



## DEIXIS IN FRANK OCEAN'S BLONDE ALBUM : CONSTRUCTING EMOTION AND INDENTITY THROUGH LYRICS

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the pragmatic realization of deixis in five selected tracks from Frank Ocean's *Blonde* album. The analysis focuses on person, temporal, and spatial deixis to determine how deictic expressions encode emotional stance, identity construction, and relational positioning within the lyrics. The research applies a qualitative descriptive methods , with data obtained through lyric transcription and interpreted using contextual pragmatic analysis. The results indicate that person deixis, especially the oscillation between "I," "you," and "we," frames asymmetrical emotional relations and reveals shifts in intimacy, vulnerability, and self-awareness. Temporal deixis captures the interplay between past memory, present instability, and imagined futures, exposing fluctuating psychological states. Meanwhile, spatial deixis functions metaphorically to mark emotional spaces rather than physical settings, signifying belonging, transition, and internal refuge. Overall, deixis in *Blonde* operates not merely as a referential device but as a stylistic mechanism that articulates affective complexity and identity negotiation. This research contributes to pragmatic stylistics by demonstrating how deictic strategies in song lyrics can index psychological depth and relational meaning, thereby offering a basis for further linguistic examinations of musical discourse.

**Keywords:** Pragmatics, Deixis, Person Deixis, Temporal Deixis, Spatial Deixis, Stylistics, Song Lyrics

### A. INTRODUCTION

Language functions not only as a symbolic system but also as a medium through which speakers construct perspective, identity, and emotional meaning. Within linguistic studies, pragmatics emphasizes that meaning is not inherent in linguistic forms alone but emerges through their relationship with context. One central pragmatic feature that enables this relationship is deixis, which allows speakers to anchor utterances to specific participants, times, and spaces within discourse (Levinson, 1983). Through deictic expressions, language becomes a tool for positioning the self and others in relation to lived experience.

In artistic discourse such as song lyrics, contextual anchoring is often indirect or fragmented. Unlike everyday conversation, lyrics rarely provide explicit situational cues, requiring listeners to infer meaning from linguistic signals embedded in the text. In this sense, deixis plays a



crucial role in revealing narrative perspective, emotional stance, and interpersonal relations, particularly in songs that foreground subjectivity and introspection.

Frank Ocean's *Blonde* (2016) offers a compelling site for pragmatic inquiry due to its introspective tone, fragmented narrative structure, and fluid temporal orientation. While previous studies have predominantly examined the album through themes of identity, memory, and queer subjectivity (Baker.H, 2020) and (Potts, 2018) limited attention has been paid to the linguistic mechanisms through which these themes are constructed. As a result, discussions of emotional expression in *Blonde* often remain interpretive rather than linguistically grounded.

This gap is significant, especially within the broader context of popular music studies, where pragmatic analyses of contemporary song lyrics remain relatively underdeveloped, particularly in the Indonesian academic context. Existing studies on deixis in song lyrics tend to focus on isolated features such as pronouns or tense markers (Adnyani, 2017) and (Ahmad, 2020) without examining how multiple types of deixis interact across an album to shape narrative coherence and emotional development. Given *Blonde*'s narrative complexity and shifting points of view, a focused deictic analysis is necessary to understand how language functions as a medium of emotional transition and identity negotiation.

Accordingly, this study examines person, temporal, and spatial deixis in five selected songs from *Blonde*: "Ivy," "Pink + White," "Self Control," "Nights," and "Godspeed." These tracks were selected for their prominence within the album's emotional trajectory and their clear shifts in narrative voice. By identifying and interpreting deictic expressions, this research seeks to demonstrate how deixis structures narrative perspective, emotional proximity, and interpersonal relations. Ultimately, this study argues that deixis functions not merely as a grammatical phenomenon but as a pragmatic and stylistic device through which Frank Ocean articulates identity, intimacy, and emotional ambivalence.

Accordingly, this research addresses the following questions:

1. What types of deixis are identified in five selected tracks from Frank Ocean's *Blonde* album?



2. How does deixis function in shaping narrative perspective and interpersonal relations in these lyrics?

Rather than treating deixis as a purely classificatory feature, this study emphasizes its interpretive function within lyrical discourse. The findings are expected to contribute to pragmatic studies of musical texts and to reinforce the view that contemporary song lyrics constitute a linguistically rich medium deserving of systematic scholarly analysis.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on deixis, pragmatics, and lyrical discourse have received growing attention as music is increasingly recognized as a productive domain of linguistic expression. Foundational works such as (Levinson, 1983) and (Yule, 1996) conceptualize deixis as a context-dependent reference system enabling speakers to locate meaning through temporal, spatial, and personal markers. These frameworks form the basis for examining how narrative shifts and emotional positioning operate linguistically, including within song lyrics.

