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DEIXIS ANALYSIS IN SOCIAL MEDIA X (TWITTER) POSTS ON *GENOCIDE*

Abstrak

Di era digital, media sosial menjadi platform utama dalam membentuk opini publik terkait isu global, termasuk genosida. Diskusi mengenai genosida di X (sebelumnya Twitter) sering kali bersifat kontekstual dan kompleks, sehingga dapat menimbulkan tantangan dalam interpretasi pesan. Deixis, sebagai konsep pragmatik, berfungsi menghubungkan bahasa dengan konteks untuk mengurangi ambiguitas dalam komunikasi, baik secara lisan maupun tulisan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggunaan deixis dalam unggahan X terkait genosida guna memahami bagaimana pesan disampaikan dan ditafsirkan. Dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui teknik dokumentasi dan dianalisis menggunakan tabel observasi checklist berdasarkan teori deixis Levinson (1983). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa deixis tempat (33%) dan deixis personal (30%) merupakan jenis deixis yang paling dominan, menandakan bahwa lokasi dan identitas memainkan peran sentral dalam wacana genosida di media sosial. Selain itu, ditemukan pula deixis waktu (16%), deixis sosial (9%), dan deixis wacana (12%), yang turut berkontribusi dalam membangun makna kontekstual. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa penggunaan deixis berperan penting dalam menjaga kejelasan komunikasi.

Kata Kunci: Deixis, Genosida, Media Sosial X (Twitter)

Abstract

In the digital age, social media has become a key platform for shaping public opinion on global issues, including genocide. Discussions about genocide on X (formerly Twitter) are often contextualised and complex, which can pose challenges in message interpretation. Deixis, as a pragmatic concept, serves to connect language with context to reduce ambiguity in communication, both oral and written. This study aims to analyse the use of deixis in X's genocide-related posts to understand how messages are conveyed and interpreted. With a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through documentation techniques and analysed using a checklist observation table based on Levinson's (1983) deixis theory. The results show that place deixis (33%) and personal deixis (30%) are the most dominant types of deixis, signalling that location and identity play a central role in genocide discourse on social media. In addition, time deixis (16%), social deixis (9%), and discourse deixis (12%) are also found, which contribute to building contextual meaning. This finding indicates that the use of deixis plays an important role in maintaining clarity of communication.

Keywords: Deixis, Genocide, Social Media X (Twitter)

INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication system used by humans to convey thoughts, feelings, ideas, and information. In the modern era, social media platforms have revolutionised the way individuals communicate, providing a global space to discuss various social, political and humanitarian issues (S & Prakash, 2024). One such platform is X (formerly known as Twitter),

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which is widely used to share opinions, disseminate information, and shape public opinion on pressing global issues, such as genocide.

Genocide is a gross violation of human rights that is not only recorded as a historical tragedy, but also a serious concern. Genocide cases that occurred in various regions, such as Palestine, Congo, and other countries, show that this phenomenon is not only a part of past history, but also an issue that continues to this day. In this context, social media, including platform X (Twitter), has played an important role as a medium to document events, voice opinions, and respond to these human tragedies. However, the language used in discussions related to genocide tends to have quite complex contextual meanings, depending on the temporal, spatial and participant aspects of communication. This dependence on context often creates interpretation challenges, which can lead to confusion or even misunderstanding among X (Twitter) users.

To overcome this confusion, one of the pragmatic studies that can be used is deixis. Deixis is a fundamental concept in linguistics that refers to the use of context-dependent expressions, which associate language with certain elements of time, place, and participants in a communication (Williams, 2019). In its communicative function, deixis facilitates understanding between speaker and listener, or writer and reader, by linking speech or text to certain contextual aspects, thus ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of communication. The importance of understanding deixis lies in its ability to reduce ambiguity and misunderstanding, while providing additional information that supports the context of communication (Wibowo & Naulfar, 2018). In social media, such as platform X (Twitter), messages are often short and limited by the number of characters, making it difficult to convey the full context of information. Without a proper understanding of this context, messages can run the risk of being misunderstood, which in turn can exacerbate misunderstandings or exacerbate existing social tensions.

