

# An Analysis Deixis Used by Mcdonald's Webpage Content: a Pragmatic Approach

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received October 20, 2022

Revised December 29, 2022

Accepted December 31, 2022

Available online December 31, 2022

### Keywords:

Pragmatics, Deixis; Referents Meaning,;

McDonald's; Webpage



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## ABSTRACT

This research studies about deixis used by McDonald's webpage content. There are two objectives of this research. The first objective is to identify the types of deixis used by McDonald's webpage content and the second objective is to analyze the referent meaning of the deixis used by McDonald's webpage content. The research method is descriptive qualitative method applying data analysis technique, that is content analysis. The result of the research shows that there are 94 deixis used by McDonald's web page content. The data in the form of deixis are classified into five types. They are person deixis, time deixis, place deixis, social deixis and discourse deixis. In this research, person deixis became the most dominant type of deixis used by McDonald's, the person deixis in addressing McDonald's teams and McDonald's customers. The use of social deixis is to address McDonald's partners and the relation, while discourse deixis is for explaining the discourse in upcoming and prior portion about the McDonald's content in the McDonald's webpage. Next, place deixis is used to mention the location and the time deixis is used for referring the specific time.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics deals with the meaning of the utterance delivered by speaker or writer and later interpreted by the listener or reader. So, it will be easier to understand the meaning based on the context. Griffiths, (2006, p.1) defines that Pragmatics deals with the use of these tools in meaningful communication about the interaction of semantic knowledge with our knowledge of the world, taking into account contexts of use. It is also declared by Levinson (1983, p. 9) in his book. He states that Pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that is grammaticalized and encoded in the structure of a language. It is also declared by Yule (2010, p.127-128) in his fourth edition book. He argues that Pragmatics is a study of what speakers mean or the speaker's meaning in utterance depending on the context whether spoken or written.

In Linguistics, deixis is a phenomenon in which contextual information is required to understand the meaning of particular words and phrases in an utterance. A word is deictic if it has a fixed semantic meaning but its denotational meaning changes according to time and place. What is clear in the relationship between language and context is seen in the structure of the language themselves and the situation in which the text is used. According to Levinson (1983, p. 54), deixis concerns with how language encodes feature of utterance context and also concern ways in which the interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of that context of utterance.

Deixis is a word in which the referents always change depending on the contexts. The explanation of deixis is related with Pragmatics, which causes deixis to be a part of Pragmatics. Levinson (1986, p.54) has stated that deixis is the single obvious way in which the relationship between language and context reflected on the structures of language themselves. In addition, he adds that deixis is used for indicating or pointing. He also divides deixis into five types. They are person deixis, time deixis, place deixis, social deixis and discourse deixis. Furthermore, Yule (2010, p.129) has stated that deixis is a technical term of Greek word that means to 'pointing' via language. Yule also categorizes the deixis into three types. They are to indicate time via temporal 4 deixis (now and then), to indicate people via person deixis (you and me), and to indicate the location via spatial deixis (here and there).

Referent is related to deixis and also used in many languages, for example, the content on the company's webpage also uses deixis. Nowadays, English is very important to study. It is also one of the foreign languages in Indonesia. It can be seen that English has been used in every statement of webpage content. Furthermore, it is for the market companies in making a content webpage as the current era of globalization where English is an international language for communicative purposes both written and spoken.

The researcher decided to analyze deixis because the perceptions between writers and readers can be different. If the readers misrepresent the meaning, the author's message will not be delivered to the readers. Therefore, the author chooses deixis in order to straighten a meaning so that the message can reach the target. The deixis statement expressed by the McDonald's company is used to explain their various superior products. In this case, the company not only explains about their products on McDonald's webpage, but they also tries to make people who read their content on the webpage become interested in buying their products.

In this research, the content of McDonald's webpage is selected as the object because McDonald's always makes statements with interesting sentences. Moreover, the description of its presentation in the webpage content are expressed in sentences that make it seem as if the team is talking directly to consumers.

## 2. METHOD

The design of this research is a qualitative method. According to Bodgan and Biklen (1998: 69), qualitative research is designed from the process of analyzing, discussing, and finding a social phenomenon that occurs naturally. It means the research is not controlled by a laboratory and numbers or statistics as the tools in analyzing the data.