Empirical research on deixis within musical texts shows that deictic expressions serve not only grammatical roles but also construct interpersonal and affective meaning. (Sinaga, 2020) demonstrate that personal deixis clarifies relational positioning between singer and addressee, while temporal deixis intensifies emotional tone. Similarly, (Abdulloh, 2024) find that deixis in “To the Bone” facilitates interpersonal closeness and subjective reflection. These findings indicate that deixis contributes significantly to shaping narrative voice and emotional nuance in musical discourse.

Further pragmatic investigations connect deictic usage to identity construction and emotional shifts. (Janah, 2024) show that deictic patterns correlate with fluctuating emotional states and identity performance in contemporary songs. This supports the broader argument that pragmatic features—especially deixis are central to interpreting emotional expression and self-positioning in lyrics.

Research concerning Frank Ocean highlights the narrative fluidity and emotional complexity of his work. (Ahmad, 2020) identifies shifting temporal perspectives in *Blonde* as markers of



vulnerability and personal transformation, suggesting that temporal fluctuation underlies Ocean's introspective storytelling. While not strictly linguistic analysis, interpretive commentary such as (Cuchna, 2018) reinforces scholarly views by emphasizing the album's layered emotional and narrative structures. These observations imply that *Blonde* provides fertile ground for pragmatic and deictic investigation.

Recent theoretical developments broaden pragmatic perspectives by extending deixis beyond purely linguistic markers. (Han, 2024) propose a multimodal account in which deictic function may also operate visually or performatively. Although developed in the context of digital communication, this model supports conceptualizing deixis as an adaptable interpretive tool in expressive media, including contemporary music.

Overall, the reviewed literature reveals a clear gap. While scholars have examined emotional fragmentation, identity shifts, and narrative fluidity in *Blonde*, no prior research has conducted a systematic deictic analysis across multiple tracks. Given Ocean's shifting narrative voice, fluctuating temporal vantage, and intimate emotional tone, a focused study of person, temporal, and spatial deixis is both timely and warranted. The present research addresses this gap by analyzing selected tracks to elucidate how deictic markers construct emotional resonance, interpersonal dynamics, and shifting perspectives throughout the album.

### ***Linguistics***

Linguistics is fundamentally concerned with the investigation of how language operates as a structured system for conveying meaning. Classical linguistic scholarship (Lyons, 1995) and (O'Grady, 2016) emphasizes that meaning emerges from the interplay of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic components. These elements form an integrated system that enables speakers to articulate ideas, experiences, and social identities through patterned linguistic choices.

Recent linguistic studies argue that structural analysis alone cannot fully account for how meaning is understood in real discourse contexts. Scholars such as (Hall, 2021)) and (Carston, 2020) highlight the role of contextual cues, inferential reasoning, and shared background knowledge in shaping interpretation. Meaning is thus viewed as dynamic and context-sensitive, often relying on what is implied or inferred rather than on explicit linguistic forms.



Song lyrics represent a distinctive linguistic genre marked by condensed expression, perspective shifts, and affective nuance. Literary linguistics research (Simpson, 2004) and (Stockwell, 2020) notes that lyrics often encode meaning symbolically through metaphor, imagery, and emotional framing rather than through direct propositional content. Because lyrical texts employ ambiguity, stylization, and layered meanings, interpretation requires attention to how linguistic forms evoke subjective experience.

Within linguistic inquiry, various subfields contribute complementary perspectives on how meaning is constructed in discourse. While structural linguistics explains how forms function, interpretive frameworks help account for how listeners derive meaning from expression, stance, and narrative positioning (Huang, 2022). These linguistic foundations are essential for analyzing how individuals express identity, experience, and emotional orientation through language.

Taken together, the linguistic frameworks discussed above demonstrate that meaning is constructed through a combination of structural organization, contextual interpretation, and stylistic expression. Linguistic structure provides the formal foundation for how messages are encoded, while contemporary perspectives emphasize that interpretation is shaped by contextual cues and inferential reasoning. Within creative discourse such as song lyrics, meaning becomes further mediated by emotional nuance, symbolic language, and perspective-driven expression. These insights collectively position linguistics as the conceptual basis for understanding how language conveys identity, emotion, and experience. This foundation is essential for advancing to pragmatic and deictic analysis, which further examines how meaning is anchored to the speaker, the situation, and the communicative context.

