Deixis in KamaNu and Karimi's Kimeru song and dance lyrics

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Abstract

This study sought to examine the semantic roles of the deictic expressions in the KamaNu and Karimi's Kimeru song and dance lyrics by finding out the types of deixis in these song and dance lyrics and, secondly, establish the semantic roles of these deictic expressions. The study, which adopted a descriptive qualitative research design, was carried out in Meru and Nairobi Counties in Kenya. The target population consisted of two native Meru artists. Data from twelve songs, six from each artist, were generated through six video recordings, observation, and note-taking of the actual live performances in social functions: three for each. Through Cruse's theory of deixis, the study established that Kimeru song and dance lyrics by KamaNu and Karimi utilised person, spatial, temporal and social deixis in their songs, with person deixis predominating. Deixis, in these songs, serve to engage the listeners and structure the discourse. The study recommends listeners to pay more attention to these expressions for an appropriate discernment of the intended meaning as these expressions carry implicit messages rather than explicit and can thus be interpreted uniquely in different contexts. It is hoped that the study will advance the body of knowledge by bringing academic focus to fostering a deeper comprehension of deixis in songs and dances.

Key terms: Deixis, Linguistic, Lyrics, Pragmatics, Song and Dance.

INTRODUCTION

Deictic, deixis and indexical are used interchangeably to represent a phenomenon in which the discourse is anchored to a speech situation. It is a form of referring tied to a speaker's context, which is the subject matter in pragmatics. Deictic expressions identify objects, persons and events in terms of their relation to the speakers in space and time. For example, *she will go there tomorrow.* The deictic words *she, there and tomorrow* refers to person, place and time, respectively, thus indicating *who, where* and *when* the action will take place, bringing about clarity in every communication since they are the elements of a discourse that point the reader or listener to a particular entity of the world such as person, place, time, society and so on. According to Kreidler (1998), every utterance is related to pointing out people, place, and time, and the meaning becomes clear if the reader or the listener knows about *who, where,* and *when* the utterance was made.

The analysis of an interpretation of utterances in terms of deictic expressions or deixis is called deictic analysis. It is an important approach that explores the link between linguistic elements and the specific context in the interpretation of language in the very specific context of the speakers and the speech act. Therefore, the speaker and the audience should share the same context to be able to interpret these deictic expressions (Hamdaoui, 2015). Since song and dance lyrics draw their content from the immediate context, then deixis interpretation is important in understanding the exact meaning expressed in song and dance lyrics as it reflects the relationship between language and context. Most of the deictic words used in the Kimeru language show cohesiveness and coherence in the utterances, but these words may also bring out other meanings in different physical and social contexts. There was, therefore, need to understand the means through which the listeners are kept afloat even when they are not from the same place.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language is a tool of communication that allows people to share ideas and keep interacting (Marpaung, 2019). This means that language is dynamic and keeps on changing to adapt to different situations or contexts and express different meanings. Language is used in different fields internationally and locally to transact businesses, in education, media houses, and entertainment, to mention but a few. One of the entertainment forms in a society where language is used is music; it is universal, transmitted through generations, usually performed in the presence of others, and of extreme antiquity (Trehub et al., 2015). Consequently, music in most countries is a key facet of the culture of many communities and facilitates interaction between community members (Wanjala & Kebaya, 2016).

Therefore, when people listen to song lyrics and watch dances, they comprehend not only their meaning but also the speaker's intended meaning based on the context. This is a preserve of Pragmatics which is the study of 'invisible' meaning or how we recognise what is meant even when it is not actually said or written (Yule, 1996). In other words, Pragmatics studies meaning as communicated by the speaker or writer and interpreted by the listener or reader based on the reference of the utterance. Consequently, context is a key aspect of the interpretation of utterances and expressions (Cruse, 2006). There are several deictic expressions in different languages where context is crucial to understanding their meaning (Crystal, 2011); as such, context constantly keeps on changing, thus allowing interlocutors to interact and clarify deictic use to give it a pragmatic expression. It is important to note that some expressions can be deictic or non-deictic depending on the context since deictic expressions must take some of their meanings and interpretations from the current social situation (Abdulameer & Suhair, 2019; Al-Azzawi & Obayes, 2021; Khalili, 2017; Levinson, 1983).