The data of this research are the types and referent of deixis used by McDonald's webpage content. The data source of this research is the McDonald's webpage. According to Arikunto and Subroto, data source is a subject where the data are obtained and the situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors in the data. Thus, those types of research data are included in a discourse because the data of this research are linguistic units such as a letter or word pertinent to slang, while the data source for this study is the McDonald's webpage content. The URL of this webpage is <https://www.McDonalds.com/us/en-us/about-our-food/whats-in-your-food.html>.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument by searching and collecting materials that are related to the types and referent of deixis used in the McDonald's webpage content. Afterward, the researcher identified and analyzed with the help of a validator as a supporting instrument besides the data from McDonald's webpage content in order to get a precise data analysis.

The technique applied in this research is study document. Study document is a term broadly to refer to printed and other materials relevant to a study, including public records, personal documents, and physical artifacts (Merriam, 1998: 70).

This research uses documentation technique in collecting data. According to Bowen (2009), documentation is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-based) material. Besides, documentation requires that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

In the research, the data should be validated before undergoing analysis. This part shows the way the researcher can get the validity because the validity of the data is very important and needed. According to the definition of Kuhnert and McCauley (1996: 238), the validity of the data gathered from employees is directly tied to their perception of trust toward the organization. In the validation process, the researcher used triangulation. According to Denzin (1970), triangulation is one of the strategies to enhance internal validity using investigator and source of data to confirm the emerging findings.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Types of Deixis in the McDonald's Webpage Content

Levinson (1983, p. 62) has stated that deixis has five types of deixis. They are:

#### 1) Personal Deixis

Personal deixis concerns with the encoding of the participants in the speech event in which the utterance in question is delivered. The first person refers to the speaker, second person refers to addressee, and third person refers to other participant in the situation of speech. (Levinson, 198, p.68). Personal deixis is divided into three categories:

## a) First person

First person deixis is the grammar of the speaker's reference himself. First person deixis is deictic reference that refers to the speaker. The pronouns of first-person deixis are (Our and We), for example:

“About **Our** Food”

The linguistic unit “*About Our Food*” is the header of the McDonald's webpage. The deixis is “*Our*”. It is categorized into first person deixis and refers to the webpage content writer. It refers to the McDonald's team.

“**We**'re Passionate About Our Food”

The word “*we*” is plural pronoun of first-person deixis in Levinson's theory. The deixis “*we*” has different forms of subject and object in English. “*We*” is used as a subject and it changes to pronoun “*us*” when it is used as object. The referent meaning of the person deixis “*we*” is the McDonald's team.

## b) Second person

Second person deixis refers to the encoding of the speaker's reference to one or more address. The pronouns of second person deixis are (*You and Your*)

*“From adding more balanced options to our Happy Meal®, to serving up fresh beef Quarter Pounder® burgers that are cooked when **you** order, we're always finding ways to show our commitment to our customers and our food.”*

McDonald's team explains how they prepare orders for their customers. However, McDonald's uses word “*you*” instead of “consumers” or “costumers”. The word “*you*” is categorized as singular pronoun as second person deixis based on Levinson's theory. The word “*you*” refers to McDonald's costumers.

*“Every day, our kitchens work to prepare your food just the way you like it.”*

The use of the phrase “*your food*” refers to McDonald's costumers. This is because McDonald's sells a variety of food menus.

## c) Third person

Third person refers to the reference of person and entities that is neither speaker but addressees of the utterance in question. The pronoun of third person is (*them, their, it*), for example:

*“Just as every family around the world is different, our Happy Meal changes with **them**”*

The word “*them*” is categorized as third person deixis because this deictic expression does not refer to something that is between McDonald's and costumers, but points to something outside of that. The word “*them*” refers to families around the world.

*“Change is good, especially when it means adding new tastes to our menu”*

The word “*it*” in the sentence above refers to the word “change” because the word “*it*” refers to a McDonald's change. Based on Levinson's theory, “*it*” is classified as third person deixis.

## 2) Time Deixis

Levinson (1983, p. 77) has stated that time deixis makes ultimate reference to participant-role. So, it is important to distinguish the moment of utterance from the moment of reception. It functions to indicate the time at which the speaker is producing the utterance, for example: now, yesterday, tomorrow, today, last months, afternoon, etc.

*“We believe in the responsible use of antibiotics important to human medicine\* to help preserve their effectiveness for human and animal health **in the future**”*

The phrase in bold “*in the future*” is categorized as the time deixis based on Levinson's theory. It is used to indicate the time in future time.

