

## **SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF DEIXIS IN THE FILM ORION AND THE DARK**

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### **Abstract**

This research explores the use of deixis in the film Orion and the Dark. It aims to identify the types of deixis employed in the film and determine which category appears most frequently. The study is based on Levinson's framework, which classifies deixis into five categories: person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. A descriptive qualitative method was used in conducting this study. The data were collected by watching the film, closely examining the dialogues, identifying expressions containing deixis, grouping them according to Levinson's theory, and interpreting the data descriptively. The results show that all five types of deixis occur in the film. Among them, person deixis is the most dominant with 2,347 occurrences. It is followed by time deixis with 373 occurrences, place deixis with 294 occurrences, discourse deixis with 289 occurrences, and social deixis with 182 occurrences. The high frequency of person deixis reflects the strong emphasis on interaction between characters, where speakers frequently refer to themselves and others during communication. Meanwhile, the other types of deixis appear less frequently and mainly serve to support the context of the dialogue, such as indicating time, location, discourse relations, and social interactions. In conclusion, deixis plays an essential role in shaping meaning and helping viewers interpret context, participants, and situational references within the film.

Keywords: Deixis, Film analysis, Semantics, Orion and the Dark, Descriptive qualitative study

### **Abstract**

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan deiksis dalam film Orion and the Dark. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis deiksis yang digunakan dalam film serta menentukan kategori yang paling sering muncul. Penelitian ini menggunakan kerangka teori Levinson yang membagi deiksis menjadi lima kategori, yaitu deiksis persona, deiksis tempat, deiksis waktu, deiksis wacana, dan deiksis sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan dengan cara menonton film, mengamati dialog secara cermat, mengidentifikasi ungkapan yang mengandung deiksis, mengelompokkan data berdasarkan teori Levinson, serta menganalisisnya secara deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa seluruh jenis deiksis ditemukan dalam film tersebut. Di antara kelima jenis tersebut, deiksis persona merupakan yang paling dominan dengan 2.347 kemunculan. Selanjutnya diikuti oleh deiksis waktu sebanyak 373, deiksis tempat 294, deiksis wacana 289, dan deiksis sosial 182. Tingginya penggunaan deiksis persona mencerminkan kuatnya interaksi antar tokoh, di mana penutur sering merujuk pada diri sendiri dan orang lain dalam percakapan. Sementara itu, jenis deiksis lainnya muncul lebih sedikit dan lebih berfungsi sebagai pendukung konteks percakapan, seperti menunjukkan waktu, tempat, hubungan wacana, dan

interaksi sosial. Kesimpulannya, deiksis memiliki peran penting dalam membangun makna serta membantu penonton memahami konteks, partisipan, dan situasi dalam film.  
Kata kunci: Deiksis, Analisis film, Semantik,, Orion and the Dark, Penelitian kualitatif deskriptif

## INTRODUCTION

Language has an essential function in human life as the main tool for communication and interaction among individuals. Through language, people are able to share information, convey thoughts, and build and maintain social relationships in everyday life. Furthermore, language also represents politeness, appropriate behaviour, and the cultural values of a community (Susanti, 2025). As social beings, humans naturally depend on interaction, cooperation, and companionship with others; therefore, communication is an inseparable part of human existence (Saputri, 2016). Communication is generally realized in two forms, namely spoken and written language. Spoken language refers to direct verbal interaction between speakers, while written language is used to express ideas through written symbols. In this regard, film can be viewed as one form of spoken discourse in which dialogue functions as the main medium for conveying messages, expressing ideas, and developing the storyline.

Films are mainly delivered through spoken expression. Barsham and Monahan (2010) define film as a narrative that is presented on screen with a specific pacing that affects how meaning is constructed and interpreted by the audience. This suggests that films combine visual and verbal elements in storytelling, which helps viewers engage with the narrative and understand characters, events, and situations more clearly and meaningfully.

In examining how meaning is produced in language use, semantics becomes one of the most important branches of linguistics. Semantics is concerned with the study of meaning in language, including how meaning is created, structured, and interpreted in linguistic expressions such as words, phrases, and sentences used in communication, including film dialogue. However, meaning in language is not determined solely by linguistic structure, but is also strongly shaped by context. One linguistic phenomenon that is closely associated with contextual meaning is deixis. Deixis refers to expressions whose interpretation depends heavily on the context in which they are used, including factors such as the speaker, listener, time, place, and social situation. Because of this contextual dependence, deixis plays a significant role in helping listeners or readers understand the intended meaning in communication, especially in spoken discourse such as film dialogue.

