

---

---

## EXPLORING DEICTIC EXPRESSIONS IN TROYE SIVAN'S LYRICS

Bahagia Halomoan Silitonga<sup>1</sup>, Milisi Sembiring<sup>2</sup>, Pahotan Sinaga<sup>3</sup>

Universitas Methodist Indonesia<sup>1</sup>, Universitas Methodist Indonesia<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Methodist Indonesia<sup>3</sup>

[bahagiasilitonga93@gmail.com](mailto:bahagiasilitonga93@gmail.com)

Abstract	Article Information
<p><i>This research is purposed to find the types and functions of deixis based on Finegan's theory. This study used a descriptive qualitative method approach. The data consisted of some selected songs by Troye Sivan. In collecting the data, the writer searched the song lyrics, downloaded the song lyrics, selected the song lyrics, examined the song lyrics, and classified deixis which is used in the song lyrics based on the types. In analyzing the data, the writer read the data more seriously, tabulated the frequency of each type of deixis, analyzed the data, and drew conclusions. The result of this research indicates there are 2 types and functions of deixis used in Some Selected Song Lyrics by Troye Sivan. There are personal deixis and temporal deixis. There are 373 data found. The first is personal deixis, namely: I (128), me (45), we (28), us (3), our (3), you (106), your (16), yours (12), they (1), him (1), it (17). The second is temporal deixis, namely: this moment forever (1), today (1), now (3), as the days fly by (1), the night before (1), next day (1), someday (1), for the weekend (1). Personal deixis was the most dominant type specifically I (128) data.</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Functions of deixis, Song Lyrics, Types of deixis, Troye Sivan</p>	<p><i>Received:</i> Sept 12, 2024</p> <p><i>Revised:</i> Sept 15, 2024</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> Sept 17, 2024</p>

### INTRODUCTION

Language is a complex system of sounds and words utilized by individuals to articulate their ideas, opinions, emotions, suggestions, desires, and social interactions through both spoken and written modes of communication. According to Finegan (2008), language is an idea or thought that is transferred to one another through communication. Moreover, Chaer (2007), language is a system of arbitrary sound symbols humans use for communication and self-identification. This system enables individuals to convey meaning through speech and interact with others in their social and cultural contexts. Language and linguistics are closely

related, as linguistics is the scientific study of language. One of the branches is pragmatics which studies how people use language in context to achieve their communicative goals.

Pragmatics is a field of linguistics that examines how meaning is conveyed through communication between speakers (or writers) and listeners (or readers) (Yule, 1996). In a song, the writer communicates with the listener through the lyrics, conveying a message or meaning. However, misunderstandings can occur due to differences in language interpretation. The study of pragmatics encompasses several aspects, one of them is deixis. The word deixis comes from the Greek adjective *deiktikos* meaning 'pointing, indicative.' Finegan stated, "deixis is the marking of the orientation or position of entities and events with respect to certain points of reference" (2008).

Sitorus Novita (2022) conducted a study entitled "Deixis in Forever My Girl Script." This research aims to find out the types and functions of deixis using Finegan's theory (2008). The method is descriptive qualitative research based on Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The findings showed that there were 1258 data found. The writer also found that the functions of deixis were only analyzed based on who, where, when, and also the situation of the utterance. The writer found that the words *these* and *that*, which are usually used in spatial deixis, could also be used in personal deixis. The study is focused on the types and functions of deixis, the difference is the object of the study.

Sitorus Novita used the script from a film entitled *Forever My Girl* while this study was from some selected song lyrics by Troye Sivan. The reason that the writer chose Troye Sivan's Selected Songs is that he is a recognized, influential songwriter and one of his favorite singers. As a fan of Sivan's work, the writer is motivated by a genuine interest in uncovering the nuances of language use in his songs, recognizing the power of his truthful and authentic songwriting style to convey strong emotions and messages. Additionally, the research honors Sivan's impact on the music industry by delving into the linguistic intricacies that contribute to the enduring appeal of his songs, ultimately aiming to deepen the understanding of language in creative expressions and its role in shaping cultural experiences.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Pragmatics**

According to Finegan (2008), pragmatics is a field within linguistics concerned with how information is organized in language. Yule (1996) defines pragmatics as the branch of linguistics that focuses on the interpretation of meaning conveyed by a speaker or writer and comprehended by a listener or reader. The analysis of pragmatics primarily revolves around understanding what speakers intend to convey through their utterances rather than simply the literal meaning of the words or phrases they use.

