

**PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF DEITIC EXPRESSIONS OF FRIDAY'S KHUTBAH (SERMON)
DISCOURSE AT MASJID USMAN BIN FODIYO FANTAI IN HADEJIA, JIGAWA STATE**

BY

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Abstract

This study investigates the pragmatic use of deictic expressions in the English translations of Friday's khutbahs delivered at Masjid Usman Bin Fodiyo, Fantai in Hadejia, Jigawa State. Previous studies on deixis have largely focused on political speeches, classroom discourse, and media communication, with limited attention to religious sermons in multilingual contexts, particularly within Hausa-speaking communities. Addressing this gap, the study proposes a focused analysis of how deictic categories function pragmatically in Islamic sermon discourse. Adopting a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through purposive sampling of eight khutbah texts originally delivered in Arabic and translated into English by the researcher. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis based on Levinson's framework, identifying person, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social deixis, and interpreting their contextual functions. Consistent observations reveal that person deixis is the most dominant category, fostering inclusivity, engagement, and collective identity. Temporal and spatial deixis systematically connect present realities with religious timelines and sacred contexts, while discourse and social deixis ensure coherence, authority, and respect. However, some non-consistent patterns were observed in the variation of spatial and discourse markers across sermons, reflecting thematic and stylistic differences. Overall, the findings demonstrate that deictic expressions serve as strategic pragmatic tools that enhance clarity, persuasion, and audience engagement. Specifically, the study shows that effective deployment of deixis strengthens sermon structure, reinforces religious authority, and promotes moral consciousness among congregants in multilingual Islamic settings.

Keywords: Deixis, Deictic Expressions, Friday's Khutbah, Pragmatics, Religious Discourse

Introduction

The Friday's khutbah (sermon) is a central institution in Islamic worship and communal life. Delivered before the congregational Jumu'ah prayer, it serves not only as a religious obligation but also as a platform for moral instruction, spiritual guidance, and community orientation. As a communicative event, the khutbah relies on language to establish authority, engage worshippers, and relate scriptural teachings to contemporary realities.

A key pragmatic feature of sermon discourse is deixis. Deictic expressions such as I, we, you, here, today, and this derive meaning from context, including participants, time, place, and social relations. In the khutbah, deixis enables the preacher to construct authority, foster solidarity, and connect Qur'ānic and Prophetic teachings to the congregation's present circumstances. Through person, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social deixis, sermons become interactive and contextually grounded communicative acts.

In northern Nigeria, including Hadejia in Jigawa State, khutbahs are often multilingual, moving between Arabic, Hausa, and sometimes English. This linguistic configuration shapes how deictic references are produced and interpreted across cultural and linguistic frameworks.

Despite the importance of the khutbah, limited research has examined it from a pragmatic perspective, particularly within Hausa-speaking communities. This study addresses that gap by analyzing and categorizing deictic expressions in eight Friday khutbahs delivered at Masjid Usman Bin Fodiyo between May and June 2025. Focusing on their English translations, the study identifies types of deixis and examines their pragmatic roles in structuring sermons, aligning participants, and reinforcing religious authority.

The study contributes to scholarship in pragmatics and religious discourse while offering practical insights for preachers and translators working within multilingual Islamic contexts.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Deixis is a fundamental concept in pragmatics, referring to linguistic expressions whose interpretation depends on the context of the speech act (Politeknik Negeri Medan, 2025; Pratama, 2025). Such expressions encompassing personal pronouns, temporal markers, spatial indicators, discourse references, and socially stratified forms enable speakers to anchor meaning within specific situational, temporal, and social contexts (Fatmah et al., 2024). In communicative events like the Friday khutbah, deixis functions as a crucial pragmatic tool, allowing preachers to assert authority, engage audiences, and connect sacred texts to contemporary social realities (Al-Hamzi et al., 2023; Tanjung & Muslim, 2025). By structuring the sermon through deictic references, the khateeb achieves clarity, cohesion, and persuasive impact while fostering communal identity.

