



## The Development of the Use of Persona Deixis in Early Childhood Speech in Instagram Reels @verenaindha: Pragmatic Study

Andini Dara Ananti<sup>1\*</sup>, Nurlaksana Eko Rusminto<sup>2</sup>, Sumarti<sup>3</sup>

<sup>123</sup>Magister Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Lampung, Lampung, Indonesia

\*E-mail: [andinidara230301@gmail.com](mailto:andinidara230301@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the forms of personal deixis usage, analyze their appropriateness in speech context, and explain the phenomenon within a pragmatic framework. The research was conducted virtually on Instagram, particularly on the @verenaindha account, with data collected progressively from earlier to recent posts representing the child's developmental stages. The population consisted of all child utterances in Reels content, while the sample included utterances produced by a child named Nala aged 22 months to approximately 5 years that contain personal deixis elements. The research instrument was the researcher supported by documentation and transcription techniques. Data were analyzed using an interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing within a pragmatic approach. The results indicate that personal deixis usage develops gradually from non-deictic forms to more complex and contextually appropriate deictic forms. At the early stage, the child used proper names to refer to herself instead of first-person pronouns. This was followed by the use of kinship terms before eventually acquiring pronouns such as "I," "you," "he/she," and "we." This progression reflects the development of pragmatic competence, although inconsistencies still occur in certain situations. Furthermore, a distinction was found between linguistic accuracy and sociopragmatic appropriateness, particularly in the use of "I-you" forms toward parents. Overall, the development of personal deixis is influenced by cognitive factors and social environment.

*Keywords: persona deixis, early childhood, speech in instagram, pragmatic study*

## Perkembangan Penggunaan Deixis Persona pada Tuturan Anak Usia Dini dalam Reels Instagram @verenaindha: Kajian Pragmatik

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bentuk penggunaan deixis persona, menganalisis ketepatan penggunaannya dalam konteks tutur, serta menjelaskan fenomena tersebut dalam kajian pragmatik. Penelitian dilaksanakan secara virtual pada platform Instagram, khususnya pada akun @verenaindha, dengan rentang waktu pengumpulan data dilakukan secara bertahap dari unggahan awal hingga terbaru yang merepresentasikan perkembangan usia anak. Populasi penelitian ini adalah seluruh tuturan anak dalam konten Reels, sedangkan sampelnya berupa tuturan anak bernama Nala usia 22 bulan hingga sekitar 5 tahun yang mengandung unsur deixis persona. Instrumen penelitian berupa peneliti sebagai instrumen utama dengan bantuan teknik dokumentasi dan transkripsi data. Analisis data menggunakan model analisis interaktif yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan simpulan dengan pendekatan pragmatik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan deixis persona berkembang secara bertahap dari bentuk non-deiktik menuju bentuk deiktik yang lebih kompleks dan kontekstual. Pada tahap awal, anak menggunakan nama diri sebagai pengganti pronomina persona pertama. Selanjutnya, anak mulai menggunakan istilah kekerabatan sebelum akhirnya menggunakan pronomina seperti "aku", "kamu", "dia", dan "kita". Penggunaan tersebut menunjukkan peningkatan kompetensi pragmatik, meskipun masih ditemukan ketidakkonsistenan dalam situasi tertentu. Selain itu, ditemukan perbedaan antara ketepatan linguistik dan kesesuaian sosiopragmatik, terutama dalam penggunaan "aku-kamu" kepada orang tua. Secara keseluruhan, perkembangan deixis persona dipengaruhi oleh faktor kognitif dan lingkungan sosial.

*Keywords: deixis persona, tuturan, anak usia dini, kajian pragmatik*

Submitted  
10/04/2026

Accepted  
13/04/2026

Published  
17/04/2026

Citation	Ananti, A. D., Rusminto, N. E., & Sumarti, S. (2026). <i>The Development of the Use of Persona Deixis in Early Childhood Speech in Instagram Reels @verenaindha: Pragmatic Study</i> . Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra, Volume 5, Nomor 2, Maret 2026, 1739-1746. DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v4i3.1350">https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v4i3.1350</a>
----------	--

Publisher  
Raja Zulkarnain Education Foundation

## INTRODUCTION

Language use in early childhood exhibits distinctive characteristics and develops gradually along with the language acquisition process. Children acquire their first language through intensive interaction with their immediate environment, particularly their family, which serves as the primary source of linguistic input in early life. The family environment not only provides vocabulary but also shapes the child's language use patterns in everyday communication. Therefore, the quality of interaction and parental communication skills significantly influence a child's language development.

