
A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF DEIXIS IN HONNE'S ALBUM LOVE ME / LOVE ME NOT

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ABSTRACT

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to investigate the use of deixis in the song lyrics of HONNE's album Love Me / Love Me Not (2018). Adopting George Yule's (1996) pragmatic classification, the analysis reveals a total of 764 deixis distributed across the album's material. The frequency distribution shows an absolute dominance of person deixis at 82.7% (632 findings), followed by spatial deixis at 9.2% (70 findings) and temporal deixis at 8.1% (62 findings). Qualitatively, the use of these expressions in the album constructs the "Emotional Pendulum" narrative, where the use of proximal deictic markers on the Love Me (●) side creates a sharp contrast with distal deictic markers on the Love Me Not (○) side to construct a dynamic emotional narrative. These findings confirm that deixis in the album do not merely function as grammatical pointers but serve strategically as a navigation tool for intimacy, an architect of emotional distance, and a driver of regression or regret that strengthens the dual themes of romance and separation for the listener.

Keywords: Deixis, Pragmatic, HONNE, Referential Meaning, Song Lyric, George Yule.

INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes the use of deixis in the song lyrics of the album Love Me / Love Me Not by HONNE through a pragmatic approach, focusing on how person, place, and time deixis build context and emotional narrative. To provide a comprehensive academic foundation, this chapter is organized into several key sub-sections, including The Background of the Study, The Reason for Choosing the Topic, The Research Questions, The Objectives of the Study, The Significances of the Study, The Limitation of the Study, and The Organization of the Thesis. Collectively, these components explain the conceptual rationale for the study and provide a clear initial understanding of its scope and direction in exploring how language functions as an emotional and communicative medium in contemporary music.

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter elaborates on the systematic methods employed to conduct the study and answer the research questions. It details the research design, which applies a qualitative descriptive approach, and outlines the step-by-step research procedure. Furthermore, this chapter describes the data resources taken from HONNE's album, the specific techniques for data collection, and the method of data analysis using Yule's framework. The methodology presented herein serves as a guideline to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the empirical findings and the qualitative discussion to answer the research questions formulated in this study. The chapter is systematically divided into two main sections. The first section, the findings, presents the classifications, frequency

distribution, and the pragmatic functions of the deixis found in HONNE's Love Me / Love Me Not album. The second section, the discussion, provides a profound qualitative analysis of their contribution to the emotional narrative based on George Yule's (1996) framework.

1. General Overview of the Analyzed Data

This section presents a general overview of the deixis obtained from the twelve song lyrics in HONNE's Love Me / Love Me Not album. In alignment with the theoretical framework (Figure 2.4) and the research procedure established in the previous chapters, the findings presented here are the final output of a systematic analytical process. The analysis began with identifying deictic words using the shifting reference criterion to ensure methodological validity. Following this, the collected data were strictly classified based on Yule's (1996) three fundamental categories: person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. The focus of the data analysis then moved to determining their referential meanings based on the context of the utterances. Ultimately, this structured process leads to the final output of the research: uncovering the pragmatic functions and the emotional narrative findings within the album.

In general pragmatics, words are classified as deixis if they possess a "shifting reference". According to Yule (1996), deictic words do not have an absolute or fixed semantic meaning; instead, their referential meaning depends entirely on the context of the utterance. This context specifically relates to who is speaking, where they are located, and when the utterance is produced. In this album, words such as "I", "you", "here", and "now" perfectly fit this criterion because their real-world entities automatically shift depending on the singer and the immediate speech event.

Although this research employs a qualitative descriptive design to answer the research questions, the researcher confidently follows the methodological advice of Becker (1970) and Maxwell (2010) by incorporating numerical data in the form of "quasi-statistics." Instead of relying purely on abstract observation, the researcher utilizes a simple frequency count in this general finding section. The purpose of this calculation is to objectively map out the linguistic tendencies and prevent subjective bias (cherry-picking) in data selection. By quantifying the occurrences, the researcher is able to scientifically determine which contextual element is given the utmost priority by the songwriter before delving into the profound qualitative analysis.