Person Deixis

Person deixis refers to linguistic markers that indicate participants in the speech event, including the speaker, addressees, and others (Levinson, 1983). In khutbah discourse, pronouns such as I, we, and you perform multiple pragmatic functions. The use of I establishes the preacher's authority, religious credibility, and personal commitment to the message (Al-Hamzi et al., 2023). Inclusive pronouns such as we and us reduce social distance, emphasizing collective responsibility and shared faith (Sitorus et al., 2025; Winata, 2026). Direct address you personalizes the sermon, prompting listeners to internalize moral exhortations and ethical guidance. Empirical studies indicate that person deixis is the most recurrent category in religious oratory,

enhancing engagement and reinforcing communal bonds (Tanjung, 2026). Moreover, generalized expressions such as whoever or every Muslim universalize the message, extending its moral and spiritual relevance beyond the immediate congregation (Fatmah et al., 2024).

Temporal Deixis

Temporal deixis situates utterances in time, linking the sermon to past, present, or future events (Putri & Santosa, 2025). In Friday khutbahs, markers like today, thereafter, before, after, and until the Day of Resurrection create a temporal framework that emphasizes moral accountability, spiritual urgency, and ritual precision (Hidayati et al., 2022). Temporal deixis operates on multiple levels: it draws attention to current social issues affecting the congregation, situates religious duties within the Islamic calendar, and projects eschatological consequences to reinforce ethical behavior. For example, references to the tenth day of Dhul-Hijjah or the Day of Resurrection link immediate actions to divine judgment, strengthening both ethical responsibility and religio-moral consciousness. By structuring sermons temporally, preachers guide listeners through logical sequences of reflection, instruction, and admonition (Putri & Santosa, 2025; Tanjung & Muslim, 2025).

Spatial Deixis

Spatial deixis involves expressions that indicate location or position, both literal and metaphorical (Dwipayanti et al., 2020). In khutbah discourse, spatial references like here, there, in the heavens and the earth, and between Safa and Marwah ground abstract theological concepts in tangible sacred spaces (Lestari & Hermanto, 2024). Literal references anchor rituals and religious practices, while metaphorical expressions, such as in the heart, highlight internalized piety and moral responsibility (Al-Hamzi et al., 2023). Spatial deixis, therefore, bridges physical, spiritual, and moral realms, allowing congregants to perceive religious teachings as both contextually relevant and personally transformative. Empirical studies affirm that the combination of literal and metaphorical spatial markers enhances comprehension and strengthens the experiential dimension of sermon discourse (Dwipayanti et al., 2020; Lestari & Hermanto, 2024).

Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis refers to linguistic devices that indicate elements of the ongoing discourse, such as this, that, among them, or therefore (Hartati et al., 2025). In khutbahs, these expressions structure the sermon, creating logical flow and coherence. They help organize Qur'anic citations, Hadiths, moral narratives, and exhortations into intelligible sequences, guiding the congregation through the argumentation process. Discourse deixis serves pedagogical purposes, making abstract or complex teachings accessible to listeners (Hartati et al., 2025; Putri & Santosa, 2025). Moreover, it contributes to retention of moral lessons, as congregants can relate earlier examples or divine injunctions to subsequent guidance within the sermon.

Social Deixis

Social deixis encodes relationships of power, respect, and hierarchy (Levinson, 1983). In khutbahs, expressions like O servants of Allah, the Prophet (SAW), and references to scholars reflect social and spiritual hierarchies (Suparni, 2021; Yusuf & Salim, 2023). Such markers reinforce reverence, authority, and communal identity. Social deixis interacts with multilingualism in Nigerian sermons, where Arabic, Hausa, and English contribute to nuanced forms of address, blending respect, solidarity, and moral exhortation (Yusuf & Salim, 2023). This interplay enables preachers to manage relational dynamics while sustaining spiritual authority and cohesion within the congregation.

