

Pragmatic Analysis of Deixis in *Zikora* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

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Abstract

This paper examines the use of deixis in Chimamanda Adichie's short story *Zikora*. The study employed the qualitative method of data analysis to analyse the deictic expressions used by the characters in the text. The data used were obtained by reading the text, identifying the different types of deixis, contextual instances and interpretations within the framework of Halliday's Systemic Functional theory. Fifteen (15) excerpts were selected from the short story and analysed to identify different types of deixis: person deixis, place or spatial deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis and social deixis. The findings revealed that out of the five types of deixis identified, person deixis was the most dominant in the story indicating the narrator's point of view. This was followed by time deixis, place deixis, social deixis and discourse deixis. Also, deixis is not only used skilfully with a dedicated act to point but built into the gesticulation itself which reflects the relationship between the structure of language and the context which enable readers to understand the elements that indicate situational context in a literary piece.

Keywords: Context, Context, Literary text, Pragmatics, *Zikora*

Introduction

Pragmatics can be traced to the founding scholars like Charles Morris (1938), Austin (1962), Katz and Fodor (1963), Levinson (2002). However, the contribution of Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975) are the bedrock of modern Pragmatics. Austin's posthumous Speech Act theory, Searle's development of Speech Act theory and Grice's Implicature became well developed and form the cornerstone of most pragmatic approaches. The origin of Pragmatics owes much to the shortcomings of formal Semantics where issues with truth and falsity were the central perspectives for the analysis of sentence meaning. It was in this period when verifiability and distrust of the inaccuracies and vacuities of ordinary language were paramount, that Austin

launched his Speech Acts Theory (Levinson 227).

Yule (127) defines Pragmatics as "a study of contextual meaning communicated by a speaker or writer, and interpreted by a listener or reader." Pragmatics is a practical oriented approach in studying meanings of utterances where all approaches have a common concern with the aim of communicative performance rather than simply grammatical competence. Also, Lyons (171) wraps Pragmatics "as the study of actual utterance; the study of use rather than meaning; the study of meaning which is not purely truth-conditioned; the study of performance rather than competence". This simplifies that in studying actual utterance, there are some utterances not said but implied, the function of such

utterance within a particular situation could have several meanings in different contexts without being conditioned to rules of language. In a similar opinion, Grundy (243) explains that “the degree of pragmatic strengthening required to accommodate the speaker’s intended meaning increases.” Pragmatics as a discipline strengthens both the speaker and hearer’s intended meaning of utterance as much as it is context-dependent and can be more explicit with paralinguistic items or non-verbal cues.

One of the most important functions of pragmatics is its concern with the choices made by speakers and the options and constraints which apply in social interactions. Not only that, it examines the effects of language use on the participants in the act of communication. The tools for pragmatic analysis aim at studying language discourse on the basis of context, text and function in any text. These tools help the readers to understand the text in much deeper way such as the conversational language, speech acts categories, relevance of the text to the theme, background contextual functions of language, implicature, deixis, indefiniteness and so on and the purpose of providing insights and understanding better with new learning perspectives.

Deixis belong to the domain of pragmatics because they directly concern the relationship between the structure of language and the context in which they are used (Levinson 55). They are often and best described as “verbal pointing”, that is to say, pointing by means of language. The linguistic forms of this pointing are called deictic expressions, deictic markers or deictic words; they are sometimes called indexicals. Deixis is a linguistic notion within the domain of pragmatics which shapes the structure of language. Their tendency to be both grammaticalized

pragmatic makes them central to the construction of meaning. In this wise, Adichie has used them for the construction of her theme.

Context of a conversation affects the meaning of the words being uttered and the environment to which an interaction occurs determines the true meaning of the words or utterance. Leech (77) asserts that “context deals with the way in which linguistic utterances become meaningful through their relation to situation by a way of narrowing down the possibilities of the message as it exists.” In addition, Auer (3) affirms that “context has become a central notion of pragmatic thinking.” It is of the understanding that context is not just about the content but it is a pragmatic way that invokes, infers, presupposes, or construes meaning and understanding of linguistic utterances even beyond what is unsaid. Therefore, pragmatics can be defined as the study of the context-dependent aspect of meaning which is systematically abstracted away from the construction of logical form. It should be noted that beyond context, utterances also lead to action in any various communication. This study investigates the contextual use of deixis in Adichie’s short story *Zikora*.