Levinson (1983, p. 54) states that one of the clearest ways in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in linguistic structure is through deixis. Deixis serves as a connection between linguistic expressions and their situational meanings, since interpretation is strongly influenced by contextual factors. Therefore, deixis cannot be properly understood without considering the context in which it occurs, making it one of the key concepts in pragmatics. The concept of deixis originates from the Ancient Greek word meaning “to point” or “to refer.” In general, deixis is used to indicate or refer to entities in both spoken and written language. It is a linguistic phenomenon in which certain expressions require contextual information in order to be correctly interpreted. Deictic expressions may refer to people, places, or time depending on the situation in which they are used. Rasyid (2017) further explains that deixis is one of the clearest ways to illustrate the relationship between language and context in linguistic structure, as it demonstrates how meaning is highly dependent on situational elements such as speaker, listener, time, and place. Therefore, deixis plays an important role in interpreting meaning in both spoken and written communication. In addition, Paundrianagari and Harida (2024) argue that analyzing deixis in discourse can help learners recognize how characters use language within specific contexts. This awareness shows that deixis does not only express spatial and temporal references, but also conveys emotional and relational meanings in communication, which are important for understanding real language use.

One of the films selected as the object of this study is *Orion and the Dark*. This film tells the story of a young boy named Orion who is often afraid of many things, especially the dark. One night, he is unexpectedly taken on a journey by a character known as “Dark,” who helps him realize that darkness is not something to be feared. Throughout the story, Orion engages in various interactions with different characters and experiences a series of events that contain meaningful dialogues. These conversations are rich in contextual expressions, making the film a suitable object for analyzing the use of deixis in natural communication.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method as described by Sugiyono (2020) to investigate the use of deixis in the film *Orion and the Dark*. It aimed to identify five categories of deixis proposed by Levinson, namely person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis. The data were collected through several systematic steps.

Initially, the researcher watched the film multiple times to thoroughly understand the plot and character interactions. Then, utterances containing deictic expressions were identified and recorded from the film's dialogues. After that, the data were classified into the five types of deixis based on Levinson's framework. Finally, the data were analyzed and interpreted descriptively to determine which type of deixis appeared most frequently in the film. The findings were presented in descriptive form and supported with tables to ensure the results were clear and systematically organized.

## **FINDING & DISCUSSION**

### **FINDING**

The analysis results are displayed in the table below, presenting the distribution of five deixis types in the film Orion and the Dark, namely person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. The table below summarizes how each type is classified and how frequently it occurs in the data.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Types of Deixis</b>	<b>Total</b>
1.	Person Deixis	2347
2.	Place Deixis	294
3.	Time Deixis	373
4.	Discourse Deixis	289
5.	Social Deixis	182

Table 1: The types of deixis found in the film Orion and The Dark

Based on the table, person deixis appears as the most frequent type in the film, with 2,347 instances. It is followed by time deixis with 373 occurrences, place deixis with 294, discourse deixis with 289, and social deixis with 182. The high number of person deixis suggests that the characters often refer to themselves and others during conversations. This is expected in dialogue-driven films, where interaction between characters plays a central role in communication. In contrast, the other types of deixis appear less often, although they still contribute important contextual information such as time, location, discourse references, and social relations. Overall, the results indicate that person deixis is the most frequently used type of deixis in the film compared to the other categories.

## DISCUSSION

Deixis plays an important role in the study of semantics because it helps in interpreting the meaning of utterances based on their context. The meaning of an utterance is not only determined by its linguistic structure, but also by external factors such as the speaker, the listener, time, place, and situation. Levinson (1983, pp. 68–94) classifies deixis into five types, namely person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis. In this study, each type of deixis is analysed based on the data found in the film *Orion and the Dark*. The analysis is conducted to examine how deixis is used in the characters' dialogues and how context influences meaning in communication.

### Person Deixis

Paundrianagari and Harida (2024) explain that person deixis is commonly divided into three types: first person (I), second person (you), and third person (he, she, it). It is used to refer to the participants involved in a speech situation, mainly the speaker and the listener. The first person refers to the speaker, the second person refers to the addressee, while the third person refers to others who are not directly involved in the conversation. In communication, the roles of speaker and listener can change depending on the interaction. In addition, the use of deixis is not only determined by grammatical rules but also by social context, such as levels of politeness, familiarity, and relationships between speakers. This is closely related to social deixis, which reflects social status and interpersonal relationships through language choice.

