

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF DEIXIS IN SONG LYRICS “ESPRESSO” BY SABRINA CARPENTER

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Received: 28/01/2026

Accepted: 03/03/2026

Publication: 01/04/2026

Abstract

Pragmatics studies how meaning is understood in context, and deixis is an important part of it because it connects language with person, time, place, discourse, and social relationships. Song lyrics contain many context dependent expressions, so they are suitable for pragmatic analysis. This study aims to identify the types of deixis and explain their contextual meanings in the song “Espresso” by Sabrina Carpenter. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The data were taken from the song lyrics and consisted of words, phrases, and sentences that contain deixis expressions. The analysis was based on the theories of Yule (1996) and Levinson (1983), who classify deixis into person, time, place, social, and discourse deixis. The results show that all five types of deixis appear in the song. Person deixis is the most dominant type, especially the use of *I* and *you*, which shows interaction between the singer and the addressee and highlights the singer’s identity. Time deixis explains when events happen, while place deixis describes movement and direction that support the lively tone of the lyrics. Social deixis shows closeness through terms of address, and discourse deixis connects ideas in the lyrics to make the message coherent. These findings show that deixis in song lyrics does not only function as reference but also expresses identity, emotions, and interpersonal relationships. This study helps readers understand how contextual meaning is built in popular song lyrics from a pragmatic perspective and shows the role of language in shaping meaning in music.

Keywords— Deixis, Espresso, Pragmatic, Sabrina Carpenter

Introduction

Linguistics provides a systematic framework for understanding how language functions as a complex system of communication and meaning. It examines various components of language, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, which explain how words and sentences are formed and interpreted in different contexts (Indriani et al., 2023). Through the study of linguistics, individuals can better understand how language reflects human thoughts, conveys meaning, and facilitates social interaction. In addition, linguistic knowledge contributes to the development of fundamental language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Ramadhan & Riansyah, 2025).

Among the branches of linguistics, pragmatics focuses on how meaning is interpreted within context rather than just from the literal meaning of words. Pragmatics examines how speakers convey literal meanings and how listeners interpret messages based on situational context and shared knowledge (Maisaroh et al., 2024). This field highlights that communication involves more than grammatical structure because meaning is also influenced by the speaker’s intention, the relationship between participants, and the surrounding situation. Pragmatic analysis

includes several important concepts such as presupposition, speech acts, implicature, and deixis, which explain how meaning is constructed in real communication situations (Yunmar et al., 2024).

One important concept in pragmatics is deixis. Deixis refers to linguistic expressions whose interpretation depends on the context of the utterance. According to Risanty et al. (2021), deixis can be categorized into five types: person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis. Person deixis refers to participants involved in communication, place deixis indicates location, and time deixis refers to temporal references. Meanwhile, discourse deixis refers to parts of the discourse itself, and social deixis reflects social relationships or status between speakers and listeners. These deixis expressions help listeners or readers interpret meaning accurately by connecting language to its situational and social context.

Deixis also plays an important role in song lyrics because it helps convey emotions and meanings within a specific context. Through the use of deixis expressions, listeners can understand who the lyrics refer to, when the events happened, and the situation in which the actions take place (Sahusilawane et al., 2023). Songwriters often use deixis to construct narratives, express personal perspectives, and build emotional connections with listeners. Therefore, analysis deixis in song lyrics can reveal how language functions pragmatically in artistic communication (Ilma & Sabat, 2023).

Song lyrics are considered a rich source for linguistic analysis because they express emotions, experiences, and social relationships through context dependent language. The frequent use of personal pronouns, time expressions, place references, discourse connects the parts of a song and social deixis expresses familiarity or affection allows researchers to observe how deixis shapes meaning within the lyrics. As a form of poetic communication, song lyrics reflect the songwriter's perspective while simultaneously creating symbolic connections with listeners (Fharaz & Djauhari, 2025). Through the analysis of song lyrics, researchers can explore how language conveys emotions, constructs social relationships, and shapes narrative views (Caca, 2024).

This study focuses on the song "Espresso" by Sabrina Carpenter because its lyrics contain various deixis expressions that are interesting to analysis. The lyrics frequently use person deixis such as "I" and "you," which represent the speaker and the person addressed in the song. The song tells the story of a confident woman who uses espresso as a symbol for energy, attraction, and personal strength. Released in 2024, the song gained international popularity since its catchy melody and expressive lyrics. Its commercial success and recognition in major music awards highlight Sabrina Carpenter's influence as a contemporary pop artist (Comstock, 2026). Analysis the types of deixis in this song can reveal how person, time, place, discourse, and social references contribute to the construction of meaning in the lyrics.

