



## Deixis Found in Joe Biden's Inauguration Speech

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### Abstract

This research is entitled Deixis found in Joe Biden's inauguration speech. The aims are to identify deixis types and their functions. The data were collected through the observation method that was done by the note-taking technique. The concept of deixis proposed by Levinson was used to support the data analysis, as well as the qualitative method was used to analyse the selected data into their types of deixis and continued by identifying its functions in the grammatical constituent and the relational information in social deixis. Then, the data analysis was presented using the informal method. The result of the analysis shows that there are five categories of deixis found in Joe Biden's inaugural speech, involving person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis. The functions of each deixis type can be seen in the person deixis which has the function in the form of a personal pronoun. Place deixis has the function of a locative adverb and the adverbial of time is used to express temporal deixis in the speech. Discourse deixis takes the shape of the object of demonstrative pronoun, while social deixis takes the form of relational information to identify a person's authority.

**Keywords:** *deixis, types of deixis, functions, inauguration speech*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini berjudul Deiksis ditemukan dalam pidato pelantikan Joe Biden. Tujuannya adalah untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis deiksis dan fungsinya. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan metode observasi yang dilakukan dengan teknik mencatat. Konsep deiksis yang dikemukakan oleh Levinson digunakan untuk mendukung analisis data, serta metode kualitatif digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang dipilih ke dalam jenis tipe-tipe deiksis dan dilanjutkan dengan mengidentifikasi fungsinya dalam unsur gramatikal dan informasi relasional dalam sosial deiksis. Kemudian, analisis data disajikan dengan menggunakan metode informal. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa ada lima kategori deiksis yang ditemukan dalam pidato pelantikan Joe Biden, yang melibatkan deiksis personal, deiksis tempat, deiksis waktu, deiksis wacana, dan deiksis sosial. Fungsi dari masing-masing jenis deiksis tersebut dapat dilihat pada deiksis personal yang memiliki fungsi berupa kata ganti orang. Deiksis tempat berfungsi sebagai kata keterangan tempat dan kata keterangan waktu digunakan untuk menyatakan deiksis waktu dalam tuturan. Deiksis wacana berfungsi sebagai objek kata ganti penunjuk, sedangkan deiksis sosial berbentuk informasi relasional untuk mengidentifikasi otoritas seseorang.

**Kata kunci:** *deiksis, tipe-tipe deiksis, fungsi, pidato pelantikan*

## Introduction

The language used and its context cannot be separated; they have a close relation to one another. In terms of function as communication throughout conveying information, a speaker wants to infer intended meaning to a listener to avoid misunderstanding. This study is called pragmatics which is a branch of linguistics that investigates the way context affects meaning is considered with what people mean and when they use that language in the society, as well as how the addressee and the interlocutor interact or communicate to understand one another. According to (Yule, 1996), pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). Therefore, communication is one of the important aspects of pragmatics in terms of sending or receiving a spoken or written message between people when the speech event occurs. However, when the speaker speaks in front of the addressee sometimes understanding expressions or words will be difficult to understand the meaning which is expressed if the interlocutor does not have sufficient information about the context of what the speaker means because every language is a lot of words and expressions that are always changing their meaning or reference in a conversation. According to the Linguistic Society of America, language is always changing, evolving, and adapting to the needs of its users.

To help in understanding between language and its context of certain utterances is called deixis. Deixis refers to the concept of understanding the meaning of the words such as (my, mine, you, yours, his, her, that, these, here, now, etc.) which gives contextual information through the utterance. The context of utterance also indicates or points the time and place of speakers, who and what is the position of the interlocutor or speakers in social circumstances. As stated by (Tanz, 1980), when language is spoken, it occurs in a specific location, at a specific time, is produced by a specific person, and is (usually) addressed to some specific other person or persons. All natural, spoken languages have devices that link the utterance with its spatio-temporal and personal context. This linkage is called 'deixis'. Deixis can be found in a text, for example in speech, lyric song, novel, interview transcription, and advertisement. In certain events, there must be a speech delivered by the leadership or important people to provide or convey information in the form of ideas, concepts, and directions to the listener. This research has used the transcription of Joe Biden's inauguration speech by reason all types of deixis were contained by doing the note-taking technique and also the person deixis "we" is used more often in inaugural speeches referring to Joe Biden and his presidential staff as well as all American citizen that the speech portrays Joe Biden as a man who dedicated to serve his service for America that indeed important to examine. In addition, the topic about deixis was used; apart from deixis having their own types thus curiosity about the issue of misunderstanding the context is very interesting to investigate. Not all listeners or interlocutors could understand the context of utterance conveyed by the speaker since deixis entirely depends on context.