Empirical Studies on Deixis in Religious and Multilingual Discourse

Recent studies (2020–2026) have examined deixis in sermons, political speeches, classroom discourse, and media (Alkhawaldeh, 2022; Fatmah et al., 2024; Tanjung, 2026). For example, Sitorus et al. (2025) highlighted the role of person deixis in engaging audiences in oral discourse. Winata (2026) emphasized inclusive pronouns in establishing collective identity in ceremonial speeches. Research in multilingual settings indicates that code-switching shapes the pragmatic functions of deixis, influencing authority, audience engagement, and interpretation (Yusuf & Salim, 2023; AlHamzi et al., 2023). Despite these contributions, deixis in Hausa–Arabic–English Friday khutbahs remains underexplored, particularly concerning how temporal, spatial, and social markers function pragmatically within sermons.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Levinson’s (1983) Theory of Deixis, which categorizes deixis into five major types: person, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social. The framework provides a systematic approach to identifying, classifying, and analyzing deictic expressions. It allows examination of how preachers construct authority, align congregants, and situate sacred teachings within contemporary contexts. In multilingual sermons, Levinson’s framework supports the analysis of cross-linguistic shifts in reference, showing how deictic expressions maintain pragmatic force across Arabic, Hausa, and English (Al-Hamzi et al., 2023; Yusuf & Salim, 2023).

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate the use and categorization of deictic expressions in Friday khutbahs at Masjid Usman Bin Fodiyo. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the study aims to explore language use in context, emphasizing interpretation and understanding of how deixis functions pragmatically within sermons rather than merely quantifying occurrences. The descriptive design enables a systematic account of linguistic forms in the khutbahs and their communicative significance, while Levinson’s (1983) theory of deixis provides the conceptual lens for analysis.

The primary data comprise printed khutbahs delivered weekly by the Imam of the mosque. These sermons, originally composed in Arabic, were collected in hardcopy form to preserve their natural delivery context. The study employed purposive sampling to select eight khutbahs delivered over two consecutive months. This approach ensured sufficient variation in thematic content and linguistic style, while keeping the dataset manageable for in-depth qualitative analysis. The mosque was chosen purposively due to its religious significance in the community, structured sermon delivery, and accessibility of printed materials from the Imam. Ethical considerations were strictly observed: permission was obtained from mosque authorities, and the focus remained on linguistic analysis rather than evaluation of the Imam personally.

The data analysis followed a qualitative content analysis procedure guided by Levinson’s (1983) framework. After translation into English, the khutbah texts were carefully examined to identify deictic expressions and classify them into the five categories: person, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deixis. Each identified expression was interpreted in its immediate linguistic and situational context, highlighting how it contributes to meaning, audience engagement, and sermon structure. For instance, inclusive person deixis such as “we Muslims” was analyzed as a device for fostering solidarity, whereas second-person references like “you believers” indicated direct audience engagement. Temporal expressions such as “today” or “now”

emphasized urgency and moral reflection, while spatial deixis such as “here” grounded divine teachings in the local context.

The analysis also explored patterns across khutbahs, revealing how deictic expressions serve three major pragmatic functions:

1. Connecting scriptural messages to congregational realities: Deixis links religious teachings to the lived experiences of the congregation, for example, using “we” to include worshippers in moral responsibility or “here” to localize ethical teachings within the community.
2. Reinforcing religious authority and social hierarchy: Deictic forms signal the Imam’s authoritative position and frame the congregation’s subordinate but respectful role. Social deixis such as “respected brothers” further maintains hierarchy while fostering solidarity.
3. Mobilizing moral and spiritual action: Temporal and spatial expressions such as “now” or “on that Day” create urgency, projecting listeners toward immediate moral engagement and eschatological awareness.