### **Deixis**

The word deixis comes from the Greek adjective *deiktikos* meaning 'pointing, indicative.' Finegan stated, "deixis is the marking of the orientation or position of entities and events with respect to certain points of reference" (2008, p. 193). Levinson also stated, "The

essential deixis concerns the ways in which languages encode or grammaticalize features of the context of utterance or speech event, and thus also concern ways depends on the analysis of that context of utterance." (1983, p.54). Levinson notes that deixis is the most apparent way in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in language structures.

## **A. Types of Deixis**

According to Finegan (2008: 193), there are three types of deixis personal deixis, temporal deixis, and spatial deixis.

### **1. Personal Deixis**

Finegan (2008: 193) states that person deixis generally conveys person pronouns, including I, you, we, they, he, she, and it. Personal deixis has 3 parts: First, first-person pronouns refer to the speaker or a group of people including the speaker. There are the pronouns I and we. The second is the second-person pronoun, which refers to the addressee, namely you, and the third is the third-person pronouns, which refer to objects, people, or other things that are talked about or mentioned in the conversation or context that do not include the speaker and the listener. There are they, he, she, and it.

No	first-person pronoun	second-person pronoun	third-person pronoun
Singular	I	you	he, she, it
Possessive	mine	yours	his, hers, its
Objective	me	you	him, her, it
Plural	we	you	they
Possessive	ours	yours	theirs
Objective	us	you	them

### **2. Temporal Deixis**

Finegan (2008: 195) says that temporal deixis is the orientation or the position of reference of actions and events in time. Finegan (2008: 196) further adds that the most basic point of reference for the tense is the time at which the sentence is spoken.

### **3. Spatial Deixis**

According to Finegan (2008: 195), spatial deixis is an orientation or position inside of a reference frame for a language expression. Finegan (2008: 195) asserts that the most frequently used categories of words to express spatial deixis are demonstrative (this and that) and adverbs (here and there).

## **B. Functions Of Deixis**

According to Finegan 2008, there are 3 functions of deixis, namely: personal deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis.

### **1. Personal Deixis**

The functions of deixis refer to the thing or the person in the utterance. Personal deixis consists of three parts: first-person deixis, second-person deixis, and third-person deixis. First-person deixis refers to the speaker of the utterance. Second-person deixis refers to the addressee of the utterance. And the third person deixis refers to someone or something not directly involved in the utterance.

### **2. Temporal Deixis**

The function of temporal deixis refers to the time of speaking and helps us understand when events occur relative to that moment (present, past, future).

### **3. Spatial deixis**

The function of spatial deixis refers to the location of the speaker. It can be close or far from the speaker. It encompasses how we use language to describe the position of objects and events concerning various reference points, including the speaker, listener, and the environment.

### **4. Song Lyric**

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines a song as a piece of music that sets a short poem or some verses to music and is intended to be sung with distinct and fixed pitches and patterns using sound and silence and a variety of forms that often include the repetition of sections. Silvian B, William Bruto, and James Joyce (2006: 697) define a lyric as a song accompanied by a lyre, expressing a single emotion, such as joy or sorrow. It can be concluded that a song lyric is the set of words or text that compose a song and are sung by the performer. It is a vital element of a song as it adds meaning and emotion to the music. Lyrics can cover a wide range of topics such as love, life, and friendship, and serve to convey the message or story that the songwriter intends to share. Without lyrics, a song would merely be instrumental.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the writer used descriptive qualitative research methods to analyze the types and functions of deixis contained in some selected song lyrics by Troye Sivan. According to Moleong (2009), qualitative research is research in which the data is in the form of written or oral words. Descriptive serves to describe or analogy something and it deals with the meaning of the thing and the view of meaning is associated (Moleong, 2009).