The use of person deixis can be observed in the film *Orion and the Dark* as follows:

- (1) KID #1: "We're so glad you are able to attend our ball."
- (2) ORION: (beat, then singing) "She's very funny. Ha ha ha ha."
- (3) ORION: "They have work in the morning. Can't I put myself in their shoes? "

### Place Deixis

According to Levinson (1983:79 in Lyons), place deixis refers to the way locations are identified in relation to the context of a speech event. The specification of location is important in communication because objects can generally be referred to in two ways, either by naming or describing them, or by indicating their spatial position. Similarly, Cruse (2000:320) explains

that spatial deixis is mainly expressed through locative adverbs such as “here” and “there,” as well as demonstratives like “this” and “that.” In English, the spatial deictic system is relatively simple, consisting of two main terms: proximal and distal. The proximal form “here” refers to a location that is close to the speaker, while “there” refers to a place that is relatively distant from the speaker. In addition, spatial deixis represents how space is perceived from the perspective of the participants in a speech event. In English, adverbs of place such as “here” and “there,” along with demonstrative pronouns like “this” and “that,” are commonly used. Words like “this” and “here” indicates proximity to the speaker or listener, while “that” and “there” are used to refer to entities that are further away from them.

The use of place deixis can be observed in the film Orion and the Dark as follows:

- (1) ORION: "Anyhow, I saw you sitting there by yourself and thought maybe you'd like some company"
- (2) ORION: "What is that?"
- (3) ORION: "I've seen all the Lars Von Trier movies. Dancer in the Dark. You forgot to mention that one."

### Time Deixis

Time deixis, also known as temporal deixis, refers to the expression of time in relation to the moment of speaking. According to Cruse (2000:321), temporal deixis is used to identify specific points or periods on the time line by taking the time of utterance as the reference point. In general, the time axis can be divided into three parts: before the utterance occurs, at the moment of utterance, and after the utterance takes place. The most fundamental temporal deictic expressions in English are “now” and “then.” In other words, temporal deixis is closely related to adverbs of time, as it reflects how time is viewed based on when a speech event occurs. In English, temporal deixis can be seen through various time indicators such as “now,” “soon,” “recently,” “then,” “yesterday,” and “this year.” It is also commonly reflected through the use of tense in sentences.

The use of time deixis can be observed in the film Orion and the Dark as follows:

- (1) MOTHER: (to father): "-- article in the Times today about climate change. Scientists say"

- (2) ORION: (quiet panic) "If I go with him, I won't get home till tomorrow night! Right?"
- (3) HYPATIA: "Your Parents are fine. I saw them yesterday. They're my grandma and Grandpa."

### Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis refers to the use of expressions within a sentence to point to parts of the surrounding discourse, including the utterance itself. It may also refer to a segment that will appear later in the conversation. In general, discourse deixis functions as a way to guide and organize meaning within an ongoing discourse by using specific linguistic markers. Common examples of discourse deictic expressions include words such as "but," "therefore," "so," "however," "well," "instead of," and "actually," among others. Discourse deixis is different from other types of deixis because it does not mainly refer to external context such as person, time, or place. Instead, it focuses on elements within the text or speech itself, as introduced by the speaker or writer. It connects different parts of discourse by linking earlier, current, or upcoming information within communication. According to Birner, discourse deixis emphasizes how parts of a text are structured and related to each other from the speaker's or writer's perspective. It helps show how a segment of discourse is positioned in relation to other parts, whether it refers to previous, current, or following information. In written texts, examples include terms such as "above," "below," "previous," "next," and "following," while in spoken language it is commonly expressed through words like "this" and "that."

The use of discourse deixis can be observed in the film Orion and the Dark as follows:

- (1) AMAYA: "It lets us wonder, to ponder the mystery of existence, to see ourselves as part of everything instead of separate. Some say that people are the mechanism by which the Universe looks at itself. When you think of it that way, maybe the fear goes away."
- (2) HYPATIA: "Yeah. Well, I'm glad to meet you. (confidentially) Actually, I think I might be dreaming."
- (3) HYPATIA: (re: map) "This is west. So, I think if we head past the sword swallower, we should spot a northern exit. If we can get to the Netherlands at the right time, we can hook onto this "

