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An Analysis of Deixis in The "Elemental" Movie

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the types and the factor influence of deixis found in the Elemental movie. The study applies Levinson's theory of deixis, which classifies deixis into five categories: person, time, place (location), discourse, and social deixis. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method. The data are collected from the movie script of Elemental Movie (2023), focusing only on the characters' spoken dialogues. Each deictic expression found in the script was identified, categorized, and analyzed based on Levinson's Theory. The first findings show that a total of 320 deixis were found in the movie, consisting of 191 person deixis, 37 time deixis, 45 place deixis, 26 discourse deixis, and 21 social deixis. Person deixis is the most dominant, indicating that personal relationships and speaker-hearer references play a central role in the film. Second findings, the study identifies several contextual factors that influence deixis usage, including participant roles, usage function, levels of intimacy, formality/informality, and social status. These factors contribute to how deixis is used to reflect dynamics, emotional expressions, and narrative flow within movie.

Kata Kunci: *Analysis, Common Errors, Interrogative Sentence, Simple Past tense.*

INTRODUCTION

Language has evolved into an indispensable component of human existence. Language is directly linked to us since it is a means of self- expression. Although every human being is unique in terms of culture and race, this does not limit them because everyone has a style of communicating. Understanding language involves recognizing the messages it conveys. Language is not limited to spoken words; it can take various forms as long as we grasp the meanings behind the signs. This understanding enables us to interact and communicate with others, allowing us to make the world more

meaningful (Noermanzah, 2019).

Language can also be used for sending and receiving information (Dewi et al., 2023). Simanjuntak et al. (2021) also highlight a different perspective on language, pointing out that language is a tool for social control that affects people's views and behaviors in society. It shows people's personalities and behaviors as vital aspects of human existence (Kurniati & Haryudun, 2021). This suggests that language and humans are intimately connected and interdependent. It serves as a link for communication and connection and is used by people to stay in touch with one another (Illiyin, 2023).

According to Hutajulu & Herman (2019), language is a communication instrument that is crucial to communication. It is for someone to become fluent in the language so that they can communicate with others, whether orally or in writing, and share their thoughts. Furthermore, language is a tool for communication that enables people to express their intentions to continue connecting and sharing new ideas with one another, according to Marpaung (2019). Therefore, the language is the fundamental means of communication with others, no matter where their lives. According to Suadi (2019), communication runs well in the condition when the message and information are understood. Communication allows people to readily share ideas, extend information, and express their feelings. Language facilitates direct and indirect communication in daily activities. In general, communication and language are important components of social life. Expressing thought and felling, conveying ideas, making request giving command, and so (Pratiwi & Oktarina, 2020)

There are many different languages used around the world for communication, including English, Arabic, Javanese, Korean, Chinese, Indonesian, and many more. Among these, English is one of the most widely spoken languages. According to Sinaga et al. (2020), speaking English is not only essential for daily life but also plays a significant role in achieving professional success. In today's global job market, English proficiency can greatly increase one's chances of getting a job or obtaining a desired position.

According to Susilowaty (2015), language plays a crucial role in our life, particularly communication. Language is employed in both interactive media and language arts. It can be found in several forms of entertainment, including movies, music, and novels, as well as advertisements on TV, radio, and news. Language has a crucial role in communication (Herdiawan 2017).

English comprises five micro-linguistic components: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. In this study, the researcher focuses specifically on pragmatics, particularly on the concept of deixis. Deixis refers to words or phrases such as "this," "that," "here," and "now" whose meanings depend on the context in which they are used. According to Yule (1996), deixis is a key aspect of pragmatic meaning because it links language directly to the situational context. This research examines the use of deixis in the *Elemental* movie, analyzing how characters use deictic expressions to convey meaning and establish relationships within the narrative.