A writer of fiction creates character and speech according to the aim and intentions of the message he/she is trying to convey hence, analysing such text could be a way of judging whether the author has done justice to spontaneous fluent use of language and analyse the text as if it were a piece of such language. In spite of the different types of works on Adichie’s texts, none has paid attention to a pragmatic analysis of deixis in her short story *Zikora*. Thus, this study intends to consider the pragmatic tools of deixis and context in the use of language discourse in Adichie’s short story *Zikora*. Analysing the deictic

expression in Adichie's short story *Zikora* in order to examine its situational context, including the speech participants, the time and location of the current speech event is the concern of the study.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate the pragmatic tools of deixis in Adichie's short story *Zikora*. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Identify and classify the most dominant type of deixis used in the text;
- ii. examine the relationship between deixis and context in the text;
- iii. identify the occurrences of deixis within the situational context in the text;

Conceptual clarification

Literary text

Language has other functions in addition to communicative functions. In literature, language is used for aesthetic and expressive purposes to produce literary discourses that readers desire to enjoy. Hence, discourse used for communicative purposes and literary discourse is often studied and analysed differently due to the different functions for which language is employed by its users (Muhi105). In his assertion, literary discourse is a type of discourse that is characterized by its multi-layered discourse since there are two different, though interrelated levels of interaction; where different sets of interlocutors interact with each other. The first layer involves interactions that take place among characters within the fictional discourse, whereas the other level involves the interaction in which both the writers and the readers are engaged. These two levels are interrelated as the interaction between the playwright and the reader is guided by

the interactions among the characters inside the literary discourse (ibid).

Saleme (NP) asserts that pragmatics analysis gives the tools to scrutinize language in context and to explain why communication may succeed, backfire, or collapse altogether. In her opinion, choosing a piece of fiction for the purpose of analysis is challenging, especially for the teacher and learners of English. In literary text, a writer of fiction creates character and speech according to the aims and objectives of the message he/she is trying to convey as against the tradition of considering raw conversation by speakers in any language situation. Meanwhile, the purpose of doing a pragmatic analysis is to judge whether the author has done justice to the spontaneous fluent language and analyse the text as if it were a piece of such language.

Similarly, Farooq and Wahid (57) state that the important thing about literary texts under study for pragmatic analysis is the approach to facts and opinions. They presumed that the best way to understand any written text is to collect the background information about the text and to take the pieces of conversation as a whole rather than dissect the text or speech word by word, consequently making the text to be understood correctly in the light of the relevant context.

Context

Pragmatics as a study of language is based on context, and the meaning of an utterance is interpreted based on context also known as pragmatic meaning. Odebunmi (1) defines context as 'the spine of meaning' of a speech, text, utterance or discourse. Context can also be said to be the distinction between semantics and pragmatic meaning in a language. It is the environment in which language is used whether physical, psychological, socio-

cultural or linguistic that is, a spine of whatever one says which is always backgrounded (ibid). He further asserts that the basic idea about context is that something thought about is said or written in a particular place, a particular time, under the influence of cultural and social factors. Context is the way in which language is used to invoke, infer, presuppose or construe the production and understanding of linguistic utterances. Consequently, for the hearer/reader to understand an utterance or a sentence, he must bring to bear certain items of background information not specifically mentioned in the utterance or sentence. It is the context which guides the hearer/reader to the correct actualization of a particular element of meaning that is intended by the speaker/writer (Sperber and Wilson. 61–62).

Basically, context is of two types; linguistic context, also called co-text, and context of situation. Linguistic context refers to the syntax which governs the construction of sentences. It consists of parts that immediately precede or follow a passage or text and identify its meaning. This type of context can account for syntactic ambiguity (Palmer 43). Context of situation, on the other hand, is related to semantic and pragmatic ambiguities, that is, ambiguities arising from lexical items and knowledge of the real world (Palmer 44). Context of situation refers to the environment of the text. Deixis requires access to certain aspects of context (in terms of production and interpretation) in order to operate.