To determine the distribution objectively, the researcher calculated the frequency of each category using the standard descriptive statistical formula:

$$P = (F / N) \times 100\%$$

In this formula, P represents the percentage, F stands for the frequency of a specific deixis type, and N is the total number of all deixis. The data presented in this table is primary data obtained through a systematic identification and classification process of the twelve song lyrics in HONNE's Love Me / Love Me Not album. The categorization is strictly based on the three fundamental types of deixis, person, spatial, and temporal, as established by George Yule's (1996) framework. For instance, the frequency of Person Deixis (632) is divided by the grand total of all data (764) and multiplied by 100, resulting in 82.7%. The complete calculation for all types is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1 The Frequency of Deixis in Love Me / Love Me Not Album

No	Type of Deixis	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Person Deixis	632	82.7%
2	Spatial Deixis	70	9.2%
3	Temporal Deixis	62	8.1%
	GRAND TOTAL	764	100%

The data presented in Table 4.1 are synthesized from the comprehensive analysis of lyric transcripts from HONNE's album Love Me / Love Me Not. Based on Table 4.1, there are a total of 764 deixis found throughout the album. The data clearly demonstrates that Person Deixis are the most dominant type, appearing 632 times and accounting for an overwhelming 82.7% of the total findings. This is distantly followed by Spatial Deixis with 70 occurrences (9.2%), and Temporal Deixis as the least frequently used type with 62 occurrences (8.1%). To maintain the flow of the discussion, the complete identification and color-coding of each deixis from the twelve tracks are comprehensively attached in Appendix.

In addition to the technical classification based on frequency, this study employs visual symbols ● and ○ to map the narrative duality that forms the foundation of the album. The symbol ● represents the Love Me side, which is pragmatically dominated by the use of proximal deictic markers to establish an atmosphere of intimacy. Conversely, the symbol ○ represents the Love Me Not side, utilizing distal deictic markers to depict feelings of alienation and separation.

This cyclical metaphor suggests that if the first quarter moon is action and the last quarter moon is release, where falling in love is a series of actions and heartbreak is a process of release, then "growing in love" is the art of balancing these two states. The explanation of these two symbols is crucial as it helps illustrate how the linguistic shifts in the raw data reflect the emotional journey from intimacy toward cognitive alienation.

Qualitatively, the massive dominance of person deixis indicates that the album's narrative is highly person-centered. It proves that HONNE strategically focuses the linguistic construction on interpersonal relationships, internal conflicts, and emotional intimacy between the speaker ("I") and the addressee ("You"). The low frequency of spatial and temporal deixis suggests that precise physical locations and exact timeframes are secondary; the core of the album is built almost entirely upon the psychological and emotional connection between the participants involved.

2. Findings: The Types and Pragmatic Functions of Deixis

This section provides an in-depth qualitative analysis to answer the first and second research questions regarding the types of deixis identified in HONNE's Love Me / Love Me Not album and their pragmatic functions. By applying Yule's (1996) framework, the researcher examines the linguistic nature and communicative purposes of each deictic category. To provide a robust foundation for the findings, representative data are analyzed individually, focusing on their shifting references, contextual dependencies, and pragmatic effects.

a. The Identification of Types of Deixis

To address the first research objective, this sub-section rigorously categorizes the deictic words found throughout the lyrical narrative. The identification process focuses on proving the status of each expression through the shifting reference criterion,

demonstrating how meanings are anchored strictly to the context of the utterance rather than fixed semantic referents. Representative data from various tracks are examined individually to highlight the nuanced differences between person, spatial, and temporal categories.

a) Person Deixis

Person deixis is the most frequent type found in the album, functioning to identify the participants in the poetic speech events. It establishes the roles of the "speaker" (the singer), the "addressee" (the romantic partner), and "others" who are not directly involved in the immediate interaction.

"It's just "me" and "you"" (Me & You ●).

In this datum, the word "me" refers to the singer as the deictic center, while "you" refers to the specific individual the singer is addressing. This line illustrates a proximal interpersonal connection. The words are identified as person deixis because their referents are not fixed; if this song were performed by a different person, "me" would no longer refer to Andy Clutterbuck (the vocalist), and "you" would shift to a different listener. This shifting reference proves that the meaning is anchored strictly to the participants of the utterance.