Several previous studies have analysis deixis in song lyrics. Harahap et al. (2024), in their study entitled "An Analysis of Deixis in 'Who I Am' Song Lyrics by Alan Walker, Putri Ariani and Peder Elias," found that person deixis reflects identity and self-expression, while discourse deixis connects ideas within the lyrics. Another study by Dwi et al. (2024), "An Analysis of Deixis in the Song Lyrics of 'Emails I Can't Send' by Sabrina Carpenter," showed that deixis makes lyrics more personal and context-dependent, particularly through the use of first-person pronouns and time expressions. In addition, Kurniati & Haryudin (2021), in their research "A Deixis Analysis of Song Lyrics in 'Hello' by Adele," revealed that person and time deixis play an important role in expressing emotions related to past relationships, while place deixis helps describe the situation addressed in the song. Similarly, Saputra & Apsari (2021), in "A Deixis Analysis of Song Lyrics in 'I Want to Break Free' by Queen," found that person deixis strongly represents the speaker's personal struggle, while other types of deixis contribute to building the context of the message conveyed in the lyrics.

Although many studies have examined deixis in song lyrics, most previous research mainly focuses on identifying the types of deixis and describing their general functions. Few studies discuss the contextual meaning of each deixis expression in detail, particularly within a single contemporary pop song. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by not only

identifying the types of deixis but also explaining how each deixis expression functions contextually in the lyrics of Sabrina Carpenter's song "Espresso."

Based on the explanation above, this study seeks to identify the types of deixis found in the lyrics of "Espresso" by Sabrina Carpenter and to explain how the deixis expressions function contextually in conveying meaning in the song lyrics. This study contributes to pragmatic research by demonstrating that deixis in popular song lyrics is not only used to make references but also to express identity, emotions, and interpersonal relationships between the speaker and the listener. Furthermore, this research provides insight into how pragmatic analysis can be applied to popular song as a form of everyday language use.

Literature Review

Pragmatics is important for understanding how meaning is communicated and interpreted in real life situations. This field studies how language expresses meaning beyond the literal meaning of words through context, speaker intention, and situational factors (Aisyah et al., 2024; Yule, 1996). Unlike semantics, which focuses on the literal meaning of words, pragmatics underline how meaning is influenced by context in communication (Benny et al., 2025). In many situations, people may ignore contextual factors, which can cause misunderstandings in both spoken and written communication. Therefore, this study uses a pragmatic study to understand how contextual meaning appears in song lyrics, especially through the use of deixis.

Deixis is important because it shows how certain words get their meaning from the context in which they are used. It connects language with the speech situation by referring to participants, time, place, and social relationships (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). Deixis expressions help listeners or readers interpret meaning by relating language to the situation being described (Rizqi & Sabat, 2022). Previous studies on deixis in song lyrics mostly focus on identifying the types of deixis used in the lyrics. However, only a few studies explain how each deixis expression functions in context to build meaning in the song. Therefore, this study uses the theory of deixis proposed by Yule (1996) and Levinson (1983) as the framework to analysis both the types and contextual functions of deixis in the lyrics of "Espresso" by Sabrina Carpenter.

Person deixis refers to expressions that identify participants in communication, such as the speaker, the listener, and others being talked about. Pronouns like I, you, he, she, we, and they change their meaning depending on who is involved in the interaction (Levinson, 1983). In song lyrics, person deixis is often used to show the relationship between the singer as the speaker and the person being addressed. Previous research shows that person deixis can represent identity, perspective, and interpersonal relationships in the story of a song. Therefore, analysis person deixis can help explain how the songwriter presents the speaker's position and emotional connection with the listener.

Temporal deixis refers to expressions that show the time of an event in relation to the time of speaking. Words such as now, today, yesterday, and tomorrow depend on the time when they are spoken or written (Yule, 1996). In song lyrics, temporal deixis helps listeners understand when certain events or emotions happen in the story of the song. Previous studies show that temporal deixis often highlights the difference between past experiences and present feelings, helping songwriters create a clearer timeline in the lyrics.