Findings are presented descriptively, supported by textual extracts from the khutbahs. Tables summarizing the Types of Deixis, Deictic Expression(s), Extract(s) from the Khutbah (1-8), and Function/Interpretation are used to enhance clarity and facilitate systematic understanding. This methodology ensures that both the linguistic structure and pragmatic function of deixis in Friday sermons are fully captured, demonstrating how imams employ language to communicate authority, guide behavior, and strengthen communal cohesion.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Introduction

This presents and analyses the data collected from selected Friday Khutbah used for this study. The major focus is to identify and examine the various deictic expressions found in the khutbah texts and to explain how they function in conveying meaning within the sermons. The data presented were carefully extracted from the khutbahs and classified according to the five major types of deixis, namely: person deixis, temporal deixis, spatial deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis.

Table 1: Distribution of Deictic Expressions across the Eight Khutbahs (Sermons)

Types of Deixis	Deictic Expression(s)	Extract(s) from the Khutbah (1-8)	Function/Interpretation
Person Deixis	I	“I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship...”	Expresses the preacher’s personal testimony; establishes authority and religious credibility.
	We / Us	“We begin in the name of Allah...” / “May Allah protect us...”	Inclusive reference to preacher and congregation; creates unity and shared responsibility.
	You / Your	“Allah has legislated for you...” / “I advise you...”	Direct address to audience; makes message personal and

			engaging.
	He / Him / His	“Whomsoever Allah guides...” / “May peace be upon him...”	Refers to Allah, the Prophet, or a third party; establishes divine authority and generalization.
	Whoever / A person / Every Muslim	“Whoever honours the symbols of Allah...”	Universal reference; broadens applicability of guidance or warning.
	They / Those / Whom	“They are those who faithfully observe their trusts...”	Refers to specific groups (believers, rightful owners); clarifies roles and responsibilities.
Temporal Deixis	Thereafter	“Thereafter, the best speech is the Book of Allah...”	Signals transition within the sermon; organizes discourse.
	Today	“How many Muslims today neglect...”	Refers to present time; makes message relevant and urgent.
	Before / After	“Before the Eid prayer...” / “After returning from Arafah...”	Specifies correct timing of religious acts.
	Whenever	“Whenever a person uses his tongue...”	Indicates general time; universal applicability of instruction.
	From the time	“From the time Allah expelled Satan...”	Refers to a specific historical starting point.
	Until the Day of Resurrection	“Follow him until the Day of Resurrection.”	Projects teaching into eschatological future; emphasizes accountability.
	The tenth day / These ten days	“You are in the tenth day of Dhul-Hijjah...”	Identifies specific Islamic calendar periods; highlights sacred timing.
	Last week	“Who passed away last week.”	Refers to recent past; localizes sermon context.
	Will	“He will be held accountable...”	Refers to future consequence or

			judgment.
Spatial Deixis	In the heavens and the earth	“Who has no partner in the heavens and the earth”	Expresses Allah’s absolute dominion and omnipresence.
	His Sacred House / Between Safa and Marwah / Muzdalifah	“Hajj to His Sacred House...”	Refers to specific sacred locations; grounds teaching in Islam during pilgrimage.
	The Fire / Fire of Hell	“Every misguidance leads to the Fire.”	Symbolic spiritual destination; warns of punishment.
	In the cause of Allah	“Jihad in the cause of Allah...”	Indicates spiritual context or direction of action.
	From His mercy	“Expelled Satan from His mercy...”	Indicates spiritual separation from divine grace.
	Here (in the heart)	“Piety is here (in the heart).”	Metaphorical internal spiritual location.
	Between / To / From / Over	“Judge between people...” / “Watching over them.”	Indicates relational direction, supervision, and moral positioning.
	In our markets	“It continues in our markets.”	Refers to local social setting; makes issue immediate.
Discourse Deixis	This / That / It	“This hadith...” / “That is required...”	Refers to previous statements or ideas; ensures cohesion.
	What is meant by	“What is meant by ‘ability’...”	Clarifies meaning of key terms; aids understanding.
	Among them / Among his sayings	“Among them are the following...”	Signals examples or elaboration; structures argument.
	Therefore	“Therefore Allah says...”	Connects reasoning to evidence; strengthens persuasion.
	Also / Including	“The Prophet also	Adds supporting

