

### DEIXIS ANALYSIS IN THE SHORT STORY “THE YELLOW WALL-PAPER” BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS STETSON

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji jenis dan fungsi deiksis dalam cerita pendek *The Yellow Wall-Paper* karya Charlotte Perkins Gilman melalui pendekatan pragmatik. Deiksis adalah konsep fundamental dalam pragmatik yang mengacu pada ekspresi linguistik yang maknanya bergantung pada faktor kontekstual seperti pembicara, waktu, tempat, wacana, dan hubungan sosial (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif untuk mengidentifikasi ekspresi deiksis dan menafsirkan makna kontekstualnya dalam narasi. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik membaca kritis dan pencatatan sistematis, dengan fokus pada kata, frasa, dan klausa yang mengandung unsur deiksis. Data yang teridentifikasi kemudian diklasifikasikan ke dalam lima kategori deiksis: deiksis persona, deiksis tempat, deiksis waktu, deiksis wacana, dan deiksis sosial, berdasarkan kerangka teoritis yang diusulkan oleh Levinson (1983) dan Yule (1996). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa deiksis persona adalah tipe yang paling dominan, khususnya penggunaan kata ganti orang pertama seperti *saya* dan *aku*. Dominasi ini menempatkan narator sebagai titik referensi deiktik sentral dan mencerminkan kemerosotan psikologisnya sepanjang cerita. Deiksis tempat menyoroti keterbatasan spasial, deiksis waktu menandai perkembangan ketidakstabilan mental, deiksis wacana mempertahankan kohesi naratif, dan deiksis sosial mengungkapkan dinamika kekuasaan patriarki yang tertanam dalam narasi. Secara keseluruhan, deiksis dalam karya ini berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai fitur linguistik referensial tetapi juga sebagai strategi naratif untuk membangun subjektivitas dan kritik sosial.

**Kata Kunci:** Deiksis, Linguistik Sastra, Perspektif Naratif, Pragmatik, *The Yellow Wall-Paper*.

**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the types and functions of deixis in the short story *The Yellow Wall-Paper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman through a pragmatic approach. Deixis is a fundamental concept in pragmatics that refers to linguistic expressions whose meanings depend on contextual factors such as the speaker, time, place, discourse, and social relations (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). This research employs a descriptive qualitative method to identify deictic expressions and interpret their contextual meanings within the narrative. The data were collected through critical reading and systematic note-taking techniques, focusing

*on words, phrases, and clauses containing deictic elements. The identified data were then classified into five categories of deixis: person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis, based on the theoretical frameworks proposed by Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996). The findings reveal that person deixis is the most dominant type, particularly the use of first-person pronouns such as I and me. This dominance positions the narrator as the central deictic reference point and reflects her psychological deterioration throughout the story. Place deixis highlights spatial confinement, time deixis marks the progression of mental instability, discourse deixis maintains narrative cohesion, and social deixis reveals patriarchal power dynamics embedded in the narrative. Overall, deixis in this work functions not only as a referential linguistic feature but also as a narrative strategy to construct subjectivity and social critique.*

**Keywords:** *Deixis, Literary Linguistics, Narrative Perspective, Pragmatics, The Yellow Wall-Paper.*

### INTRODUCTION

Language is the primary instrument used by humans to convey meaning, and its interpretation is inseparable from context. In pragmatics, meaning is understood as something that emerges from the interaction between language and context, including the speaker, the time of utterance, and the situational setting (Levinson, 1983). One of the central concepts in pragmatics is deixis, which refers to linguistic expressions whose reference shifts depending on the situational context in which they are used (Yule, 1996).

Deixis is generally classified into five types: person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis (Yule, 1996). These categories help explain how speakers and writers anchor meaning to particular points of reference within a communicative event. In written discourse, especially literary texts, deixis plays an important role in establishing narrative perspective, emotional proximity, and the relationship between characters and their environment (Leech & Short, 2007).

In literary works that employ a first-person narrative perspective, deixis becomes particularly significant. First-person narration relies heavily on person deixis to foreground subjectivity and internal experience (Huang, 2007). One prominent example is *The Yellow Wall-Paper* (1892) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Written in the form of diary entries, the story presents the inner thoughts of a female narrator who gradually experiences psychological deterioration as a result of medical control and patriarchal domination.

Previous studies have demonstrated that linguistic features such as deixis are not merely grammatical tools but also function as stylistic and ideological devices in literary texts (Leech

& Short, 2007). Therefore, analyzing deixis in *The Yellow Wall-Paper* is essential for understanding how language constructs psychological experience and reveals social power relations. This study focuses on identifying the types of deixis found in the story and examining their functions in shaping narrative meaning and social criticism.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study applies a descriptive qualitative research method, which is appropriate for examining linguistic phenomena in their natural context and for interpreting meaning rather than measuring statistical frequency (Moleong, 2018). The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth analysis of deictic expressions and their pragmatic functions within a literary text.