It can be concluded that descriptive qualitative research is a systematic application of the problems and the data that can be oral or written. Therefore, the writer aims to identify and find out the types and functions of Deixis in Some Selected Song Lyrics by Troye Sivan. In this study, the writer used 5 different albums namely: Angel Baby, Blue Neighbourhood, In A Dream, Bloom, and Love Simon the songs of Troye Sivan as the data source, and 10 song lyrics: Angel Baby, Fools, Take Yourself Home, Strawberry and Cigarettes, Youth, The

Good Side, Postcard, What a heavenly to die, Animal, and Swimming Pools from Toyes Sivan as the data. Where, in collecting the data, the writer searched the song lyrics, downloaded the song lyrics, selected the song lyrics, examined the song lyrics, and classified deixis which is used in the song lyrics based on the types. In analyzing the data, the writer read the data more seriously, tabulated the frequency of each type of deixis, analyzed the data, and drew conclusions.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Types of Deixis**

#### **1. Personal Deixis**

##### **a. First-person deixis**

*I just wanna live in this moment forever*

(Angel Baby, lines 18-19)

The word *I* is a personal deixis that refers to the first-person pronoun. *I* refer to the singer who speaks the lyrics of the song. *I* show that the singer desires to perpetually reside in the present moment, transcending the boundaries of time. The use of *I* emphasizes the singer's hope to live in the moment forever and certainly enjoy the experience as well as the moment.

*Until you gave up so we could be together*

(Angel Baby, lines 24-25)

The word *we* is a personal deixis that refers to the first-person plural pronoun. This pronoun refers to both the singer and the addressee in the song lyrics. The word *we* emphasize is that the singer desires to be together with her when she gives up. So, it is like the idea of building a deep bond between the two of them.

##### **b. Second-person deixis**

*You came out the blue on a rainy night, no lie*

(Angel Baby, lines 14-15)

The word *you* is a personal deixis that refers to the second-person pronoun. *you* refer to someone who is addressed in the song. The lyric contains a metaphor that clearly depicts the unexpected meeting between them. It was a very emotional moment because the presence of that person would lead him to a new life. The person who met him that night was like a light that would light up his life.

*Until you gave up heaven so we could be together*

(Angel Baby, lines 24-25)

The word *you* is a personal deixis that refers to the second-person pronoun. *you* refer to the listener or refer to someone who is addressed in the song. The lyric depicts a powerful metaphor that captures the sacrifices the singer makes for his beloved. This will lead to a fulfilling relationship and a feeling of security. And to be together forever.

**c. Third-person deixis**

What if we let them fall behind and *they're* never found?

(Youth, lines 8-9)

The word *they* is a personal deixis that is used in the third-person plural pronouns. They refer to people other than the speaker and the person they are speaking with. This sentence expresses something that they want to forget, once they forget it, it will never be found. It can refer to a moment, or an experience in the past.

You never picked *it* up

(Postcard, line 3)

The word *it* is a personal deixis that refers to the third-person pronoun. It refers to objects, people, or other things that are talked about or mentioned in the conversation or context that do not include the speaker and the listener. In the lyric, it refers to the postcard that was mentioned by the singer in the previous line.

**d. Temporal Deixis**

Runaway *now* and forevermore

(Youth, line 17)

*Now* is included in the temporal deixis. This deictic phrase uses the present tense to show that they want to run away now and forever. This escape could be a form of escapism, a way for the couple to temporarily avoid the problems or troubles they're facing.

*Next day*, nothin' on my phone

(Strawberries and Cigarettes, line 30)

*Next day* is included in the temporal deixis, which includes the future tense. The lyrics express the meaning of not seeing or finding your loved one the next day. But the singer says that he will be able to find his partner and come back to his arms.

**Functions of Deixis**

**1. Personal Deixis**

**a. First-person deixis**

*I* need a lover to keep me sane

(Angel Baby, line 1)

I function as the first-person singular pronoun. The lyric conveys that the singer desperately desires or seeks a lover's presence to maintain mental stability. Without the lover's presence, his life is like a missing piece. The one who can bring happiness and unwavering support, making him feel truly whole.

