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Deictic Study of 64th Independence Day Speech Delivered by Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana.

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Abstract

This study sought to look at usage of deixis in the 64th Independence Day speech delivered by Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo, the president of Ghana. The Qualitative method was employed with a focus on descriptive text analysis. Data was purposively selected, downloaded, and converted from pdf to word format. The study focused on how the three types of deixis; person, time, and place were used. Their occurrences, effects, and the possible reasons for their use. It was revealed that person deixis had the highest usage, followed by time deixis and place deixis. It was also revealed that the first-person pronouns (I, we, us, and our) had the highest exploitation. By the generous use of these pronouns as deictic elements, the speaker achieved the most desired effects required of a speech of this nature- call for unity, teamwork, sacrifice, and commitment of all, especially at a time when the country had been hardest hit by the covid-19 pandemic. Time and place deixis all occurred in both proximal and distal forms relative to the time and place of the speaker and deictic center. By proximal use, time, and place deixis created some form of closeness and engagement with the audience, the people of Ghana. Distal forms created distance in time, suggestive of the 'pastness' of the events that led to the actual independence struggle concerning the time of speaking. They also depicted the positioning of these events in relation to the speaker's current positioning as the deictic center. It also created some form of psychological distance between the speaker and the audience.

Keywords: Independence, teamwork, proximal, distal, deixis, proximal.

Introduction

1.0 Background to the study

Communication is the act of relating to others for the purpose of expressing our feelings, thoughts, desires, and understanding. Among the means through which people communicate is the use of language. Language, therefore, provides a vehicle on which the act of communication thrives. Embedded in every communication process are the participants, place, time as well as process. Each communicative process possesses unique characteristics and features, the presence of which distinguish them from other communication processes. Effective communication requires that both speakers and listeners understand each other. There exists a very important connection between language and context. Much of what would be understood from language depends to a large extent on the context in which it is used. Context contributes to the meaning of what is said in communication as Simpson (1993: 6) intimates 'language is not used in a contextless vacuum; rather, it is used in a host of discourse contexts.

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that relates to the study of language in use and how context contributes to meaning. It evaluates how human language is used in social interactions. Nordquist (2019) describes pragmatics as a branch of linguistics that relates to the use of language in social contexts and how people produce and understand meanings through language.

Pragmatic studies involve such context-dependent theories as deixis, conversational implicature, text organization, speech act theory, and presupposition. Pragmatic studies look beyond linguistic meaning and consider such concepts as context, real-world knowledge, and reference. The concept of Deixis helps to reflect this connection or relationship between

language and context. Deixis relates to the pragmatic study of language use in real situations that relates to the participants, time, place, etc. It is a way by which we can distinguish between what is said on one occasion as well as what is meant, given the situation of use. Rhetorical theory of deixis helps scholars to discover and recover a text's materiality by revealing how spoken oratory responds symbolically to the world around it - revealing the distinguishable ways in which deixis links language to context.

In most discourses, speakers make several attempts to appeal to their audience in varying ways. One of such ways is the apt exploitation of language and linguistic devices to achieve desired effects. Independence Day remains a very important day in the life of every country that was once colonized. Its significance stems from several factors. First, it marks the point of departure from slavery to freedom and self-rule. It is also important because it brings memories of both painful and victorious experiences the nation might have endured. The sensitive nature of Independence Day, therefore, requires that speakers or scriptwriters possess such skills that portray unity, commonality, and unity of purpose among others. It is important to note, from the ongoing discussion, that knowledge of linguistic devices that have contextual appeal is critical for audience/listeners' understanding and appreciation of various speeches. This study would add to the stock of existing research on context-sensitive devices, deixis, in political discourse.

Objectives of the Study

In this study, we examine how the five types of deixis as proposed by Levinson (1983, 2004) are employed in the 64th Independence Day speech by Akufo Addo of Ghana. We would make a detailed discussion on how three types: person, time, and place deixis are utilized in the speech.