Levinson (1983, 2004) and Fillmore (1997) (in Diessel, 2014:7), outline general information regarding deictic categories that are commonly identified through a descriptive approach to deixis. The details of the deictic categories can be found in the table presented below.

Table 1. Deictic Categories

Category	Example
Person deixis	<i>I, you</i>
Place deixis	<i>here, there, this, that</i>
Time deixis	<i>now, then, today, yesterday, tomorrow, etc</i>
Social deixis	<i>the latter, the aforementioned</i>
Discourse deixis	<i>tu, vous [French]</i>

Source : Deixis and Demonstratives Journal (2014:7)

Based on Table 1 above, Levinson (1983, 2004) and Fillmore (1997) state that deixis elements consist of five components, namely personal, place, time, social, and discourse. These five types of deixis play an important role in language use and understanding (Mahmudova, 2023). So, the relationship between one deixis and another is very important to know, not only to add insight but this knowledge really needs to be applied to get a better understanding and mastery when doing communicative interactions, especially in online communication.

Various previous studies have examined the use of deixis in the context of social media. Diudonne (2023), in her research entitled ‘Analysis of Deixis in Cameroonian Social Media’, analysed deixis on WhatsApp, Facebook, and Messenger platforms. The findings show that persona deixis, especially the use of the word ‘you,’ is the dominant form of deixis in communication on the three platforms. Meanwhile, research conducted by Anggraini et al. (2024), entitled ‘An Analysis of Deixis Used in Facebook and Instagram Posted by EFL Students’, reveals that the most dominant type of deixis used is persona deixis with a total of 363 data (63.57%), followed by place deixis with 97 data (16.98%), and time deixis with 65 data (11.38%). Furthermore, the study by Putra & Santoso (2023), entitled ‘An Analysis of

Pragmatic Deixis in Social Media’, found that persona deixis was used 26 times with details of the use of pronouns ‘I’ in the first person, ‘you’ and ‘we’ in the second person, and ‘he’ in the third person. In addition, spatial deixis was recorded 6 times with forms such as ‘there,’ ‘that,’ ‘this,’ and ‘here,’ while temporal deixis was found 5 times which included ‘January,’ ‘then,’ ‘soon,’ ‘now,’ and ‘the beginning of the year.’ Discourse deixis was found 2 times, including the phrases ‘there is’ and ‘but.’ This finding shows the variation of deixis usage in the context of communication on social media which depends on the type of platform and its communicative purpose.

The three studies that have been conducted show that personal deixis is the most dominant type of deixis used in communication on various social media platforms. However, based on the analysis of the existing literature, there is a research gap because there is no study that specifically analyzes deixis on social media platform X (Twitter). Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by analyzing the types of deixis that appear in discourse on social media X (Twitter) and identifying the most dominant types of deixis, especially in the context of sensitive issues such as genocide. By using deixis, the speaker/communicator (or writer/reader) can adjust the message or information to be conveyed according to a certain context so as to minimize confusion in communication. By understanding the use of deixis, it is expected to reveal how messages about genocide are conveyed and received by social media users, as well as how deixis plays a role in conveying precise and relevant meanings.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the research population including all posts (tweets) on social media platform X related to the issue of genocide. The research sample was purposively selected, namely posts that contain deixis elements (personal, temporal, spatial, discourse, or social), and include the use of relevant keywords, such as “genocide,” “mass killing,” and other appropriate terms. The accounts come from 50 participants including 20 male accounts, 16 female accounts, 3 media and news company accounts, 1 government & non-profit organization account, 2 news broadcasting accounts, and 8 accounts whose owners are not clearly known. The following is a recapitulation of data on deixis analysis of “mass murder” on platform X (Twitter). Data was collected through documentation in the form of screenshots of posts from bakun that discussed the issue of genocide that occurred in several countries.