There are three undergraduate theses and one article from each international and national journal that have similar topics into this research.

The first study was written by Rinaldi (2020). He identified and analysed the types of deixis and the reference meaning that are conveyed in the speech by using the category of deixis proposed by Levinson (1983) and the concept of anaphora proposed by Birner (2013). The data for the qualitative study was gathered using the documentation method and note-taking technique. Rinaldi has found four types of deixis such as person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis. The similarity between Rinaldi's study and this current research are contained in the research problem which is about deixis types and the data source using the speech. However, the differences are contained in the second research problem which is about references of meaning, and the use of the concept by Birner (2013), while this current research analysed the functions of each deixis type to know the purpose of the speaker when communication occurs, and only used the category of deixis proposed by Levinson (1983).

The second study was completed by Fani (2020). This previous study examined the most dominant deixis and the referent meaning about deixis found in education news articles by using the deixis category proposed by Levinson (1983). Also, the previous research used a qualitative method to describe types of deixis from the news articles. The types of deixis found in every education news article on the edition November 2019 until May 2020 picked from the Antara News are presented in this previous study. There are seven education news articles analysed. The previous study found all types of deixis, such as person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis, and the dominant deixis are person deixis 78 times and social deixis 76 times. However, from these seven data sources, there was only one place deixis was found. Both the previous study and the current research investigated types of deixis by using the concept of deixis proposed by Levinson (1983). But, the differences are contained in a number of respects such as in the data source and the second research problem. The previous study used news articles as the data source and the current research was using the speech. The second research question in the previous study discussed the referent meaning, but the current research discussed the functions of each deixis type used.

The third study was written by Nurmaharani (2021). She investigated the types of deixis in *The Frozen II* movie and the dominant deixis used in the movie. The concept of deixis proposed by Levinson (1983) was used to answer the research questions. From the result, Nurmaharani's found five types of deixis, namely personal deixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis. The researcher found the dominant deixis used in the movie entitled *Frozen II* are personal deixis and social deixis. There are a number of similarities between the previous study and the current research which are shown in the first research problem and used the concept of deixis by Levinson (1983). Besides that, the difference is only contained in the data source. In the previous study, the data source was using the movie. However, the current research was using the speech as the data source. Besides investigating the types of deixis, the functions of each deixis type are to be analysed in the current research.

The fourth study that has been done by Van Thao and Herman (2020). They have analysed the kinds of deixis by using the theories by Bouk (2016), Peccei (1999), Yule (1996), Brown and Yule (1983). The previous study used semantics and pragmatics to

investigate the data source, since both were focused on meanings. Pragmatics is applied to examine words and language in relation to temporal deixis, spatial deixis, and other contextual factors. As well as semantics used to analyse the song lyrics with contained aspects of meaning. The aim of the study is to investigate the types of deixis used in the song lyrics. A qualitative method was used in the previous study. To collect the data using two techniques by listening to the song and reading the lyrics. This previous study gave some contributions because the problem of the study used was almost the same as the current research. There are three types of deixis depicted in the song "My heart will go on" by Celine Dion, namely person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis that include the deictic marker. Person deixis is mostly used in the song. Therefore, it can be used to give some contextual information or deictic marker of the person, spatial and temporal deixis into the speaker or listener. However, the previous study has not dealt with the functions of each deixis type and applied one research problem. The data source of the previous study was different from this current research. In the previous study, the data source was using the song lyrics, but the data source in the current research was using the speech and applied the category of deixis proposed by Levinson which describes five types of deixis to answer the research questions. Furthermore, the functions of each deixis type in the speech are examined in the current research because deixis is an essential component of human discourse, not only explaining the relation between language structure and its context in which it is produced. It also has a relation in functioning the speech discourse.