1.2 Research Questions

The study would be informed by these questions

1. What types of deixis were employed in the 64th Independence Day speech of Ghana and what proportions?
2. Which of these three types (person, time, and place) of deixis were employed most?
3. What are the possible reasons for the exploitation of these types of deixis and their effects?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The research explores the pragmatic and contextual nature of deixis in one important speech in every country's history, the Independence Day speech. The study is significant due to the following reasons.

First, it seeks to expose and enrich both students and researchers' knowledge with the effectiveness of deictic elements in textual representations, especially speeches.

Secondly, the study's findings would help students and researchers of language to understand deictic expressions in other types of texts such as other political, legal, and academic texts.

Additionally, the study would serve pedagogic significance by revealing the need for deixis to be taught adequately in Ghanaian schools, to ensure that students use them appropriately in their writings.

Lastly, the study's findings would add to the existing stock of research on context-sensitive research in Ghana.

Limitations of the Study

The study focuses on analyzing only one speech- the address delivered by the Ghanaian president on the occasion of the nation's 64th Independence Day celebration. Secondly, we examine how the five types of deixis were exploited in the speech, however, with detailed focus and analysis of how three of them were used, for what reason and effect. The researchers accept that analysis of all five types of deixis would have been more interesting but for time constraints. Finally, the researchers could have done a more complex work by looking at other linguistic items that occur in the speech in addition to the deictic elements in the speech.

Literature Review

This unit looks at the theoretical framework upon which the study would be carried. It would also look at some concepts that relate to the theory of deixis.

2.0 The Definition of Deixis

Levinson (2004:73) defines deixis as a phenomenon in which some linguistic expressions are systematically dependent on the context for their interpretation. Equivalent to indexicality (Latin), suggests "pointing via language", Yule (1996:115) and includes such words as I, you, now, today, here, there, that, this. Deixis plays a tremendous part in communication by providing a framework that serves as a link between the time, physical location, people who are involved as well as what people say. Generally, deixis can be said to refer to the phenomenon in which interpretation of some words or phrases is understood with the help of contextual information. They are wordings whose semantic meanings are fixed with differing denotational meanings in respect to time and/ place. Indeed, Levinson (1983:54) posits that deixis reflects "key points of juncture between grammar and context. Specifically, it concerns who the speaker is, the time and place of speaking, the intended addressees, the gestures of the speaker as well as the current location of the discourse. Five types of deixis have been identified: person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis (Fillmore (1982) and Lyons (1979), Levinson 1983)

2.1 Person deixis

Person deixis refers to grammatical categories of people involved in an utterance and expressed by the pronoun persons: first person deixis (I, we), second person deixis (you), and third-person deixis (he, she, it, and they). It is a deictic reference to the participant role of a referent and includes the speaker, addressee, and referents which are neither speaker nor addressee, depending on the participant's role in the utterance and on the addressee, both in the plural and singular form (Lyons, 1979).

2.2 Place Deixis

Place deixis relates to words and phrases used to point to a location that has relevance to the location of a participant in the speech event. By implication, they indicate the relative locations of people and things in a communicative event. Place deixis has three forms: adverbs of place, such as 'here', 'near' and 'there', demonstratives that refer to a person or thing 'this', 'that', 'these' and 'those', and motion verbs, particularly 'come' and 'go'. They are deictic so long as they indicate movement towards or away from the 'deictic center'. Examples of these include; he goes (away from the speaker) and he comes (towards the speaker). According to Cummings (2005), place deictic references may be absolute

or relational in nature. Absolute references to place locate an object or person in specific longitude and latitude, whereas relational references locate people and place in terms of how they relate to each other in a communicative situation (Wijaya, 2012). Levinson (1983) again suggests that place deixis may be used to indicate psychological proximity or distance between participants (speaker and referent). 'this', 'these' and 'here' are used to suggest proximal or near entities in relation to the speaker, whereas 'that', 'those' and 'there' refer to distal entities. They may also be used to show empathetic attitudes. The construction, 'I don't like that', expresses one's attitude towards behavior that irritates him.