In addition to family environmental factors, children's language use is also influenced by the broader social context. Children tend to imitate language forms they frequently hear without fully understanding their referential function (Clark, 2009:45). This suggests that language acquisition is not only related to structural aspects but also involves the ability to understand social perspectives in interactions (Tomasello, 2003; Sudharmawan et al., 2022, Jambia et al., 2022). Thus, children's language use reflects a complex process involving cognitive, social, and pragmatic aspects.

In the study of pragmatics, one important aspect of language use is deixis, namely expressions whose reference depends on the context of speech (Cummings, 2007). Personal deixis specifically refers to the roles of participants in a speech event, such as the speaker, the interlocutor, and the person being spoken to (Yule, 2018). Children's use of personal deixis often exhibits inaccuracies, such as the use of pronouns that are inappropriate for the context. This phenomenon aligns with Jakobson's (1971) opinion, which states that children experience difficulty understanding changing deictic references.

Linguistically, the use of personal deixis in Indonesian has a complex system, both in terms of form and function. The difference between pronouns such as "saya" and "aku" lies not only in

meaning but also in social nuance and level of formality (Purwo, 1984). Early childhood children tend to use proper names as substitutes for first-person pronouns before eventually switching to pronominal forms such as "aku" or "me." This development indicates a process of adaptation to societal communication norms.

The phenomenon of children's use of personal deixis is increasingly easy to observe in the digital era, particularly through social media like Instagram. Documenting children's speech in video form allows researchers to obtain authentic, natural data. One example can be found in the children's speech on the Instagram account @verenaindha, which displays daily interactions with their families, especially their children. This data serves as a relevant source for examining the use of personal deixis in real contexts.

Based on this background, the research problem is formulated as follows: What forms of personal deixis are used in the speech of young children in @verenaindha's Instagram Reels? What is the appropriateness of the use of personal deixis in the context of these speeches? How can the phenomenon of personal deixis use be explained within a pragmatic study? In line with the research problem formulation, this study aims to describe the forms of personal deixis use in the speech of young children in @verenaindha's Instagram Reels, analyze the appropriateness of the use of personal deixis based on the context of the speech, and explain the phenomenon of personal deixis use from a pragmatic perspective.

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. From a theoretical perspective, this research can enrich linguistic studies, particularly in the areas of pragmatics and personal deixis in children. From a practical perspective, this research can serve as a reference for parents and educators in understanding children's language development, particularly in the use of personal pronouns appropriate to the communication context. Furthermore, this research can also serve as a reference for other researchers interested in



studying children's language in digital media.

Etymologically, deixis comes from the Greek word *deiktikos*, meaning "pointing" (Mubarak, 2017). In pragmatics, deixis refers to words or phrases whose meaning depends on the context of the utterance (Cummings, 2007). Yule (2018) explains that deixis is a fundamental form of human language activity that functions to designate something through language. Similarly, Nursalim (2019) explains that deixis is related to the expression of changing referents in communication through language. Personal deixis is a subset of deixis related to the roles of participants in a speech act, namely first, second, and third person (Purwo, 1984; Abidin, 2019; Mudani & Sayfullah, 2024). Sebastian et al. (2019) also explain that the category of personal deixis relates to the roles of participants in a linguistic event, namely the speaker, listener, and the person being spoken to. In Indonesian, the personal deixis system has various forms influenced by social factors, such as the level of familiarity and the communication situation (Setiawan, 2015). For example, the use of "aku" tends to be informal and indicates familiarity, while "saya" is used in formal situations.

In the context of language acquisition, children experience difficulty understanding deictic referents due to their fluctuating nature (Jakobson, 1971). Several previous studies relevant to this research include Indriyani's (2022) study entitled "Deixis Acquisition in 24-Month-Old Children," which shows that children have not yet fully mastered deixis, particularly time deixis. The difference between these studies lies in the object of study, namely this study focuses on early childhood in the context of social media and emphasizes personal deixis. In addition, Magfira's (2023) study entitled "The Use of Deixis in Children Aged 3-5 Years in the Antang Makassar TPA Settlement" which examines personal deixis, place, and time. The difference with this study lies in the data source, namely this study uses natural speech data documented in Instagram Reels, so it is more contextual and actual. Setiawan's (2015) study dis-

cusses the personal deixis system in communication acts in general. This study is theoretical and explains the rules for using personal deixis in Indonesian. Meanwhile, this study is empirical with a focus on the use of personal deixis by early childhood in real contexts. Thus, this study has novelty in the object of study, data sources, and the pragmatic approach used to analyze children's speech in digital media.