The fifth study was conducted by Herman and Pardede (2020). The focus of their study is about the types of deixis and the dominant types deixis found in the articles. The category of deixis proposed by Levinson (1983) was used in the previous study. The documentation method was used when collecting the data. This previous study presents the types of deixis found in every business article of the Jakarta Post which are selected. There are five business articles to be chosen in order to be used as the data. The result of this previous study is that all the types of deixis are found in the business articles of the Jakarta Post, such as person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, social deixis. Also, the dominant type of deixis which is used in the business articles of the Jakarta Post is person deixis. Both this previous study and the current research are investigating the types of deixis and use the concept of deixis proposed by Stephen C. Levinson. However, the data source of this previous study was using the articles but in this current research was using the speech and investigated about the functions of each deixis type. Many business articles were found in the previous study and that is becoming a strength because the more data that the previous study was analysed, the better and stronger claim or conclusion in the finding. In spite of the previous research taking many data sources, they only described the number of each deixis that was found without explaining the intended meaning and the examples of each deixis type that was contained in each utterance.

These three undergraduate theses and two articles above give a worthy contribution to this current research; besides they conducted research on the same subject and the same research problem which is about the types of deixis, all the previous research help in constructing and developing the explanation about deixis types in order to improve the description about the concept of deixis types to increase

better understanding about the use of deixis or any deictic content that contribute in this current research.

## **Method**

There are four parts of methods applied such as data source, method and technique of collecting data, method and technique of analysing data, method and technique of presenting analysis.

### ***Data Source***

In this research, the data were taken from Joe Biden's inauguration speech on January 20, 2021 at 11.30 a.m. The duration of the speech is 21:25 minutes and 2424 words are contained in the speech text. The video was downloaded from YouTube which is displayed by the BBC News channel and continues with inscribing the speech video into a written document. Joe Biden was sworn in as the 46th President of the United States of America. In the speech, he declared "America's Day" at the U.S. Capitol. The reason why this data source was used is because deixis indicates who the speaker is, where the location, time, or social status of the person is very important in this speech to know the specific reference of what the speaker means in the utterance.

### ***Method and Technique of Collecting Data***

Library research is one of the types of research that is used in this research because the data or information is accessed from the speech. In collecting the data, the observation method was used in order to identify deixis in the utterances spoken by Joe Biden. In addition, the note-taking technique is applied in order to collect the possible data which are contained in the data source.

### ***Method and Technique of Analysis Data***

A qualitative method was used in this research to find out the types of deixis and their functions used in the transcriptions of inauguration speech that was chosen as the data source.

There are two techniques are applied to find out types of deixis and its function as the following steps:

1. Classifying the types of deixis found in the data source based on deixis category by Levinson (1983:54).
2. Analysing the functions of each deixis type in the grammatical constituent and the relational information in social deixis that has been categorised by using the deixis functions proposed by Levinson (1983:62) and continuing with interpreting the deictic meaning based on its context.

### ***Method and Technique of Presenting Analysis***

The Informal method was used in presenting the analysis. It means that the data were presented descriptively based on the category of deixis proposed by Levinson (1983), by describing the types of deixis first, then continuing with explaining the functions of each type of deixis used in Joe Biden's inauguration speech.

## **Result and Discussion**

### ***Person deixis***

The researcher highlights three types of person deixis from various page(s) and line(s) of the transcribed speech such as first person deixis, second person deixis, and third person deixis.

#### ***First Person Deixis***

##### **Excerpt 1**

“I know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength, the strength of our nation, as does President Carter, who I spoke with last night who cannot be with us today, but who we salute for his lifetime of service.” (*Page 1/Line 14/Data 001*)

The word “I” is categorised as the first person singular deixis which refers to the speaker (Joe Biden as the 46th President of the United States) who salute for President Carter (the 29th President of the U.S.) for his lifetime of service to America that he has not been able to join in the inaugural ceremony.