*“The Happy Meal® has been enjoyed by families around the world for **decades**, bringing people together to share moments and create lasting memories.”*

The word “*decades*” is categorized as time deixis because decade means period of ten years. The word “*decades*” in this sentence refers to the Happy Meal that can be enjoyed since more than ten years ago.

*“We recognize the important role we have in feeding millions of people **every day**, and in providing families with a variety of choices to meet their needs.”*

The phrase “*every day*” is classified as the time deixis based on Levinson’s theory. The phrase “*every day*” suggests that McDonald’s never closes a single day.

*“**Today**, McDonald’s USA is 60% of the way to our goal, and in 2020, we sourced more than 1.1 Billion cage-free eggs for our U.S”*

The word “*today*” is identified as the time deixis based on Levinson’s theory of time deixis. This is because the word “*today*” has the interpretation on knowing the relevant time. The word “*today*” here is used to show the situation on the present time. The referent meaning of the word deixis “*today*” is the present time, when the McDonald’s achieves their goal.

### 3) Place Deixis

Levinson (1983, p. 80) has stated that place deixis concerns with the encoding of spatial locations relative to the location of the participants in the speech. There are some pure place deictic words in English like the adverbs “*here*” and “*there*” and the demonstrative pronouns “*this*” and “*that*”, for example:

*“In 2017 we set out to eliminate the highest priority antibiotics across our global chicken supply chain.*

*We didn’t stop **there**. In December 2018, McDonald’s announced a policy to reduce the overall use of antibiotics important to human health, in our beef supply chain. Our policy covers for our top 10 beef sourcing markets around the world, including the U.S., representing more than 85% of our global beef supply”*

From the example sentence, it can be seen that McDonald’s mentions their movement about antibiotics policies which have been launched since 2017 in the US and then one year later, they announced the policy around the world.

### 4) Social Deixis

Social deixis concerns with the aspect of sentences, which the establishment is determined by certain realities of the social situation in which the speech act occurs (Levinson, 1983, p. 85). It can be inferred that social deixis refers to the level of the relationship between a person and information. Social Deixis is divided into:

#### a) Relational Social Deixis

Relational social deixis is a deictic reference to some social characteristics of referent apart from any relative ranking of referents or deictic reference to social relationship between speaker and addressee, speaker and the person who is talked to, the addressee and the person who is talked to. Relational Social Deixis consists of my husband, daughter, my teacher, her students, their cousin, family, friends, etc., for example:

*“By joining forces with **our partners**, our beef sustainability goal is to influence industry-wide changes on a global scale”*

The phrase “*our partners*” is classified as the relational social deixis based on Levinson’s theory which any relative of social relationship between writer and addressee. The linguistic unit “*our partners*” has a referent meaning to person or organization engaged with McDonald’s.

## b) Absolute social deixis

Absolute social deixis a deictic reference usually expressed in certain forms of address, which will include no comparison of the ranking of the speaker and addressee. An example of absolute deixis is: your honor, Mr. President, your majesty, etc.

Example:

*“**Parents** are looking for menu choices that they can feel good about feeding their kids, and that’s why we’re focused on evolving the Happy Meal and making balanced meals more accessible to families across the globe”*

In the datum SH/84/SAD, the word “*parents*” is categorized as the absolute social deixis and it is, usually expressed for the writer and the addressee with no comparison of ranking. McDonald’s mentions parents in the sentence to indicate McDonald’s customers.

## 5) Discourse Deixis

Levinson (1983, p. 85) has stated that discourse deixis deals with the use of expressions within some utterances to refer to some portion of the discourse contents of that utterance (including the use of the utterance itself). Discourse deixis are next, this, that. The deictic words used here are the demonstratives “this” and “that”. This can be used to refer to a portion of the discourse and that to previous portion.

*“Building on **this** progress, in 2017 we set out to eliminate the highest priority antibiotics across our global chicken supply chain”*

The sentence above is written by McDonald’s content writer as the webpage content producer. McDonald’s explains their movement progress. From the example sentence, the word “*this*” is classified as the discourse deixis and it is used to explain the upcoming portion of the discourse according to Levinson’s theory.

