



## A Pragmatic Study of Deixis in Imran Khan's Speech at the United Nations General Debate

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### Abstract

Language is one of the tools for communication. One of the functions of the language is the referential function which points out something in an immediate situation. Deixis is one of the pragmatics branches that is essential to learn about pointing person, time, place, discourse, and social in a contextual event, especially delivering a speech in an international forum such as the United Nations. This pragmatic analysis study investigates the most dominant deixis used and the reasons for using deixis in Khan's address at the United Nations General Debate in 2019. The researcher uses qualitative as the design of the study. Furthermore, the researcher observed a video recording for the instrument of the study. The findings revealed that Khan used time deixis dominantly in his speech. The time deixis appeared 554 times. He used 41.81% of it for the full address. He used deixis to show defines his feeling, persuade, and reveal ideological bias. Therefore, it is essential to consider the context of the speech to avoid the misinterpretation of the utterances.

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## INTRODUCTION

People are human beings that manage to live together in society. They need to communicate with each other to deliver their insight. They can do it by using language. Verderber (1999) defined language as the corpus of words and the organizational framework for their usage among members of the same community, country, region, or cultural tradition. Moreover, language is a set of sounds, words, sentences, meanings, and their use in context. It can be presented in spoken, written, signed, or gesture. Lyons (1981) stated that language is the institution through which humans communicate and interact using commonly used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols. So, language is a tool to communicate with human beings in the same community, area, and culture and share meaning in a context that can be spoken, written, and signed.

Mariani (2019) stated that the scientific study of language is known as linguistics. It concerns language, such as sounds, words, sentences, meanings, and their use in context. Hudson (1996) named them linguistic items. Phonetics, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics are some branches of linguistics.

One of the linguistics branches is pragmatic. Pragmatic is one of the interesting branches of linguistics to talk about because it focuses on contextual meaning (Yule, 1996). Moreover, Levinson (1983) stated that pragmatics concerns language usage. It is focused on how to say more than what is said and implied in communication. In addition, pragmatics examines the connections between linguistic forms and their users. So, pragmatics is a study of an understanding of context or situational thing of language.

Finocchiaro (1989) stated that one of the functions of language is the referential function. It discusses the immediate situation that points out the time, place, and culture. The point out is called deixis in pragmatics. It is one of the essential things in pragmatics to learn because it is used to point the reference like people, time, place, discourse, and society in context. Levinson (1983) stated that context refers to participants' identities, ideas, objectives, information, time, and place. It would only be easy to understand the context by comprehending the deixis or deictic expression.

Thus, it is crucial to understand deixis as the referential function of language to understand the context.

One of the ways to share ideas is by speaking. Chaney and Burk (1998) stated that speaking is a system of creating and exchanging meaning in various contexts using verbal and non-verbal signals. By speaking, the speaker can deliver a speech to others in a situational event. The speaker must choose the right deixis to make the speech can be understood easily by the hearers and avoid miscommunication, especially delivering the speech such as in formal, serious, and severe situations, such as speaking in an international forum.

There are several international forums in this world. As an example, consider the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Council of Europe, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), United Nations (UN), and many more. Every time they are held, each country will send its representation to attend and speak in those forums. For example, in United Nations, the countries' leaders will attend the conference to deliver speeches about their concerns about what is happening in the world or their own countries. They need to use the right deixis so the speaker and hearer can connect what is being discussed. If the speaker used the wrong deixis, the hearer could not get the meaning, causing misinterpretation or, worse, can cause conflict.

The United Nations is one of the international forums that provide the member states a conference on the matter in their countries and international issues. The conflict between countries can be one of the concerns to discuss in the United Nations. For example, the war between India and Pakistan. They have been in conflict since their independence. There are three massive wars between them, such as wars in 1947, 1965, and 1971. These countries have not found their middle ground for peace.

In 2019, Pakistan sent their Prime Minister, Imran Khan, as the representative to deliver his speech at the United Nations General Assembly at the United Nations General Debate. He addressed about four topics that concerned him. One of the topics he was talking about was India and Pakistan's never-ending conflict. He showed sadness, disappointment, and anger in his speech.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in analyzing the dominantly

used of deixis and the reason for using deixis by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, in the United Nations General Debate and will use Levinson's (1983) theory of deixis as the base of this research.