Deixis

The word deixis is of Greek origin which means “pointing” through the use of language. Deixis is a pervasive element of natural language that has triggered much philosophical and linguistic interest.

Deictic terms gesturally or symbolically point at elements of the interactional context of utterance. They grammatically encode elements of context in which the interaction is taking place. Fillmore (35) defines deixis as the name given to uses of items and categories of lexicon and grammar that are controlled by certain details of the interactional situation in which the utterances are produced. Fillmore also refers to deictics as those lexical items and grammatical forms that can be interpreted only when the sentences in which they occur are understood as being anchored in some social context, that context defined in such a way as to identify the participants in the communication act, their location in space and time during which the communication act is performed (59).

In addition, Cruse (44) defines deictic expression forms as a subtype of definite referring expressions. They can be loosely thought of as expressions which point to their referents. He further asserts that deixis is the marking of the orientation or position of entities and events with respect to certain points of reference. In another opinion, Bar-Hillel (67), called the linguistic items indexical expressions because they indicate or point to other entities within the text or context of utterance, or shifters because their referential meaning shifts with every new speaker or occasion of use. According to Levinson (54), deixis relates to the way in which languages encode or grammaticalise features of the context in utterance or speech event, and thus relates to the ways in which the interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of that context of utterances. Levinson (60), classified deixis into five categories and they are: person, place, time, social and discourse deixis.

Person Deixis

Horn and Ward (62) assert that person deixis belongs to the semantic categories which refer to the encoding of the participant's role in the speech event such as speaker, addressee, and others, in which the utterance in question is delivered. It is a deictic reference to the participant's role of a referent and it deals with the grammatical categories of people involved in an utterance which include the speaker, the addressee, and referents which are neither speaker nor addressee (Abdulameer, 292). Person deixis is commonly expressed by pronouns, possessive affixes of nouns and agreement affixes of verbs. It is of three kinds namely: first person deixis (*I, we*) which refers to the speaker or to a group of speakers. Second person deixis (*you*) refers to the addressee or a group of addressees, and third person deixis (*he, she, it* and *they*) refers to other participants in the context of situation, which are neither speaker nor addressees.

Place or Spatial Deixis

Place or spatial deixis deals with the encoding of special locations relative to the interlocutors in speech event. It depends on where the word is uttered. It is grammaticalized in adverbs of place and demonstratives such as "*this* (plural: *these*) and *here*" for something near or close to the speaker, and "*that* (plural: *those*) and *there*" for something distal or close to the addressee. In other words, place deixis is an expression used to show the location relative to the location of a participant in the speech event. Words and phrases used to point to a location, such as, 'here', 'there', 'this' and 'that' are called spatial deixis (Yule, 130). Also, there are two parameters in identifying spatial deixis: they are, absolute references to place which locate an object or person in a specific longitude and latitude, while relational

references locate people and place in terms of each other and the speaker (Cummings, 26).

Time Deixis

Time deixis is also called temporal deixis. Levinson (98) states that time deixis deals with encoding at temporal points of the spoken or written message. Similarly, Renkema states that "time deixis is a reference to time, relative to a temporal reference point and it is typically the moments of utterance" (10). It is usually grammaticalized in deictic adverbs of time, such as *now, then, this week, this afternoon, yesterday, today*, and many more. In other words, time deixis refers to an expression that points to certain period when the utterances are produced by the speaker.

Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis is a piece of linguistic material that takes a referent within a discourse. This encodes reference to parts of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance is located (Levinson, 99). Discourse deixis is an expression that serves to refer to special discourse that includes the utterance or as an indication and its relations to the surrounding text. The deictic phrases used by this deixis are "*this*" which refers to an upcoming part and "*that*" to a former part.

Social Deixis

Social deixis differs from the other kinds of deixis. Social deixis does not refer to the time, place, or person, but it refers to the social ranking and positions between the speaker and the addressee in the society using language. Levinson (100) declares that social deixis deals with the encoding of social differences between speaker and addressee or speaker and some referents. In other words, social

deixis is an expression used to distinguish social ranks and status.

Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics is an approach that proves to be an appropriate concept for the study of texts. This framework looks at language from different perspectives because it analyses language as used naturally in any social setting. To better understand the general functionality of language within discourse, texts can be analysed through Systemic Functional Linguistics. It can equip us to discover tendencies and patterns in texts that otherwise remain hidden through description, interpretation and making meaning of texts.

Halliday states that language is functional in the sense that it is designed to account for how language is used and that each text unfolds in some context of use (13).

This study adopts Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic theory because it is primarily concerned with the way in which language functions to realise meaning in texts and it also provides a model for the interpretation and description of deixis in Chimamanda Adichie's *Zikora*.

Empirical Review

Pangaribuan, Manik and Pasaribu (2015), studied deixis used on business brochures taken randomly from launching products in Indonesia in March 2014. The result of the analysis of the research showed that there are five types of deixis used on business brochure texts. They are person, place, time, discourse and social deixis. Discourse deixis has the highest percentage, followed by person deixis. Discourse deixis is the most dominantly used in business brochure texts. Discourse deixis refers to a text deixis which is the use of expressions within an utterance used in written language. It contains reason, description, background and sophisticated

technology explanation. The goal of preparing business brochures is to give a clear description, and details of the product, the specimen, and the new technology. The result showed that if the brochures are for inexpensive products, person deixis is mostly used; on the contrary, if the product is expensive, discourse deixis is used with more explanation and description.

Eragbe and Yakubu (2015), examined the uses of deictic expressions in Boko Haram insurgency reports by the media in the four affected countries of West Africa. The study was carried out using qualitative approach to explore the incidences and functions of deictic expressions in Boko Haram insurgency reports by the media. The result of the investigation showed that media reports use person, time and place deixis to locate the participants in discourse. Spotting of the participants in discourse via deictic expressions gives the audience a clear picture of the incidence of insurgency reported on. Deictic expressions, as used in insurgency reports point to the insurgents, or the victims, the place of operation and time. These put together enhance cohesion and coherence in the discourse of Boko Haram insurgency reports.

Al- khalidy (2017) explored spatial deixis in the discussions of general budget by the members of Jordanian Parliament for the financial year 2017. The study aimed to investigate the use of spatial deixis in the speeches delivered by the members of Jordanian Parliament during the discussion of general budget. Ten different speeches were randomly selected from eighteen speeches delivered during the discussion. The spatial deixis was analysed in terms of frequency of occurrence. The study revealed that the proximate term was the most frequent sub-spatial deixis used by the members of the

Jordanian Parliament, followed by the distal term whereas the medial term was the least sub-spatial deixis used. Based on the findings, the study concludes that sub-spatial deixis that were used in the speeches delivered by the members of Jordanian Parliament during the discussion of the 2017 budget were proximal term, distal term and medial term. The proximal term was the most sub-spatial deixis used whereas the medial term was the least sub-spatial deixis used.

Ojo (2018) carried out a pragmatic analysis of time deixis in Helon Habila's *Measuring Time*. The study adopted the quantitative and qualitative method of analysis. The data used were obtained by reading the entire text, identifying the different types of time deixis chapter by chapter, the number of times they occurred, percentile representation and different instantiation of time deixis and their interpretation within the framework of Halliday and Hasan's Cohesion in English and Halliday's Systemic Functional theory. Eighteen (18) different notations of time deixis were found and they occurred one thousand five hundred and fifty-nine times (1,559) times in the text. The study showed that the time deixis 'now' was the most frequently used while 'recently' was the least used. The study revealed that time deixis functions anaphorically and cataphorically based on the context and time deixis is interpretable only in relation to the context in which it is used. The study concludes that time deixis function as shifters of context which in turn maintain referential coherence, as well as anchor the narrative to time periods and time points inside the text.

Chefor and Zhying (2019) carried out a study to understand the use of deixis in Paul Biya's message to the Cameroonian youth. The study aimed at quantitatively and qualitatively identifying the different

types of deixis used by Paul Biya in his message to the Cameroonian youth and their frequencies. The data were obtained from the official website of the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon. The result revealed that Paul Biya used different types of deixis in his speech. Person deixis occurred in 103 utterances (52.2%). Spatial deixis occurred in 17 utterances (9.4%), temporal deixis occurred in 21 utterances (4.7%), social deixis occurred in 30 utterances (16.79%), whereas discourse deixis occurred in 8 expressions (10%). The study concludes that Paul Biya used different types of deixis, namely, person, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixis in his speech to the Cameroonian youth. Person deixis was the most dominant deixis used in President Paul Biya's message to the Cameroonian youth.