### ***Pragmatics as Contextual Interpretation***

Pragmatics examines how linguistic expressions interact with contextual information to generate meaning. Rather than assuming that utterances carry complete semantic content, pragmatic theory proposes that interpretation emerges through inference guided by shared situational assumptions. (Levinson, 1983) argues that hearers move beyond literal meanings by drawing on background knowledge, conversational norms, and discourse expectations. In song lyrics where explicit situational context is absent these inferential mechanisms become crucial for reconstructing the narrator's emotional stance and communicative intent.



Contemporary pragmatic scholarship further emphasizes that meaning-making depends on the alignment between speaker intention and listener interpretation. (Marmaridou, 2020) characterizes pragmatic comprehension as a socio-cognitive activity in which listeners infer communicative goals on the basis of textual cues. Similarly, (Bayo-Moriones, 2022) notes that when contextual information is limited, as in poetic or musical discourse, interpretation becomes increasingly dependent on identifying the speaker's projected intention through linguistic indicators such as pronouns, evaluative expressions, and stance markers. In narrative-oriented song lyrics, these cues guide listeners in reconstructing the implied addressee, emotional trajectory, and relational dynamics.

Pragmatics also plays a central role in interpreting texts with inherently ambiguous or underspecified contexts (Yule, 1996) emphasizes that comprehension in genres like poetry and lyrics requires bridging contextual gaps using cultural knowledge, discourse conventions, and textual signals. Since songs do not provide a clearly defined setting, listeners must construct narrative coherence through features such as tense usage, metaphorical references, and pronominal shifts. These elements collectively function as contextual anchors in the absence of explicit situational detail.

Within this broader theoretical landscape, deixis constitutes a core concern of pragmatic analysis because deictic expressions depend entirely on reconstructing the speaker's personal, temporal, and spatial orientation. (Huang, 2022) explains that deixis hinges on identifying the "deictic center," a psychological point of reference from which relationships between participants, locations, and times are interpreted. In lyrical discourse, this conceptual center enables listeners to trace shifts in perspective, emotional distance, and interpersonal alignment across a song's narrative progression.

Overall, pragmatic theory demonstrates that understanding meaning requires reconstructing context, inferring speaker intention, and interpreting linguistic forms as cues to underlying psychological and relational states. Because song lyrics provide minimal external context, pragmatic reasoning becomes essential for identifying the narrator, mapping emotional transitions, and interpreting deictic expressions that structure the song's narrative world. Consequently, pragmatics offers a critical theoretical foundation for this study by positioning



deixis not merely as a linguistic category but as a mechanism through which listeners rebuild the implicit contexts and shifting perspectives embedded in Frank Ocean's *Blonde* album.

### ***Perspectives on Deixis***

(Stockwell, 2020) conceptualizes deixis as a cognitive mechanism through which narrative perspective is organized. Rather than functioning solely as a referential tool, deixis becomes a mental framework that shapes how speakers position events and characters within discourse. (Zhuang, 2023) expand this view by emphasizing the psychological and interactional dimensions of deictic choice. They argue that deixis reflects the speaker's emotional stance and relational positioning, making it central to the construction of identity and interpersonal meaning. Complementing these perspectives, (Huang, 2022) introduces the concept of the "deictic center," a cognitive anchor that allows listeners to interpret the speaker's personal, temporal, and spatial orientation. In genres lacking explicit context such as song lyrics this deictic center becomes essential for reconstructing narrative viewpoint and emotional orientation.

Recent scholarship expands the scope of deixis beyond verbal expressions by incorporating auditory and performative cues (Han, 2024) and (Lim, 2022) demonstrate that elements such as voice quality, tone, and spatial orientation can function as deictic indicators, shaping how listeners perceive narrative stance. Although *Blonde* is an auditory medium, its vocal layering, tonal modulation, and shifting narratorial voice align with this broader multimodal framework, making such perspectives relevant to its interpretation

Person deixis refers to linguistic expressions used to identify participants in discourse. Studies such as (Sari, 2023) demonstrate that shifts in personal pronouns often signal emotional transitions, relational dynamics, or fragmented self-representation, all of which are highly relevant to song lyrics where identity tends to be fluid and unstable.

Temporal deixis concerns expressions that indicate time relative to the speaker's perspective. (Chen, Y., 2021) argues that temporal markers such as *now*, *then*, and *still* function not only as chronological indicators but also as cues to psychological states often signaling nostalgia, longing, or emotional transitions across lyrical narratives.



Spatial deixis includes terms such as *here*, *there*, *near*, and *far*, which frequently operate metaphorically in poetic and musical discourse. (Rahimi, 2022) contends that spatial deixis in lyrics often expresses emotional proximity or distance rather than literal physical location, serving as an index of intimacy, detachment, or psychological movement.