The Function:

The word “I” has the function as the subject of personal pronoun. In the utterance above, Biden declared that he already knows the resilience and the strength of the constituents of America. It can be seen that he has a career in American politics for 50 years which makes him very aware of the state of the U.S. politics and policy.

##### **Excerpt 2**

“Today we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate but of a cause, a cause of democracy.” (*Page 1/Line 5/Data 002*)

The word “we” is classified as the first person plural deixis, referring to the speaker (Joe Biden as the 46th President of the United States), and his presidential staff officer. The use of the word “we” indicates the encoding of the role of Joe Biden and his presidential staff that celebrate the triumph in the inaugural ceremony on January 20, 2021. As stated by Levinson (1983:62), person deixis concerns the encoding of the role of participants in the speech event. The word “we” also demonstrates a deictic expression in which the speaker presents and emphasises his involvement as a participant in the inaugural ceremony.

The Function:

The word “we” has the function as the subject of personal pronoun that shows Joe Biden and his presidential staff officer celebrating the triumph for the Democrat party that Biden and Harris became the next candidates whom qualified as President and Vice President against the Republican party. In the speech, Biden also emphasised that they won not as a candidate but from a cause of democracy that heard and heeded the will of people in the U.S.

#### ***Second Person Deixis***

##### **Excerpt 3**

“To all those who supported our campaign, I'm humbled by the faith you placed in us. If you still disagree, so be it. That's democracy. That's America. The right to dissent peacefully.” (*Page 3/Line 66-67/Data 003*)

The word “you” is categorised as the second person deixis which refers to a group of people who oppose Biden becoming President. In the speech, Biden feels

humbled by the faith all American citizens placed in Joe Biden as the President and his associate to make America together.

The Function:

The word “you” has the function as the subject of personal pronoun. In the inaugural ceremony, Biden and his presidential staff officer would move forward even if there are a few people who did not give support.

### ***Third Person Deixis***

#### **Excerpt 4**

“When he put pen to paper the president said, and I quote, 'if my name ever goes down in history, it'll be for this act, and my whole soul is in it'. My whole soul is in it today, on this January day” (*Page 1/Line 31-33/Data 004*)

The word “he” is categorised as third-person deixis which refers to Abraham Lincoln who signed the emancipation proclamation of the United States on January 1, 1863.

The function:

The word “he” has the function as the subject of personal pronoun that Joe Biden quotes what President Abraham Lincoln said in the emancipation proclamation ceremony. Abraham Lincoln is becoming a role model for Biden and all presidents because the act of abolishing slavery as well as the problems that he faced along the way, are what have left such a lasting influence on the presidential history, as stated by (Smith, 2019).

### ***Place or Spatial Deixis***

#### **Excerpt 5**

“So now on this hallowed ground where just a few days ago violence sought to shake the Capitol’s very foundations.” (*Page 1/Line 8/Data 005*)

The words “on this hallowed ground” is categorised as place deixis because it refers to the speaker's location at the time of speaking. According to Levinson (1983:64), the deictic centre typically assumed to be the central place is the speaker's location at utterance time or CT. In the inaugural ceremony, the speaker and the audience who attend the event are in the same place that was in the U.S. Capitol. As a result, the audience may understand what "on this hallowed ground" implies. If anyone in the audience or outside the inauguration event is uncertain where it is, Biden already specifies the name of the area in his speech.

The Functions:

The words “on this hallowed ground” used the preposition “on” and have the functions as a locative adverb because it has a relation to that location and concerns to the proximal form by reason of the position in which the speech event occurs is near to the speaker. According to Levinson (1983:62), probably most languages grammaticalize at least a distinction between proximal (or close to speaker) and distal (or non-proximal, sometimes close to addressee).