The instrument used in this research is a checklist observation table designed based on deictic categories according to Levinson's theory (1983). This instrument is used to identify and classify the deictic elements contained in genocide-related posts on social media X (Twitter). In the analysis stage, each data containing deixis elements is carefully examined, and the identified phrases are color-coded differently based on the relevant deixis categories. This approach aims to simplify the process of categorizing and analyzing data according to the categories that have been determined in the checklist observation table.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Deixis Found in Social Media X (Twitter) Posts about *Genocide*

This section discusses the deixis found in X (Twitter) posts related to genocide, categorized based on Levinson’s (1983) deixis framework. The findings indicate the prevalence of personal, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixis in the analyzed posts, as detailed below.

Table 2. Personal Deixis Found in X (Twitter) Posts about *Genocide*

Types of Person Deixis	Occurrence Frequency
I	12
You	8
They	6
We	3
She	1
He	3

Them	2
Us	1
Your	1
Their	3
Her	2
Nickname	9
Total	51

Based on the data presented in Table 2, the most dominant personal deixis in posts on social media X (Twitter) related to the topic of genocide is the first-person singular pronoun “I” with a total of 12 occurrences. This finding indicates that many posts are written from a personal perspective, reflecting an individual's opinion, experience, or emotional involvement with the issue of genocide. Additionally, the first-person plural pronouns “we” (3 times) and “us” (1 time) appear in several posts, showing an inclusive attitude where users position themselves as part of a collective group. These pronouns suggest solidarity and a sense of shared responsibility, often found in posts advocating for a cause or raising awareness about genocide.

Meanwhile, the second-person pronoun “you” appeared 8 times, indicating direct engagement with the audience. This usage suggests that many posts involve direct communication, either as a call to action, an appeal for awareness, or even accusations toward certain groups or individuals. The second-person possessive pronoun “your”, which appeared once, might serve a persuasive function, encouraging the audience to reflect on their role or responsibility in addressing the issue of genocide.

In contrast, third-person pronouns are also significantly present, emphasizing references to external groups. The third-person plural pronouns “they” (6 times), “them” (2 times) and “their” (3 times) collectively appear 11 times, indicating that users frequently refer to other groups, either as perpetrators or victims of genocide. Similarly, third-person singular pronouns such as “he” (3 times), “she” (1 time) and “her” (2 times) highlight a focus on specific individuals, likely victims or key figures in the genocide. Notably, the use of *nicknames* (9 times) reveals a tendency among users to explicitly mention certain names or aliases, further personalizing the discourse surrounding genocide.

The following is an example of personal deixis used in tweets on X (Twitter) about *Genocide*.

Example 1

Account source: [theravadakritik, 2023](#)

I can't believe so many are still ignoring the Uyghur genocide happening on china right now.

In the example above, the pronoun “I” is included in personal deixis because it refers directly to the speaker or the individual who wrote the statement. In linguistics, personal deixis is categorized into three main types: first, second, and third person, each with singular and plural forms (Gobel et al., 2023). Where first person deixis refers to the speaker, second person to the addressee, and third person to the person being talked about (Latupeirissa, 2016). In this case, “I” is a first person singular pronomina that indicates that the statement is from the author's personal point of view. The use of this word reflects the author's emotional involvement and subjective opinion towards the issue at hand, namely the Uyghur genocide. By using “I”, the author asserts his position as an individual who has a particular view and wants to express his distrust of the attitude of others who ignore the event. Therefore, “I” in this sentence is categorised as a personal deixis because it shows the identity of the speaker in communication. It can be concluded that the function of personal deixis found in the example above is the first-person singular deixis as a pointer to the person who is speaking. Because the personal deixis “I” refers to the first-person singular pronoun, and the tweet upload shows the speaker's personal perspective toward the issue being discussed.

Table 3. Spatial/Place Deixis Found in X (Twitter) Posts about *Genocide*

Types of Place Deixis	Occurrence Frequency
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Jail	1
Where	1
There	2
Countries Name	44
Total	48

As shown in Table 3, place deixis in X (Twitter) posts mostly refers to country names (44 times), such as Palestine, Myanmar, Sudan and Ukraine. This shows that X (Twitter) social media users tend to emphasize specific locations to provide clarity about genocide events. In addition, the use of the word “there” (2 times) shows an indirect reference to the location already mentioned in the previous context. The word “jail” (1 time) indicates a reference to a place of detention that is often associated with political repression, while the word “where” (1 time) appears in the form of a question that questions the existence of those who should act in a genocide situation.