Taken together, the theoretical perspectives demonstrate that deixis functions not only as a linguistic category but also as a cognitive and emotional framework for interpreting narrative meaning. In song lyrics where context is highly reduced deictic expressions serve as crucial interpretive anchors that reveal shifts in perspective, emotional stance, and relational identity. For this study, deixis provides an essential analytic foundation by enabling a systematic interpretation of how personal, temporal, and spatial references shape the emotional and narrative structures within Frank Ocean's *Blonde*

### ***Deixis in Song Lyrics and Relevance to Blonde***

Research on deixis in song lyrics emphasizes its function in shaping emotional intimacy and narrative cohesion (Adelia, 2021) notes that personal, temporal, and spatial references in lyrics allow listeners to track shifts in feeling and perspective even when the narrative context is minimal. Similarly, (Santoso, 2023) argues that the ambiguity typical of lyrical discourse heightens the importance of deictic markers, as they provide the primary cues for interpreting who is speaking, to whom the message is addressed, and how emotional distance is constructed. Through these mechanisms, deixis becomes central to understanding how songs establish affective engagement and narrative fluidity.

Studies of Frank Ocean's *Blonde* extend this view by demonstrating how deixis interacts with layered narrative structures. (Baker.H, 2020) describes Ocean's songwriting as inherently multi-perspectival, with frequent shifts between narrative voices, temporal frameworks, and intimate addressees. (Potts, 2018) further observes that Ocean's lyrics rely heavily on deictic anchoring to navigate these transitions, allowing listeners to reconstruct fragmented emotional states and shifting identities. In this context, deixis does not merely index participants, time, or place; it also signals changes in psychological stance and narrative orientation, making it fundamental to interpreting the album's lyrical complexity.



Taken together, these studies show that deixis functions as a critical interpretive mechanism in song lyrics, especially in texts characterized by minimal context and fluid narrative voice. The research suggests that deictic expressions guide listeners through emotional transitions, shifts in speaker identity, and movements across temporal and spatial frames. In *Blonde*, these deictic cues become even more pivotal because of the album's fragmented structure and introspective tone. Therefore, deixis provides a powerful analytical lens for understanding how song lyrics construct narrative coherence, emotional depth, and relational meaning despite the absence of explicit situational detail.

## **B. METHOD**

### ***Research Design***

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design, which is suitable for analyzing linguistic phenomena that rely on contextual and interpretive depth rather than numerical measurement. Qualitative description enables researchers to present findings in a manner that stays close to the data while offering systematic interpretation. (Sandelowski, 2000) emphasizes that qualitative descriptive studies aim to provide a comprehensive and straightforward account of a phenomenon, making it appropriate for investigating pragmatic elements embedded in discourse.

According to (Lambert, 2012), qualitative descriptive research is especially beneficial when the goal is to describe patterns, meanings, and functions without imposing theoretical abstraction beyond what the data naturally present. This aligns with the aim of the present study, which seeks to uncover how deixis constructs narrative perspective, interpersonal relations, and emotional nuance in Frank Ocean's lyrics.

(Creswell, 2021) also highlight that qualitative approaches allow researchers to interpret meaning within context, which is essential for analyzing deixis a linguistic feature that depends heavily on speaker intention, narrative stance, and situational reconstruction. Additionally, (Miles, 2020) emphasize the value of inductive analysis in qualitative research, where patterns and interpretations emerge organically from the data. This remains crucial in examining lyric discourse, where meaning is layered and fragmented.



Overall, a qualitative descriptive design provides the most suitable methodological framework for this study because it allows for a detailed and context-sensitive analysis of deictic expressions. It supports the investigation of how deixis functions narratively, interpersonally, and emotionally within the lyrical structure of *Blonde*, without distancing the interpretation from the linguistic data itself

### ***Data Source***

The data of this study consist of the official lyrics of five selected tracks from Frank Ocean's *Blonde* (2016), namely *Ivy*, *Pink + White*, *Self Control*, *Nights*, and *Godspeed*. These songs were purposively selected on the basis of their relevance to the research objectives and their representativeness of the album's emotional and narrative development. Each track reflects a distinct lyrical context that enables the examination of varied deictic functions.

*Ivy* and *Self Control* prominently employ person deixis to construct intimate speaker–addressee relationships and to articulate emotional conflict and vulnerability. *Pink + White* demonstrates a reflective narrative structure characterized by shifts between past experiences and present awareness, making it particularly suitable for analyzing temporal deixis. *Nights* features fragmented narrative sequencing and fluctuating temporal and spatial references, which align with themes of emotional instability and identity transition. *Godspeed*, as the closing track of the album, foregrounds future-oriented expressions and spatial metaphors associated with emotional release, acceptance, and resolution.