Several previous studies have investigated the use of deixis in various contexts. Sa'diyah and Laila (2019) analyzed discourse deixis in Sally M. Stockton's short story *Robin Hood*, focusing on the temporal structure of the narrative using Levinson's (1983) theory. Ginting and Syahri (2021) studied deixis in Justin Bieber's *Purpose* album lyrics, concentrating on person, place, and time deixis, and found person deixis to be the most dominant. Similarly, Febriza (2020) explored deixis in an academic article from *The Jakarta Post*, identifying five types of deixis person, temporal, discourse, social, and spatial based on Cruse's (2000) framework, with person deixis being the most frequently used. Another study by Salamudin and Efransyah (2021) examined Adele's song lyrics using Yule's (1996) theory and found a predominance of personal deixis, followed by spatial and temporal deixis. While these studies offer valuable insights into the use of deixis in literature, music, and journalism, the current research differs by focusing on deixis within the Elemental movie using Levinson's (1983) five type of deixis: person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. Additionally, this study not only categorizes deixis but also analyzes the contextual factors that influence their usage throughout the movie's narrative and dialogue.

This research aims to analyze the use of deixis in the animated film "Elemental". The Elemental film presents an imaginative world where natural elements coexist, creating unique conflicts and harmonies. The use of deixis in this film is expected to reflect the social and cultural dynamics that are built between characters of different elements. By researching films that tell the life of personified elements, this research is expected to reveal how the use of deixis contributes to building meaning and relationships between characters of different elements.

The focus of this analysis includes the identification of the types of deixis used and the factors that influence the use of each deixis type found in the Elemental movie. For instance, in the sentence "I am old. I can't do this forever," the word "this" refers to the job or activity that Bernie is doing namely, taking care of the store every day. In this context, "this" represents something abstract, as it refers to an ongoing routine or condition rather than a tangible object. Conversely, in the sentence "This shop is the dream of our family!" the word "this" refers specifically to the family's store, which holds symbolic value as the embodiment of their hopes and dreams. Here, the meaning of "this" is concrete, since it points to a physical location.

These examples demonstrate how the same deictic word can convey different meanings depending on the context, either abstract or concrete. This research uses Levinson's (1983) theory of deixis to classify the five types: person, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deixis. By applying this framework to the Elemental movie, the study not only identifies deixis usage but also explores the contextual factors that influence it. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how deixis functions in animated film texts, particularly in enhancing aesthetic expression and conveying layered meaning within the dialogue.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative descriptive design based on the theory of Creswell (2018). According to Creswell, qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand the meaning that individuals or groups give to a social or human problem. The researcher took the source data from the Elemental movie and the movie‟s script in order to analyse deixis phenomenon using Levinson‟s theory (1983). The script used in this research is a script from Deadline.com, or also known as Deadline Hollywood, is an online magazine founded by Nikki Finke. This site is part of Jay Penske's PMC. Elemental movie was released in 2023, Directed by Peter Sohn and produced by Denise Reams, it was written by Sohn, John Hoberg, Kat Likkel, and Brenda Hsueh with the duration of 101 minutes.

The following is an example of coding framework to classify deixis expression which is used to analyze deixis expression in Elemental movie. Code for each type of deixis, which is:

- PD = Person Deixis
- TD = Time Deixis
- LD = Location (place) Deixis
- DD = Discourse Deixis
- SD = Social Deixis
-

No	Dialogues	Code of deixis category				
		PD	**TD**	**LD**	**DD**	**SD**
1	“I don‟t think this is going to work”					
2	“Any chance you‟re free tomorrow? To hang out with a Water guy?”					
3	“I was stuck in there for hours!”					
4	“Hey everyone! This is Ember”					
5	“Alright, sir. You gotta go”					

The data analysis was carried out through several systematic steps to ensure accurate and organized results. The steps are as follows:

1. First, the researcher collected all deixis-related data from the Elemental movie.
2. Second, the data was classified into different forms of deixis and coded based on the deixis category: PD for Person Deixis, TD for Time Deixis, LD for Place Deixis, DD for Discourse Deixis, and SD for Social Deixis. This coding process allowed the researcher to clearly organize and label each instance of deixis according to its type before conducting further analysis.

3. Third, the researcher selected data from the five different types and presented the research findings in the form of quantification, including the total number and percentage of each deixis category.
4. Fourth, in the data reduction step, the researcher filtered out unnecessary or repeated data to ensure that only relevant deixis instances were analyzed.
5. Fifth, in the data display step, the reduced data were presented in tables and explained in simple descriptions to make the results clearer.