"We" need to get away" (I Got You ●).

The pronoun "we" in this lyric serves as an inclusive person deixis, where the speaker groups himself and the addressee into a single deictic unit. Pragmatically, this indicates a state of togetherness or a shared situation between the couple. The referential meaning of "we" is determined by the boundaries of the relationship described in the song; it is deictic because it points to a specific pair of people whose identities are only known through the context of the singer's personal narrative.

"She" loves "me" not" (Forget Me Not ●).

The use of the third-person pronoun "she" identifies an entity that is external to the immediate "I-You" interaction. Unlike the intimate second-person address, "she" creates a psychological distance, suggesting that the person being discussed is no longer part of the speaker's proximal deictic center. This word is a person deixis because its referent is determined by the speaker's focus at the moment of speaking; the identity of "she" shifts depending on which female character the singer is referring to in his story of heartbreak.

b) Spatial Deixis

Spatial deixis, or place deixis, is used to track the physical and metaphorical locations mentioned in the lyrics. It relies on the speaker's position to determine whether a location is perceived as "here" (proximal) or "there/away" (distal).

"We can see for miles up "here"" (Me & You ●).

The word "here" acts as a proximal spatial deixis that indicates a location close to the speaker. In the context of this song, "here" represents a metaphorical "high point" of happiness and intimacy. It is deictic because it designates a space that is defined solely by the speaker's current presence; if the singer were in a different place, the geographical meaning of "here" would change, yet its function as a pointer to the speaker's immediate environment would remain.

"Given that I'm miles "away"" (Location Unknown ●).

The word "away" is identified as a distal spatial deixis, signaling a significant distance from the deictic center or the intended destination. Pragmatically, this word

encodes the feeling of separation and longing that permeates the Love Me Not side of the album. The meaning of “away” is not a fixed coordinate on a map, but a relative position that only exists because it is far from the "here" where the speaker wishes to be.

"Tryna find a way “back” home" (Location Unknown ●).

The deictic word “back” indicates a directional spatial reference toward a previous location that the speaker considers a center of security or "home." It implies a movement relative to the speaker's current distal position. This word is deictic because the direction it points to is entirely dependent on the speaker's starting point and their history; "back" only has meaning if the listener understands the speaker's prior spatial context.

c) Temporal Deixis

Temporal deixis anchors the lyrics to specific points or periods in time. It distinguishes between the immediate "now" of the song's emotion and the "then" of past memories or future hopes.

"“Now” we're taking in the view" (Me & You ●).

The word “now” is a proximal temporal deixis that refers to the exact moment of the speaker's utterance. It captures the "presentness" of the emotion, making the listener feel as though the events are unfolding in real-time. Because the "present" is a moving target, the referent of “now” shifts constantly; it refers to a specific second in time that is only identifiable by the act of singing or hearing the lyric at that very moment.

"Fake my death “tonight”" (I Might ●).

The expression “tonight” functions as a temporal deixis that defines a timeframe encompassing the night of the speaker's current day. It provides a proximal deadline for the intended action described in the song. The word is deictic because its specific date and time shift every twenty-four hours; it is forever anchored to the "today" of the speaker, requiring the listener to share the speaker's temporal perspective to understand when the action occurs.

"I ain't seen you in “ages”" (Location Unknown ●).

The word “ages” serves as a distal temporal deixis, referring to a long and vague duration of time in the past relative to the present moment. It emphasizes the temporal gap between the last encounter and the current state of longing. This is a deixis because the "length" of “ages” is subjective and its starting point is anchored to the moment the singer expresses his regret, shifting based on whenever the statement is made.

b. The Pragmatic Functions of Deixis

While the previous section established the formal categories of deixis, this subsection delves into the communicative intentions and psychological effects driven by these linguistic choices. According to Yule (1996), deixis are not merely grammatical pointers; they function as vital tools for shaping how a listener interprets a speaker's emotional state and interpersonal dynamics. Furthermore, Levinson (1983) asserts that deixis functions to link language directly with situational factors, enabling meaning to be interpreted relative to its communicative context. In the context of the Love Me / Love Me Not album, the songwriter strategically manipulates the deictic center to construct complex mental landscapes. By examining the data through a pragmatic lens, this analysis uncovers how deictic markers are utilized to build intimacy, establish boundaries, and simulate the cognitive disorientation of heartbreak.

