

Deixis in The Novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev And Relevance to English Language Learning

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Abstract

This study investigates the forms of deixis found in the novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev and examines their relevance to English language learning among junior high school students. The primary aim is to identify and describe the various deixis forms present in the novel and explore their potential application in the context of English language education within the framework of the Independent Curriculum. Employing a descriptive qualitative methodology, the research utilizes data documentation techniques by reading the novel and noting relevant dialogues. The data were collected through purposive sampling, resulting in the identification of 12 deixis forms in the novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev. The findings highlight the diversity of deixis expressions used in the novel, which can serve as valuable linguistic resources for enhancing students' understanding of deictic terms and their contextual usage in English. This research contributes to the development of teaching materials and strategies that incorporate authentic literary sources to improve language proficiency and pragmatic competence in junior high school learners.

Keywords: *Forms Of Deixis, Fathers And Sons Novel, English Language Learning, Independent Curriculum*

Introduction

In English language learning, understanding context is often challenging for students because the meanings of words and expressions, especially pronouns as a form of deixis, depend heavily on the situation (Azizah, Erawati, et al., 2025). In understanding deixis in the English language learning, meaning depends on the situational context, which is often difficult for students to grasp. This is reinforced by Muammalah & Misnadin (2023), who states that 77% of students are still confused about context, particularly in English language learning. Therefore, understanding deixis is very important to help students comprehend the meaning of language more accurately.

According to George Yule (1996), deixis is a phenomenon in pragmatics that refers to how speakers indicate people, places, and time through language. The forms of deixis include first person singular, first person plural, second person singular, second person plural, third person singular, third person plural, proximal, distal, present tense, past tense, and future tense. According to Huang (2014), the function of deixis forms is to refer to people, places, and times in both spoken and written communication. According to Susanti et al. (2023), deixis is a linguistic phenomenon in pragmatics that takes various forms and serves to refer to people, places, and times in communication, both spoken and written, so that the intended meaning can be understood in the appropriate context. It can be concluded that deictics are a pragmatic phenomenon that serve to refer to people,

places, and times through deixis forms, which play a crucial role in helping speakers and listeners accurately understand the context of a situation.

In this context, this study will analyze the forms of deixis in the novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev. The novel studied is *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev. The novel *Fathers and Sons* consists of 28 chapters and was published by The Norris Group International in 2025 (Turgenev, 2025). The reason for selecting this novel is its relevance to the field of education, particularly in helping middle school students read and understand the meaning of personal pronouns in English language learning under the Merdeka Curriculum (Carduza & Lamanilao-Agdana, 2025). According to Yule (1996) and Huang (2014), deixis is crucial for understanding how language functions in context, thereby enabling effective communication; this is particularly relevant when studying personal pronouns to help students grasp their meanings within specific contexts. This English language lesson aligns with the learning outcomes, specifically reading and understanding the meaning of the first person singular pronoun (Wasia, 2025).

Puspaningrum (2024) and Rosa (2025) examined five types of deixis, and both used short stories as their data source. Fauziah (2024) used a novel approach but only focused on one type of deixis, person deixis. Intan et al. (2024) used Kushartarti's theory to examine three types of deixis: person, spatial, and temporal. Megawati et al. (2025) only focused on two types of deixis, namely spatial and temporal. Özturan & Kiziltin (2022) focus two types of deixis are persona and temporal, and uses a quantitative methodology. Widianti et al. (2024) used Levinson's theory to examine three types of deixis, namely persona, temporal, and geographical.

Previous researchers have focused solely on the types of deixis, so there has been no analysis that encompasses the forms of deixis and their relevance to English language learning. These studies have revealed a gap: there has been no study that examines all forms of deixis simultaneously within a single data source, and their relevance to English language learning using the theoretical approach of Yule and Huang. The novelty of this study lies in examining all forms of deixis and their relevance to English language learning as found in the novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev.

