Deixis and Pragmatic Strategies in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025): An Analysis through Levinson's Framework

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Deixis Analysis, Pragmatic Strategies, Levinson's Framework, Lilo & Stitch (2025), Film Discourse.	Deixis has an important role in communication by allowing speakers and listeners to locate referents, events, and actions within a specific context. In real life interactions, deictic expressions help participants identify who is involved, when events occur, and where actions take place, thereby ensuring clarity and coherence in discourse. Similarly, in staged or fictional conversations, such as cinematic dialogue or film, deixis is essential for expressing social relationships, emotional states, and character identities. Through the use of deictic forms, speakers convey not only the literal meaning of their utterances but also pragmatic and interpersonal nuances that shape audience understanding and engagement within the narrative. The aims of this study were to identify the types of deixis found in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) and to analyze their pragmatic strategies in conveying emotional and social meanings in the utterances of the main characters, Lilo and Stitch. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, using the documentation method to collect data from the film's transcript. The data were analyzed using Levinson's model of deixis, which includes personal, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social categories. The results showed that personal deixis was the most frequently used type, functioning to express personal identity, emotional closeness, and character relationships. Spatial and temporal deixis provided contextual anchoring of events, while discourse deixis maintained narrative coherence and thematic progression. Social deixis appeared less frequently but indicated respect, intimacy, and family hierarchy among characters. Overall, deixis in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) served not only as a linguistic reference system but also as a pragmatic strategy that reflected belonging, empathy, and cross-species communication. The findings implied that cinematic dialogue can be an effective medium for studying pragmatic meaning, offering insights for linguistic studies and language education.

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and its users in particular contexts of communication. According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics is how people use language in context and how they use context to interpret what others mean. Similarly, Yule (1996) emphasizes that pragmatics focuses on the speaker's meaning and the interpretation of utterances in a particular context. Studies in pragmatics include speech acts, implicatures, politeness, presuppositions, and deixis, each of which reveals how meaning is dynamically constructed in communication. One of the most important studies in pragmatics is deixis because the phenomenon of deixis is the most obvious way that the meaning of words depends on the context of communication.

Deixis refers to words and phrases that cannot be fully understood without context. Niswa (2021) emphasizes that deixis is very important in building coherence in communication because it creates a dynamic relationship between speech and the situational context in which the speech occurs. For

example, persona deixis such as *"I"* or *"we"* identifies the roles of the speaker and listener, while spatial deixis such as *"here"* or *"there"* places meaning relative to physical or imaginary locations. Temporal deixis, on the other hand, such as *"now"* or *"yesterday,"* places discourse on a timeline, thereby directing interpretation of when an event occurred (Liawati, et al., 2020). Thus, deixis plays an important role as a link between language form and situational reality, enabling speakers and listeners to construct meaning coherently in communicative interactions.

According to Levinson (1983), deixis can be classified into five main categories: person, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social deixis, each serving distinct communicative functions. Person deixis encodes the participant roles of speaker and addressee in discourse, typically expressed through pronouns (*e.g. I, you, and we*); personal deixis is constructing interpersonal relations among characters (Hati et al., 2021). Temporal deixis situates actions and events in relation to the time of utterance, as reflected in expressions *(e.g. now or yesterday)*; temporal deixis plays a crucial role in maintaining narrative sequence and guiding interpretation across shifting timelines (Liawati, et al., 2020). Spatial deixis, realized through terms *(e.g. here and there),* anchors discourse to the speaker's or hearer's location, thereby linking linguistic expressions with physical or imagined settings (Sodiqova, 2020). Discourse deixis refers to segments of discourse itself *(e.g. this or that) t*o organize reference within a text or conversation; discourse deixis to structure coherence and point readers toward salient ideas (Hati et al., 2021). Finally, social deixis encodes relational information such as politeness, honorifics, or social status *(e.g. Sir or Madam)*; social deixis reflects cultural norms of hierarchy and respect embedded in interaction (Karimah & Luthvia, 2023). Therefore, these categories illustrate how deixis bridges linguistic form and contextual reality, enabling speakers and listeners to negotiate meaning in communicative interaction.