*“Burgers are an integral part of our menu, but **that’s** just one of the reasons we’re on a journey to advance more sustainable beef production”*

The linguistic unit “*that’s*” in bold is classified as the discourse deixis based on Levinson’s theory and it is used to explain the thing in the prior section of the discourse. The word “*that*” has referent meaning to the burgers

## 3.2. The Referents Meaning of the Deixis Used by McDonald’s Webpage Content

## 1) The Referent Meaning of Person Deixis in the McDonald’s Webpage content

Personal deixis concerns with the encoding of the participants in the speech event in which the utterance in question is delivered. The first-person deixis refers to the speaker, second person refers to addressee and third person refers to other participant in the situation of speech.

## a) First Person Deixis

The first-person deixis refers to the speaker/writer. Based on Levinson’s theory, “we” and “our” are used as the first-person deixis.

*“About **Our** Food”*

The phrase is written on the McDonald’s webpage and this is the title of the webpage. The word “*our*” has referent meaning to McDonald’s who design the webpage.

*“At McDonald’s, **we** take great care to ensure that what we serve every day is safe, quality food”*

McDonald’s team explains their food quality in their restaurants. The webpage writer uses the word “*we*” to replace their team. The word “*we*” refers to McDonald’s team.

## b) Second Person Deixis

The second person deixis refers to the addressee. Based on Levinson’s theory, “you” and “your” are used as second person deixis. Below is the referent meaning of the deixis used by McDonald’s content

writer in the McDonald's webpage content. The word "you" and "your" have referent meaning to the McDonald's Costumers.

*"Every day, our kitchens, work to prepare **your food**, just the way you like it"*

The bolded pronouns "you" and "your" are classified as the second person deixis based on Levinson's theory. The referent meaning of both "you" and "your" is the costumers of McDonald's.

### c) Third Person Deixis

The third person deixis is deictic reference to a referent that is not identified as the speaker or addressee. Based on Levinson's theory, "they", "them", "their", and "it" are used as third person deixis. The following indicates the referent meaning of the deixis used by McDonald's content writer in the McDonald's webpage entitled About our Food. The words "they", "them", "their", and "it" have referent meaning to the McDonald's costumers.

*"Parents are looking for menu choices that **they** can feel good about feeding **their** kids, and that's why we're focused on evolving the Happy Meal and making balanced meals more accessible to families across the globe"*

The words in bold "they" and "their" are classified as the third person deixis based on Levinson's theory. The sentence above is addressed to the parents. The referent meaning of "they" and "their" is the parents that choose to give McDonald's products for their kids.

*"Just as every family around the world is different, our Happy Meal changes with them."*

The word "them" in the sentence above is classified as third person deixis based on Levinson's theory. The referent meaning of the word "them" in the sentence above is families around the world

*"Change is good, especially when **it** means adding new tastes to our menu"*

The word "it" in the sentence is classified as third person deixis based on Levinson's theory. The word "it" refers to the change made by McDonald's.

## 2) The Referent Meaning of Time Deixis in the McDonald's Webpage content

Time deixis is used to indicate the when the writer produced the sentence.

*"**Every day**, our kitchens work to prepare your food just the way you like it"*

In the sentence, time deixis is used by webpage content producer. The word "every day" is an adverbial phrase made up of the adjective every and noun day. Adverbs describe verbs, adjective, or other adverbs, but not nouns. the phrase every day describes the verbs prepare by saying when it happens. The word "every day" refers to the day when McDonald's opens the restaurants from Sunday to Saturday 24 hours a day.

*"**Today**, McDonald's USA is 60% of the way to our goal(B), and in 2020, we sourced more than 1.1 Billions cage-free eggs for our U.S. restaurants, some of which are used in our Egg McMuffin®."*

This webpage was published by McDonald's in 2022. They explain their target in 2025. However, they already reached 60% of their target in 2022. The word in bold "today" is categorized as the time deixis based on Levinson's theory. It is also called as the adverb of time. The referent meaning of "today" aims to indicate the period in present time.

## 3) The Referent Meaning of Place Deixis in the McDonald's Webpage content

Place deixis concerns with the encoding of spatial locations relative to the location of the participant in the text.