2.3 Time Deixis

Levinson (1983) defines time deixis as that which relates to encoding at temporal points of spoken or written message. These are expressions that point to certain periods of utterances that are produced by the speaker at particular periods. They manifest usually in adverbs of time, such as now, then, this week, this afternoon, yesterday, today, and many more. Renkema (1993) states that time deixis is a reference to time relative to a temporal reference point and it is typically the moment of speaking. Time expressions are represented by adjectives of time, such as 'yesterday', 'now', 'tomorrow', and the verb tenses. Grundy (2000) describes it as a "tense system". He declared that almost every sentence refers to an event that can only be determined concerning the time of the utterance (Wijaya, 2012). Similarly, Yule (1996) posits that the basic type of temporal deixis is the choice of tense: present and past forms in English. For instance, tense adverbs such as 'here' and 'then' suggest either present and proximal or past and distal time. It is worth noting that temporal deixis ranges from single types such as now, today, yesterday, then, to complex adverbials such as this evening, next week, next vacation, etc. Thus, they can be calendrical (non- deictic) or non-calendrical, depending on their relation to the time of the speaker's utterance. Calendrical usages refer to a fixed-length sequence of naturally given time points such as Sunday, July, this morning, etc. Non-calendrical forms are deictic and refer to points of measurement concerning some fixed points of interest. Examples include; now, evening, fortnight (Huang, 2007, p. 144). The addition of demonstratives such as 'this' or 'that' turns calendric forms into deictic forms, thus, relating the time to the particular time of utterance. Example, this night, this June, that month, etc. (Al-Tekreeti, 2012: 17).

2.4 Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis refers to portions of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance is located (Levinson, 1983, p.62). That is to say that, discourse deixis are expressions used to refer to certain discourse that contains the utterance and how they relate to the co-text. Discourse deictic elements indicate prior or succeeding parts of the discourse: the words and phrases that indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse. They run commentary on the text and with expressions such as 'but', 'therefore', 'in conclusion', 'actually', 'all in all' etc, they construct discourse and manage the current utterance in chronological order (ELLO, 2018). They refer either anaphorically or cataphorically with the help of both demonstratives and adverbials. Discourse deictic words may refer backward ('anaphora'), or forwards ('cataphora') (Suleymanova,

2018). Such deictic words can be used to express anticipation of upcoming utterances such as in: 'here comes the bride', etc. Alternatively, the use of 'that' in 'that was a true report', relates to a preceding activity or event.

2.5 Social Deixis

Social deixis relates to the social status of the speaker, the addressee, or a third person or entity referred to, as well as the social relationships that holds between them" (Huang, 2007: 163). Among the relationships carried by social deixis are social class, kin relationship, age, sex, profession, and other groups. They expose the social positioning of participants in communicative events. Al-Tekreeti, (2016: 21) cited in Abdulameer1 (2019) provides the following examples

- 1) Title of the addressee (Sir, Mr., Miss).
- 2) Kinship terms (uncle, my uncle).
- 3) First name (James).
- 4) Combination (James Bond).
- 5) Titles borrowed from names of occupations (doctor).
- 6) Ranks in certain social/ professional groups (Colonel).
- 7) Combination of titles and names (Professor Sir John Lyons) (Dandeigo, 2018).

3.0 Research Procedure

The types of deictic elements used in the 64th Independence Day speech of Ghana were explored in this study. The qualitative method was employed because of the descriptive nature of the study. A document was used as an instrument for the study. The text was downloaded and converted from pdf to word format for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the data for the study. The 64th Independence Day speech is chosen for the study since it is the most recent Independence Day speech. Secondly, it was delivered in the first year of the second tenure of the sitting president, and at a critical period when the country is recovering from the ravaging effects of the covid-19 pandemic. The Independence Day speech of Nana Akufo-Addo was downloaded from the internet. Textual analysis was carried out to ascertain the types of deictic elements that were used by the speaker on this specialized occasion as well as the reasons behind their use.