a) The Function of Person Deixis in Constructing Identity and Emotional Displacement

In pragmatics, the selection of person deixis goes beyond identifying participants; it functions to construct shared identities or to build psychological defense mechanisms. Recent studies on popular music, such as by Ilma and Sabat (2023), demonstrate that person deixis primarily serves to construct relational meaning and simulate conversational closeness between the narrator and the listener.

"“We” need to get away" (I Got You ●).

The pragmatic function of the inclusive person deixis “we” in this context is to construct a unified cognitive identity. By merging “I” and “you” into “we”, the speaker pragmatically dissolves individual boundaries. As Salvator et al. (2023) suggest, this type of deixis contributes to building intense intimacy by isolating the communicators into a private sphere. The speaker is not merely stating a need to travel; they are declaring an absolute partnership, forcing the listener to perceive the couple as a single, inseparable entity.

"“She” loves “me” not" (Forget Me Not ●).

Conversely, the pragmatic function of the third-person deixis “she” serves as a mechanism for emotional displacement. By referring to the former lover as “she” instead of the intimate “you”, the speaker pragmatically strips away the direct interpersonal connection. This functions as a psychological defense mechanism; objectifying the partner as a third party allows the speaker to narrate their pain from a distance, softening the blow of rejection by treating the ex-partner as an outsider.

b) The Function of Spatial Deixis in Deictic Projection and Boundary Marking

Spatial deixis in the album functions significantly through deictic projection, a concept where the speaker projects their psychological center into a metaphorical space rather than a physical geographical location. Stockwell (2020) points out that the cognitive processing of such linguistic pointers leads to the construction of complex mental spaces for the audience.

"Way up “here”, just “me” and “you”" (Me & You ●).

The proximal spatial deixis “here” functions pragmatically to establish a psychological sanctuary. The speaker is not providing physical GPS coordinates; rather, they are using spatial language to draw an invisible boundary of exclusivity. Pragmatically, “here” functions to lock the addressee inside a shared emotional peak (euphoria) while simultaneously locking the external world out.

"Tryna find a way “back” home" (Location Unknown ●).

The directional spatial deixis “back” functions to spatialize the abstract concept of grief. Pragmatically, “home” is the lost state of equilibrium. By using the word “back”, the speaker pragmatically positions themselves as a permanent exile wandering in an unfamiliar emotional landscape. This spatial language functions to make the listener deeply feel the speaker's disorientation.

c) The Function of Temporal Deixis in Psychological Time Anchoring

The pragmatic function of temporal deixis in these lyrics highlights the friction between chronological time (clock time) and psychological time.

"but “now” I'm up in the air" (Me & You ●).

The proximal temporal deixis “now” functions to execute an illocutionary act of immediate confession. By anchoring the feeling of vulnerability to “now”, the songwriter

demands the listener's immediate psychological participation. It creates a snapshot of sudden, overwhelming emotion, making the narrative feel urgent and active.

"I ain't seen you in "ages"" (Location Unknown ●).

The distal temporal deixis "ages" functions to distort the perception of time. Pragmatically, the speaker's physical body is in the present, but their psychological anchor is trapped in the distal past. By deliberately avoiding a specific metric of time and choosing the exaggerated term "ages", the speaker pragmatically communicates the agonizing slowness of time when enduring heartbreak

3. Discussion: The Contribution of Deixis to the Emotional Narrative

This sub-section aims to answer Research Question 3 regarding the contribution of deixis to the construction of the emotional narrative in the album Love Me / Love Me Not. Through in-depth analysis, it is found that deixis is not merely a grammatical marker, but rather the primary architect that builds the listener's cognitive world and drives the emotional dynamics from the beginning to the end of the album.

