national belonging; however, in this educational context, it serves to nurture students' sense of identity and attachment to the nation rather than mobilizing political support. Overall, the integrated analysis demonstrates that deictic expressions in the Youth Pledge Day speech function not merely as grammatical markers but as pragmatic resources for meaning construction and value transmission in academic ceremonial discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that deictic expressions play a significant pragmatic role in constructing meaning within the Youth Pledge Day speech delivered in an academic ceremonial context. The analysis shows that personal, temporal, and spatial deixis are strategically used to create solidarity between the speaker and the audience, connect historical events with present and future national aspirations, and construct a shared sense of national space. Personal deixis, particularly inclusive pronouns, strengthens collective identity and encourages students' involvement in national values. Temporal deixis reinforces the continuity of national struggle across generations, while spatial deixis fosters a sense of belonging beyond the immediate setting of the ceremony. These findings indicate that deixis functions not merely as a grammatical feature but as a pragmatic strategy to convey moral messages and national ideology in educational institutions. By focusing on a school-level ceremonial speech, this research extends pragmatic studies of deixis beyond political discourse and highlights the importance of contextual language use in educational settings.

REFERENCES

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Cutting, J. (2002). Pragmatics and discourse: A resource book for students. Routledge.

Levinson, S. C. (1983). Pragmatics. Cambridge University Press.

Manik, K. N., Tarigan, M. S. Br., & Sinaga, D. R. (2023). Deixis study in speech text of President Joko Widodo on Independence Day. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, 5(2), 168–189. <https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v5i2.168-189>

Ritonga, M. (2023). Person deixis in Joko Widodo's speech: A pragmatic analysis. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3(1), 20–25. <https://doi.org/10.52622/joal.v3i1.142>

Safi', M. (2025). Deixis in Prabowo's religious-themed speeches: A pragmatic analysis. *International Journal of English and Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1–10.

Thomas, J. (1995). Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics. Longman.

Yule, G. (1996). Pragmatics. Oxford University Press.