The primary data source of this research is the short story *The Yellow Wall-Paper* by Charlotte Perkins Stetson, first published in 1892. The data consist of words, phrases, and clauses that contain deictic expressions. Data collection was conducted through critical reading and systematic note-taking. During the reading process, all deictic expressions found in the text were identified and recorded as research data.

The collected data were then analyzed by classifying them into five categories of deixis: person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis, based on the theoretical frameworks proposed by Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996). To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, repeated readings and careful observation were conducted. The consistent application of established pragmatic theories strengthens the credibility of the findings (Moleong, 2018).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data Findings

Based on the analysis, the distribution of deixis types found in the short story is presented in the following table.

**Table 1. Distribution of Deixis Types in *The Yellow Wall-Paper***

Type of Deixis	Number of Occurrences
Person Deixis	18
Place Deixis	7
Time Deixis	6
Discourse Deixis	5
Social Deixis	4

The table indicates that person deixis appears most frequently, suggesting that the narrative is strongly centered on the narrator's subjective perspective.

## Category Analysis

### Person Deixis

Person deixis is the most dominant category in the narrative. The frequent use of first-person pronouns such as *I* and *me* positions the narrator as the central deictic center of the story. According to Yule (1996), person deixis encodes the role of participants in a speech event, particularly the speaker. In *The Yellow Wall-Paper*, this dominance emphasizes the narrator's subjectivity and unstable psychological condition. The pronoun *he* refers to John, the narrator's husband, symbolizing patriarchal authority, while *she* refers to the woman behind the wallpaper, representing the narrator's fragmented self and psychological projection (Levinson, 1983).

### Place Deixis

Place deixis is expressed through spatial terms such as *nursery*, *room*, and *here*. These expressions locate events relative to the narrator's position and contribute to the depiction of confinement and isolation. Levinson (1983) states that place deixis anchors meaning to spatial context. In this story, spatial references function symbolically to represent psychological entrapment and the lack of personal freedom experienced by the narrator.

### Time Deixis

Time deixis includes temporal markers such as *now*, *two weeks*, *at night*, and *in the daytime*. These expressions situate events in time and reflect the gradual progression of the narrator's mental deterioration. According to Yule (1996), time deixis organizes events chronologically. In literary narratives, temporal deixis may also represent changes in perception and emotional state, as reflected in the narrator's shifting reactions to the wallpaper (Huang, 2007).

### Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis is realized through demonstratives such as *this* and *that*, which refer to elements within the discourse itself. These expressions help maintain textual cohesion by linking ideas across sentences and paragraphs (Levinson, 1983). In *The Yellow Wall-Paper*, discourse deixis repeatedly draws attention to the wallpaper, reinforcing the narrator's obsessive focus and guiding readers' interpretation (Leech & Short, 2007).

### Social Deixis

Social deixis reflects social relationships and power structures within the narrative. The reference to John as a *physician* encodes his professional status and institutional authority over the narrator. According to Yule (1996), social deixis reveals hierarchical relations and degrees of power. In this story, social deixis exposes patriarchal dominance and positions the narrator as a powerless subordinate within her marriage and society.

### Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that deixis in *The Yellow Wall-Paper* functions not merely as a grammatical pointing device but as a narrative and ideological strategy. The dominance of person deixis confirms the narrator's role as an unstable psychological deictic center, while place and time deixis reinforce themes of confinement and mental deterioration. Furthermore, discourse deixis maintains narrative cohesion, and social deixis reveals gender inequality and patriarchal power relations. These findings support pragmatic theories proposed by Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996) and are consistent with previous studies in literary pragmatics (Leech & Short, 2007).

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

This study concludes that deixis is effectively employed in *The Yellow Wall-Paper* to construct narrative meaning and portray the protagonist's psychological and social oppression. Person deixis strengthens the subjective point of view, place and time deixis emphasize isolation and mental decline, discourse deixis maintains textual coherence, and social deixis exposes hierarchical power structures. Overall, deixis functions as a pragmatic and stylistic device that integrates individual experience with social criticism.

### Suggestions

#### For Future Researchers:

Future studies are encouraged to examine other pragmatic phenomena such as implicature, presupposition, or speech acts to complement deixis analysis and provide a more comprehensive understanding of meaning construction in literary texts.

#### For Academics:

This study can serve as a reference for teaching pragmatics, literary linguistics, and stylistics, particularly in analyzing narrative perspective and context-dependent meaning in literary discourse.

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