Yakubu (2022) examined dietic expressions used by the characters in the play entitled *Another Raft* by Femi Osofisan. The study employed a qualitative method of data analysis to analyse the deictic expressions used by the characters in the text. The result of the analysis revealed that characters in the text used person, place, and time deixis while communicating with one another. Person deixis points to participants in speech events, place deixis points to the places where actions are taken while time deixis points to different times of actions.

Many researchers have conducted research on deixis, but they have different subjects and different or similar theories. Some of them conducted research on media reports, business brochures, general budget, speech, and play. This study is different from the others because the researcher analysed a short story *Zikora* written by Chimamanda Adichie using deixis.

The text, *Zikora* by Chimamanda Adichie has been investigated by other

researchers but works done on this text have been either literary or stylistic analysis. Roifah (2021) in his study explored the cries that Zikora had to undergo in her transition to become a mother. Zikora is the protagonist in the short story. The study applied the theory of motherhood by Andrienne Rich and used a qualitative approach. The result of the study showed that motherhood brings women to a new world full of challenges. Motherhood requires not only physical strength but also mental strength and self-control so that whatever the cries are, women can bear them and overcome the obstacles they are facing.

Nanthini and Kohila (2022) in their study analysed the short story *Zikora* by Chimamanda Adichie. Adichie is sprawling in the epic journey and emotional storms battered by women in the story. This short story deals with the plight of women, maternal mortality, single parenthood, polygamy, social expectations and misinformation about the female body, pregnancy and sexuality. Zikora, the protagonist is a 39 year old successful lawyer whose boyfriend Kwame abandons her when he finds out she is pregnant. Zikora's mother comes to help her through labour and she reflects upon their relationship. Zikora is a thought provoking story. It explores the unique challenges black mothers face in the United States as well as the difficulty of being a working mother.

Nkansah and Bonsu (2022) examined the transitivity of verbal process types in Adichie's short story *Zikora* using corpus procedures assisted by corpus linguistics. The study used transitivity as an analytical framework to analyse the verbal process in the text. Three major findings were reported from the study. First, through the verbal processes, Adichie deconstructed the myriad suffering and subjugation of

women through dialogic means and taking responsibility for their livelihood. Second, the foregrounded verbal processes reflect the attribution of processes to other characters than accounting for the literary effects projected through the clauses. Finally, while the writer used the projected clauses to attribute the verbal processes to others, the dominant use of the first-person mode of narration identifies a sharing of roles to account for the literary work.

Many researchers have conducted studies on Adichie's works from stylistics, discourse analysis, literary and pragmatic perspectives but none has given enough scholarly attention to deictic expressions used by characters in Adichie's short story *Zikora*. Therefore, this study is different because it is a pragmatic analysis of deixis in Adichie's short story *Zikora*.

Synopsis of *Zikora*

Zikora by Chimamanda Adichie is a short story that explores multidimensional emotions around pregnancy, labour delivery and single parenting for a professional woman who decides to raise her baby alone. Zikora, a Nigerian lawyer working in Washington, D.C. finds out she is pregnant for her ex-boyfriend, Kwame who is not ready to take parenting responsibility.

Zikora went into labour and while in, her mother sits nearby and never touched her. She felt so much pain and struggling with the progress of the procedure, she then, began to tell the tales about her past experience as a young girl who went through parental separation and abandonment by her ex-boyfriend because she was pregnant. As a young girl of eight years, Zikora grew up in Nigeria living with her parents until her father announced his intention to take another wife which the mother didn't find comfortable, and then, relocated leaving

the father and his new family. Although Zikora was physically separated from her father, she had always loved to yield to her father's desires on decisions that pertain to her life. Eventually, she became a high-powered lawyer in Washington D.C. and at a memorable book launch event, she met a dashing young lawyer, Kwame. Throughout the early days of their relationship, she was overwhelmed by his maturity and good sense of humour but sometimes she feels he is too perfect for her, hoping he will change and start revealing his character. When Kwame doesn't change after sometime, she then allows herself to become convinced of their future together.