Place or spatial deixis refers to expressions that indicate location relative to the speaker or listener. Words such as here, there, this, and that require contextual understanding of the speaker's position in order to be interpreted correctly (Levinson, 1983). In song lyrics, spatial deixis can help create a sense of place or situation, allowing listeners to imagine the environment described in the song. Previous studies suggest that spatial deixis helps create imagery and context that support the story in the lyrics.

Social deixis refers to expressions that show social relationships, levels of politeness, or social status in communication. Forms such as titles, honorifics, or polite pronouns can indicate respect, familiarity, or hierarchy between participants (Levinson, 1983). Although social deixis is more commonly found in formal communication, it can also appear in song lyrics to show

closeness, intimacy, or power relationships between people. This shows that language also functions as a social tool that reflects cultural values and interpersonal relationships (Safi & Medan, 2025).

Discourse deixis refers to expressions that point to parts of the discourse itself. Words such as this, that, the following, or the first help connect different parts of a text by referring to previous or upcoming ideas (Yule, 1996). In song lyrics, discourse deixis helps organize the structure of the message and guides listeners in understanding how different lines in the lyrics are related to each other.

By using the deixis theories proposed by Yule (1996) and Levinson (1983), this study applies five types of deixis as the analytical framework for examining the lyrics of “Espresso.” This framework helps the researcher identify the types of deixis found in the lyrics and analysis how these expressions function in context to create meaning, emotions, and relationships in the song. Through this approach, the study also shows how contextual language in song lyrics can reflect the speaker’s perspective and interaction with the listener.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method. According to (Sandelowski, 2000), qualitative descriptive research aims to describe phenomena clearly and factually with minimal interpretation using everyday language. This method was chosen because the study focuses on identifying types of deixis and explaining their contextual meanings in song lyrics. The primary data of this study were the lyrics of the song “Espresso” by Sabrina Carpenter (Bunetta, 2024). The lyrics were obtained from a reliable and official website that publishes song lyrics to ensure authenticity and accuracy. The data consisted of all words, phrases, and sentences that potentially contain deictic expressions. The study focused only on the textual aspect of the song. In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the main instrument. In this study, the researcher was responsible for identifying, classifying, and interpreting the deictic expressions and their contextual meanings. A documentation sheet was used as a supporting instrument to record the data and to organize the classification of deixis types systematically.

The data collection procedure was carried out chronologically. First, the researcher collected the complete lyrics of the song. Second, the researcher read the lyrics repeatedly to understand the overall context. Third, the researcher identified words and phrases that function as deixis. This identification process was guided by the theories of (Yule, 1996) and (Levinson, 1983), who classify deixis into five types: person, time, place, social, and discourse deixis. The data analysis procedure also followed clear steps. After identifying the deictic expressions, the researcher classified them into their respective types. Then, each expression was analyzed to describe its contextual meaning based on the speaker, addressee, time reference, place reference, social relationship, and discourse context implied in the lyrics. The researcher compared the findings with the frameworks of Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996) to check the accuracy of classification and interpretation. In addition, repeated reading and careful review of the data were conducted to minimize errors and maintain consistency in analysis.

Results and Discussion

Results

Chart 1. Identify the Types of Deixis

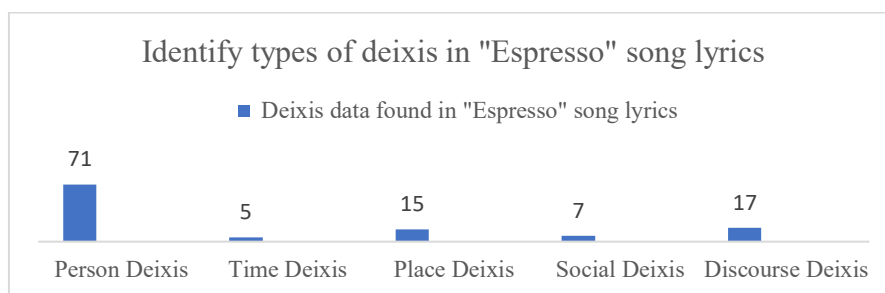


Chart 1 presents an identification of deixis found in the lyrics of Sabrina Carpenter’s “Espresso”. The results show that five types of deixis are identified: person, time, place, discourse, and social deixis. Person deixis appears most frequently, followed by time deixis, while place, discourse, and social deixis occur in smaller numbers.

Person Deixis

Person deixis in the song is classified into first person, second person, and third person references. Person deixis is used to show who is involved in the conversation within the lyrics. In this song, person deixis helps listeners understand the relationship between the singer and the people being talked about.