In an effort to remain afloat, contemporary Kimeru artists take cognisance of the beautiful Meru culture and configure it to fit into the present moment in a seamless manner so as to maintain their cultural identity. It is on this ground that KamaNu and Karimi have taken up the lead in the Meru community to preserve the beautiful aspects of the culture through Kimeru songs and dances. Their song and dance lyrics are a recreation of a mixture of traditional, religious

and sacred songs. They are infused with contemporary content to suit the present times and therefore are considered traditional since they borrow so much from the past to position the community in its cultural context while maintaining the modern perspective of life. These are characterised by unique deictic elements which make these compositions very popular within Meru County and beyond. These song and dance lyrics by the two artists have high ratings on the local Meru FM stations, social media platforms, and are preferred in social functions and entertainment joints.

Wu (2004) notes that massive studies indicate that deixis is prevalent and ubiquitous in all languages. This, therefore, shows that deixis is relevant in the Kimeru language and language study in general. It is therefore important to acknowledge that deixis has been a subject of study across languages, genres, and theoretical perspectives, but prior to this study, Kimeru song and dance lyrics by KamaNu and Karimi had not received any scholarly attention with regard to the concept of deictic value in their songs. This study, therefore, examined the types and the semantic content of deixis in Kimeru song and dance lyrics by KamaNu and Karimi.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a qualitative approach using a descriptive research design, in particular, a case study. The research was carried out in Meru and Nairobi Counties, where the two Meru artists, KamaNu and Karimi, perform live in social functions patronised by native Kimeru speakers and other Kenyans who enjoy Meru music. The required data was limited to linguistic and social deictic content, and as such, data collected consisted of person, temporal, spatial, and social deixis. The target population consisted of two native Meru artists, a male and a female, namely: KamaNu and Karimi, who were purposively sampled as a corporate item since they complement each other in the music field. In purposive sampling, the sample elements are selected based on the logic of the study (Campbell et al., 2020). The two Kimeru artists are composers and singers of the Kimeru song and dance lyrics and therefore yielded the required data with regard to the research topic. Twelve songs, six from

each of the artists, were picked on the basis that they have a traditional tinge and contain deictic content that was relevant to the study. Data was collected through six video recordings and note-taking of the actual live performances in social functions only: three for each artist to enable the researcher to get verbatim data and songs without any alterations. The transcribed songs were translated from Kimeru to English language for purposes of analysing the data and also making it comprehensible to English language learners who are not familiar with the Kimeru language.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Types of Deixis in Kimeru Song and Dance Lyrics by KamaNu and Karimi

The intention of this section was to examine the types and purpose of deixis in the Kimeru song and dance lyrics by KamaNu and Karimi. Cruse's (2006) theory of language was the lens through which deictic content in these songs and dance lyrics were analysed. The main instruments of data collection were video recording, observation and note-taking from live performances. The results indicated that person, spatial, temporal and social deixis were utilised in these songs, with person deixis overriding the rest. The following section presents the types of deixis found in KamaNu and Karimi's Kimeru song and dance lyrics.

Person Deixis

According to Cruse (2006), person deixis designates the basic roles in a speech event through the speaker (first person), addressee or the person(s) spoken to (second person) and the person(s) who are neither speaker nor addressee (third person). Cruse (2006) posits that person deixis operates on a three-part division, represented by first person pronouns 'I, me, we', second person pronoun '*You*', and third person '*She, he, it*'. He emphasises that person deictic words include pronouns (*I, you, him, mine, yours, hers, myself, yourself, herself, himself),* possessive adjectives (*my, your, her, his),* and verb inflections such as (*I love, you love, he or she loves).* Nevertheless, Buhler (2011) asserts that person deixis encodes other participant's roles, such as the source who is neither the speaker

nor hearer who is not the addressee; such as the first person plural *'we/us'* which normally represents a group by a single person. In the selected Kimeru song and dance lyrics, person deixis is encoded in form of *first, second and third person,* as presented in the table below.