The following is an example place deixis in X (Twitter) posts about *Genocide*.

Example 2

Account source: [KufiyyaPS, 2023](#)

Just 1 hour ago, Israel committed a massacre in Jabalia Camp, Gaza killing 40-50 innocent civilians mostly women and children, the search for survivors is still ongoing.

As seen in the example above, the phrase that shows the use of place deixis can be seen in the phrase in Jabalia Camp, Gaza. This phrase is included in the category of place deixis because it provides a reference that directly and specifically shows the location where the alleged massacre took place. Place deixis is a reference by the speaker to the location where the speech occurs (Palupi, 2019). Place deixis marking is not only limited to the use of words or phrases that refer explicitly to a location, such as the use of the name of a country or region. However, place deixis also includes words or phrases such as *here, there, around, near, far, and so on*.

Table 4. Temporal/Time Deixis Found in X (Twitter) Posts about *Genocide*

Types of Time Deixis	Occurrence Frequency
Today	4
In 2017	2
2 Years Ago	1
Recently	1
Currently	1
Now	3
Right Now	1
Every Minute	1
Just One Hour Ago	1
Ongoing	2
Since 2016	1
In Few Weeks	1
Yesterday	1
150 Years	1
Next Year	1
2 or 3 Days	1
Total	22

Based on Table 4, it is found that time deixis in X (Twitter) posts about genocide varies in indicating the time of the event, whether it is ongoing, just happened, or happened in the past. Temporal or time deixis or time deixis is involvement in the encoding of temporal time points and distance based on the context delivered by the speaker (Wicaksono, 2020 in (Febriza, 2020: 690). The use of the words “today” (4 times) and “now” (3 times) shows that many social media users highlighted *ongoing* events, emphasizing the urgency and real-time nature of the

reported events. This is also supported by the words “right now” (1 time) and “currently” (1 time), which indicate that the event was happening when the user shared the information. Besides that, there are several references to the past, such as “in 2017” (2 times), “since 2016” (1 time), and “150 years” (1 time), which emphasize the connection between the current genocide and wider historical events. The use of “yesterday” (1 time) and “just one hour ago” (1 time) indicates a more detailed level of time specification, suggesting that the information shared is actual and relevant to current conditions.

Some time deixis also indicate the continuity of an event, such as “ongoing” (2 times) and “every minute” (1 time), which illustrates that genocide is not just a momentary event, but continues to occur over a long period. Words like “recently” (1 time) and “in a few weeks” (1 time) show a more flexible time span but still provide a strong temporal context for the reader. Besides that, there are also references to the future, such as “next year” (1 time), which indicates an expectation or prediction about the continuation of the current situation. This shows that in the discussion about genocide in X (Twitter), time is not only used to describe events that have already happened, but also as a tool to build a narrative about the long-term consequences of the conflict.

The following is an example time deixis in X (Twitter) posts about *Genocide*.

Example 3

Account source: [SamEdwardd, 2023](#)

I remember 2 years ago when Israel bombed Gaza, the Israeli defense force posted a video from a Russian missile launch in Ukraine and said it was Hamas. The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) deleted the tweet after it went viral and people called them out for lying. All israelis do is use the media to lie.

As indicated from example above, at the beginning of the sentence there is the use of the phrase *2 years ago*, where this phrase is included in the category of time deixis. The use of words or phrases that refer to time, both in the context of social media posts and in the scope of other writing, can be considered as part of the concept of time deixis. Time deixis is used to facilitate readers or listeners in understanding specific information related to the time of an event or the acquisition of information. Some examples of time deixis include the use of phrases such as *now, yesterday, tomorrow, next week, one month ago, last year*, and the like. Therefore, time deixis in general can be more easily identified and understood compared to other types of deixis. Because readers or listeners can immediately point to the existence of this deixis.

