



DEIXIS ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE *BLACK WIDOW* (2021) MOVIE

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Abstract

The research aims to analyze the types, functions, and deictic usage of deixis used by the main character in the movie *Black Widow* (2021). This research employed Cruse's (2000) theory to analyze the types of deixis, Cruse's (2006) and Huang's (2007) theories to analyze the functions of deixis, and Levinson's (1983) theory to analyze the kinds of deictic usage. The data were collected from the script of the movie *Black Widow* (2021), which consists of utterances containing deixis used by the main character. The findings reveal five types of deixis used by the main character in the movie *Black Widow* (2021). Based on the data, person deixis was the most dominant type with 287 data, which shows its crucial role in personal references, followed by discourse deixis with 45 data, spatial deixis with 34 data, temporal deixis with 27 data, and social deixis with 16 data. These types of deixis function to clarify the roles participants, indicate place and time, express social relationships, and maintain discourse coherence. In addition, two kinds of deictic usage were identified, namely symbolic usage and gestural usage, with symbolic usage emerging as the most prevalent.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Deixis, Movie, Black Widow

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A. INTRODUCTION

Language is the primary means of communication among humans, allowing individuals to convey thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Through language, people can overcome differences in understanding and establish meaningful interactions, whether through spoken words, writing, or other forms of expression. Zaim et al., (2020) emphasize that language is the process of conveying messages to others through speech or writing, which must be understood by the recipient for communication to take place effectively. This emphasizes that meaning plays a crucial role in communication. Language is not limited to verbal expression but also includes other forms of signals as long as they can be interpreted. Therefore, understanding how meaning is produced and interpreted in communication becomes a central concern in linguistic studies.

In linguistics, the study of meaning in relation to context is examined through pragmatics. Pragmatics focuses on how meaning is constructed and interpreted based on the relationship between speakers, hearers, and the situational context in which language is used. According to Huang (2007), pragmatics covers several main topics, including implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and deixis. Among these topics, deixis plays an important role because it directly connects language to the context of an utterance.

Deixis refers to linguistic expressions whose interpretation depends on the context of the speech event. Levinson (1983) explains that deixis concerns how languages encode aspects of context and how utterances can only be fully understood by considering who is speaking, when, where, and to whom the utterance is directed. Cruse (2000) classifies deixis into five types: person, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixis. Person deixis refers to participants in speech events, spatial deixis indicates location, temporal deixis relates to time, social deixis encodes social relationships, and discourse deixis refers to parts of the discourse itself. These types are essential for interpreting meaning accurately, especially in communicative situations where context is crucial.

Deixis is not only found in everyday conversations but also appears prominently in movies. Movies provide natural and contextualized language use that closely resembles real-life communication. Bordwell and Thompson (2016) describe movies as sequences of moving images used to tell stories, while Gomery and Overduin (2011) view movies as cultural products that convey values, meanings, and social messages. Although movies are often enjoyed as entertainment, they also serve as valuable data sources for linguistic studies. Misunderstandings may occur when audiences fail to grasp contextual references in dialogues, particularly when deictic expressions are not clearly understood. Therefore, analyzing deixis in movies helps clarify how meaning is constructed and interpreted through language in context.

Several previous studies have examined deixis in various media, such as advertisements, movies, song lyrics, speeches, novels, and newspapers. These studies generally focus on identifying types of deixis and determining their

dominant forms and functions. However, most of them did not analyze the use of deixis in terms of gestural and symbolic differences.

Based on this research gap, the present study differs from previous research by analyzing not only the types and functions of deixis but also the kinds of deictic usage. This study applies Cruse's (2000) theory to identify the types of deixis, Cruse's (2006) and Huang's (2007) theories to analyze their functions, and Levinson's (1983) framework to examine deictic usage, namely gestural and symbolic usage.

The object of this research is the movie *Black Widow* (2021), which features rich dialogues and strong character development, particularly through the main character, Natasha Romanoff. The movie presents various contexts involving personal relationships, spatial settings, temporal shifts, social hierarchies, and discourse continuity, making it an appropriate object for deixis analysis. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the types of deixis, their functions, and deictic usage found in the utterances of the main character in the movie *Black Widow* (2021).