Procedure of Analysis

First, the number of sentences in the text was counted and coded to arrive at the overall total. Secondly, the text was read carefully to identify deictic elements.

Deictic elements identified were categorized into the various types appropriately. This was done per the classification provided by Levinson (1983). Then, these deictic elements were considered based on their situational/contextual use in different contexts. Again, the significance of each deictic element was analyzed in respect of how they contributed to the overall effects of the speech. Finally, discussions on the possible reasons for deictic usages were done.

4.0 Discussion and Findings

Deictic elements that were employed in the 64th Independence Day address by the Ghanaian president.

Table 1.0:

Deictic type	Number of words	Percentage (%)
Pronoun /Person	105	56.5
Time	32	17.2
Place	11	5.9
Discourse	24	12.9

Social	14	7.5
Total	186	100

From the table, the total number of deictic words used in the speech is 186. It can be seen from the table that person deixis had the highest number of occurrences, representing (56.5%). This is followed by time deixis with 32 (17.2%) occurrences. Discourse deixis followed with 24 occurrences, being 12.9%. Social deixis had 14 occurrences representing 7.5% and finally, place deixis occurs 11 times as 5.9%.

Table 2: This table presents an individual deictic representation in the speech

Type of pronoun	Number	Percentage
I	5	4.76
You	3	2.86
We	28	26.67
Us	13	12.381
It	7	6.67
Our	43	40.95
Them	1	0.95
Their	2	1.90
Ourselves	2	1.90
Her	1	0.95
Total	105	100

Table 2 reveals that pronoun deixis occurs 105 times in the speech. The pronouns occurred in varying proportions according to their variants. The possessive plural '**our**' had the highest occurrence (43). The personal plural '**our**' was next with (28). **Us**, being the personal objective had (13). **You** occurred (3) times. **Their** and **themselves** had (2) each. **I** and **them** were the least exploited with (1) occurrence each.

Table 3: Time deixis representation.

Types of Time deixis	Number of words	Percentage
Proximal	19	59.4
Distal	13	40.6
Total	32	100

Table 3 reveals the breakdown of temporal deictic elements used in the speech. Proximal deictic use was highest with 19 occurrences being 59.4%, while distal usage had 13 occurrences representing 40.6%

Table 4: Occurrences of Place Deixis in the speech

Place	Number of words	Percentage
Proximal	9	82
Distal	2	18
Total	11	100

The focus of this study has been to consider the three types of deixis; Person, Time, and place deixis in terms of their occurrence, effects, and possible reasons behind their usage. The data reveals that Person deixis had the highest occurrence, followed by time deixis and then place deixis.

Discussion of Person Deixis

Person deixis occurred largely in both singular and plural, subjective and objective forms. It is observed from the table that the first person **I** and its variants have the highest occurrence. The pronouns, **I** (5), **We** (28) and **Us** (13), and **our** (45), make up the greatest appearances in the text. The others however remain relatively insignificant.

Throughout the speech, the president employs pronouns that

indicate collectivity and shared responsibility with the audience. This is probably due to the nature of the event, the Independence Day celebration. This is a national event that commemorates the selflessness, hard work, and team spirit of our forefathers, that gained us independence from our colonial masters. The speaker, therefore, sees it as a great opportunity to bring all citizens on board to support and continue the good work of their forebears. The president thus makes a careful shift from the use of 'I' to 'We', 'us' and 'our'. In the examples that follow, the president recounts the journey that led our forefathers to gain independence, a step that set the tone for other African nations to pursue the same:

1. **We** were the first nation, in colonial Africa, to gain **our** independence from the colonial power and became the torchbearer of the struggle for the liberation of the African continent.
2. As **we** lowered the British Union Jack on the eve of 6th March 1957, and replaced it with **our** own, the iconic red, gold, green flag, with the black star in the center, the mood of citizens of this newly-minted State was one of unrestrained excitement and jubilation, because of the prospects of what the future held for **us**.
3. **We** were an example for the rest of Africa to follow. Not surprisingly, much was expected of the poster-boy country.