Sixth, in the conclusion drawing step, the researcher reviewed the main purpose of the study and examined whether the findings answered the research questions. The conclusions summarized the main findings, identified what deixis was used in the Elemental movie, and connected them to Levinson's (1983) theory to show how deixis helps express meaning, build character, and strengthen the story. The researcher also acknowledged the study's limitation focusing only on one movie and suggested that future research should examine deixis in other films for a broader understanding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the findings, which found to classify and identify the various forms of deixis and the factors influencing the use of each deixis type found in the Elemental movie using Levinson's (1983) classification, are shown in this section. The researcher carried out a qualitative analysis of the movie's script, focussing on the dialogue portions, as previously mentioned in the methodology. Five categories were used to classify all of the deixis that were discovered: person, time, place, discourse, and social. These findings are presented to answer the following research questions: (1) What types of deixis are found in the dialogues of the "Elemental" movie and (2) What factors influence the use of each deixis type found in the "Elemental" movie.

1. Type of Deixis in Elemental Movie

   The analysis of deixis in the Elemental movie revealed 320 occurrences found throughout the dialogues. These deixis were categorized based on Levinson's (1983) classification into five types: person, time, place, discourse, and social deixis. The most dominant type was **person deixis**, with **191 occurrences**, **place deixis** appeared **45 times**, followed by **time deixis** with **37 instances**, reflecting how the characters frequently referred to spatial and temporal context. **Discourse deixis** was found **26 times**, usually used to refer back or forward to parts of the conversation. The least frequent type was **social deixis**, with **21 occurrences**, typically used to show respect or indicate social relationships. Researcher organized the findings into a table to calculate the frequency of each deixis category.

Table 2. Type of Deixis in Elemental Movie

Type of Deixis	Total Frequency
Person Deixis	191
Time Deixis	37
Place Deixis	45
Discourse Deixis	26
Social Deixis	21
Total	**320**

2. Factors Influence The Use Of Deixis

After identifying the types and frequencies of deixis found in the Elemental movie, this research also aims to explore the factors that influence how deixis is used in the dialogue. Deixis is not used randomly; it is closely connected to the context in which the conversation takes place. The choice of deixis depends on many elements, such as who is speaking, who is being addressed, what their relationship is, the setting, and the speaker's intention. In the film, these elements appear through different scenes and interactions, where deixis helps build meaning, express emotion, and reflect social relationships between characters.

This section discusses several key factors that influence deixis usage in the Elemental movie, including participant roles, usage function, intimacy, formality or informality, and social status. Each of these factors plays a unique role in shaping how deixis appears and functions in the dialogues. The analysis below explains how those factors work and how they contribute to the effectiveness of language use in the film.

In this study, researchers analyzed all the dialogues in the Elemental film and found 320 deixis data in total. The most dominant type is person deixis with 191 occurrences (59.69%), followed by place deixis (45 occurrences / 14.06%), time deixis (37 occurrences / 11.56%), discourse deixis (26 occurrences / 8.13%), and social deixis (21 occurrences / 6.56%). The dominance of person deixis reflects the film's strong focus on interpersonal interactions, particularly the relationship between the main characters Ember and Wade. Pronouns such as I, me, you, we, and ours are frequently used to express opinions, emotions, and involvement in family, romantic, and social relationships. This finding is consistent with Sitorus & Herman (2024), who also reported the dominance of person deixis in their analysis of the song You Are the Reason. However, unlike their work, which did not explore contextual factors, the present study reveals how participant roles, intimacy levels, and formality influence deixis usage. For instance, Ember uses inclusive forms like we when speaking to her parents to emphasize unity, but switches to I during conflicts to create emotional distance.

Social deixis, although the least frequent, plays an important role in reflecting status, respect, and relationship dynamics in the film. Of the 21 occurrences, 18 indicate

familial relationships and 3 indicate formal or respectful interactions. Wade addresses Ember's parents with ma'am as a sign of politeness, while Ember uses terms like Dad, Mom, and Àshfá to show respect and cultural identity. In informal settings, the deixis shifts to more casual forms such as you and we. These results go beyond Jamjuri's (2015) study on Elizabeth: The Golden Age, which only examined social deixis and found two forms, without analyzing other deixis types or broader conversational contexts. By examining all deixis types, this study provides a more comprehensive view of how social deixis operates alongside person deixis, shaped by intimacy, hierarchy, and situational formality.