Deixis is not restricted to written texts or formal conversations but is also in artistic forms such as films, where it becomes an essential tool for anchoring meaning to the context of speaker, time, and place. The live-action adaptation *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), directed by Dean Fleischer Camp, offers a rich pragmatic landscape in which deictic expressions serve as markers of reference and perspective. Within the film, personal, spatial, and temporal deixis are particularly salient in shaping the coherence of dialogue between humans and the non-human entity, Stitch. For instance, when Lilo says to Jumba, *"He's not an animal. He's my friend,"* the personal deixis (*he, my*) encodes participant roles and relational meaning, positioning Stitch as both subject and companion within her perspective. Similarly, when Lilo reminds Nani, *"Remember when papa took us camping out here? I had s'mores. And you also did too,"* the personal deixis (*us, I, you*) reflects shared familial roles, while the spatial deixis (out here) ties memory to a specific location, and the temporal deixis (*when*) situates the event in the past. Finally, when Stitch asserts, *"This is my family. I found it all on my own. It's little and broken, but still good,"* the discourse deixis (*this*) points to the immediate social unit, while the personal deixis (*my, I*) signals ownership and agency in claiming belonging. Thus, *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) demonstrate how deixis in the film functions not merely as a grammatical feature but as a pragmatic strategy that constructs emotional ties, mediates cross-species communication, and reinforces the narrative's thematic emphasis on belonging and identity.

The deixis can be found in various conversational situations in real life and even in films, for example, *Lilo & Stitch* (2025). Lilo & Stitch is a live-action adaptation of Disney's 2002 animated film of the same title, directed by Dean Fleischer Camp. The adaptation presents a reimagined version of the original narrative, preserving its central themes of family, acceptance, and identity while situating the story in a contemporary Hawaiian context. The film follows the relationship between a young girl, Lilo, and an extraterrestrial creature, Stitch, whose interactions reveal complex emotional and communicative patterns. Through their dialogue, various forms of deixis, such as personal, spatial, temporal, and discourse deixis, emerge as linguistic tools that not only indicate reference but also construct emotional attachment and social connection. Therefore, *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) serves as an appropriate object of study for pragmatic analysis, as it provides rich examples of how deixis operates contextually to express meaning, build relationships, and reinforce the film's central theme of belonging.

Previous studies have demonstrated that deixis plays a crucial role in constructing reference and coherencer within film narratives and literary discourse. For example, Dieudonné (2023), analyzed deixis guided by Levinson's (1983) theory in Cameroonian social media by applying Fillmore's (1997) concept of deixis as context-dependent reference, showing how personal and temporal deixis adapt dynamically in digital interactions to maintain coherence and participant involvement. Likewise, Karimah and Luthvia (2023) investigated deixis in Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore and reported that third-person deixis occurred most frequently, serving to strengthen moral and social values expressed in the film. In another contribution, Hati, et al. (2021) analyzed deixis in John Green's Looking for Alaska,

applying Levinson's (1983) framework to show how temporal and discourse deixis marked shifts in narrative perspective and thematic development. These studies confirm that Levinson's pragmatic framework provides a strong analytical foundation for categorizing deictic expressions and linking them to narrative functions. However, while prior research has largely focused on human and human or human and supernatural interactions, studies on deixis in animated films involving human and alien communication remain limited, which highlights the novelty of the present study. Therefore, this study provides novelty by combining Levinson's deixis theory with an analysis of speaker strategies in the context of animation, as well as expanding pragmatic studies into narrative media.