Table 1. Person deixis first person in “Espresso” song lyrics

No	Lyrics	Deixis Word	Types of Deixis	Contextual Meaning
2	“I guess so”	I	Person Deixis	Refers to the singer as the speaker.
15	“I know I got ‘em”	I	Person Deixis	Shows the singer as the subject in the sentence.
34	“My twisted humor”	My	Person Deixis	Shows something that belongs to the singer.

First person deixis positions the singer as the central speaker in the lyrics. It emphasizes the singer’s feelings, thoughts, and personal identity. The use of words like *I* and *my* makes the lyrics feel more personal and expressive.

Table 2. Person deixis second person in “Espresso” song lyrics

No	Lyrics	Deixis Word	Types of Deixis	Contextual Meaning
3, 7, 24, 28, 44	“Say you can’t sleep”	You	Person Deixis	Refers to the person being addressed in the song.
16	“Too bad your ex don’t do it for ya”	Your	Person Deixis	Shows possession related to the person being addressed.
16–21, 36–41	“Ya”	Ya (you)	Person Deixis	An informal form of <i>you</i> that still refers to the addressee.

Second person deixis indicates direct reference to the listener or the person addressed. It shows that the singer is speaking directly to someone in the lyrics. The use of *you*, *your*, and *ya* create a sense of closeness and interaction between the singer and the addressee.

Table 3. Person deixis third person in “Espresso” song lyrics

No	Lyrics	Deixis Word	Types of Deixis	Contextual Meaning
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1, 22	“He’s thinkin’ ‘bout me every night”	He / me	Person Deixis	<i>He</i> refers to the man being talked about, and <i>me</i> refers to the singer.
12	“And I got this one boy”	One	Person Deixis	Refers to one specific male person.
14	“They act this way”	They	Person Deixis	Refers to several people/men in general.

Third person deixis refers to participants other than the speaker and addressee. It is used to talk about other people who are not directly involved in the conversation. Words like *he*, *they*, and *one* help describe others and show how they relate to the singer.

Place Deixis

Table 4. Place deixis in “Espresso” song lyrics

No	Lyrics	Deixis Word	Types of Deixis	Contextual Meaning
5, 26, 46	“Move it up, down, left, right”	Up, down, left, right	Place Deixis	Shows directions of movement.
6, 27	“Switch it up like Nintendo”	Up	Place Deixis	Shows a change in direction or movement.

Place deixis indicates spatial orientation and movement in the lyrics. It helps listeners visualize actions or directions described by the singer. Words like *up*, *down*, *left*, and *right* guide the audience through the physical or metaphorical space in the song.

Time Deixis

Table 5. Time deixis in “Espresso” song lyrics

No	Lyrics	Deixis Word	Types of Deixis	Contextual Meaning
1, 22	“Now he’s thinkin’ ‘bout me every night”	Now	Time Deixis	Refers to the present time.
1, 22, 42	“Every night”	Every night	Time Deixis	Shows something that happens repeatedly each night.
20, 40	“That morning coffee brewed it for ya”	Morning	Time Deixis	Refers to the morning time.
32	“I’m working late ‘cause I’m a singer”	Late	Time Deixis	Refers to a late time period.
34	“My twisted humor make him laugh so often”	Often	Time Deixis	Shows frequent occurrence.

Time deixis marks temporal reference in the events described. It helps listeners understand when actions happen in the song. Words like *now*, *every night*, *morning*, *late*, and *often* show the timing, frequency, or duration of events.

Social Deixis

Table 6. Social deixis in “Espresso” song lyrics

No	Lyrics	Deixis Word	Types of Deixis	Contextual Meaning
3, 7, 24,	“Baby”	Baby	Social Deixis	A term of address that shows closeness.

28, 44				
35	“Honey bee”	Honey bee	Social Deixis	A term of address that shows intimacy or closeness.

Social deixis reflects forms of address that signal social relationships. It shows how the singer interacts with others and expresses familiarity or affection. Words like *baby* and *honey bee* indicate closeness, emotional connection, and a friendly or intimate tone in the lyrics.

Discourse Deixis

Table 7. Discourse deixis in “Espresso” song lyrics

No	Lyrics	Deixis Word	Types of Deixis	Contextual Meaning
2, 23, 31, 43, 50	“Is it that sweet?”	That	Discourse Deixis	Refers to something already mentioned or understood in the discourse.
4, 25, 29, 45	“That's that me espresso”	That	Discourse Deixis	Refers to a meaning that has been discussed earlier in the song.