*“In August of 2016, we accomplished our goal to only source chickens in the U.S. not treated with antibiotics important to human medicine. Building on this progress, in 2017 we set out to eliminate the highest priority antibiotics across our global chicken supply chain(B).*

*We didn’t stop there. In December 2018, McDonald’s announced a policy to reduce the overall use of antibiotics important to human health, in our beef supply chain. Our policy covers for our top 10 beef sourcing markets around the world, including the U.S., representing more than 85% of our global beef supply.”*

This sentence is presented in the subheading section entitled Antibiotics Policies. McDonald’s explains the movement to reduce the overall use of antibiotics important to human health. In 2016, McDonald’s only targeted the U.S. as the first country. Then, in 2018 McDonald’s announced that the policy covered the market around the world. The word “*there*” is classified as place deixis based on Levinson’s theory and it is used to indicate the place mentioned by McDonald’s. The word “*there*” has referent meaning to the U.S.

#### 4) The Referent Meaning of Social Deixis in the McDonald’s Webpage content

According to Levinson (1983:89), social deixis concerns with aspect of sentences which reflects or establishes or is determined by certain of the social situation in which the speech act occurs.

##### a) Absolute Social deixis

Absolute social deixis is the reference usually expressed in certain forms of address and it does not include comparison of the ranking of the speaker and addressee.

*“Parents are looking for menu choices that they can feel good about feeding their kids, and that’s why we’re focused on evolving the Happy Meal and making balanced meals more accessible to families across the globe”*

The word “parents” is categorized as the absolute social deixis which is usually expressed to refer to the writer and the addressee with no comparison of ranking. McDonald’s mentions parents in the sentence to indicate McDonald’s customers.

##### b) Relational social Deixis

Relational social deixis is referent apart from any relative ranking of referents or deictic reference to social relationship between speaker and addressee, speaker and the person who is talked to, the addressee and the person who is talked to. There are three data in this aspect.

*“From adding more balanced options to our Happy Meal®, to serving up fresh beef Quarter Pounder® burgers that are cooked when you order, we’re always finding ways to show our commitment to **our customers** and our food.”*

The phrase “*our customers*” is classified as the relational social deixis based on Levinson’s theory in which any relative of social relation between the writer and addressee. The linguistic unit “*our customers*” has referent meaning to the McDonald’s customers or the buyers and sellers.

*“By joining forces with our **partners**, our beef sustainability goal is to influence industry-wide changes on a global scale”*

The word “*partners*” is classified as Relational social deixis based on Levinson’s theory in which any relative of social relation between the writer and addressee. The word “*partners*” has referent meaning to the farmers who cultivate McDonald’s staple foods and beverages.

#### 5) The Referent Meaning of Discourse Deixis in the McDonald’s Webpage content

Discourse deixis concerns with the use of expressions within some sentences to refer to some parts of the discourse containing that sentence (including the use of sentence itself).

*“Burgers are an integral part of our menu, but that’s just one of the reasons we’re on a journey to advance more sustainable beef production.”*

The word “*that*” is classified as the discourse deixis based on Levinson’s theory which is used to explain the thing in prior part of the discourse. The word “*that*” has referent meaning to the burgers mentioned before.

The analysis focusing on referent meaning of the deixis used in the McDonald’s webpage content shows that McDonald’s often use person deixis in addressing McDonald’s teams and McDonald’s customers. The followings are also identified: the use of social deixis to address McDonald’s partners and the relation, the use of discourse deixis for explaining the discourse in upcoming and prior part about the McDonald’s content in the McDonald’s webpage. Place deixis is also used to mention the location. Lastly, time deixis is used for referring the specific time.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The research aims to identify the types of deixis used by McDonald’s webpage content. There are five types of deixis according to Levinson’s theory that are employed on McDonald’s webpage.

There are 94 data of deixis discovered in McDonald’s webpage content. The data in the form of deixis are classified into five types. They are person deixis, time deixis, place deixis, social deixis and discourse deixis. In this research, person deixis is the most dominant form used by McDonald’s. This happens because McDonald’s often use first, second, and, third person pronouns in their sentences. Time deixis is also the most frequently used deixis by McDonald’s after person deixis. Next, the third most used deixis is social deixis, followed by discourse deixis, and the last is place deixis which is the least used by McDonald’s on the webpage content.

The investigation on the referent meaning of the deixis used in McDonald’s webpage content has revealed that McDonald’s often use person deixis in addressing McDonald’s teams and McDonald’s customers, the use of social deixis to address McDonald’s partners and the relation, the use of discourse deixis for explaining the discourse in upcoming and prior sections of the McDonald’s content on the McDonald’s webpage. Also, place deixis is used to mention the location, and the time deixis is used for referring to specific time.

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