Based on this description, it can be concluded that the use of personal deixis in early childhood is an interesting phenomenon to study, particularly from a pragmatic perspective. This study is important for understanding why children tend to be inconsistent in using language in social contexts and how the appropriateness of deixis use develops with age and communication experience.

## METHOD

This research employed a qualitative procedure with systematic stages. The initial stage involved collecting data in the form of field notes containing the speech of young children contained in the Instagram Reels of @verenaindha. The collected data were then transcribed into written text. Afterward, the data were classified based on the type of personal deixis that appeared in the speech. The next stage was analyzing the form and appropriateness of personal deixis use according to the context of the speech. The research process concluded with conclusions drawn based on the results of the data analysis.

This research employed a qualitative descriptive design with a pragmatic approach. This design was used to describe the phenomenon of the use of personal deixis in early childhood speech in depth and contextually. A pragmatic approach was chosen because this research focuses on the relationship between language form and the context of the speech situation, thus explaining the meaning of the use of personal deixis in real, natural interactions.

The research data was obtained from the so-

cial media platform Instagram, specifically the account @verenaindha, which posts Reels videos depicting everyday speech by young children. Data collection was conducted online by observing, selecting, and recording videos relevant to the research focus. Data collection activities were carried out over a specific period of time throughout the research process, taking into account the recency and suitability of the data for the research objectives.

The tools used in this research included digital devices such as mobile phones or computers to access and store video data. Furthermore, data recording sheets were used to document utterances containing personal deixis. In this study, the researcher acted as the primary instrument, observing, recording, and interpreting the data obtained.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative descriptive techniques through several steps (Afifuddin & Saebani, 2002; Sugiyono, 2019; Razak, 2017). First, data reduction was carried out by selecting utterances containing personal deixis. Second, data presentation was carried out in the form of narrative descriptions or tables based on the categories of personal deixis. Third, context analysis was conducted to assess the appropriateness of the use of personal deixis in children's speech. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the usage patterns and phenomena found, referring to pragmatic studies.

## RESULTS

### 1. Forms of Personal Deixis Use in Early Childhood Speech

Based on the analysis of children's speech data in the Instagram Reels of @verenaindha, a number of utterances by the child (Nala) demonstrated the development of personal deixis use from approximately 22 months to over 5 years of age. The use of personal deixis encompasses first, second, and third person. In first-person deixis, the child uses two main forms: the pronoun "I" and the proper name "Nala" as well as the plural form "kita." Second-person deixis is found in the

pronoun "kamu" and greetings such as "mami," "papi," "mas," and "pak."

### 2. Appropriate Use of Personal Deixis in Speech Context

The analysis results indicate that the use of personal deixis in Nala's speech generally corresponds to the intended referent in the context. First-person deixis, "I" and "Nala," are used to refer to oneself, while second-person deixis is used to refer to the interlocutor involved in the conversation. Addresses such as "mami" and "papi" are consistently used to refer to specific individuals present in the speech situation, thus demonstrating a clear relationship between the deictic form and its referent.

Furthermore, the use of personal deixis also demonstrates appropriateness to the interaction context. In some data, different address forms are found for the same person depending on the situation, such as "Mas." However, variations in the use of first-person deixis were found, namely between the form "I" and the personal name "Nala." This variation occurs both in different data sets and within the same utterance. However, these differences in form do not result in a change in the referent in the context of the utterance, as the intended meaning remains clearly understood. Thus, despite the variation in form, the use of personal deixis in the data remains accurate in terms of reference, contextual appropriateness, and occurrence in various speech situations.

### 3. Phenomena of the Use of Personal Deixis in Speech

Based on the analyzed data, several phenomena of the use of personal deixis in children's speech were found. First, there was the use of various forms of address referring to the same addressee, such as "mami," "papi," and "pak." Second, the use of more than one form of deixis was found in a single utterance, for example, the simultaneous use of "aku," "kamu," and "kita."



Furthermore, there was data indicating changes in the form of address in certain situations, as well as the use of plural personal deixis in contexts involving more than one participant. The use of third-person deixis was also found, although not dominant. The data also showed that the use of proper names still appeared in speech as a substitute for first-person deixis. Several utterances also exhibited variations in deixis forms within the same context.

## DISCUSSION

The development of Nala's use of personal deixis shows a gradual and systematic pattern along with her age and cognitive and social development. This development moves from the use of non-deictic forms to the more complex and contextual use of personal deixis.