The president also commends the people for the resilience and strength of purpose they have shown, especially in the face of the covid-19 pandemic, and then urges them on, onto greater heights to overcome the impact of the pandemic. He believes that once Ghanaians have done this in times past, they are certainly able to do it again. It is interesting to note, however, the president's use of **we**', '**us**', and '**our**'. With this, he places himself at the center of the responsibility he calls for and shows his belief in the people he leads. The following examples give credence to this:

4. If **we** are to be successful in building a resilient Ghana, capable of withstanding, in future, external shocks, such as COVID-19, then **we** must all put **our** shoulders to the wheel
5. Year after year, **we** commit ourselves to ensuring that **we** work to lift the standard of living of the Ghanaian, and help construct an economy that is capable of creating a society of opportunities for all.
6. **We** did that before, and **we** can do it again.

He acknowledges the fact that the work ahead would not be easy, but with resilience, commitment and optimism, it can be done. This is seen in the following examples:

7. Nevertheless, **we** recognize that the biggest challenge confronting **us** is to be able to put **our** country on the path of sustained progress and prosperity and enhance the well-being of every Ghanaian.
8. Albeit an arduous task, **I** am confident that, with dedication, hard work, honesty, and integrity, **we** can fulfill the dreams and aspirations of the founding fathers of our nation, who envisioned **us** to be a dynamic, progressive, prosperous, and united nation, a nation that, under God, in J.B Danquah's immortal words, cherished its "ancient freedom".
9. **We** must all step up and play significant roles in the development of Ghana, **our** motherland.
10. Let **us** bequeath to **our** children, their children, and generations unborn a nation of hope and opportunity,

not one of despair and retrogression

In other instances, he expresses his faith, trust, and hope in God as the source of all good works and says that;

11. With God on **our** side, **we** can unleash **our** considerable energies, and make **our** unique contribution to the growth of world civilization.

The second person 'you' had very minimal occurrence and with it, he appreciates the people while making an appeal to the Ghanaian people to get involved in the fight against the pandemic:

12. I appeal to all of **you** to help ensure its decline.

13. I appeal passionately to each one of **you** to take the vaccine when it is your turn

The third-person pronouns, both singular and plural, were also used, though insignificantly. We have instances such as;

14. If any more evidence were needed of the impact of COVID-19, the fact that this, the 64th Independence Day Celebration, has had to be canceled, and substituted with, essentially, a virtual celebration, is one of **them**.

15. Let us bequeath to our children, **their** children, and generations unborn a nation of hope and opportunity, not one of despair and retrogression.

Discussion of Time/Temporal Deixis

Time or temporal deixis refers to the reference to time or temporal moments relative to the speaker's time of speaking. As noted earlier, they may suggest a time that is close to the current time of speaking (proximal) or further from the time of speaking (distal). In the speech, the president made use of both proximal and distal temporal deictic items. Distal temporal deixis was illustrated by words that suggest distal relations to the current time of speaking. The mentioning of times past as well as the use of the past tense, together with the use of the demonstratives 'that' and 'those' all suggest distance(distal) in time. It can be observed that with such distal usages, the speaker makes nostalgic feelings for the memorable and adorable history Ghana has had in the past. Examples of distal deixis include:

16. Sixty-four (64) years ago, we freed our nation, Ghana, from the shackles of colonialism and imperialism.

17. As we lowered the British Union Jack on the eve of 6th March 1957, and replaced it with our own, the iconic red, gold, green flag, with the black star in the centre, the mood of citizens of this newly-minted State was one of unrestrained excitement and jubilation, because of the prospects of what the future held for us.