Based on these problems, the research focus is summarized into two questions: (1) What forms of deixis are found in the novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev? and (2) How is the deixis in the novel *Fathers and Sons* relevant to English language learning in junior high school? Therefore, the objectives of this study are to identify the forms of deixis in the novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev and to explain their relevance to English language learning in junior high school. The results of this study can be utilized as teaching materials for educators, as motivation for students to understand personal pronouns, and as an additional reference for other researchers in pragmatic studies. By combining Yule and Huang's theories of deixis, this study aims to comprehensively identify and analyze deixis forms in the novel *Fathers and Sons* and their relevance to English language learning at the junior high school level.

Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach because the data consists of words and sentences within dialogues containing deictic forms, to understand meaning based on context (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2024). This study is flexible in nature and was conducted from February to April 2026 using the campus library facilities. The data source consists of dialogues in the novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev, published by Norris Group International. Data collection was conducted using the data documentation

technique, involving intensive reading of the novel, identifying, recording, and classifying deictic data into various deictic forms.

This study employs a purposive sampling analysis technique with the limitation of a single novel, namely *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev. Data qualification regarding deictic forms aligns with the context related to the meaning of pronouns (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2024). Data analysis includes the stages of organizing data, labeling data, and categorizing data. Data validity was established through theoretical triangulation using two main theories: one by Yule (1996) regarding deixis forms and another by Huang (2014) regarding the functions of deixis forms.

Results

Forms Of Deixis

Based on research conducted on Ivan Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*, 12 instances of deixis forms were identified. The following table presents some of the findings regarding deixis forms:

Table 1. Data on deixis forms

No	Forms of deixis	Data	Amount of data
1.	First person singular deixis	My	1
2.	First person singular deixis	I	2
3.	First person plural deixis	We	1
4.	Second person singular deixis	You	1
5.	Third person singular deixis	He	1
6.	Third person plural deixis	they	1
7.	Spatial proximal deixis	This	1
8.	Spatial distal deixis	Home	1
9.	Future Temporal deixis	Tomorrow	1
10.	Present Temporal deixis	Now	1
11.	Past time Temporal deixis	Yesterday	1
		TOTAL	12

Based on the results of the data analysis, it was found that the use of deixis in the novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev includes various forms of deixis that appear in different dialogue contexts.

Discussion

Persona Singular Deixis

Singular person deixis is found in the dialogue of the novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev, referring to the speaker or other participants in singular form. There are three

types of singular person deixis: first persona singular deixis, second persona singular deixis, and third persona singular deixis.

First Persona Singular Deixis

In the deictic elements of Ivan Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*, first persona singular deixis forms such as "my" and "I" are found.

Datum (C1/P15)

"My son Arkady has graduated!"

In datum (C1/P15), the word *my* is directed toward Nikolai Petrovitch as the speaker in the utterance. The word *my* belongs to first persona singular deixis because it refers directly to the speaker. According to Yule (1996) *my* is a form of first persona singular deixis because the son referred to belongs to Nikolai Petrovitch. In line with this, according to Huang (2014), the function of *my* as a form of first persona singular deixis is to indicate possession or a personal relationship between the speaker and the object being discussed, namely Nikolai Petrovitch's son.

Datum (C6/P42)

"Yes, I prefer physics, in fact, the natural sciences in general, to anything else"

In Datum (C6/P42), the word *I* is directed toward the character Bazarov as the speaker in the utterance. The word *I* falls into first persona singular deixis because it refers to the speaker. According to Yule (1996), *I* is a form of first-person singular deixis because it refers to the speaker, or Bazarov, as the subject of the deixis. In line with this, according to Huang (2014), the function of *I* as a form of first persona singular deixis is to show that Bazarov is the main agent of the statement, asserting his identity and role in the communication.

Datum (C9/P67)

"I am a doctor"

In the Datum (C9/P67), the word *I* refers to the character Bazarov as the speaker. The word *I* belongs to first-person singular deixis because it points to the speaker. According to Yule (1996), *I* is a form of first-person singular deixis because it refers to the speaker, or Bazarov, as the subject in the utterance. In line with this, according to Huang (2014), the function of *I* as a form of first-person singular deixis is to show that Bazarov is the main agent of the statement.

Second Persona Singular Deixis

In the deixis elements of Ivan Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*, second persona singular deixis forms such as *your* are found.

Datum (C10/P75)

Arkady does indeed seem solicitous for your education."