Table 5. Social Deixis Found in X (Twitter) Posts about *Genocide*

Types of Social Deixis	Occurrence Frequency
Government	5
Petition	1
Martyred	1
King	1
Civillians	1
Soldiers	1
International Community	1
Total	11

Based on Table 5, it is found that the use of social deixis in X (Twitter) posts about genocide reflects the various social entities involved in the discussion and narration of the event. In this case, the word “government” (5 times) was the most frequent, indicating that discussions about genocide often centered on the role of the government in the conflict, whether as the perpetrator, the responsible party, or the entity expected to provide a solution. Moreover, there are references to social groups that were victimized or directly involved in the event, such as “civillians” (1 time) and “soldiers” (1 time). The term “martyred” (1 time) is used in the context of someone who is considered to have died for a specific reason, often related to political beliefs or struggles, indicating an ideological dimension in the framing of genocide events on social media.

The use of the word “*petition*” (1 time) indicates an advocacy or campaign effort to gain public support in addressing the issue of genocide. In the meantime, the word “*international community*” (1 time) reflects how discussions about genocide are not only limited to the local level, but also involve global actors, such as international organizations, foreign governments, or the world community who have responded to the event. The term “*king*” (1 time) shows that in some cases, the role of the leader or monarchy is also part of the discussion around genocide. Although the frequency of occurrence is lower compared to other terms, this shows that aspects of leadership and power remain part of the narrative that develops on social media.

The following is an example social deixis in X (Twitter) posts about *Genocide*.

Example 4

Account source: [BlakPantherBabe, 2023](#)

One of the most heartbreaking things about the current genocide in Congo is that this is their second genocide. King Leopold of Belgium slaughtered 10 Million Congolese.

In the tweet above, King Leopold is referred to as a social deixis because it refers to a person with a title that indicates social status and position in the hierarchy of society. The use of ‘King’ before the name ‘Leopold’ shows that he has a role as the leader of the Belgian monarchy, which ruled over the Congo in the historical context of colonialism. This social deixis refers to power relations, as it shows authority and political roles that have an impact on the action mentioned in the tweet, namely the massacre of 10 million Congolese. It can be concluded that the function of social deixis found in the example above is to indicate hierarchical status and authority. The term “*King Leopold*” reflects his official rank, which emphasizes his power and role in the historical event mentioned in the tweet.

Table 6. Discourse Deixis Found in X (Twitter) Posts about *Genocide*

Types of Discourse Deixis	Occurrence Frequency
This	10
These	2
That	2
Those	1
It's	4
But	2
Next	1
Total	21

Discourse deixis refers to the use of an expression in speech that refers to a particular part of the content of the discourse, including reference to the speech itself (Levinson, 1983). Based on Table 6 above, the word “*this*” (10 times) is the most frequently used form of discourse deixis. This word generally refers to an event, claim, or information that has just been mentioned in a post. Its use can reinforce urgency or highlight an important point in a discussion about genocide. Additionally, the word “*it's*” (4 times) also appears quite frequently in the data. The use of “*it's*” in discourse deixis generally refers to something that has been mentioned earlier in the text, often serving to emphasize or refer back to the main claim in the narrative about genocide.

On the other hand, the words “*these*” (2 times) and “*those*” (1 time) are used to indicate entities or concepts that are being discussed in a broader context, either in the form of concrete or abstract objects. The word “*that*” (2 times) also functions as a discourse reference, often to compare or contrast the information provided. Interestingly, the conjunction “*but*” (2 times) appears in the category of discourse deixis. This shows that in discussions about genocide, there is often an attempt to compare two conflicting claims or provide different perspectives in one narrative. Finally, the word “*next*” (1 time) found in the data shows that there is a reference to the upcoming part of the discourse.

The following is an example discourse deixis in X (Twitter) posts about *Genocide*.

Example 5

Account source: [RedactedRosalia, 2023](#)

I'm pissed off that Joe Biden pays for this we start 2024 with people we love in Sudan Palestine Congo Syria in pain in genocide wtf is wrong with America? This is insanity cruelty to human kind. #countdown2ceasefire

In the tweet above, the word “this” is referred to as a discourse deixis because it refers to a situation or event that has been mentioned earlier in the text. In this context, “this” refers to Joe Biden's actions that finance or support situations that cause suffering and genocide in Sudan, Palestine, Congo, and Syria. The use of “this” serves to connect the previous clause with the speaker's expression of emotion towards the event, which is then reinforced with words such as ‘insanity’ and ‘cruelty to human kind’. It can be deduced that the function of the discourse deixis found in the example above is to refer back to the previously mentioned situation.