Based on the aforementioned explanation, the present study aims to identify the types of deixis employed by the main characters, Lilo and Stitch, by applying Levinson's (1983) typology, interpreting the functions of deictic expressions and to analyze the strategies through which speakers use deictic expressions to construct meaning in cinematic interaction. By situating deixis within the context of animated film dialogue, the study seeks to expand pragmatic inquiry beyond traditional spoken and literary discourse into multimodal narrative media. The findings are expected to provide both theoretical contributions, by illustrating how deixis functions in cross-species communication within film, and practical implications, particularly for pedagogy. In language teaching, especially in courses on pragmatics, the analysis of deictic expressions in films can serve as an authentic resource that demonstrates how abstract linguistic concepts are realized in naturalistic and engaging communicative contexts.

Pragmatics and Pragmatic Strategies

A subfield of linguistics called pragmatics studies how language, speaker intention, and context interact to produce meaning. According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics is the study of how speakers use language to express meaning that goes beyond the literal interpretation of words, but Yule (1996) highlights how important context is in determining how utterances are understood. Cutting (2002) goes on to say that pragmatics studies how language users use situational cues, cultural norms, and shared knowledge to communicate effectively. This means that pragmatics consider the decisions speakers make to maintain productive interaction and negotiate meaning in addition to the linguistic form itself. As an example of how intention and context affect interpretation, in casual conversation, an utterance like "It's cold in here" might serve as a request to close the window rather than a straightforward statement about the temperature. Because pragmatics offers a framework for comprehending how meaning is actively created, negotiated, and interpreted, especially in complex media like movies where dialogue serves both linguistic and narrative purposes, it is crucial to linguistic studies.

The methods that speakers use to successfully communicate their intended meaning are among the fundamental components of pragmatics. In their politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) emphasize that pragmatic strategies enable speakers to maintain face, negotiate interpersonal relationships, and modify their utterances according to the social context. These tactics include deixis, speech acts, implicature, presupposition, and politeness. Deixis is crucial among them since it makes meaning interpretable in context by anchoring utterances to the participants, time, and location of communication. For instance, the use of person deixis like we can be used as a tactic for inclusion or exclusion, indicating distance or solidarity between speakers and listeners. Similarly, spatial deixis, like here or there, can serve to highlight presence or absence in an interaction, while temporal deixis, like now or later, can strategically direct the discourse's progression and mold the listener's expectations. Deixis is therefore a pragmatic tactic as well as a linguistic device that helps speakers to maintain coherence, minimize ambiguity, and negotiate meaning dynamically in communicative interactions.

In film communication, pragmatic strategies are especially relevant as they are utilized in building character relations, developing plots, and emotional appeal to audiences. The utterances of characters are crafted with due regard to pragmatic considerations such as politeness, face-saving, or context-dependent allusions (Aziz & Hashim, 2025). Deixis, for example, is a technique that anchors dialogue in particular participants, times, and places, making dialogue realistic and captivating to audiences (Mukhtaruddin et al., 2024). Therefore, pragmatic devices in film are not simply linguistic devices but also narrative devices that assist in storytelling. Film pragmatics by Hrvoje Turković (examines whether and how pragmatics can be applied to film, including how film utilizes elements of deixis, focus, and context to construct meaning).

Deixis (Levinson's Framework)

A key concept in pragmatics is deixis, which shows how linguistic items like pronouns (*I, you*), spatial expressions (*here, there*), and temporal markers (*now, then*) get their referential meaning solely from contextual factors like the speaker and addressee's identities, the utterance's time and place, and its position within discourse. According to Levinson (1983), deictic meaning must be "anchored" to the context of utterance and cannot be fully deduced from lexical form alone. This point of view is consistent with the situational and perspectival nature of deictic reference, as highlighted by Bühler's (1934) organon model of language and Kaplan's (1989) theory of indexicals. Deixis, then, is a pragmatic phenomenon that emphasizes the dynamic relationship between language and context in addition to being a grammatical category. Because multimodal components like sound, visuals, and character perspective co-construct the interpretation of deictic expressions, deixis is particularly pertinent to film studies.