## METHODOLOGY

The design of this study consisted of qualitative research despite it being a pragmatic analysis. In addition, the researcher utilized Levinson's (1983) theory of deixis to analyze the data. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, is the focus of this research, and the object of the investigation is the deixis that Khan utilized in his address to the United Nations General Assembly. In addition, one of the instruments that the researcher used to collect data was to conduct an observation.

This research aimed to determine which type of deixis was most prevalent in the speech given by Khan during the United Nations General Debate. Here is the procedure for collecting and analyzing. Firstly, the researcher downloaded an address video by Khan on the 74<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly on the United Nations channel. The duration of this video is 50 minutes long. Moreover, the researcher used *savefrom.net* as the tool to download the video. After that, based on the video recording, the researcher transcribed the video downloaded into the text to analyze the speech's dominantly used deixis and the reasons for using it. Next, the researcher also coded and classified the following Levinson's (1983) theory. Then, the data will be summed up and then the percentage so it will be eased the researcher to find the dominant deixis used in the speech.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Levinson (1983) classified the type of deixis into person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. Thus, the researcher found that 1325 deixis in the video recording can be distinguished into types of deixis based on Levinson's theory. The findings showed that from a total of 1325 deixis in Khan's speech at the United Nations General Debate 74<sup>th</sup> session in 2019, there were 425 times person deixis, 19 times place deixis, and 554 times time deixis uttered the most dominant deixis. Moreover, 235 times discourse deixis and 93 times social deixis are found in the speech. In addition, the researcher

found that such deixis was used to express feeling, persuade, and deny or reveal ideological bias.

### A. Dominant Types of Deixis

One of the objectives of this research is to find the dominant types of deixis used in Khan's address at the United Nations General Debate. The findings of the analysis showed that the time deixis was dominantly used of deixis in Khan's speech. This finding has the same finding as the previous research done by Alkhaldeh (2022). Alkhaldeh (2022) investigated the types of deixis that are frequently used in Friday sermons and the deictic expression applied in each type. This study revealed that time deixis was dominantly used in the 70 sermons in the corpus. The researcher divided the time deixis into two, they were lexically and grammatically. The lexical form included time deictic expressions such as adverbs. Moreover, grammatical form is differentiated into past, present, and future tenses. It appeared 155 times. Time deictic expressions such as 'today' appeared 61 times and 'now' 20 times are dominantly used in the sermons. Examples *Today, we'll talk about one of the amazing stories in the Qur'an to bring up the topic of the sermon and What I mean by 'disbelief' I will explain to you now* to show that the preachers and listeners have the same dimension of time.

By contrast, person deixis was found to the dominantly used by the speaker in speech research by Minkhatunnakhriyah (2021), Ningsih and Megawati (2022), and Abdulameer (2019). Minkhatunnakhriyah (2021) researched the use of deixis and its context in Indonesian representatives' comment speeches at the United Nations General Assembly. This research found that person deixis was the dominant used in the speech comment that appeared 23 times from 35 deixis has been found. Moreover, Ningsih and Megawati (2022) investigated the use of deixis in Lera Boroditsky's speech. This research revealed that person deixis is the most frequently appeared in speech and it was used 223 times. Lastly, Abdulameer (2019) analyzed the use of deixis in a lecture by Imam John Starling. The researcher found that person deixis was the dominant deixis in the lecture. It appeared 202 times in the speech.

However, the data of this current research revealed that time deixis was dominantly used in speech, compared to person, place, discourse, and

social deixis. It was 41.8% applied in the whole address and appeared 554 times. Below are the examples of time deixis that were found in the speech.