		said...”	evidence within discourse.
	Earlier	“From the hadiths mentioned earlier...”	Refers back to prior part of sermon; maintains coherence.
Social Deixis	O servants of Allah	“O servants of Allah, fear Allah...”	Religious address; reinforces identity and hierarchy.
	O brothers / O noble brothers / Brothers and sisters	“O brothers and sisters...”	Expresses solidarity and communal closeness.
	O people	“O people, everyone should know...”	Broadens address beyond specific group.
	The Prophet (SAW) / Messenger of Allah	“The Messenger of Allah said...”	Honorific reference; indicates high religious authority.
	Allah (SWT)	“Allah (SWT) has favoured...”	Expresses reverence and glorification.
	May Allah be pleased with her/him	“Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her)...”	Shows respect and supplication for companions.
	Scholars / Prophets	“Scholars interpreted...”	Indicates religious authority and hierarchy.

Analysis of the Results from the Eight Khutbahs

The analysis of the eight Friday khutbahs shows that deixis functions as a central pragmatic and rhetorical tool in Islamic sermon discourse. All five major categories: person, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social deixis (as outlined by Stephen C. Levinson in *Pragmatics*, 1983) are consistently employed. Their use confirms that the khutbah is a structured, persuasive, and interactive religious communicative event.

Person Deixis: Engagement and Collective Identity

Person deixis is the most dominant category. Frequent use of pronouns such as I, we, us, you, and general forms like whomever, strengthens interaction and inclusiveness. The declaration “I bear witness” establishes the preacher’s authority and aligns with the traditional testimony (shahadah) structure. Inclusive pronouns (we, us) reduce social distance, presenting shared faith and accountability, while direct address (you) personalizes moral instruction. General references universalize the message beyond the immediate congregation. Overall, person deixis enhances engagement and communal solidarity.

Temporal Deixis: Urgency and Accountability

Temporal expressions such as today, before, after, whenever, and until the Day of Resurrection connect present actions with past precedents and future consequences. References to current issues create

immediacy, while ritual timings (e.g., specific Islamic dates) stress precision in worship. Eschatological references project consequences into the Hereafter, reinforcing moral seriousness and accountability. Temporal deixis thus links worldly conduct to eternal judgment.

Spatial Deixis: Sacred and Spiritual Dimensions

Spatial references operate both literally and metaphorically. Mention of sacred sites such as Masjid al-Haram, Safa and Marwah, and Muzdalifah grounds teachings in ritual geography. Metaphorical expressions (in the heavens and the earth, in the heart) extend meaning to divine authority and inner spirituality. Spatial deixis therefore connects the cosmic, ritual, and personal realms, deepening theological and emotional impact.

Discourse Deixis: Structure and Clarity

Markers such as this, that, what is meant by, among them, and therefore organize the sermon logically. They signal clarification, addition, and conclusion, ensuring coherence in oral delivery where listeners cannot revisit earlier points. Discourse deixis thus supports the khutbah's pedagogical function.

Social Deixis: Authority and Solidarity

Expressions like "O servants of Allah" and honorific references to the Prophet reflect Islamic hierarchy and respect. Social deixis establishes authority (Allah, Prophet, scholars) while reinforcing shared religious identity among believers. It balances reverence with communal unity.

Overall Interpretation

The findings demonstrate that deixis in the eight khutbahs is strategically employed to achieve engagement, relevance, clarity, authority, and spiritual transformation. The dominance of person deixis highlights the interactive nature of the khutbah, while temporal and spatial references expand its scope from immediate concerns to eternal accountability. Discourse markers ensure coherence, and social deixis embeds the sermon within Islamic etiquette and hierarchy.