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the research problem, the researcher employed a descriptive method. According to Zaim (2014), the descriptive method is an approach that describes linguistic phenomena as they naturally occur, in which the researcher does not interfere with or alter the data in the field. By using this approach, the utterances of the main character in the movie *Black Widow* (2021) were examined to identify and analyze the use of deixis. The data source of this research was the script of the movie *Black Widow* (2021). The data consisted of utterances containing types of deixis used by the main character. In this study, observation was used as the main technique for data collection. Furthermore, a descriptive qualitative method was applied to analyze the data, focusing on identifying and interpreting the use of deixis in the main character's utterances.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

1) Types of Deixis

Based on the research, five types of deixis were found by the main characters in the *Black Widow* (2021) movie. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 4.1 Types of Deixis Used by the Main Character in the Movie Black Widow (2021)

No	Types of Deixis Found in the <i>Black Widow (2021) Movie</i>	Number
1.	Person Deixis	287
2.	Spatial Deixis	34
3.	Temporal Deixis	27
4.	Social Deixis	16
5.	Discourse Deixis	45
Total		409

Based on the table, five types of deixis were identified as used by the main character in the movie *Black Widow* (2021). The most prominent category was person deixis, occurring in 287 data, highlighting its crucial role in character development and personal reference. This was followed by discourse deixis as the second most common type, which occurred in 45 data. Spatial deixis ranked third with 34 data, while temporal deixis appeared in 27 data. Social deixis was the least frequent type, occurring in only 16 data. These findings indicate that the main character in the movie *Black Widow* (2021) employs all five types of deixis, namely person, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixis.

2) Function of Deixis

The functions of deixis in the movie *Black Widow* (2021) serve to structure the narrative and enhance emotional connections. Person deixis functions to clarify the roles of participants and their relationships with others. For the first person, the singular forms consist of “I,” “me,” “my,” and “myself.” Each of these forms has a different function: “I” functions as a subject personal pronoun in an utterance, “me” is used as an object personal pronoun, “my” indicates possession, and “myself” is used as a reflexive pronoun. In the plural form, person deixis includes “we,” “us,” and “our.” In this case, “we” is used as the subject personal pronoun in an utterance, “us” as the object personal pronoun in an utterance, “our” shows possession before a noun. Next, the 2nd person pronouns include “you,” “your,” “yours,” and “yourself.” The pronoun “you” can be used as both a subject and an object, “your” functions as a possessive adjective, “yours” as a possessive pronoun, and “yourself” as a reflexive pronoun. Then, 3rd person pronouns include “he,” “she,” “him,” “her,” “his,” “they,” “them,”.

These pronouns serve as subjects, objects, possessive adjectives, and possessive pronouns.

Second, spatial deixis functions to indicate the location of something that is close to or far from the speaker. The spatial deixis found in the movie consists of proximal and distal terms, each of which has a different function. Proximal terms designate locations that are near the speaker or addressee, while distal terms designate locations that are far from the speaker or from both the speaker and the addressee. In the movie, proximal terms are represented by words such as “*here*” and “*this*,” whereas distal terms are represented by words such as “*there*” and “*that*.” The main character uses this type of deixis to indicate location relative to the position of participants in the speech event.

Third, temporal deixis serves to show when an event occurs relative to the time of speaking. Temporal deixis explains when events happen by using time references that show the present or the past, helping the audience follow the story and understand memories and consequences. Overall, temporal deixis functions to organize and move the timeline.

Fourth, social deixis reveals the dynamics between characters through titles, forms of address, or honorifics, reflecting social hierarchy or familiarity. For example, the use of words such as “*mom*”, “*daddy*”, and “*sister*” shows familiarity and emotional closeness among the characters, indicating family bonds and the degree of respect or affection expressed in their interactions.