One evening, after returning home from an event, Zikora tells Kwame she is pregnant. This news got him consumed and he acts confused as if he didn't know that stopping birth control meant she could be pregnant and disinterested in having a child, however, he offers to pay for an abortion meanwhile, Zikora doesn't understand his reaction because they were both in their late thirties with a good profession and well-paid job and she wants the baby.

Finally, the story depicts Zikora's seemingly perfect love life with Kwame, who is younger than her and earns less than she does. Their breakup comes as a shock to Zikora, since there was nothing in Kwame's character and attitude towards her that had suggested such a possibility. It is the pregnancy, therefore, that leads to his desertion of her, because of his ignorance that unprotected sex could lead to pregnancy. He, however, chooses to read the pregnancy as a "miscommunication" (p. 11) and subsequently leaves Zikora. Throughout the pregnancy stages, Zikora remains consumed by Kwame's absence and cannot understand what happened and why he changed at the news of the

shrug in her but eventually, she accepted the challenge of becoming a single mother in bitterness whereas, the mother came through and supported her.

Methodology

This paper adopts a descriptive qualitative method. This method was employed to give an in-depth explanation of deictic expressions used by the characters in the text *Zikora* to interact with one another. The data used was obtained by reading the text, identifying the different types of deixis, contextual instances, interpretations and the pages in which they appear. The data analysis was based on the five types of deixis according to Levinson (68). They are person, place, time, discourse and social deixis. In carrying out the second part of the analysis, the total number of each frequency of the different types of deixis was divided by the overall total number of the occurrence of the five different types of deixis in the text. The result was multiplied by (100) to get the percentile distribution. The analysis was presented in a tabular form showing the different types of deixis, frequency and distribution.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The relationship between language and context is clearly observed through the phenomenon of deixis. Linguistic items such as demonstratives, pronouns, tense, place and time adverbs such as *now* and *here*, as well as other grammatical features which are tied directly to the context of utterance are prototypically deictic. However, the study chooses to analyse this piece because there must be a context that surrounds the language and to figure out the importance of using deixis.

Person Deixis

Excerpt 1

I wanted nothing touching my body. I yanked off my hospital gown, the flimsy blue fabric with its effete dangling ropes that gaped open at the back as if designed to humiliate. Naked, I perched on the edge of the bed and retched. Relief was impossible; everything was impossible. I stood up, sat down, and then I got on my hands and knees, my taut belly hanging in between. The clenching in my lower body came and went, random, irregular, like mean surprises. (p.7)

Excerpt 2

"Don't disgrace me like that again," she said calmly, and for a long time I remembered the sudden vertigo, feeling surprise rather than pain as her palm struck the back of my head. She wanted me to meet each rush of pain with a mute grinding of teeth, to endure pain with pride, to embrace pain, even. When I had severe cramps as a teenager, she would say, "Bear it, that is what it means to be a woman," and it was years before I knew that girls took Buscopan for period pain. (p. 12)

Excerpt 3

Why don't I call his parents? To inform them. They deserve to know, my mother suddenly said one morning as she fed my son, and I was startled that she could read my mind. "Who?" I asked foolishly. She looked at me evenly. "Kwame." "No," I said. "Not yet." (p. 27)

In excerpt 1 above, person deixis 'I' appears five times. This 'I' is a symbolic use that reflects the speaker's active involvement in the event of discourse narrating her experience in the labour room with explicit understanding of the procedure to the readers.

All the 'she and I' in excerpt 2 are symbolic usage of person deixis because the content of discourse is a common ground knowledge of both characters. Both characters know who and who they are in the discourse moment. While the first 'she' is an anaphoric reference to the object of the verb used by the speaker the 'I' is the same participant as the narrator. The third person 'It' in the excerpt refers to menstrual pain and anaphoric reference respectively.

In excerpt 3, the dominant deixis is the first person deixis 'I'. This 'I' is a symbolic use that reflects the speaker's active involvement in the event of the discourse, narrating her experience of being abandoned by her partner with explicit understanding of what transpired between them to the readers. The third person plural deixis 'they' points to Kwame's parents. Also, the gestural person deixis 'she' is recurrently used as an anaphoric referencing of 'my mother'.