In the early stages, around 22 months of age, Nala did not yet use personal deixis conventionally, instead using proper names like "Nala" or simple phonological forms like "Yaya" to refer to herself. This use of proper names instead of first person indicates that the child does not yet understand the concept of deictic reference, which depends on the speaker's role in the communication situation. In pragmatic studies, this phenomenon reflects children's limitations in connecting linguistic forms to the context of speech. Levinson (1983) stated that deixis is contextual, so its use requires the ability to identify the roles of the speaker and the interlocutor. Thus, Nala's use of proper names indicates that the child's pragmatic abilities are still at an early stage and tend to be lexical.

From a cognitive development perspective, this phenomenon is related to the egocentric stage in early childhood. Piaget (1952) explained that children at this stage are not yet able to fully understand another person's perspective. This is evident in the data, where Nala is unable to differentiate between herself as an individual and herself as a speaker in communication. This condition is also related to the underdevelopment of Theory of Mind skills, namely the ability to understand an-

other person's point of view. Tomasello (2003) emphasized that this ability is crucial in the use of deictic language, because deixis requires an understanding of the positions of the speaker and the interlocutor.

Entering the next stage, around the age of 2–3 years, variations in the use of forms referring to interlocutors begin to emerge, such as "daddy," "mami," "sir," and "mas." However, these forms remain lexical in nature, referring to fixed identities, not roles within the communication context. At this stage, parents also frequently use the name "Nala" in everyday interactions, thus influencing the child's language patterns. This aligns with Clark's (2009) view that children's language acquisition is strongly influenced by linguistic input from their environment. Therefore, the continued use of proper names is not solely driven by cognitive factors but also by language habits acquired through interactions with parents.

At around the age of 3, the use of first-person deixis, such as "I," and second-person deixis, such as "you," begins to emerge, although this use is not yet consistent. In some utterances, Nala uses "I" appropriately to refer to herself, but in other situations, it mixes with other forms, such as the use of proper names or even interchanges. This phenomenon indicates that children still have difficulty understanding deictic properties, where references change depending on the position of the speaker and the interlocutor. This condition is part of the normal language development process, as children are still in the transitional stage toward mastering a stable pronoun system.

More complex developments are seen around the age of 3.5 to 5 years, when Nala begins to use various forms of personal deixis such as "I," "you," "she," and "we" in various speech events. The use of "we" indicates that children are beginning to understand the concept of personal deixis, namely involving themselves and others in a group. Furthermore, children's pragmatic abilities also experience significant development, as evidenced by their ability to adapt language to social contexts,

such as in role-playing and praying. For example, when Nala addresses her father as "sir" while role-playing as a doctor, this indicates that Nala has understood that language use can change with the situation and social role.

One important finding of this study is Nala's use of personal deixis "I" and "you" in interactions with her parents. Linguistically, the use of "I" to refer to oneself and "you" to refer to a conversation partner is appropriate in the Indonesian language system. This indicates that children have mastered the role of participants in communication and use pronouns according to their basic functions. Therefore, from a linguistic and pragmatic perspective, children's use of "I-you" to their parents cannot be considered an error, but rather an indicator of positive language development.

However, from a social and cultural perspective, the use of "you" to parents in Indonesian society is often considered inconsistent with politeness norms. Culturally, children are generally taught to use more respectful forms of address, such as "mama," "papa," "ibu," or "ayah." This demonstrates a difference between linguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence. Children may be able to use language forms structurally correctly, but they may not yet fully understand the social norms governing their use. In this context, Nala's use of "you" can be understood as a newly learned pronoun form, without considering politeness aspects.

This phenomenon also demonstrates the important role of the environment in shaping children's language use. If parents do not provide corrections or alternative, more appropriate forms, children will perceive the use of "you" as acceptable in all contexts. Conversely, if parents consistently model language use that conforms to social norms, children will gradually learn to adapt their use of personal deixis. This reinforces the view that language acquisition is influenced not only by cognitive factors but also by social interactions and language habits within the environment.