Table 1: Person Deixis in the Twelve Songs

12 Songs	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Form of Deixis	I, me, my, we, us, mine, our	You, your, yours	He, she, he/she, it, her, him, them, their
Frequencies	524	158	425

First Person Deixis

As indicated in the table above, the selected Kimeru song and dance lyrics encode the first person deixis through the subjective pronouns *I* and *we*, the objective pronouns *me* and *us*, and the possessive pronouns *mine, ours, our*, and *my* to refer to the speaker and the group of which the speaker is part of. Levinson (1992) posits that the first person deixis is the grammaticalisation of the speaker's reference to himself, while the first person plural '*we and us'* is produced by a single speaker who represents a group (Cruse, 2000). This form of deixis points to an inclusive character of use to emphasise the speaker's feelings and that of the groups represented, thus relating with the situation and making the addressee identify with it as well. The speaker, therefore, controls all the happenings as he/she is viewed as all-knowing and as such guides the listener into interpreting the intended meaning appropriately. All these are realised through various morphemes in form of *prefixes* and *suffixes* as follows: First person pronoun *I* as '*ndi-, nga-, nku-, ndo-, nde-, mbi-, ni-, mbo-, ntu-, nta-, nkwa-, nti-, -nki, mba-, -ni, nka-, -mgi, -mpu-,-nki,* and *nti-''.* For example, in the statements *We* in the form of *–tu, -natwi, tu-, twa-, twe-;* first person objective form *me* as *ndu-, nde-,'* **us:** '*Cietu, twi-, twe-, -twi,* and *ga-.'* The possessive pronouns **my, ours, our,** and **mine** as '*gakwa, yakwa, wakwa; yakwa, gietu, Cietu, yetu; ci-,* and *wakwa'* consecutively. A few illustrations from the corpus are presented in form of morphemes representing the deictic expressions underlined in the following lyrics: *Ndiraumire Mutindwa, ntegete ya Nairobi (I left Mutindwa headed to Nairobi); 'I' represents the speaker. Umenye no ngacoka (I will come back). Ndigucemania nawe mantu jagucencia (when I met you, things changed).* The first person plural form *'we'* is realised

through the morpheme *twe-* as in the word *tweta kiri kiria beetaga sheng' (when we go to Sheng…),* the pronoun *'we' is* used inclusively to refer to the speaker and the community at large. In the lyrics, *niatia ngitikia (what would I do!) 'ngi' indicates 'I',* nga*kua ngwete (I will die holding what belongs to me…),* The first person plural form (we) is captured through the morpheme *tu-* as in the word *tugacemanagia Kiarago (we be meeting at Kiarago),* and plural objective form (us) as *ci-* in words such as *cietu* in the lyrics *'Urathanga Cietu (If you attack any of us),* and the possessive form *(mine)* as *wakwa. No*nkwene *(I usually see…).* The first person singular possessive form (my) is indicated by the terms *gakwa, yakwa,* and *wakwa; nti-* in the word *nti*kwina *(I am not singing alone),* objective form (*us*) is realised through the morpheme *-tu-,* in words like *ga*turombe *(let us pray).* The first person plural form *(we)* is captured through prefixes *twa-,* as in the words *twa*kwarire *(we spread),* while the plural possessive pronoun (our) as *'yetu'* and first-person objective plural form *(us)* as *twi-* in *twi*nthe *(all of us).*