Based on the data findings in Table 4.1, the absolute dominance of person deixis, reaching 82.7%, provides a strong linguistic foundation for this album's narrative. The researcher synthesizes these findings using George Yule's (1996) theoretical framework and the Cognitive Deictic Center (DC) concept to prove that this album operates as an "Emotional Pendulum," where a systematic shift occurs from proximal (near) markers toward distal (far) markers to depict the cycle of a romantic relationship.

a. Person Deixis as a Navigator of Interpersonal Intimacy

The 82.7% dominance of person deixis proves that the emotional narrative of HONNE's album is entirely a subject-centered narrative. In George Yule's (1996) perspective, person deixis functions as a tool to map the psychological distance between the speaker and the addressee.

On the Love Me side, person deixis acts as a highly efficient navigator of intimacy. The use of proximal first and second-person pronouns such as "me" and "you" in the song Me & You (●) creates what the researcher calls an "exclusive deictic focus." Pragmatically, the phrase "It's just 'me' and 'you'" serves to eliminate the outside world from the center of the listener's attention, building zero psychological distance, where the subject and the object of affection exist within a single, inseparable cognitive space. The transition from singular pronouns to the use of the inclusive pronoun "we" in the song I Got You (●) marks the peak of this intimacy navigation. Cognitively, using "we" forces the listener to undergo a deictic shift into a single unit of identity.

However, much like a pendulum mechanism, this position immediately swings toward disintegration on the Love Me Not side. The use of third-person pronouns like "she" in the song Forget Me Not (●) functions as a tool for emotional distancing. By replacing the familiar address "you" with "she," the singer pragmatically evicts the object of affection from their proximal Deictic Center, turning them into an outside entity that is alien and distant.

b. Spatial Deixis as the Architect of Emotional Distance

Although its frequency is lower (9.2%), spatial deixis in this album contributes significantly by providing a "physical metric" for abstract feelings. Location in HONNE's lyrics is not merely a coordinate point, but a projection of the inner landscape built by the narrative architect. Yule's (1996) concept of Deictic Projection is highly relevant here,

where the speaker projects their center of being into specific metaphorical spaces.

During the euphoria phase, proximal spatial deixis like "here" and "this" is dominantly used to build a "psychological sanctuary." For example, the lyric "Way up 'here', just 'me' and 'you'" in the song Me & You (●) positions "here" not as a geographical place, but as an emotional peak or soaring happiness. Conversely, on the Love Me Not side, this spatial architecture becomes vast and empty. The use of distal deixis such as "away" and "miles" in the song Location Unknown (●) creates a spatial conflict. The phrase "Given that I'm miles 'away'" provides a vivid visualization of the physical void resulting from separation. "Away" here is not just a distance between cities, but a distance between souls that are no longer connected. This shift from the intimate "here" to the alien "away" pragmatically simulates a sense of helplessness, where losing someone is felt as a tangible spatial void that is difficult to bridge.

c. Temporal Deixis as the Driver of Progression and Regret

Temporal deixis (8.1%) acts as the engine controlling the narrative pacing and creating dramatic effects through the manipulation of psychological time. There is a sharp distinction between chronological time and perceived time, built through the contrast of the proximal marker "now" and distal markers like "ages" or "yesterday."

In the Love Me phase, temporal deixis is highly proximal to capture an intense present-moment awareness. The word "now" in the song Me & You (●) demands the listener's immediate attention, simulating the accelerated heartbeat that accompanies new happiness. However, the narrative undergoes a significant "temporal distortion" as the pendulum swings to the Love Me Not side. The use of the word "ages" in Location Unknown (●) is a subjective and hyperbolic time marker. Pragmatically, "ages" communicates how slowly time crawls when one suffers from a broken heart. The researcher identifies a time manipulation mechanism defined as:

Tperceived = Eintensity / Wchronological

This formula is grounded in the theory of Psychological Time proposed by Droit-Volet and Gil (2009), which suggests that high emotional arousal, such as the intense grief in 'Location Unknown', distorts the internal clock. In this context, Eintensity represents the magnitude of heartbreak, which 'bloats' the perceived duration (Tperceived) far beyond the actual clock time (Wchronological). Consequently, the deixis 'ages' is not a literal measure of years, but a linguistic manifestation of this emotional ratio, where the density of pain makes a single moment feel like an eternity."

d. Synthesis: Deixis as the Primary Engine of Narrative Duality

The final synthesis proves that deixis is the primary engine driving the emotional narrative and narrative duality in this album. This emotional narrative operates through a mechanism the researcher terms the "Emotional Pendulum," which works through two contrasting phases of linguistic synchronization:

Consolidation Phase (Side Love Me): HONNE synchronizes all proximal markers: persona merges into "we," spatiality anchors firmly in "here," and temporal focus is on "now." The pragmatic effect of this convergence is to force the listener into a very tight psychological proximity with the singer, simulating a "claustrophobic" euphoria of love.