Until you gave up so *we* could be together

(Angel Baby, lines 24-25)

The word *we* function as the first-person plural pronoun. This pronoun refers to both the singer and the addressee in the song lyrics. The use of *we* highlights that the singer wants to be with her lover. So, it's like the idea of building a deep bond between the two of them. Whatever he would do to show how much the singer loves her lover. Until one moment the lover sees all the sacrifices, and commitment and is willing to be with him through the ups and downs forever.

**b. Second-person deixis**

You came out the blue on a rainy night, no lie

(Angel Baby, lines 14-15)

The word *you* function as the second-person pronoun. *you* refer to someone who is addressed in the song. The lyric clearly describes an unexpected encounter between two people. It is a very emotional moment, and the presence of this person will lead the singer to a new life. The person he met that night is like a light that will illuminate his life, and there will be no stain or speck to obscure that light. Because her lover is sincere and pure, there is no deception.

Until you gave up heaven so *we* could be together

(Angel Baby, lines 24-25)

The word *you* function as the second-person pronoun. *you* refer to someone who is addressed in the song. The lyric highlights a powerful metaphor that describes the sacrifices the singer makes for his lover. This will lead to a fulfilling relationship and a sense of security. And to be together forever. Perhaps the lover has not yet accepted or seen his sacrifice and has not even been able to accept the differences between the two parties, so there is still doubt and uncertainty. So, the singer must be willing to sacrifice to prove that he will accept and remain faithful until his lover can soften her feelings.

**c. Third-person deixis**

What if we let them fall behind and they're never found?

(Youth, lines 8-9)

The word *they* function as the personal deixis used in the third-person plural pronouns. They refer to people other than the speaker and the person they

are speaking with. In the lyrics, "they" refers to various things that are weighing on the singer's mind, such as doubts, expectations, fears, or problems they've been facing lately. The lyrics express the desire to forget these things, believing that once forgotten, they will never resurface. This could be referring to a specific moment or experience from their past that they wish to erase and never have to revisit.

You never picked it up

(Postcard, line 3)

The word *it* functions as the personal deixis that refers to the third-person pronoun. It refers to objects, people, or other things that are talked about or mentioned in the conversation or context that do not include the speaker and the listener. In the lyrics, it most likely refers to the postcard mentioned earlier by the singer. The postcard may contain pictures of the couple from happier times. The singer intends to give this memento to their lover, but sadly, the lover never claims it.

#### **d. Temporal Deixis**

Runaway now and forevermore

(Youth, line 17)

Now functions as the temporal deixis that belongs to the present time. The word now shows that they want to run away now and forever. This escape could be a form of escapism, a way for the couple to temporarily avoid the problems or troubles they're facing.

*Next day*, nothin' on my phone

(Strawberries and Cigarettes, line 30)

Next day functions as the temporal deixis that belongs to the future tense. The lyrics express the meaning of not seeing or finding your loved one the next day. It depicts that their relationship is lost and faded. It's as if his loved one has left him alone with a deep sense of sadness and grief. Yet the singer still holds out a glimmer of hope that he will be able to find his partner and return to his arms.

This thesis examined the use of deixis in Some Selected Song Lyrics by Troye Sivan, drawing on the theory proposed by Finegan (2008). By analyzing a selection of his songs, the study identified a total of 373 data of deixis both for both the types and the functions of deixis. The analysis revealed only two types of deixis: personal and temporal. This is in contrast to the theory of Finegan (2008) which suggests the presence of three types (personal, temporal, and spatial deixis).



After analyzing temporal deixis in the ten songs, the writer realized that some temporal deixis are partial and lack specific context. Partial temporal deixis refers to deictic expressions that do not specify a clear time frame. For example, the word "forever" can be considered a partial temporal deixis because it does not specify a specific duration.

For example: Started giving up on the word "forever" (Ooh, forever)

Although the word "forever" usually conveys a concept beyond a certain period of time, in the context of this song, "forever" can be considered a type of temporal deixis.

Why is this? While deictic expressions traditionally point to a specific time relative to the utterance (e.g., today or yesterday) they can sometimes become more abstract in certain contexts.