Second Person Deixis

The second person deixis here is encoded through the personal pronoun *'you',* the possessive pronoun *'yours'* and the adjective '*your',* respectively. According to Levinson (1992), second-person deixis encodes the speaker's reference to one or more addressees. In the selected Kimeru song and dance lyrics, the second person deixis is encoded through particular words and morphemes such as follows, *we-, wa-, nagwe, nabwi, u-, -kwi-, -bu-, bu-; ciaku, bieku, bwaku* and *waku* consecutively. A few illustrations are presented as follows: *'You'* is expressed through the vocative expressed in the noun phrase '*nabwi, akuru ba Njuri'* translated *'you Njuri Ncheke',* the morpheme *'u-'*

urathanga (if you ever attack), the word nag*we (you),* *bu-* in *bukwenda (what do you want?),* and the possessive form 'yours' as *waku,* the prefix *wa- in* *waurwa (when you are beaten…),* while the possessive deixis 'your' is encoded through the word *ciaku.*

Third Person Deixis
In the selected Kimeru song and dance lyrics by KamaNu and Karimi, third person deixis is encoded through *he, she, it, they, their, her, him, hers, its, him/her, he/she,* in form of morphemes and particular words such as *they- ba-, be-, tu-; he/she* as *a-; hers* as *–we, him/her* as *–mu-, -mwe-, yawe; it* as *ka-, ki-, ni-, i-, no-, ga-; them* as *ci-, -ri-, ba-; she/he* as *a-, u-,* and *theirs* as *mwi-.* A few illustrations are presented as follows:
The third person deixis *they, hers* and *her* in form of morphemes *ba-* in *baiji (they know), -we* in *ciawe (hers),* and *-mwe-* in *ndiramwerenca (I pleaded with her),* respectively. *Be-* in *beetaga (they call)* and the inanimate pronoun 'it' as *ka-* in *kaimurio (it is sweet),* and the suffix *–ko* in *kinyako (it is also)* and *-ku* in *kinyaku (it is also), respectively.* The third person deixis *he/she* is encoded as *a-* in *akainaga (he/she would…),* *him/her* as *-mu-*in *ndimuromba (I have asked her/him),* *ci-* in *ciitite (if you see them on the way…),* while in the song *Susana, she* is reflected through the prefix *a-* in *areta (she left)* and *her* in the word *yawe.* The singular form *he* is reflected as *a-* in *aracemania (he met…),* the objective form *them* as *-ri-* in *turibera (we are telling them…),* and the inanimate pronoun *it* through *no* in *no nguku (it is the cock).* In the prefixes *ba-* in *bae (give them),* *ba-* in *batutongerie (they lead us),* and *-mi-* in *umiirigire (you surround it).*

This form of deixis is thus encoded through the expressions '*he/she, they, it, them* and *their.*' In this category, the deictic expressions '*he/she*' are used anaphorically to reflect gender; otherwise, they are not gendered, just like the plural forms, when used individually.

Spatial Deixis
According to Cruse (2006), spatial deictic words indicate the location in space relative to the speaker. This, therefore, means that the concept of distance is clearly relevant to spatial deixis, in which the relative location of people and things is indicated; as such, deixis is ultimately a form of referring that is tied to the speaker's context that encompasses nearness to the speaker (proximal) exemplified by words such as '*here, this, now*' and away from the speaker (distal) expressed by words such as, '*that, there, then*', which can also indicate *near addressee* or *away from both speaker and addressee.* Fillmore (1977) asserts that place deixis can be related to a moving object expressed in certain verbs, such as *come* and *go,* since it points to an item that is moving from one point to another. The words *now* and *then* are generally understood as referring to some point or period in time that has the time of the speaker's utterance as its centre. The selected Kimeru song and dance lyrics utilise spatial deixis expressed through distal, proximal and projected/specific location terms, as reflected in the table below.