### ***Time or Temporal deixis***

#### **Excerpt 6**

“Today we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate but of a cause, a cause of democracy. The people - the will of the people - has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded.” (*Page 1/Line 5/Data 006*)

There is an adverbial time “today” in the utterance which has been said by the speaker (Joe Biden as the 46th president of the United States) who celebrates the triumph in the inaugural ceremony on January 20, 2021. This denotes that it is a deictic expression in the utterance based on Levinson's (1983) concept. The adverbial time of “today” is categorised as time deixis because it shows the time when the utterance was spoken.

The Function:

Temporal deixis “today” has the function as an adverb to demonstrate the twenty-four-hour inauguration ceremony that was uttered by the speaker by indicating the timing of temporal points in the speech event.

### ***Discourse Deixis***

#### **Excerpt 7**

“This is America's day. This is democracy's day. A day of history and hope, of renewal and resolve.” (*Page 1/Line 3/Data 007*)

The discourse utterance “this” indicates the discourse objective referent that defines the specified day which the speaker (Joe Biden, 46th President of the United States) celebrates the inaugural ceremony on January 20, 2021 with his presidential staff officer. Based on Levinson (1983:85), since discourse unfolds in time, it seems natural that time-deictic words can be used to refer to portions of the discourse.

The Function:

Deictic marker “this” has the function as an object. In the speech, the discourse marker “this” which was conveyed by the speaker gives an informative contextual portion for the hearer at the time of the speech event. According to Levinson (1983:64), the discourse center is the point which the speaker is currently at in the production of his utterance.

### ***Social Deixis***

#### **Excerpt 8**

“Many centuries ago, St Augustine - the saint of my church - wrote that a people was a multitude defined by the common objects of their love.” (*Page 3/Line 76/Data 008*)

Based on the utterance above, it could be identified that the word “the saint” was used to encode the social identities of the participant, in which this identity had a special role in social circumstance by applying the philosophical values of the region, in this case; Christians. “The saint” is also a polite expression which was proposed to the honorable person. According to Levinson (1983:63), distinctions of fine gradation between the relative ranks of speaker and addressee are systematically encoded throughout, for example, the morphological system, in which case we talk of honorifics.



#### The Function:

In the utterance the use of “the Saint” has the function as a referent honorific in order to maintain politeness in language and to maintain social attitude between Biden to his saint. “St. Augustine” is one of the important theologian for Christian. It showed Joe Biden as the pilgrim of Christian and St. Augustine as the saint, both having their social level in society.

#### Conclusion

According to the findings and discussion, this research concludes five types of deixis found in Joe Biden's inauguration speech, involving person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis. Person deixis can be found in the form of personal pronoun, such as a subject of personal pronoun, an object of personal pronoun, or a possessive adjective which is highlighted in Joe Biden's inaugural speech on January 20, 2021. Place deixis can be found as a locative adverb. Time deixis appears in the speech in the form of the adverbial of time. Discourse deixis appears in the form of the object of demonstrative pronoun and social deixis appears in the form the relational information of social deixis. It can express politeness and respect as well as to identify the authority of the person. As the result of the analysis, the diverse frequently used types of deixis are contained among the given deixis types and their functions. Person deixis became the most dominant used type of deixis and discourse deixis is very rarely used in the data source. Joe Biden's inauguration speech is one of the interesting speeches which has deixis characteristics. It can be seen in the use of person deixis "we and our" which is more dominantly used instead of using the deictic word "I" which only refers to himself. The use of the deictic expression “we and our” can refer to Biden, his presidential staff officer and/or all of the American. The dominant use of the deictic words “we and our” can illustrate Joe Biden as the President of America has a sense of community and responsibility for the people of America, not only for himself. Besides that, place deixis, time deixis and discourse deixis uses the dominant deictic expression such as "here", "today" and "this" which refers to the current location, the present time of the speech and the point in which the speaker is currently produce his utterance. The last type is social deixis which refers to the authority of a person. Biden often mentions "Vice President" found at the time of (0:18) and (9:45) in the speech video. He wants to introduce his colleague Kamala Harris who will accompany Joe Biden in carrying out his presidential duties. The researcher would like to make a suggestion to other researchers who are interested in studying various types of deixis to investigate by a new concept or using an updating theory to develop the description and to make a wide scope of deixis with various theories.

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