In the Datum (C10/P75), the word *your* refers to the addressee, Nikolai Petrovitch. The word *your* falls under the category of second persona singular deixis forms, as it is directed at the person being spoken to. According to Yule (1996), the word *your* is a second persona singular deixis form because it refers directly to the person being addressed. According to Huang (2014), The function of the word *your* in the second-person singular deictic form is to indicate that this education is directly related to the addressee.

Third Persona Singular Deixis

In the deixis elements of Ivan Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*, third persona singular deixis forms such as *he* are found.

Datum (C5/P38)

"He is a nihilist."

In the Datum (C5/P38), the word *he* refers to the character Bazarov as the addressee. The word *he* is a form of third-person singular deictic pronoun because it refers to the person being discussed, not the speaker or the addressee. According to Yule (1996), The word *he* is a third person singular deictic form because it refers to a third person as the subject. This aligns with Huang (2014) view that the function of the word *he* in the third-person singular deictic form is to refer to a party not directly involved in the conversation.

Plural Persona Deixis

Plural person deixis is found in the research data, referring to more than one individual in the context of dialogue.

First Persona Plural Deixis

In the deixis elements of Ivan Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*, first persona plural deixis forms such as *we* are found.

Datum (C5/P39)

"But we older people see things differently"

In Datum (C5/P39), the word *we* refers to Paul Petrovitch and Nikolai Petrovitch as the speakers. The word *we* falls under first-person plural deictics, as it refers to the speakers. According to Yule (1996), The word *we* is a form of first-person plural deictic that refers to the speaker and others, including the speaker themselves. The function of the word "we" in the third-person deictic form is to indicate that the speaker and others in their group are speaking together, affirming a collective identity in communication (Huang, 2014).

Third Persona Plural Deixis

In the deixis elements of Ivan Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*, third persona plural deixis forms such as *they* are found.

Datum (C27/P289)

"They knelt together side by side."

In the Datum (C27/P289), the word *they* refers to a group of servants in Bazarov's house. The word *they* falls under third-person plural deictics, as it refers to the servants being discussed. According to Yule (1996), the word *they* is a form of third-person plural deictic because it refers to people outside the context of direct speech. The function of the word "they" in the third-person plural deictic form is to refer to the person or group of people being discussed, not the interlocutor or oneself (Huang, 2014).

Spatial Proximal Deixis

Spatial demonstrative deixis is used to indicate the location of an object based on its distance from the speaker in a communication situation.

Datum (C3/P24)

“Evidently, this is not a rich district”

Datum (C3/P24) The word “this” is a form of proximal spatial deixis because it indicates that the subdistrict is extremely run-down and impoverished. According to Yule (1996), the word “this” refers to a place close to the speaker. Huang (2014) emphasizes that the word ‘this’ is typically used to refer to something that is physically or situationally close to the speaker, so the function of “this” is as a pointer indicating proximity and immediacy in the context of communication.

Spatial Distal Deixis

Spatial locative deixis is used to indicate a specific location in events occurring within the story.

Datum (C10/ P76)

“There is first going to be a skirmish”

Datum (C10/P76) The word *there* is a form of distal spatial deixis because it indicates a location within the kingdom where a minor conflict is about to occur between the lower and upper nobility. According to Yule (1996), the word *there* refers to a place far from the speaker. Huang (2014) asserts that *there* functions as a distal demonstrative pointing to a location far from the speaker and is typically used to indicate the presence of something in a place that is neither physically nor situationally close to the speaker.

Future Time Temporal Deixis

Future-time temporal deixis refers to events that will occur after the time of speaking.

Datum (C17/P131)

“a walk tomorrow morning.”

In the Datum (C17/P131), the word *tomorrow* is a form of future time temporal deixis, as it refers to the time one day after the utterance takes place. According to Yule (1996), future time temporal deixis forms such as *tomorrow* indicate the time of an event in the future relative to the time of speech. In line with this, according to Huang (2014), the function of *tomorrow* in future time temporal deixis forms is to indicate the time on the day following the moment of speaking, marking the time of the activity’s occurrence.

Past Tense Temporal Deixis

Past tense temporal deixis is used to indicate events that occurred before the time of speaking.