Time Deixis

Excerpt 4

A plague. A primitive wind blowing at will, evil but purposelessly so, an overcoming in my body that didn't need to be. Hour after hour of this, and yet the nurses said I wasn't progressing. "You're not progressing," the smaller nurse said as though it were my fault. The room felt too warm and then too cold. (p. 5)

Excerpt 5

Then came a wave of exhaustion, a tiredness limp and bloodless. I was leaving my body. I could die here, now, today, like Chinyere died in a fancy Lagos hospital that had flat-screen TVs in the labour ward. (p. 9)

Excerpt 6

I spent **weekends** willing the landline next to my bed to ring. Often it didn't. **Then** he would call, **before midnight**, to ask if I was still up, so he could visit and leave **before dawn**. (p. 21)

In **excerpt 4** above time deixis is reflected as '**hour after hour**' and '**then**'. This is placing an emphasis on time of event in the scene which could have expressed the period of labour. **Then**, expresses a temporal, sequential situation/ relation in the discourse segment.

In **excerpt 5**, time deixis is used in emphasising the activity of the process out of the patient's imagination and exhaustion from excruciating pains. '**Then, here, now and today**'. '**Then**' refers to the particular time of exhaustion Zikora felt and the demonstrative time reference enacts a form of verbal pointing. '**Here and now**' show the region of event immediate to the speaker and the time immediate to the utterance while '**today**' refers to some unspecified moment in that portion of the day that remains unexpired.

In **excerpt 6**, time deixis is used to show the frequency of timing involved in the relationship between the narrator and the referent. This reveals how the speaker has built the affection between her and the referred entity, with the use of the salient deictic markers such as '**weekends, then, before midnight and before dawn**.'

Place/Spatial deixis

Excerpt 7

I need your help to get **this** done, okay? I need you to be very still, okay?" "**That's** your mom?" he asked. "Hi, Mom! I'd like you to help us out **here**, okay? If you can hold her so she doesn't move . . ." (p. 13)

Excerpt 8

Now **here** he was wrapped like a tidy sausage roll and placed on my chest. He was warm and so very small. I held him with stiff hands. I was suspended in a place of no feeling, waiting to feel. I could not separate **this** moment from the stories of this moment—years of stories and films and books about **this** scene, mother and child, mother meeting child, child in mother's arms. (p. 17)

Excerpt 9

All through the night my mother sat **near** me but never touched me. I had prepared for pain but **this was not mere pain**. It was something like pain and different from pain. (p. 5)

In **excerpt 7** above, spatial (proximal location, demonstrative proximal and distal), deixis is embedded within. The spatial deixis reflects the demonstrative relative proximity of distance '**this done**' and it is gestural, that is pointing to an activity that must be executed through cooperation. In another instance '**That's your mom?**' reflects spatial demonstrative distal gestural deixis. Also, the use of '**here**' shows the proximal location of the speech event, the speaker and the participants.

In **excerpt 8**, there is the use of place deixis emphasising the feeling of bonding between Zikora and the baby despite the excruciating pains experienced at the delivery point. '**Here, this moment, this scene**' describing the feeling at the scene on the appearance of the baby juxtaposing with what the speaker has read in stories relating to birth and bonding between a mother and child yet hers seems different.

In **excerpt 9** spatial deixis is also reflected in both location and demonstrative reference of the location. '**near, this was not mere pain**.' indicating location whose reference can only be

determined in relation to the location of the utterance

Social Deixis

Excerpt 10

My doctor came in looking unbearably calm. “**Dr. K**, something is wrong. I just know something is wrong,” I said. My body was turning on me in spasms and wrenches I had never before known, each with a dark promise of its own return. Something had to be wrong; childbirth could not be this gratuitous and cruel. “Nothing is wrong, **Zikora**, it’s all normal.” “I’m tired, I’m so tired,” I said, in my mind the image of **Chinyere** pregnant and dead on a hospital floor. (p. 9)

Excerpt 11

My son woke up and began to cry. **My mother** hurried to his crib. I watched her cradle him and lower her head, as though to inhale him, touching the skin of his face with the skin of hers. (p. 28)

Excerpt 12

She hid it in her **daughter’s** underwear drawer, where **Emmanuel** would never go, until she went to a discreet doctor’s clinic. (p. 18)

In **excerpt 10** above, words such as **My doctor**, **Dr.K**, **Zikora** and **Chinyere** are all examples of social deixis both absolute and relational references showing the relationship status between the participants in the discourse scene. **My doctor** is the same reference as **Dr.K** showing a cataphoric expression.