Last, discourse deixis connects parts of the dialogue by pointing to ideas or moments already mentioned, helping the conversation flow smoothly. Discourse deixis enhances coherence, with expressions such as “*this*”, “*that*” and “*it*” linking parts of the discourse and guiding the listener's attention.

3) Kinds of Deictic Usage

The classification of deictic usage in this study is based on Levinson's (1983) theory. According to Levinson, deictic usage can be categorized into two types: gestural usage and symbolic usage. The findings of this study show that both types of deictic usage are employed by the main character in the movie *Black Widow* (2021).

1. Gestural usage

Gestural usage refers to deictic expressions whose interpretation depends on accompanying physical gestures or movements. In the movie *Black Widow* (2021), gestural usage occurs when the meaning of a deictic expression becomes clear through visible actions performed by the speaker. For example: “Then why did you save this?”, “This” is classified as gestural usage because its reference is clarified through a physical gesture, namely holding the photo album while speaking.

2. Symbolic usage

Symbolic usage refers to deictic expressions that are interpreted through shared situational knowledge without relying on physical gestures. In this study, symbolic usage is the most dominant kind of deictic usage found in the movie, indicating that most deictic expressions are understood through linguistic and contextual information. For example : I don't wanna go back there. The word "there" is classified as symbolic usage because its reference is understood through shared contextual knowledge without any accompanying physical gesture. The meaning of "there" is understood through shared situational knowledge between the speaker and the listener, referring to a place that is already known from the previous conversational context.

Based on the analysis, two kinds of deictic usage were identified in the data, namely gestural usage and symbolic usage. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 4.2 Kinds of Deictic Usage Used by the Main Character in the Movie Black Widow (2021)

No	Kinds of Deictic Usage	Number
1	Gestural Usage	30
2	Symbolic Usage	379

Based on the table, two kinds of deictic usage were identified as used by the main character in the *Black Widow* (2021) movie, namely gestural usage and symbolic usage. Symbolic usage occurred 379 times, making it the most frequently used type, while gestural usage appeared only 30 times. This shows that the main character relied more on linguistic context than physical gestures to express meaning in the dialogue.

2. Discussion

The discussion of this study focuses on the types of deixis, their functions, and the kinds of deictic usage found in the utterances of the main character in the movie *Black Widow* (2021). The findings demonstrate that deixis plays a significant role in shaping character interaction, clarifying meaning, and supporting narrative development throughout the movie.

Regarding the types of deixis, the results show that five types proposed by Cruse (2000) were used by the main character. Among these types, person deixis was the most dominant, occurring 287 times. The high frequency of person deixis indicates that the main character frequently referred to herself and other participants in the interaction. This dominance can be explained by the nature of movie dialogue, which relies heavily on interpersonal communication to express emotions, intentions, and relationships. By using person deixis, the dialogue

becomes concise while maintaining clarity and coherence. This finding is consistent with previous studies, such as Pratiwi et al. (2025) in *The Greatest Showman* and Muafiq (2023) in *Eternals* (2021), which also identified person deixis as the most dominant type in the movie. These similarities suggest that person deixis commonly dominates spoken discourse in movies because it directly reflects character interaction and personal relationships. Discourse deixis was the second most frequent type, occurring 45 times. This type of deixis was used to refer to parts of the dialogue or ideas that had been mentioned earlier, helping to maintain coherence and continuity in conversations. The use of discourse deixis allowed the main character to guide the listener's attention and avoid unnecessary repetition, particularly in complex or fast-paced scenes. Spatial deixis appeared 34 times and functioned to indicate locations relative to the speaker. This type of deixis helped ground the characters within specific settings, enhancing the realism of the story. Temporal deixis ranked fourth with 27 occurrences and was mainly used to situate events in relation to the moment of speaking. Through temporal expressions, the audience could follow shifts between past experiences, present actions, and future plans, which is especially important in a movie that involves flashbacks and strategic planning. Social deixis was the least frequent type, occurring only 16 times. This low frequency reflects the fact that social hierarchy or formal status is not strongly emphasized in the movie, which mainly focuses on personal and familial relationships. This finding aligns with Muafiq, (2023) study, which also reported a low occurrence of social deixis due to minimal emphasis on social status in the narrative.