The selected songs present spatial deixis in the following manner: The use of projected terms in these songs are expressed by words that reflect mobility, such as *raumire (left), ntegete (headed), coka (come back), ndetite (was going),* and *ari gwe (no you!) nkwija (have come), nandi (now),* and *rugura (open),* while the Proximal term is represented by the deictic word '*huku*' *(here),* '*this* and *these*' and those indicating specific locations are represented by expressions such as *bus station, in Nairobi,* and *in town, Mutindwa* and *house.*

In conclusion, the deictic expressions '*this* and *these*' point to physical proximity to the speaker, whereas '*those* and *that*' is a directionality referent from the speaker's location. The deictic expression '*here*' pragmatically makes a reference to the speaker's location, and it implies the urgency to act promptly.

Temporal Deixis
Cruse (2006) defines temporal deictic words as those that indicate the time of an event relative to the time of speech, brought out through time adverbials like *now, then, today,* different tenses which can distinguish three points in the time at which the event occurred (past), the time at which the utterances were produced (present), and the reference time (future)

(Cruse, 2006). Time deixis is sometimes brought out through spatial prepositions such as *in the morning, in time, at night* and many others. The selected Kimeru song and dance lyrics by KamaNu and Karimi temporal deictic expressions are analysed in terms of specific time and pure deictic words/verb tense.

These expressions were presented in terms of specific time, such as adverbials *today (narua), night (utuku)* and *dawn* (rukiiri), and verb tenses such as present, *past, future, present perfect, past progressive* etc., in reference to the deictic centre. These tenses point to a more precise interpretation of the passage of time and its implication since tense necessitates the existence of a specific point in time. The present tense temporal deixis place events in the current reference time frame, thus their timelessness which facilitates interpersonal relation with the addressee(s) and, in some cases, creates the urgency to act in case a situation is wanting. This finding is consistent with Chovanec's (2014) results that the present tense has a strong interpersonal orientation. The perfect tenses make reference to a period close to when the speaker made an utterance and point to the perfection of events.

Social Deixis

Social deixis refers to social relationships between participants, their status, and relation to the topic of discourse. Hatch (1992) observes that social deixis is considered a marker of knowing the social relationship between the speaker and the addressee or audience. He classified social deixis into two types: absolute deixis, such as *Mr President or Your Majesty,* and relational or lexical deixis, which aim at locating a person in relation to the speaker rather than their roles in the society as a whole, such as *my husband, brother, and teacher.* Cruse (2000) asserts that

although English doesn't encode social attributes of the *addressee* in lexical items, the other languages have systems for grammaticalising social relations, most of them of either a higher or lower social *standing* to the speaker. Cruse (2006) states that social deixis is an indication of the position of the referent on the scales of social status and intimacy relative to the speaker.

In this category, absolute deictic expressions such as *Akuru ba Njuri (Njuri elders), Kangangi (White District commissioner), mukoroni (white coloniser), muejani (God the Giver), mwenenyaa (God of the mountain), and Murungu (God),* and *Baba (Father);* and relational deictic words *Aari (ladies)* and *Nyanga'u (derogative for a foolish person), kanyomba (a diminutive term for a small room), makambi (sugarcane waste), juju (grandmother), mutano baa (my brother), ncamba (heroes), Nkatha cia Meru (respected women), and akaa na arume (women and men) muturi (neighbour), muciere (young mother)* just to mention but a few.

To this end, all the social deictic words used in these songs express the position of the referent relative to the speaker. This depiction is in line with Hassanah (2016), who asserts that social deixis indicates social status or intimacy relative to the participants in the speech event.

Discourse Deixis

Levinson (1983) refers to discourse deixis as the use of some expressions with some utterances to refer to some portions of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance (containing the text referring expression) is located. However, in the twelve songs that were analysed, no discourse deixis was found.