- (2) *I feel honored today to represent my country at this forum of world leaders....*  
 (15) *We planted a billion trees in 5 years.*  
 (21) *This is really what I hope....*  
 (95) *The Muslim leadership was so scared of being called radical Islam.*  
 (128) *I'll try to explain what he means to us.*  
 (185) *Now, we supposed to tell them....*  
 (226) *Our Foreign Minister was supposed to be on this UNGA last year, India cancelled it.*  
 (320) *They will shoot them.*

Sentences number (2) and (15) were the sentences that used verbs to show the time deixis of Khan's utterances. He used the present verb 'feel' in sentence number (2) to define the current context of the utterance and applied the past participle verb 'planted' in sentence number (15) to describe the past event. Moreover, sentences number (21) and (95) were the sentences that used 'to be' in Khan's address of time deixis. In sentence number (21), he used to be 'is' as the present time of the utterance has been talked. He also used the past to be 'was' in sentence (95) to talk about what happened in the past. In addition, sentences number (128) and (320) used the auxiliaries to tell what is going to happen and predict the future. These two sentences used 'will' as the modal auxiliary verb. Lastly, sentences number (185) and (226) used time adverbs and time-deictic morphemes as time deixis in the address. In sentence number (185), Khan used the time adverb 'now' to tell the audience the current time of the event. He also used the time-deictic morpheme 'last year' to tell the audience what happened last year. Therefore, Khan used verbs, to be, auxiliaries, time adverbs, and the time-deictic morpheme to time his address.

Moreover, deictic expressions refer to the present tense as the time deixis dominantly used in Khan's address at the United Nation General Debate in 2019, in contrast to past and future tense, and time deictic expressions such as adverbs. It appeared 261 times. Below are examples of the present tense used by Khan.

- (5) .... *I start with climate change.*  
 (11) .... *we are mainly an agricultural country....*  
 (65) *Human communities live together.*  
 (69) *Hijab is some sort of a weapon.*  
 (90) *I am sad to say....*  
 (130) *The Holy Qur'an is the book of guidance for Muslim....*  
 (154) *The Prophet lives in our hearts.*  
 (288) *It shares arrogance....*  
 (383) *I am in Kashmir.*  
 (415) *You are the one who guarantee the people of Kashmir the right of self-determination.*

Sentences number (5), (65), (154), and (288) were the sentences that used verbs to show the present time of Khan's utterances. He used the present verb 'start' in sentence number (5), 'live' and 'lives' in sentences number (65) and (154), and 'shares' in sentence number (288) to define the current context of the utterance. Moreover, sentences number (11), (69), (90), (130), (383), and (415) were the sentences that used 'to be' in Khan's address of the present tense of time deixis. He used to be 'is' in sentences number (69) and (130). In addition, sentences number (90) and (383) applied 'am' to be. Lastly, in sentences number (11) and (415), Khan applied 'are' to be. Therefore, Khan used present verbs and 'is', 'am', and 'are' to be, to time the current situation in his address.

In addition, the other time deixis such as past tense also frequently used in Khan's speech. It was past tense. These deictic expressions were uttered 183 times. Below are examples of past tense that appeared in Khan's address at the United Nations General Debate.

- (13) *We detected already 5000 glacier lakes in our mountains.*  
 (35) .... *our total debt went up 4 times.*  
 (76) *Because certain western leaders equated terrorism with Islam....*  
 (96) *In Pakistan, we were the eye of the storm....*  
 (115) .... *there were reactions in the Muslim world.*  
 (120) *It was against freedom of expression.*  
 (129) *Our Prophet was the witness to the Divine book, the Holy Quran.*  
 (192) *Taliban were in Afghanistan.*  
 (193) *Al Qaeda was in Afghanistan.*  
 (207) *I invited the Iran President.*

Khan used past participle verbs in sentences number (13), (35), (76), and (207). For example, the verbs 'detected' in sentence number (13), 'went' in sentence number (35), 'equated' in sentence number (76), and 'invited' in sentence number (207). Moreover, the 'to be' of past tense such as 'was' and 'were'. For example, he used 'were' in sentences number (96), (115), and (192). He also used 'was' in sentences number (120), (129), and (193).

Next, time adverbs or deictic morphemes were the third place frequently used by Khan. It was used 72 times. Below are examples of time adverbs or deictic morphemes applied in the speech.