"Forever" in this context points to an indefinite future: Here, the singer is using "forever" to express their desire to extend the present moment of happiness indefinitely. Although it is not a specific time frame, it still points to a future state relative to the present moment of speaking.

Contrast with the past: The lyrics state that they are "starting to give up on the word 'forever'," which highlights a shift in perspective. The contrast between giving up on the word "forever" in the past and now wanting to live in "this moment forever" reinforces the temporal reference of "forever" in the context of the song.

Therefore, although not a typical deictic expression due to its lack of inherent specificity, "forever" in this song can be considered a deictic expression that points to an indefinite future state relative to the speaker's current speech.

The analysis of ten selected Troye Sivan songs did not identify any instances of spatial deixis. This suggests that Sivan's lyrics may focus less on spatial deixis compared to personal and temporal deixis. Further research might provide a more comprehensive picture. Analyzing a larger sample of his work might reveal the presence of spatial deixis or provide insights into the frequency of different deixis types and functions. Additionally, comparing Sivan's use of deixis with other artists might reveal stylistic variations within a genre or across genres altogether. It's important to remember that this study focused on a selection of Sivan's songs. Examining his other published material could offer valuable insights and contribute to a richer understanding of his use of deixis in songwriting.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research concerns the types and functions of deixis found in *Some Selected Song Lyrics* by Troye Sivan. The writer identifies the types and functions of deixis using Finegan's theory (2008). Thus, the writer finds the data and concludes that there are two types and two functions of deixis found in *Some Selected Song Lyrics* by Troye Sivan. Based on the data analysis, the writer concludes that: There are 373 data found for both the types and functions. The first is personal deixis, namely: I (128), me (45), we (28), us (3), our (3), you (106), your (16), yours (12), they (1), him (1), it (17). The second is temporal deixis, namely: this moment

forever (1), today (1), now (3), as the days fly by (1), the night before (1), next day (1), someday (1), for the weekend (1). Personal deixis is the most dominant type specifically I (128) data. The use of deixis found in some selected song lyrics by Troye Sivan is mostly based on his life experiences. Based on the findings above, the writer found and realized that some temporal deixis are partial and lack specific context. Partial temporal deixis refers to deictic expressions that do not specify a clear time frame.

## REFERENCES

- Alan, C. (2000). *Meaning in Language An Introduction to Semantics and Phonetics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Britannica*. (2024, January Thursday). Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/>: <https://www.britannica.com/search?query=song+is>
- Chaer, A. (2007). *Tata Bahasa Praktis Indonesia*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Collar, M. (2024, January Thursday). *ALLMUSIC*. Retrieved from [troye-sivanmn0003271457/biography: https://www.allmusic.com/artist/troye-sivanmn0003271457/biography](https://www.allmusic.com/artist/troye-sivanmn0003271457/biography)
- Cook, G. (1989). *Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Finegan, E. (2008). *Language Its Structure and Use (3rd ed.)*. USA: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999.
- Finegan, E. (2008). *Language Its Structure and Use (5th ed.)*. In E. Finegan, *Language Its Structure and Use (5th ed.)*. USA: Wardsworth.
- Fromkin Victoria, R. R. (1998). *An Introduction to Language (Sixth edition)*.
- Grundy, P. (2000). *Doing Pragmatics*. London: Hodder Arnold Publication.
- Jack C Richards, R. S. (2002). *Long Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. London: Pearson Education Limited, 2002.
- L, M. J. (1983). *Pragmatics: An Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lyons, J. (2002). *Language and Linguistics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Maulidya, A. (2023). Analisis Tindak Tutur Ilokusi Direktif Dalam Film Tune In For Love. *UNAS*, 1 Chapter 2.
- Moleong, L. J. (2009). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Oxford Learners Dictionaries*. (2024, January Thursday). Retrieved from <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/song?=song>

*Prologue: Journal on Language and Literature Vol. 10 No. 2 (2024)*

Renkema, J. (1993). *Discourse Studies: An Introductory Textbook*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Saeed, J. I. (2003). *Semantics 2nd Edition*. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing.

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