The Most Dominant Type of Deixis Found in Tweet Posts about Genocide

Based on the results of the analysis that has been presented in the previous tables, the following is a recapitulation table that summarizes the number of occurrences of each deixis category in the data studied.

Table 7. Frequency of Occurrence of Deixis Categories about *Genocide* in X (Twitter) Post

No	Types of Deixis	Code	Occurrence	Percentage
1	Personal Deixis	Prs	44	30%
2	Place Deixis	Plc	48	33%
3	Time Deixis	Tme	24	16%
4	Social Deixis	Scl	13	9%
5	Discourse Deixis	Dsc	18	12%
Total			147	-

Based on Table 7, place deixis has the highest frequency with 48 occurrences (33%), indicating that the location of genocide events is an aspect that is often emphasised by writers in discussions on X (Twitter). Personal deixis follows with 44 occurrences (30%), indicating that many posts involve specific subjects, both individuals and groups, in discussing genocide events. Although the difference between the two deixis is not too large, it shows that in the discussion about genocide on X (Twitter), the main emphasis is still more inclined to the location of the incident than to who is involved. This finding is in line with research conducted by Rosyidah (2016) entitled *Deixis Used in Liverpool FC's Live-tweets on Twitter*, which shows that place deixis is the most dominant category with a frequency of occurrence of 47 times, followed by personal deixis, especially third-person pronouns, which appear 44 times.

However, time deixis appeared 24 times (16%), indicating that temporal aspects are also an important part of framing genocide narratives, both in historical contexts and current events. Discourse deixis, found 18 times (12%), shows how X (Twitter) users refer to elements in their discourse to strengthen arguments or connect information. Lastly, social deixis has the least number of occurrences, at 13 times (9%), but is still significant as it reflects how X (Twitter) users refer to the social status and roles of various entities in the genocide. This distribution shows that in genocide discourse on social media, aspects of location and actors are more often the main focus than aspects of time or discourse structure. When compared to research with different social media objects, as revealed by (Putra & Santoso, 2023b) which examines deixis on social media Chanel TikTok and YouTube, where personal deixis is the most dominant type of deixis with 26 occurrences.

CONCLUSION

From the results of data analysis, it is concluded that this study found five types of deixis as proposed by Levinson, namely personal deixis, place deixis, time deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis. This research identifies 147 data related to the use of deixis in X (Twitter)

posts related to genocide. Place deixis is the most dominant type of deixis in this study, with 48 data (33%). The most frequent location reference is country name as many as 44 times, indicating that the issue of genocide in this post is strongly related to specific locations. In addition, the words *Jail* (1), *Where* (1), and *There* (2) were also found. Personal deixis is the second most common type of deixis with 44 data (30%). The most frequently used pronoun is *I* (12 times), followed by *You* (8), “*They*” (6), and *nickname* as a personal reference 9 times. In addition, the use of *We* (3), *She* (1), *He* (3), *Them* (2), *Us* (1), *Your* (1), *Their* (3), and *Her* (2) were also found.

Time deixis was found as much as 24 data (16%), with the word *Today* as the most dominant time reference (4 times), followed by *Now* (3), *In 2017* (2), as well as other references such as *Recently*, *Currently*, *Since 2016*, *Yesterday*, *Next Year*, and *Just One Hour Ago*. Discourse deixis was found as much as 18 data (12%). The word *This* is the most dominant (10 times), followed by *It's* (4), *That* (2), as well as other discourse references such as *These*, *Those*, *Next*, and *But*. Lastly, social deixis was found as much as 13 data (9%), with the word *Government* as the most dominant social reference (5 times), followed by *Petition*, *Martyred*, *King*, *Civillians*, *Soldiers*, and *International Community*. The results of this study show that place deixis and personal deixis are the most dominant types of deixis in genocide-related X (Twitter) posts.

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