Taken together, these five songs provide a representative sample through which person, temporal, and spatial deixis can be examined across different emotional states and narrative positions within the album. The lyrics were obtained from verified and authoritative sources to ensure textual accuracy and reliability. Additional contextual information, including album commentary and relevant scholarly interpretations, was consulted to support the analytical discussion; however, such materials were not treated as primary data.

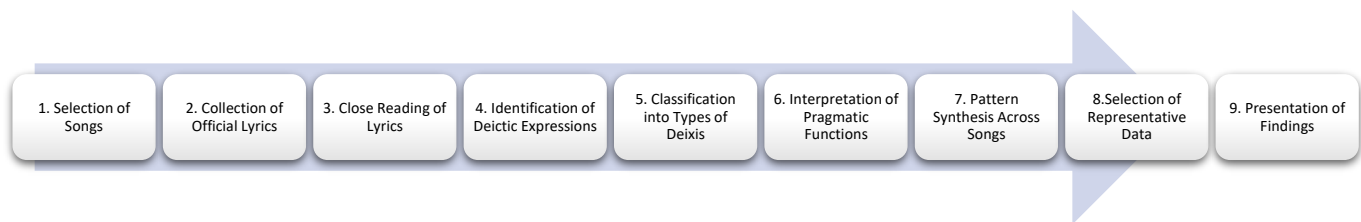
### ***Data Collection Procedures***

Data were collected through documentation. First, the official lyrics were downloaded and cross-verified for accuracy. Second, each text was formatted into a structured document to

allow systematic examination. Initial identification of person, temporal, and spatial deixis was performed through close reading. Additional contextual references were collected to enrich the pragmatic interpretation but without altering textual fidelity.

### ***Data Analysis Procedures***

A flow chart illustrating the data analysis procedures has been added to clarify the sequential stages of the research process.



### ***Analytical Framework***

The analytical framework of this study draws upon both classical pragmatic theory and contemporary approaches to multimodal deixis. At its foundation, the study employs (Levinson, 1983) typology of deixis, which categorizes deictic expressions into person, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social types. Levinson argues that deixis is fundamentally anchored in the “deictic center” a conceptual point representing the speaker’s position in time, space, and social interaction. This framework establishes the basis for identifying referential shifts and interpreting how linguistic choices shape narrative perspective in lyric discourse.

Levinson’s model is particularly relevant because it explains how meaning is constructed relative to the speaker’s viewpoint rather than through fixed semantic content. In contexts such as song lyrics where explicit situational information is minimal this theory clarifies how personal pronouns, temporal markers, and spatial indicators help reconstruct the narrator’s psychological stance and relational positioning. As a result, Levinson’s typology provides the primary structure for categorizing deictic forms in the selected songs.

To complement this classical framework, the study also incorporates contemporary multimodal perspectives on deixis, including insights from (Huang, 2022) and (Han, 2024) These scholars argue that deixis extends beyond verbal markers and involves additional modal cues such as voice quality, prosody, emotional tone, and narrative framing. Although the present research

analyzes auditory rather than visual data, the album *Blonde* frequently employs vocal layering, tonal shifts, and fragmented narrative voice features that align with multimodal deixis principles. These characteristics allow listeners to perceive emotional movement and perspectival shifts, even when explicit linguistic indicators are limited.

Integrating these two theoretical strands enables a comprehensive analytical approach. Levinson’s typology structures the identification of deictic categories, while multimodal deixis theory supports the interpretation of stylistic, emotional, and narrative complexity. Together, they allow the analysis to move beyond surface-level referential patterns and uncover deeper insights into how deixis shapes identity, emotion, and perspective within Frank Ocean’s lyrics.

### C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### *Result*

This section presents the findings of deixis based on the lyrical analysis of five songs by Frank Ocean: *Ivy*, *Pink + White*, *Self Control*, *Nights*, and *Godspeed*. The main focus is on Person Deixis, Temporal Deixis, and Spatial Deixis as represented in the selected lyric excerpts.

#### *Deixis Analysis in “Ivy”*

**Table 1. Deixis in “Ivy” by Frank Ocean**

No	Lyric Excerpt	Type of Deixis	Deictic Form	Function	Interpretation
1	“I thought that I was dreaming”	Person	I	First-person reference	Centers the narrator’s emotional state and introspection.
2	“We’ll never be those kids again”	Person	We	Collective subject	Evokes shared past identity that has been irreversibly lost.
3	“You came to visit”	Person	You	Addressee reference	Invokes memory of intimacy and past relational presence.
4	“I was dreaming”	Temporal	was	Past-tense marker	Reflects nostalgic recollection mixed with disbelief.
5	“Last week”	Temporal	last week	Specific temporal reference	Grounds emotional conflict in a concrete past moment.