18. Later that night, at the Old Polo Grounds, that vision of what an independent Ghana could be, that is a prosperous, progressive country, which was to be an active player in the affairs of the continent and the world, was eloquently laid bare by our historic first leader, Kwame Nkrumah.

He also makes references to events that may happen in the future and which would depend on the present actions of Ghanaians.

19. Let us embrace today's challenges as opportunities for a brighter tomorrow

Proximal deixis also suggests relative nearness to the current time of utterance. This is instantiated by the speaker's association with the things he says at present. Several illustrations of the use of the present tense and

demonstratives 'this', 'these', and other words that suggest significance and relatedness to the current time abound in the speech. For instance,

20. At **these** annual events, we have sought to express a deep consciousness of love for the country and the importance of ensuring that we realize our potential as the Black Star of Africa.

21. It is taking quite some time for us to get there, but I believe there is far more self-confidence among us Ghanaians **today**, than there has been **since**.

22. The Minister for Finance will **this** month, God willing, provide to Parliament further details on the measures to be taken to spur on the process of economic recovery.

There were instances when the speaker employed both proximal and distal temporal deixis in the same construction. With it, he brought to the fore, what Ghanaians have been able to do before and what they are capable of doing.

23. We did that before, and we can do it again.

24. Let us embrace today's challenges as opportunities for a brighter tomorrow

Discussion of Place Deixis

As discussed earlier, place deixis occurs in both proximal and distal forms relative to the speaker's location or deictic center. It is important to note that, unlike person and time deixis, place deixis was less utilized comparatively. Proximal uses of place deixis in the speech include;

25. On sixty-three (63) previous occasions, we have usually congregated in our capital of Accra

26. Successful Ghanaian diplomacy enabled the African Union to agree to the location here in Accra of the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), arguably the most important initiative of the AU since its foundation

Distal uses of place deixis include

27. Later that night, at the **Old Polo Grounds**, that vision of what an independent Ghana could be, that is a prosperous, progressive country, which was to be an active player in the affairs of the continent and the world, was eloquently laid bare by our historic first leader, Kwame Nkrumah.

28. It is taking quite some time for us to get **there**, but I believe there is far more self-confidence among us Ghanaians today, than there has been since the very early days of self-government, that we can make it if we work at it.

The use of 'Old polo grounds' is distal in relation to where this speech was delivered, virtually at the president's residence. There were other instances in which both proximal and distal place deixis was used, again, in the same construction.

29. A year from today, we should regain our pride of place as one of the fastest-growing economies not only in **Africa** but also in the **world**...

'Africa' and 'world' suggest both proximal and distal usages. While 'Africa' suggests proximity relative to the deictic center, Accra, 'world' is distal, relative to the deictic center.

Conclusion

This study has looked at the use of deixis in one important national speech, the 64th Independence Day speech. It has

revealed the fact that the Independence Day speech possesses almost all deictic types as proposed by Levinson (1983, 2004) and Fillmore (1982). However, they are exploited in varying degrees of occurrences. This suggests and relates to the skill and tact of scriptwriters or speakers in the crafting and delivery of their speeches. The study focused on how the three types of deixis: person, time, and place were used, their occurrences, effects, and the possible reasons for their use. It was revealed that person deixis had the highest use, followed by time deixis and then place deixis. It was also revealed that the first-person pronouns (I, we, us, and our) had the most use, and this pointed to the fact that a speech of this nature required a call for unity, teamwork, sacrifice, and commitment of all, especially at a time when the country had been hardest hit by the covid-19 pandemic. Time and place deixis all occurred in both proximal and distal forms relative to the time and place of the speaker and deictic center.

Finally, it is concluded that the speaker, Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo, made generous use of deictic items in his speech. The effect of this is the textual coherence he achieves as well as the physical connection, bond, and engagement he creates with the people of Ghana.

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