Discourse deixis links expressions to parts of the ongoing discourse. It helps the listener connect current statements with previous lines in the song. Words like *that* point to ideas, objects, or meanings already mentioned, maintaining cohesion in the lyrics.

Discussion

This analysis refers to the theoretical framework of Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996) on the five main types of deixis: person deixis, time deixis, place deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis. The results show that person deixis is the most dominant type in the lyrics of “Espresso.” Words such as *I*, *me*, *my*, *you*, *ya*, *he*, and *baby* appear frequently because the song focuses on relationships and self-expression. The use of first person deixis (*I*, *me*, *my*) shows that the singer puts herself at the center of the story, which reflects confidence and strong self identity. Second person deixis (*you*, *ya*, *baby*) shows direct interaction with the person being addressed, making the lyrics feel personal and conversational. Third person deixis (*he*, *him*, *they*, *one boy*) is used when the singer talks about other people’s actions. This explains why person deixis appears more often than other types.

Time deixis appears in words like *now*, *every night*, *morning*, *late*, and *often*. These words show when events happen and often describe repeated actions, especially in *every night*. This supports Yule’s (1996) idea that time deixis helps place events in a time context. These time markers make the story in the song feel continuous, not just happening once. Place deixis such as *up*, *down*, *left*, and *right* is mostly used in lines about movement. These words create active and lively images that match the energetic tone of the song. Even though place deixis is not as frequent, it helps make the lyrics more vivid.

Social deixis appears in words like *baby* and *honey bee*, which show closeness and intimacy. These expressions support the playful and teasing mood of the song. Discourse deixis appears through words like *that* and *this*, which refer to something already mentioned in the song. For example, “*that me espresso*” uses *that* to point to the strong effect the singer believes she has. This matches Levinson’s (1983) idea that discourse deixis connects parts of a text. Deixis helps build the emotional and relational meaning of the lyrics. Person deixis builds the singer’s identity, while time, place, discourse, and social deixis make the story more detailed and interactive.

These findings are similar to previous studies. Research by Dwi et al. (2024); Harahap et al. (2024); Kurniati & Haryudin (2021) and Saputra & Apsari (2021), also found that person deixis is usually dominant in song lyrics because songs often talk about personal feelings and relationships. However, this study adds something new by showing how deixis also works

symbolically, especially in the phrase “*that me espresso*,” which represents the singer’s emotional influence. This study also has some limitations. It only analysis one song, so the results cannot represent all songs. The interpretation of meaning also depends on the researcher, which may cause subjectivity. In addition, this study focuses only on language and does not include music or visual performance. Future studies can analysis more songs or combine pragmatics with other approaches for a deeper understanding.

Conclusion

This study analysis the use of deixis in the song lyrics of “Espresso” by Sabrina Carpenter. The results show that all five types of deixis appear in the lyrics: person, time, place, social, and discourse deixis. Person deixis is the most dominant type, especially the use of I and you, which shows that the song focuses on the relationship between the singer and the person she is addressing. Time deixis such as now, every night, and morning helps listeners understand when events happen in the song. Place deixis such as up and down adds a sense of movement to the lyrics. Social deixis, including expressions like baby and honey bee, shows closeness and intimacy between the speaker and the person addressed. Discourse deixis such as that helps connect ideas in the lyrics and refers to something mentioned earlier.

These findings answer the research questions by identifying the types of deixis used in the song and explaining their meanings in context. The study also supports pragmatic theory, especially the deixis theory proposed by Yule (1996) and Levinson (1983), showing that contextual expressions are important for understanding meaning in song lyrics. In addition, the findings suggest that song lyrics can be used as useful learning materials for teaching pragmatics. By analysis deixis in songs, students can learn how language meaning depends on context while also making learning more interesting.

Overall, this study shows that deixis in song lyrics is not only used to refer to person, time, place, social and discourse but also to express emotions, identity, and relationships. It also highlights the importance of context in helping listeners understand the meaning conveyed in the lyrics. In addition, the use of deixis helps create a clearer connection between the speaker and the listener in the song. This shows that contextual language plays an important role in shaping how meaning and messages are delivered in song lyrics.

Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who supported the completion of this study. Special thanks are given to the academic advisor for guidance, suggestions, and encouragement throughout the research process. Appreciation is also extended to the authors of the theories and references used in this study, which greatly contributed to the development of this research.

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