6	“We’ll never be those kids again”	Temporal	never / again	Irreversible temporal shift	Emphasizes emotional maturation and unreturnable past.
7	“That’s the way it goes”	Spatial	that	Discourse–spatial reference	Refers to prior emotional events, signaling distance.
8	“Keep a place for me”	Spatial	place	Symbolic spatial deixis	Suggests emotional refuge or relational attachment.
9	“The start of nothing”	Spatial	start	Conceptual spatial marker	Implies emptiness and transitional emotional state.

### *Analysis (Person Deixis)*

The person deixis in *Ivy* highlights shifting relational perspectives through the pronouns I, we, and you. The narrator's self-reference foregrounds personal emotional experience, while “we” reflects a collective identity linked to shared history. Meanwhile, “you” brings the addressee back into the narrative as a memory rather than a present figure. Together, these deixis markers expose the emotional transition from closeness to separation.

### *Analysis (Temporal Deixis)*

Temporal deixis constructs a narrative rooted in memory and irreversible change. The past-tense markers indicate reflective reconstruction of events, while expressions like “never” and “again” draw boundaries between past and present emotional realities. These elements shape a temporal progression from innocence toward complexity.

### *Analysis (Spatial Deixis)*

Spatial deixis in the track is largely metaphorical. The word “that” indexes emotional episodes from the discourse, while “place” and “start” refer to conceptual locations rather than geographic ones. These elements reinforce themes of displacement, emotional distance, and the dissolution of former intimacy.

**Deixis Analysis in “Pink + White”**

**Table 2. Deixis in “Pink + White” by Frank Ocean**

No	Lyric Excerpt	Type of Deixis	Deictic Expression	Function	Interpretation
1	“Don’t you let me go”	Person	you, me	Direct interaction	Expresses emotional dependence and desire for relational continuity.
2	“If you could see through my eyes”	Person	you, my	Addressee–speaker link	Invites empathy by asking the addressee to understand inner perception.
3	“We’ll grow older”	Person	we	Collective reference	Projects shared identity toward an imagined relational future.
4	“That’s the way everyday goes”	Temporal	everyday	Habitual temporal frame	Portrays the cyclical nature of lived experience.
5	“We’ll grow older”	Temporal	will	Future projection	Indicates temporal progression and imagined continuity.
6	“All of the while”	Temporal	while	Continuous duration	Suggests ongoing emotional process alongside lived moments.
7	“Keep a place for me”	Spatial	place	Symbolic spatial anchor	Represents emotional belonging and relational refuge.
8	“You’re the one”	Spatial	the one	Identity–location indexing	Positions the addressee as central within relational space.
9	“That’s the way”	Spatial	that	Discourse–spatial pointer	Marks conceptual distance toward life patterns described.

**Analysis (Person Deixis)**

The pronominal system in *Pink + White* foregrounds vulnerability and intimacy. The shifting interplay between “you–me” constructs reciprocal emotional ties, while “we” projects an

idealized joint identity. These person deixis markers emphasize dependence and fleeting connection, reflecting the song’s introspective emotional stance.

### *Analysis (Temporal Deixis)*

Temporal deixis in the track juxtaposes habitual time with imagined future continuity. “Everyday” universalizes the rhythm of life, whereas “will” marks the temporal horizon of anticipated change. These elements underscore the song’s engagement with the flux of time and the instability of lived experience.

### *Analysis (Place Deixis)*

Spatial deixis in *Pink + White* functions primarily on a symbolic level. “Place” serves as an emotional anchor, while “that” signals abstract distance within relational discourse. These markers reinforce the song’s themes of stability versus uncertainty in emotional grounding.

### *Deixis Analysis in “Self Control”*

**Table 3. Deixis in “Self Control” by Frank Ocean**

No	Lyric Excerpt	Type of Deixis	Deictic Expression	Function	Interpretation
1	“I know you got your own life”	Person	I, you	Speaker–addressee contrast	Indicates emotional separation while acknowledging personal autonomy.
2	“Keep a place for me”	Person	me	First-person object	Expresses desire to remain emotionally relevant in the addressee’s life.
3	“You made me lose my self-control”	Person	you, me	Relational dynamic	Shows the addressee’s emotional influence over the narrator.
4	“Keep a place for me”	Temporal	implied future	Future orientation	Suggests imagined continuity beyond the present relationship.