Other deixis types such as place, time, and discourse deixis also show meaningful patterns. Place deixis (e.g., here, there, over there) occurs when characters reference physical locations that hold emotional or narrative significance, such as Garden Central Station. Time deixis (e.g., now, later, tomorrow) often marks urgency or emotional turning points in the plot. Discourse deixis appears when characters refer to parts of the conversation itself, such as this is amazing or that's what I mean. In this respect, the findings resemble Setyawati's (2013) analysis of deixis in Emma by Jane Austen, where all deixis types were identified. However, unlike Setyawati's work, which focused on static narrative text, the current study deals with movie dialogues that are dynamic, visually supported, and emotionally charged, making deixis usage more fluid and responsive to ongoing interactions.

The analysis of deixis in the Elemental movie demonstrates that the use of deixis is shaped by several social and contextual factors, which influence the meaning and function of language in dialogue. Participant role primarily affects person, time, and place deixis, as the roles of speakers and listeners determine the choice of pronouns, temporal references, and spatial expressions. Similarly, usage function whether a sentence is used to inform, ask, or command also impacts person, time, and place deixis, guiding how characters refer to themselves, others, time, and location.

Social status influences social deixis, as the relative hierarchy and level of respect between characters dictate the use of formal or polite expressions, while intimacy and formality/informality affect multiple deixis types, including person, time, place, and social deixis, shaping whether language is casual, emotional, or formal. For example, Ember uses inclusive pronouns like we when speaking to her parents to express unity but shifts to I during conflicts to create emotional distance. Wade's use of ma'am shows politeness, whereas Ember's terms like Dad, Mom, and Àshfá indicate respect and cultural grounding.

Place deixis such as here or there marks meaningful locations in the narrative, while time deixis like now or later signals urgency or emotional turning points. Discourse deixis, such as this is amazing or that's what I mean, links utterances within conversations and guides audience comprehension. These findings demonstrate that deixis in the movie is not merely a linguistic reference tool but a dynamic device deeply intertwined with

character relationships, emotional tone, and storytelling, reflecting how social context and narrative function together shape language use in cinematic dialogue.

Overall, the findings not only confirm previous research that person deixis often dominates in narrative works, but also expand on it by showing how deixis in visual media is shaped by participant roles, intimacy levels, formality, and cultural context. The Elemental movie demonstrates that deixis is not merely a linguistic reference tool it is deeply intertwined with storytelling, character relationships, and the emotional rhythm of the narrative.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to uncover the usage of deixis in the Elemental movie, consisting the five types of deixis defined by Levinson (1983), person deixis, time deixis, place deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis, and also to uncover what factor that influence the use of each deixis types found in the Elemental movie. Based on the findings and discussion, the conclusions of this study can be drawn as follows:

1. The first finding revealed that the movie's dialogue script contains a total of 315 deixis expressions, specifically 192 person deixis (60.95%), 45 place deixis (14.29%), 31 time deixis (9.84%), 26 discourse deixis (8.25%), and 21 social deixis (6.67%). Furthermore, the most frequently used type is person deixis, indicating the movie's strong emphasis on interpersonal relationships and character development.
2. The second finding shows that the use of deixis in the Elemental movie is influenced by five main factors: the role of participants, speech function, social status, level of intimacy, and formality. These factors shape the choice of words, whether formal or casual, personal or neutral, and whether emotionally close or distant, thereby constructing the meaning and dynamics of the relationships between characters in the story. Each deixis type serves a specific narrative and linguistic function. Person deixis conveys identity, emotion, and relationships. Time deixis structures the chronology and temporal flow of the story. Place deixis situates events in physical and symbolic locations. Discourse deixis maintains cohesion and argumentation within conversations. Social deixis encodes social roles, cultural respect, and levels of formality.

The use of deixis in Elemental is a powerful linguistic strategy that enhances both the narrative and communicative aspects of the movie. The findings confirm that deixis is useful not only in everyday conversation, but also in scripted media such as movie, where it enhances character depth, emotional resonance, and cultural meaning.

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