Tabulation and Interpretation

Table 2: Frequency of Types of Deixis Found in the Twelve Songs

TYPE OF DEIXIS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Person	1107	58.0493
Spatial	292	15.3120
Temporal	71	3.7231
Social	437	22.9156
Total	1907	100

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions: It was noted that person deixis was used 1107 times, constituting 58.0493 per cent as the most dominant form and were encoded through the use of first-person pronouns, '*I, we, us, ours, our, me, my, mine and the vocatives 'we, ours, our and us,'* which refer to the speaker as well as the group/community he/she represents; the second person pronouns '*you, your, and yours,'* representing the listeners/ addressees. The second person in Kimeru, however, is not a mapped version of the English language (whose referent is either singular or plural) since in the Kimeru language, it is clearly specified as singular and plural forms such as '*you*' realised as '*ugwe,*' which refers to a close proximity context to the speaker; those further as '*uria*' singular '*you*' and plural '*you*' realised as '*babwi;*' the third person pronouns, '*she, he, it, her, their, they, them, his, he/she and him/her'* refers to the person/people/things/main character in the song being talked about in the song. All these are realised through various morphemes in form of *prefixes* and *suffixes* as follows: First person pronoun *I* as *ndi-, nga-, nku-, ndo-, nde-, mbi-, ni-, mbo-, ntu-, nta-, nkwa-, nti-, -nki, mba-, -ni, nka-, -mgi, -mpu-,-nki,* and *nti-.* **We** in form of *–tu, -natwi, tu-, twa-, twe-;* first person objective form *me* as *ndu-, nde-,* **us:** *Cietu, twi-, twe-, -twi,* and *ga-.* The possessive pronouns **my, ours, our** and **mine** as *gakwa, yakwa, wakwa; yakwa, gietu, Cietu, yetu; ci-,* and *wakwa* consecutively. The second person **you** and possessive forms **your** and **yours** as follows, *we-, wa-, nagwe, nabwi, u-, -kwi-, -bu-, bu-; ciaku, bieku, bwaku* and *waku* consecutively. The third person subjective and objective forms are realised as follows, **they-** *ba-, be-, tu-;* **he/she** as *a-;* **hers** as *–we,* **him/her** as *–mu-, -mwe-, yawe;* **it** as *ka-, ki-, ni-, i-, no-, ga-;* **them** as *ci-, -ri-, ba-;* **she/he** as *a-, u-,* and **theirs** as *mwi-.* This form of deixis points to an inclusive character of use to emphasise the speaker's feelings and that of the groups represented, thus relating with the situation and making the addressee identify with it as well. The speaker, therefore, controls all the happenings as he/she is viewed as all-knowing and therefore guides the listener into interpreting the intended meaning appropriately. This concurs with Abdulameer and Suhair (2019), who found out that person deixis in a religious text is crucial due to the particularity of the message centred on the divine entity. This was closely followed by social deictic words used 437 times, reflecting 22.9156 per cent, expressed through relational or lexical terms and absolute deixis such as God. At third position was spatial deixis utilised 292 times at 15.3120 per cent encoded through distal forms '*those, that* and *there'*, *proximal forms 'this, these* and *here'* and a variety of specific location terms referring to particular places, or projected forms which indicate movement of people or things expressed through verbs. Lastly, temporal deictic expressions utilised 71 times at 3.7231 per cent were encoded through pure deictic expressions/specific time words such as time adverbials and verb tense forms were the least used. To this end, the study found out that the selected Kimeru song and dance lyrics utilise *person, social, spatial*, and *temporal* deictic expressions in that order.

Recommendations: The study established that KamaNu and Karimi's Kimeru song and dance lyrics utilise person, spatial, temporal and social deixis, which play a crucial role in the interpretation of the intended meaning. The study thus recommends listeners to pay more attention to these expressions for an appropriate discernment of the intended meaning as these expressions carry implicit messages rather than explicit and can thus be interpreted uniquely in different contexts. There is also a need for the addressee to pay attention to the paralinguistic features accompanying the expressions for purposes of clarity.

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