In terms of function, the findings reveal that deixis in *Black Widow* (2021) functions not only as a linguistic tool but also as a narrative device that supports character interaction and story development. Person deixis plays a crucial role in clarifying participant roles by distinguishing speakers, addressees, and others involved in the interaction. The use of personal pronouns allows the audience to easily identify relationships and emotional connections between characters. This aligned with the results of the study conducted by Mawadah, (2022) in *Pride and Prejudice* movie, who found that the function of person deixis also referred to the subject pronoun, object pronoun, possessive pronoun, possessive adjective. Spatial deixis functions to indicate location relative to the speaker or addressee, helping the audience visualize where interactions take place. Temporal deixis anchors events in time and supports the progression of the plot by highlighting past events, present actions, and future plans. Social deixis functions to reveal emotional closeness and familial bonds through relational terms such as mom, daddy, and sister. In this movie, only relational social deixis was found, while absolute social deixis was absent, as the interactions focus more on family relationships than formal social hierarchy. Discourse deixis functions to maintain coherence by linking parts of the dialogue. The frequent use of anaphoric discourse deixis shows that the main character often referred back to previously mentioned information, allowing the dialogue to remain clear and efficient during extended conversations.

Concerning the kinds of deictic usage, the findings indicate that symbolic usage was more dominant than gestural usage. Symbolic usage occurred 379

times, while gestural usage appeared only 30 times. This dominance suggests that the main character relied more on shared contextual knowledge rather than physical gestures when using deictic expressions. According to Levinson (1983), symbolic deixis can be interpreted through knowledge of the speech context, such as time, place, and participant roles, without the need for body movements. This pattern is typical in movie discourse, where meaning is primarily conveyed through dialogue supported by narrative context. This finding is consistent with previous studies by Kartikasari et al., (2023) and Ishak, (2023), which also reported that symbolic usage was more frequent than gestural usage in speech and movie data. Gestural usage, which depends on physical movements such as pointing or gaze direction, appeared mainly in action scenes or situations requiring immediate reference. However, because *Black Widow* emphasizes dialogue-driven interaction and character development, the use of gestural deixis was relatively limited.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

There are five types of deixis used by the main character in the *Black Widow* (2021) movie, namely person, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixis. Person deixis functions to clarify the role of participants. The functions of person deixis also refer to the subject pronoun, object pronoun, possessive pronoun, possessive adjective and reflective pronoun. Spatial deixis functions to indicate location relative to the speaker in the movie. Temporal deixis to show when an event occurs relative to the time of speaking. Social deixis reveals social relationships among characters. Last, in discourse deixis, there are two main functions: anaphoric deixis and cataphoric deixis. Anaphoric referring back to something previously mentioned. Cataphoric referring to something will be mentioned.

In terms of deictic usage, two kinds were identified: symbolic usage and gestural usage. Symbolic usage was the most dominant, with 379 occurrences, indicating that deixis in the movie was mostly interpreted through shared contextual knowledge without relying on physical gestures. Gestural usage occurred 30 times and involved the use of body movements or physical actions to support meaning. Overall, the findings indicate that the main character used five types and functions of deixis to support clear communication and strengthen the narrative in the *Black Widow* (2021) movie.

Before concluding the study, it is important to present several suggestions that may be useful for future research and the development of similar studies in pragmatics. This research focused on analyzing the types of deixis, the functions of deixis, and the kinds of deictic usage used by the main character in the movie *Black Widow* (2021). However, the analysis of deixis should not be limited to a single movie or one main character. Therefore, future research is encouraged to examine deixis in different movies, genres, or characters, as well as to compare the use of deixis between main and supporting characters or across movie genres in order to identify similarities and differences in deictic patterns. In addition, future studies may apply different pragmatic or linguistic theories or focus on

specific types or functions of deixis to provide a deeper understanding of how deixis contributes to meaning and interaction in cinematic dialogue.



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