In **excerpt 11**, ‘**my mother**’ and ‘**my son**’ are examples of relational social deixis, pointing to the relationship that exists between the speaker and the third persons in the narratives.

Deixis in **excerpt 12** reflects an absolute social deixis referencing ‘**Emmanuel**’ which does not include comparison of the

ranking of the speaker and addressee rather, it’s only a simple reference. Also, ‘**her daughter’s**’ is a relational social deixis, pointing to the social relationship between the referents.

Discourse Deixis

Excerpt 13

Nigerian banks were not yet modernized, online transfers didn’t exist, and so I drove, windscreen frosted with ice, to a Western Union. **I sent her the money in dollars, so she could get the best rates on the black market.** (p. 18)

Excerpt 14

I sent Kwame a text: I’m 20 weeks today. He replied three days later: **It’s manipulative to send me this.** You know you made a decision that excluded me. **I didn’t want things to end this way.** I’m hurting too. (p. 13)

Excerpt 15

The epidural person, a pale-faced man with a reddish moustache, was saying, “I need your help to get this done, okay? (p. 7)

In **excerpt 13** above, there is the use of discourse deixis in the excerpt. This type of deixis is indicating the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse. ‘**I sent her the money in dollars, so she could get the best rates on the black market**’ This is indicating a kind of commentary on the conversation by the speaker.

In **excerpt 14**, the choice of deictic markers is more of discourse deixis. The speaker is technically referencing the utterance towards the content of the narrative. There is also the use of empathetic deixis in the excerpt; ‘**It’s manipulative to send me this**’ and ‘**I didn’t want things to end this way**’. This is showing psychological proximity

between the speaker and the referent according to Levinson (1999). Where the referent is expressing his attitude towards the decision taken by the speaker that makes him feel hurt.

In **excerpt 15**, discourse deixis is embedded within. It should be noted that the first person pronoun 'I' is an anaphoric reference to the '**the epidural person**' and it is classified under discourse deixis because of the element of coherence in the utterance.

Table 1: Types, frequency and percentile distribution of the deictic expressions

Types of deixis	Frequency	Percentage
Person deixis	19	35.2
Time deixis	14	25.9
Place/Spatial deixis	09	16.6
Social deixis	08	14.8
Discourse deixis	04	7.4
Total	54	100 Approx.

Table 1 above clearly shows that person deixis is the most dominant in the text and it occurs 19 times with 35.2% distribution. This is followed by time deixis which occurs 14 times with 25.9% distribution. Place/spatial deixis occurs 9 times with 16.6% distribution. Social deixis occurs 8 times with 14.8% distribution. Discourse deixis occurs 4 times with 7.4% distribution. In conclusion, the analysis shows that person deixis is the most frequently used deixis in the text while the least is discourse deixis.

Conclusion

Deictic words are words with a reference point that is speaker or writer-dependent and is determined by the speaker or writer's position in space and time. Based on the data analysis, the author

of the story used the five types of deixis in the story which is relatively dominated by person deixis. Usually, narrative is told from one person's point of view and the viewpoint of the narrator also changes along with different events and situational context within the story. The story reflected situational context such as; hospital, childhood experience, her workplace contexts etc. Hence, deictic use in relation to the structure of language and context help the readers to follow the changes in co-text as imagined in the world the author describes. Listeners apparently imagined the story scenes from the narrator's viewpoint, which coincided with the protagonist's viewpoint in first-person stories but with the observer's viewpoint in third-person stories (Bruny'eet al.29). It is also noted that deixis is used to easily describe the function of personal pronoun, time, space, demonstratives and lexical features connecting the utterances and the relationships as well as to catch the references of meaning that is included in communication process.

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