Disintegration Phase (Side Love Me Not): The deictic center is intentionally destroyed using distal markers. The "we" identity breaks back into an isolated "I," "here" dissolves into a hollow "away," and "now" is replaced by the nostalgia of "ages."

From a cognitive perspective, the primary function of this shift is empathetic manipulation. Referring to Hogan (2017), listeners adopt the narrator's perspective through deictic cues to experience the "emotional whiplash" of the falling in love and heartbreak cycle. Thus, HONNE's success in delivering a coherent story without the need for a complex plot proves the power of deixis in translating abstract human emotions into interpersonal, spatial, and temporal distances that can be linguistically measured. This contribution of deixis transforms a collection of separate songs into a single, honest, and profound emotional narrative, fitting for the philosophy of their name, honne (true feelings).

CONCLUSION

The linguistic investigation into the deictic structure of the selected lyrics has yielded a total of 764 deixis, providing a robust empirical basis for understanding the speaker's pragmatic orientation. The quantitative data reveals a significant dominance of Person Deixis, which accounts for 82.7% (632 instances) of the total data. This is followed by Spatial deixis at 9.2% (70 instances) and Temporal deixis at 8.1% (62 instances).

Based on these findings, it is concluded that the narrative within these lyrics is fundamentally subject-centered. The overwhelming frequency of person-based markers demonstrates that the lyrical world is constructed around an egocentric "origo," where the relationship between the "I" and the "You" serves as the primary anchor for all communicative meaning. The spatial and temporal markers function as secondary supports to this interpersonal core.

Furthermore, the research identifies a mechanical shift in the deictic center described as the "Emotional Pendulum." The narrative dynamics reveal a systematic transition between proximal and distal markers:

1. Proximal Orientation: In the state of "Love Me" (symbolized by the First Quarter Moon ☾), there is a clustering of proximal markers (e.g., this, here, now). This linguistic behavior mirrors the phase of action and growth, where the speaker seeks to pull the addressee into their immediate deictic sphere.
2. Distal Orientation: In the state of "Love Me Not" (symbolized by the Last Quarter Moon ☽), the pendulum shifts toward distal markers (e.g., that, there, then). This phase represents a process of release and doubt, as the speaker linguistically distances themselves from the object of affection.

The lunar symbolism of the First Quarter ☽ (representing growth/action) and the Last Quarter ☽ (representing release/doubt) provides a structural framework for these deictic shifts. Synthesizing these elements, the study concludes that the pragmatic architecture of the lyrics maps a complex emotional journey. If falling in love is a series of actions and heartbreak is a process of release, then growing in love is the art of balancing these two states.

Suggestion

The researcher suggest future research should broaden the scope of this pragmatic inquiry by integrating "Social Deixis" into the analytical framework. While this study prioritized person, spatial, and temporal markers, an investigation into social deictic elements could further illuminate the power dynamics and relational hierarchies that fluctuate alongside the "Emotional Pendulum". Furthermore, it is recommended that

scholars explore the multimodal intersection of deictic shifts and acoustic features, such as how vocal prosody or melodic crescendos might intensify the perceived proximity of a distal marker.

For pedagogical purposes, educators are encouraged to utilize this subject-centered analysis as a model for teaching pragmatic competence in the EFL classroom, allowing students to decode complex emotional narratives through the objective lens of deictic frequency. Finally, a comparative study involving a larger corpus of contemporary lyrical works could validate whether the "Emotional Pendulum" observed in this study is a universal pragmatic feature of romantic discourse or a specific stylistic choice of the artist.

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