- (3) *I want to talk about a lot of problems but just four today.*
- (16) *Now, we've set ourselves a target of 10 billion trees in Pakistan.*
- (35) *In my country, when I took a charge of our government a year back.*
- (51) *They must take action now.*
- (91) *After 9/11, when this thing came about the war against "radical Islam" ....*
- (105) *No one did research that before 9/11 the majority of suicide attacks in the world were by Tamil Tigers who were Hindus.*
- (122) *And every two or three years, someone would malign our Prophet (PBUH).*
- (182) *And now, our government was supposed to the reason I oppose joining this war.*
- (245) *Okay, after the election we'll get back to our normal relationship.*
- (384) *I've been locked up for 55 days.*

The examples above revealed the use of time adverbs and time-deictic morphemes. Khan used time adverbs of 'today' in sentence number (3) and 'now' in sentences in numbers (16), (51), and (182) to show the current time of his speaking. Moreover, he used time-deictic morphemes such as 'a year back' in sentence number (35), 'after 9/11' in sentence number (91), 'before 9/11' in sentence number (105), 'every two or three years' in sentence number (122), 'after the election' in sentence number (245), and 'for 55 days' in sentence number (384).

The last is the very least used time deixis, future tense. It was applied 36 times in the speech. Below are the examples of future tense that showed in the speech.

- (101) .... *they will get virgins in heavens.*
- (128) .... *I'll try to explain what he means to us.*
- (234) .... *we will admit it,*
- (245) *Okay, after the election, we'll get back to our normal relationship.*
- (318) *They will be out of the street.*
- (368) *And then, I'll tell you what will happen.*
- (369) .... *someone will pick up arms.*
- (394) *There will be reaction to this.*
- (396) *Two nuclear armed countries will come face to face like we came in February.*
- (411) .... *it will have consequences far beyond the borders.*

The examples above showed that Khan used 'will' to predict the future. For example, he used 'will' in sentences number (101), (234), (245), (318), (369), (394), (396), and (411) to predict the future. He also used 'will' to what was he going to do after the utterance in sentence number (128) and (368).

Thus, the time deixis was dominantly used in Khan's address. It appeared 554 in the speech. The findings also revealed that the present tense was dominantly used grammatically. It was applied 261 times.

## B. Reasons for Using Deixis

One of the objectives of this research is to find the reasons why Khan used deixis in his speech. This research found that deixis is used to express feeling, persuade, and deny or reveal ideological bias. These findings are in line with the findings of previous research done by Dawood (2019). Dawood (2019) found that the pronoun 'I' in person deixis is used to show the speaker's feelings in a presidential speech. For example, *Well, I know it's hot.*

In this study, the researchers found that deixis was used to show express the feeling, persuade, and deny or expose ideological bias in Khan's address at the United Nations General Debate in 2019.

The first reason Khan was to show his feeling. Below are examples of the pronoun 'I' and 'We' of person deixis that show Khan's feelings.

- I feel honored today to represent my country at this forum of world leaders.*
- I feel that there are some very urgent problems.*
- I am sad to say that we Muslim leaders have not addressed this issue either.*
- We find it so difficult to retrieve it.*

Moreover, the second reasons for using deixis were to persuade (Akinbiyi, 2016). Below are examples of time deixis that show how Khan persuade the audience at the conference.

*Let's resolve our differences relationship retreat.*  
*Let's build our relationship on trust.*  
*Let's leave that behind.*  
*Let's move forward.*

Lastly, one of the reasons Khan used deixis was to deny or expose ideological bias (Wilson, 1990). Below are examples of utterances that show how Khan denies or exposes ideological bias.

*No Pakistani was involved in 9/11.*  
*No Pakistani government would have dared do this.*

Therefore, the reasons Khan used deixis in his speech were to express his feelings, deny or expose ideological bias, and persuade the audience.

## CONCLUSION

The researchers can draw some conclusions based on the analysis and discussion of this current research. The conclusions of this research are about the dominant use of deixis and the reasons why the deixis was applied in Khan's address at the United Nations General Debate, 74<sup>th</sup> session of UNGA in 2019.

Levinson (1983) classified deixis into five types. They are person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. Following Levinson's (1983) theory about deixis, the researchers found that time deixis was dominantly used compared to the other four types of deixis in the speech. It was applied 554 times and revealed that the present tense was the most dominantly used. Present time uttered 261 times. Moreover, this research found that Khan used deixis to show solidarity and unity by using the 'we' pronoun person deixis and to express his feeling by using the 'I' pronoun person deixis. In addition, he also used time deixis to narrate the story from the past event.

Thus, it can be concluded that the time deixis is dominantly used in Khan's address at the United Nations General Debate, and he used deixis to show

solidarity and unity, express his feelings, narrate the story, and predict the future.

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