Datum (C26/P258)

“Yesterday, the process of reformation”

The word *yesterday* (C26/P258) is a form of past tense temporal deixis, as it refers to a time before the current speech act. According to Yule (1996), past tense temporal deixis forms such as *yesterday* are related to the time of the utterance. Based on its function, the word *yesterday* in the past tense temporal deixis form indicates a time on the day before the moment of speaking and marks the time of the topic being discussed (Huang, 2014).

Present Time Temporal Deixis

Present time temporal deixis is used to refer to events that are occurring at the time the utterance is delivered.

Datum (C26/P261)

“since it is now summertime.”

In the Datum (C26/p261), the word now is classified as present tense temporal deixis because it refers to the current time. The use of the word “now” helps clarify the current situation in communication. According to Yule (1996), The expression ‘now’ contains a present tense temporal deixis that indicates the time of the utterance itself. In line with this, according to Huang (2014), The expression “now” in the present tense temporal deixis form serves to indicate the present moment, signifying that the statement applies at the time of speaking.

Relevance To English Language Learning

In English language instruction at the junior high school level, particularly in 7th grade, the Merdeka Curriculum’s Learning Outcomes include reading and understanding personal pronouns. In this study, the results of an analysis of deixis forms in Ivan Turgenev’s novel *Fathers and Sons* will be applied to English language instruction, specifically regarding personal pronouns. The following is an explanation of deictics in Ivan Turgenev’s novel *Fathers and Sons* as it relates to English language learning.

Datum (C1/P15)

“My son Arkady is a graduate!”

Datum (c1/p15) The deixis word “my” is a first-person singular pronoun indicating possession by the speaker. In this sentence, “my” indicates both possession and emotional closeness between the speaker, Nikolai Petrovitch, and the mentioned object, his son Arkady. According to George Yule’s theory (1996), first persona singular deixis expressions position the speaker as the deixis center of communication. The function of the word “my” in the sentence “My son Arkady is a graduate!” is as a first persona singular deictic that indicates ownership and an emotional connection between the speaker and the object being discussed (Huang, 2014). In the context of English language learning, the use of “my” helps students understand first-person singular pronouns in accordance with the learning objective of reading and understanding the meaning of personal pronouns.

Datum C6/P42)

“Yes, I prefer physics, in fact, the natural sciences in general, to anything else”

The deictic word “I” is a first-person singular pronoun or subject pronoun that functions as the subject of a sentence. According to George Yule’s theory (1996), first persona singular deixis expressions place the speaker at the center of deictic reference in communication. The meaning of this pronoun indicates the speaker’s identity as the primary subject expressing a personal opinion. The deictic word “I” functions as a marker of the speaker’s identity and as the focal point of first-person singular deictics in communication, affirming the speaker’s position as the main subject in the sentence (Huang, 2014). This form and function, in conjunction with CP 1.1, help students understand who is speaking and clarify the relationship between the speaker and the message being conveyed, thereby facilitating the understanding of the pronoun’s meaning.

Datum (C9/P67)

“I am a doctor”

The word “I” is a first-person singular pronoun referring to the speaker, Bazarov. Linguistically, “I” functions as a subject that indicates the speaker’s identity (Huang, 2014). Pragmatically, its use affirms professional identity and authority while building self-confidence. According to George Yule’s theory (1996), first-person deictic expressions place the speaker at the deictic center of communication. Thus, “I” not only identifies the speaker but also establishes credibility. In learning outcome 1.1, this helps students understand who is speaking, the point of view, and the implied meaning.

Conclusion

Based on the results of a study conducted on Ivan Turgenev’s novel *Fathers and Sons*, it was found that the use of deictics in character dialogue plays a significant role in constructing meaning within the narrative text. Of the 12 data points analyzed, there were three main types of deixis: personal deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. Personal deixis appears in the form of pronouns, including first-person singular and plural, second-person singular, and third-person singular and plural. Additionally, spatial deixis appears in the form of demonstrative pronouns related to places or locations in the conversation, while temporal deixis appears in the form of time adverbs indicating when an event occurs in the story.

The results of this study also indicate that the use of deictics in novels can be linked to the meaning of pronouns in the study of narrative texts, particularly in English language instruction for eighth-grade students in junior high school. Thus, an analysis of deictics in literary works can help students understand the meaning of pronouns in narrative texts and can also serve as a teaching resource for teachers.

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