In sum, the Friday khutbah emerges as a linguistically sophisticated and pragmatically structured form of religious communication, carefully designed to educate, persuade, unify, and morally guide the Muslim congregation.

Summary and Conclusions

Summary

This study examined the use of deictic expressions in the English translations of eight selected Friday khutbahs. The main objective was to identify the types of deixis employed in the sermons and to analyze their pragmatic functions in enhancing clarity, persuasion, religious authority, and audience engagement.

The analysis was anchored in pragmatic theory, particularly the concept of deixis as a linguistic device that anchors meaning to context. The study identified five major types of deixis across the eight khutbahs: person deixis, temporal deixis, spatial deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis.

The findings in Chapter Four revealed that:

Person deixis was the most dominant category across all khutbahs. Pronouns such as I, we, us, you, he, him, his, and generalized expressions like whoever and every Muslim were frequently used. These expressions established interaction, fostered inclusiveness, and reinforced the preacher's authority and credibility.

Temporal deixis appeared in expressions such as today, thereafter, before, after, whenever, and until the Day of Resurrection. These references linked present conduct with future accountability and sometimes with specific Islamic ritual times. Temporal deixis therefore strengthened moral urgency and religious consciousness.

Spatial deixis was used both literally and metaphorically. Literal references included sacred sites and ritual locations, while metaphorical expressions such as in the heavens and the earth, from His mercy, and in the heart emphasized divine authority and internal spirituality. Spatial deixis grounded theological teachings in both physical and spiritual spaces.

Discourse deixis ensured coherence and structural clarity. Expressions like this, that, what is meant by, among them, therefore, and also guided listeners through explanations, scriptural citations, and transitions. This category enhanced logical organization and comprehension.

Social deixis reflected hierarchy, reverence, and communal identity. Expressions such as O servants of Allah, O brothers, the Prophet (SAW), Messenger of Allah, and other honorific references reinforced religious respect and authority while fostering solidarity within the congregation.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that deixis is not merely a grammatical feature but a powerful communicative strategy embedded in Islamic sermon discourse.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and analysis presented in Chapter Four, this study concludes that deixis plays a fundamental role in the structure, effectiveness, and persuasive power of Friday khutbahs.

First, the dominance of person deixis confirms that the khutbah is highly interactive and audience-centered. The preacher strategically employs inclusive pronouns to create unity and direct pronouns to personalize instruction. This strengthens engagement and reinforces shared religious identity.

Second, temporal deixis effectively connects past events, present realities, and future consequences. By linking daily behavior to the Day of Resurrection, the sermons emphasize accountability and moral urgency. Time references also situate ritual acts within precise Islamic frameworks, reinforcing the importance of correct religious observance.

Third, spatial deixis expands the message from tangible sacred locations to spiritual and metaphorical realms. References to divine dominion and inner piety deepen theological reflection and internalize moral responsibility.

Fourth, discourse deixis ensures logical progression and coherence within the sermons. It enables the preacher to interpret Qur'anic verses and Hadith systematically, maintaining clarity in oral delivery.

Fifth, social deixis reinforces Islamic hierarchy and etiquette. Through respectful address and honorific references, the khutbah affirms religious authority while simultaneously promoting unity among believers.

In summary, the study confirms that deixis functions as a strategic pragmatic tool that enhances clarity, strengthens persuasion, establishes authority, and promotes communal cohesion. The Friday khutbah emerges as a carefully constructed form of religious discourse in which linguistic choices are purposefully aligned with spiritual and moral objectives.

Contributions of the Study

This study contributes to knowledge in the following ways:

- i. It expands pragmatic studies by applying Levinson's Deixis Theory to Islamic sermon discourse.

- ii. It demonstrates how linguistic analysis can reveal the persuasive mechanisms of religious texts.
- iii. It provides insight into how English translations of khutbahs maintain interactive and contextual features of the original sermons.
- iv. It highlights the importance of deixis in religious communication, particularly within Islamic contexts.

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