### Social Deixis

Social deixis does not primarily deal with the basic deictic categories of person, place, and time, but instead focuses on how language reflects social relationships among participants in communication. It describes how linguistic choices are influenced by social structure, including status, role, and level of familiarity between speakers. In this way, social deixis shows how individuals express their social positions and relationships through language use. Fillmore explains that social deixis refers to aspects of speech that represent social realities that exist during a speech event. In general, social deixis is divided into two main types, namely relational and absolute social deixis. Relational social deixis refers to expressions that indicate the social characteristics of a referent or the relationship between speaker and listener without making comparisons between social ranks. Examples of this type include words such as “mother,” “teacher,” “husband,” and “cousin,” which directly indicate interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, absolute social deixis refers to fixed forms of address that express respect or social status without comparing the social positions of participants. These are commonly realized through honorifics, formal titles, or specific address terms.

Levinson (1983, p. 89 in Fillmore) states that social deixis refers to aspects of language that reflect, construct, or are shaped by the social context in which a speech act takes place. It encodes the identities of participants, their social roles, and the relationships that exist between them or with other individuals being referred to. Social deixis is often expressed through polite forms of language, including honorific expressions, titles of address, informal names, and nicknames, depending on the level of formality, respect, or intimacy in interaction. Moreover, social deixis emphasizes differences in social roles among participants, especially in relation to status differences between speaker and addressee. It marks social relationships within linguistic expressions, either directly or indirectly, by referring to social roles in a particular speech situation. As stated by Rifqi (2026), social deixis in pragmatics illustrates how language use is influenced by social conditions within a speech event, where linguistic expressions are shaped by the speaker’s awareness of social status and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, social deixis demonstrates the strong connection between language use and social reality in communication.

The use of social deixis can be observed in the film *Orion and the Dark* as follows:

- (1) MOTHER ORION: "... Mr. And Mrs. Doodlebug Secondly, the book skews way Duck would never let anything too young for me. bad happen to any of their children..."

(2) ORION: (intimidated) "Yes, Ma'am."

(3) ORION: "Thanks, Dad. I just thought I heard something."

The results of the study are presented in a table that shows the distribution of the types of deixis in the film Orion and the Dark.

No.	Utterances	Types of Deixis	Meaning
1.	Orion: First of all, <b>I</b> am neither a doodlebug nor a duck.	Person Deixis	<b>"I"</b> is a form of person deixis referring to the speaker, Orion. It shows that he is referring to himself while stating that he is not a doodlebug or a duck.
2.	Orion: "I was afraid of storm drains before. Falling into one and never being able to get out is a concern. Of course, it's much worse if <b>there's</b> an evil clown down there."	Place Deixis	<b>"There"</b> is a place deixis referring to a location away from the speaker, in this case the storm drain area. Its meaning depends on the context of the situation being described.
3.	Orion: "Say, I was thinking, can I stay with you guys <b>tonight?</b> "	Time Deixis	<b>"Tonight"</b> is a time deixis that refers to the evening of the current day when Orion is speaking. Its meaning depends on the time of the utterance.
4.	Orion: "Johnny doesn't know my plan, <b>but</b> he seems like a nice person, <b>so</b> maybe it'd work."	Discourse Deixis	<b>"But"</b> and <b>"so"</b> are discourse deixis that function to connect ideas within the sentence. <b>"But"</b> shows contrast between two statements, while <b>"so"</b> indicates a result or conclusion. Their meanings depend on how

		the ideas are related in the discourse.
5.	Orion: “Mrs. Spinoza usually calls on kids who don’t raise their hands.”  Social Deixis	“Mrs. Spinoza” functions as social deixis that indicates a respectful social title referring to a teacher, showing her social role and status in the interaction.

Table 2: Classification and Examples of Deixis in Orion and the Dark

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, it can be inferred that the film Orion and the Dark contain all five categories of deixis introduced by Stephen C. Levinson, including person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. The analysis reveals that person deixis is the most frequently used type because the characters often mention themselves and others during communication. This indicates that the film strongly emphasizes interaction among characters throughout the story. Furthermore, the other forms of deixis also support the development of meaning within the dialogues. Place deixis helps indicate location, time deixis refers to temporal information, discourse deixis links parts of the conversation, and social deixis reflects the social relationships and levels of politeness between speakers. Overall, deixis has an essential function in helping the audience understand the context, meaning, and situations presented in the film. The study also shows that language interpretation in conversations cannot be separated from the context in which the utterances occur.

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