5	“I’ll be the boyfriend in your wet dreams tonight”	Temporal	tonight	Specific present time	Creates immediacy and intensifies emotional closeness.
6	“I came to visit”	Temporal	came (past)	Past event reference	Revisits a prior interaction that shapes current emotional tension.
7	“Keep a place for me”	Spatial	place	Symbolic spatial anchor	Represents emotional territory reserved for the narrator.
8	“You got your own life”	Spatial	own (implicit)	Psychological domain	Suggests separate personal spheres or emotional boundaries.
9	“You used to live a blonded life”	Spatial	live (implied)	Spatial–temporal metaphor	Signals transition between emotional environments or identity states.

### *Analysis (Person Deixis)*

Person deixis in *Self Control* foregrounds an asymmetrical relational dynamic. The juxtaposition of “I” and “you” conveys emotional dependence against a backdrop of separation, while repeated reference to “me” highlights the narrator’s vulnerability. These pronominal choices illustrate longing, internal conflict, and a struggle for emotional agency.

### *Analysis (Temporal Deixis)*

Temporal deixis reflects fluid movement between past memory, present desire, and projected future contact. “Tonight” frames the immediacy of emotional closeness, while “came” evokes nostalgia. This temporal shifting mirrors the narrator’s unstable emotional state, oscillating between reminiscence and anticipated intimacy.

### *Analysis (Spatial Deixis)*

Spatial deixis in the song is largely metaphorical, evoking emotional or psychological space rather than literal location. The recurring motif of place signals the narrator’s hope for

continued presence, while reference to your own life underscores separation. The implicit spatial metaphor of used to live reinforces identity shifts and emotional distancing.

### *Deixis Analysis in “Nights”*

**Table 4. Deixis in “Nights” by Frank Ocean**

No	Lyric Excerpt	Type of Deixis	Deictic Expression	Function	Interpretation
1	“Every night fucks every day up”	Person	implicit speaker	Unstated narrator	Projects emotional turmoil; situates the speaker within chaotic experiences.
2	“You’re the one I want”	Person	you, I	Direct address	Reveals longing and emotional attachment toward the addressee.
3	“I been up for three nights at the motel”	Person	I	First-person narration	Highlights personal instability through insomnia and disrupted routine.
4	“Every night...”	Temporal	night (repeated)	Recurrent temporal frame	Suggests ongoing emotional turbulence with repetitive internal conflict.
5	“...every day up”	Temporal	day	Temporal contrast	Establishes duality between emotional states across time cycles.
6	“Three nights”	Temporal	three nights	Measured duration	Indicates prolonged instability and psychological strain.
7	“Three nights at the motel”	Spatial	at the motel	Physical location	Conveys unstable, temporary living circumstances.

8	“Drop the pin on the address”	Spatial	address, pin	Spatial reference	Reveals search for geographical clarity and emotional grounding.
9	“All my nights been wild”	Spatial	my nights (metaphorical)	Psychological/spatial zone	Represents internal emotional territory shaped by turbulence and disorder.

### ***Analysis (Person Deixis)***

Person deixis in *Nights* grounds the narrative in a subjective emotional lens. The persistent “I” forms a self-focused account of instability, while “you” introduces relational dependency and unresolved desire. The alternation between self-reference and direct address underscores fragmented emotional identity, mirroring the song’s shifts between personal vulnerability and connection.

### ***Analysis (Temporal Deixis)***

Temporal deixis in *Nights* illustrates recurring emotional disruption. Repetition of night and day constructs a cyclical rhythm of instability, while measured duration such as three nights signals sustained struggle. The shifting temporal cues emphasize fragmented perceptions of time, reinforcing the song’s portrayal of ongoing psychological tension.

### ***Analysis (Spatial Deixis)***

Spatial deixis in *Nights* interweaves physical and psychological space. The motel signals transience and instability, while digital spatial references such as drop the pin reflect efforts to locate stability. Metaphorical spatiality my nights highlights emotional territory marked by chaos. These spatial markers collectively reinforce a fractured sense of grounding and identity.

**Deixis Analysis in “Godspeed”**

**Table 5. Deixis in “Godspeed” by Frank Ocean**

No	Lyric Excerpt	Type of Deixis	Deictic Expression	Function	Interpretation
1	“I will always love you”	Person	I, you	First–second person	Conveys enduring affection and sustained emotional commitment.
2	“I let go of my claim on you”	Person	I, you, my	Release of possession	Marks emotional maturity through acceptance and relinquishment.
3	“You’ll have this place to call home”	Person	you	Addressee-centered focus	Offers reassurance, symbolizing stability and a safe emotional space.
4	“I will always love you”	Temporal	will, always	Future continuity	Projects sustained emotional devotion beyond present circumstances.
5	“I let go”	Temporal	past	Past emotional action	Indicates a decisive moment of acceptance and personal release.
6	“You’ll have this place”	Temporal	will	Future reassurance	Promises stability and emotional comfort in the addressee’s future.
7	“You’ll have this place to call home”	Spatial	place, home	Spatial metaphor	Symbolizes emotional refuge and grounding.
8	“I hope you find your way”	Spatial	your way	Metaphorical spatial pathway	Represents personal growth and forward movement.
9	“Godspeed” (implied)	Spatial	implied spatial motion	Blessing for transition	Suggests safe passage toward a new emotional or life trajectory.