However, research also shows inconsistencies in the use of personal deixis, particularly in spontaneous or emotional situations, such as when a child is crying. In these situations, pronoun use becomes unstable, and a mixture of the first and second person often occurs. This suggests that mastery of personal deixis in early childhood is not fully automatic and still depends on cognitive and emotional conditions. These findings align with research by Sari (2020), which states that young children often experience difficulties in using deixis due to its contextual and dynamic nature.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the use of personal deixis in Nala's speech develops from non-deictic use to more complex deictic use. This development is influenced by cognitive factors, such as the ability to understand perspective, as well as environmental factors, such as language input from parents. The use of forms such as "I-you" indicates that the child has reached a more advanced stage of linguistic development, although it still requires adjustment to prevailing social norms. Thus, the development of personal deixis in children is a gradual, dynamic process, and is strongly influenced by the interaction between cognitive abilities and the social environment.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that the use of personal deixis in the child's (Nala) speech in the Instagram reels of @verenaindha includes first-, second-, and third-person deixis with variations in forms such as pronouns and greetings. First person deixis is realized through the form "I" and the mention of the proper name "Nala", second person deixis through the form "you" and greetings such as "mami", "papi", "mas", and "pak", while third person deixis is shown through the use of "dia". In addition, the use of the plural person deixis "we" and the use of several forms of deixis simultaneously in one utterance was also found. The use of personal deixis



in the utterance has generally shown accuracy in referring to the participants involved in the speech event. Personal deixis is used to refer to the speaker, the interlocutor, and other parties clearly according to the context of the speech. Although there are variations in form, such as the use of "I" and proper names interchangeably, the intended referent can still be identified through the accompanying context. From a pragmatic perspective, the use of personal deixis in the data shows that the meaning of deixis is contextual and depends on the speech situation and the relationship between participants. This is evident from the variations in the use of greetings for the same referent, changes in deictic forms according to the interaction situation, and the emergence of more than one form of deictic form in a single utterance. Thus, the use of personal deictic form in children's speech reflects the function of deictic form as a marker of participant roles and as an element that links language forms to the context of the speech event.

## REFERENCE

- Afifuddin, A. & Saebani, B. A. (2002). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Pustaka Setia.
- Abidin, J. (2019). Deiksis dalam Novel Merindu Baginda Nabi karya Habiburrahman El Shirazy. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 5(1), 74–80. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.unisda.ac.id/index.php/pentas/article/view/1517>
- Aini, A. N., & Sari, N. K. (2025). Analisis Pengaruh Lingkungan Keluarga untuk Perkembangan Pemerolehan Bahasa Pertama Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Pendidikan Deiksis*, 7(1), 8–16.
- Jambia, M. A., Hefni, A., & Hudiyono, Y. (2022). Variasi Bahasa Anak pada Perkawinan Campur Buton Cia-Cia Laporo dan Banjar. *Diglosia: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*, 5(3), 665–674. <https://doi.org/10.30872/diglosia.v5i3.477>
- Levinson, S. C. (1997). *Pragmatik*. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press.
- Mudani, A., & Sayfullah, A. (2024). The Use of Deixis In The Short Story Nasihat-Nasihat By A.A. Navis. *Demagogi: Journal of Social Sciences, Economics and Education*, 2(5), 310–326. <https://doi.org/10.61166/demagogi.v2i5.71>
- Nursalim, M. P., & Alam, S. N. (2019). Pemakaian deiksis persona dalam cerpen di harian *Republika*. *Deiksis*, 11(2), 121–129.
- Piaget, J. (2002). *Psikologi anak*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Purwo, B. K. (1984). *Deiksis dalam bahasa Indonesia* (Vol. 13). Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.
- Razak, A. (2017). *Menggapai Mixed Methods Bidang Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia*. Pekanbaru: Ababil Press.
- Sari, R. (2020). Penggunaan Deiksis Persona pada Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Linguistik Indonesia*, 38(1), 4556.
- Sebastian, D., Diani, I., & Rahayu, N. (2019). Analisis deiksis pada percakapan mahasiswa pendidikan b a h a s a Indonesia Universitas Bengkulu. *Jurnal Ilmiah Korpus*, 3(2), 157–164.
- Setiawan, T. (2015). Sistem Deiksis Persona dalam Tindak Komunikasi. Yogyakarta: Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.
- Sudharmawan, A. A. K., Aryana, I. G. P. M., Suliartini, N. W. S., & Candraningsih, R. A. (2022). Mutant Character of the M3 Generation of Red Rice (G16) Results by Gamma Ray Irradiation 300 Gy. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA*, 8(6), 2888–2893. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v8i6.2486>
- Sugiyono, S. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Kombinasi, R&D dan Penelitian Pendidikan)*. Bandung: Alfabeta.



- Tomasello, M. (2005). *Konstruksi Bahasa Anak* (Terjemahan dari *Constructing a Language: A Usage Based Theory of Language Acquisition*). Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Yule, G. (2018). *Pragmatik*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.