**Analysis (Person Deixis)**

Person deixis in *Godspeed* emphasizes unconditional affection while signaling emotional release. The consistent use of “I” reflects sincerity and reflective awareness, where’s “you”

places the addressee at the emotional core of the expression. This pronominal structure highlights acceptance, closure, and mature compassion, shaping a tone of benevolent farewell.

***Analysis (Temporal Deixis)***

Temporal deixis in *Godspeed* integrates past acknowledgment with future goodwill. Past markers convey emotional resolution, while future references express enduring care. This alignment portrays closure grounded in benevolence, reinforcing the song’s themes of acceptance, blessing, and unconditional support.

***Analysis (Spatial Deixis)***

Spatial deixis in *Godspeed* primarily evokes emotional and metaphorical territory. "Home" symbolizes security and acceptance, while your way indicates an open journey of self-discovery. The implicit spatial blessing within *Godspeed* itself reinforces themes of protection, transition, and benevolent farewell.

**DISCUSSION**

***Summary of Deixis Findings Across Five Tracks***

The analysis of the five selected songs reveals that deixis functions as a central linguistic mechanism through which Frank Ocean constructs emotional positioning, interpersonal dynamics, and fluid identity. Person, temporal, and spatial deixis work collectively to form the introspective and fragmented narrative style characteristic of *Blonde*.

**Table 6.1 Distribution of Deixis in the Five Songs**

No	Deixis Type	Description	Narrative/Emotional Function	Frequency	Percentage
1	Person Deixis	“I,” “me,” “you,” “we”	Expresses intimacy, distance, self-evaluation, and identity negotiation	38	50%

2	Temporal Deixis	“now,” “then,” “last week,” “tonight”	Marks memory, emotional progression, and reflective temporality	22	29%
3	Spatial Deixis	“here,” “there,” “home,” “at the motel”	Constructs emotional spaces, displacement, and psychological orientation	16	21%
<b>Total</b>				<b>76</b>	<b>100%</b>

### *Interpretation of the Findings*

Person deixis emerges as the dominant category (50%), showing that emotional expression in *Blonde* is primarily grounded in interpersonal relationships, with shifting I,you,we forms reflecting fluid identity and fluctuating emotional proximity. Temporal deixis (29%) connects past events to present emotional states, emphasizing personal transformation and the cyclical nature of the narrator’s internal struggles. Spatial deixis (21%) functions as an emotional landscape, relying on symbolic rather than literal locations to construct psychological “spaces,” consistent with multimodal pragmatic theory. Across the five songs, these patterns form a cohesive emotional arc, moving from heartbreak (*Ivy*, *Self Control*) to reflection (*Pink + White*), fragmentation (*Nights*), and ultimately emotional maturity (*Godspeed*).

### **D. CONCLUSION**

This study confirms that deixis plays an essential pragmatic role in shaping emotional stance, relational positioning, and fluid identity in Frank Ocean’s *Blonde*. Across the five selected tracks, personal, temporal, and spatial deixis do not merely indicate referential direction; rather, they serve as interpretive frameworks through which the lyrical persona constructs and negotiates meaning.

Person deixis reveals fluctuating interpersonal dynamics, in which expressions such as “I,” “you,” and “we” articulate shifting emotional alignment, ranging from intimacy to detachment. Temporal deixis highlights the coexistence of memory, immediacy, and anticipated futures,



illustrating psychological fragmentation and emotional evolution over time. Spatial deixis, predominantly metaphorical, locates emotional experience within symbolic rather than physical domains, emphasizing vulnerability, refuge, or transition.

The findings demonstrate that deixis functions as a stylistic mechanism that encodes affective complexity, thereby expanding the scope of pragmatic inquiry beyond strictly situational interpretations. The study contributes to existing literature by showing that deixis within song lyrics can serve as a tool for representing identity formation and emotional transformation, rather than solely referencing external context.

While the analysis was limited to five selected tracks, these findings provide a foundation for broader linguistic exploration. Future research may incorporate comparison across different albums, genres, or multimodal contexts such as live performance, interviews, or visual storytelling. Such extensions would deepen the understanding of deixis as a discursive resource within artistic expression.

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