Levinson (1983) identifies five broad types of deixis: person, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social. Person deixis involves participant roles (e.g., I, you, we), and spatial deixis involves relative positions (e.g., here, there). Temporal deixis puts utterances on a timeline (e.g., now, yesterday), discourse deixis involves segments of the discourse or speech itself (e.g., this, that to point to discourse segments), and social deixis conveys social relations, levels of formality, or honorifics. Every category contributes to coherence in communication uniquely by grounding language within the speaker's situation and point of view.

The researchers interpret Levinson's framework as demonstrating that deixis is a basic pragmatic tool that speakers employ to orient themselves and others in communication, rather than just a collection of grammatical markers. For instance, the speaker's strategic decision to define group membership is reflected in the use of the first-person plural, which allows us to include or exclude the listener (Fillmore, 1997). By evoking a sense of immediacy or postponement, temporal deixis like now or later can also affect interpretation, which frequently affects how events are viewed in discourse (Lyons, 1977). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), social deixis, such as honorifics or titles, illustrates how language conveys social hierarchy, civility, and respect. These categories, in my opinion, demonstrate that deixis is not just a linguistic phenomenon but also a reflection of interpersonal dynamics and cultural values, which makes Levinson's typology (1983) a solid and thorough foundation for examining communication in narrative media as well as everyday interactions.

Deixis in Films

Deixis is essential to film discourse because it helps viewers better grasp the narrative context by anchoring dialogue to characters, settings, and timelines. According to earlier research, person, spatial, and temporal deixis are crucial for establishing character relationships and promoting plot coherence (Saputri, et al., 2020; Subekti and Fauziati, 2025). This is especially important in animated movies like *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), where deixis not only places dialogue in space and time but also helps to connect the dots between human and non-human characters. Temporal deixis, such as now or forever, indicates the continuity of bonds over time, whereas personal deixis, such as I or we, indicates emotional attachment and perspective right away. This, in my opinion, demonstrates that deixis in movies is more than just a language tool; it turns into a narrative technique that builds closeness, highlights a sense of belonging, and enhances the story's thematic depth, all of which help dialogue to more effectively connect with viewers.

METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research design, aiming to analyze the deictic expressions and pragmatic strategies found in the dialogues of the main characters, particularly Lilo & Stitch. A qualitative approach was used because deictics are inherently context-dependent and require interpretive analysis of language use in relation to its situational environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design allows for an in-depth exploration of how linguistic forms encode references, roles, and social meanings in communicative interactions. The qualitative research approach used is a form of descriptive qualitative analysis, specifically document analysis as a method of data collection and interpretation. Document analysis is a research approach to objectively, systematically, and quantitatively describe manifestations of communication, in which texts or visual data are analyzed to

interpret meaning, identify patterns, and deconstruct the messages conveyed (Nilamsari, 2014). This approach was chosen in line with the study of contextual linguistic phenomena such as deixis, in which the researcher acts as a key instrument for analyzing and interpreting data in depth (Fitria, 2020). This method was used to analyze the script and dialogue transcripts of the film, which are text or document data, with a focus on the content of the main characters' dialogue, so that a careful examination of the content of communication was carried out in the collection of the necessary data.

The primary data source for this study is the film *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) itself. In addition to the film, transcripts of *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) obtained from Movies Fandom were used as supporting data. These transcripts served as text references that facilitated the identification and documentation of deictic expressions in the film. By using the film and its transcript, this study provides accuracy in data collection, combining textual and audiovisual evidence in the examination of deixis and pragmatic strategies: the transcript provides a systematic record of the dialogue, while the film itself is used to confirm the context, speaker roles, and situational factors. The second source of data was also obtained indirectly by researchers through related materials, such as books, journals, and other relevant references, which served to support and supplement the primary data.

Data was collected through documentation techniques. All utterances in the film audio and transcripts containing deictic expressions were identified, categorized, and classified using Levinson's (1983) theory, which categorizes five types of deixis: personal, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social. Each occurrence was coded according to its type or communicative function, and pragmatic strategies were also noted, especially when speakers used deictic expressions to construct meaning in their interactions.

The data were analyzed using Levinson's (1983) theory of deixis with pragmatic interpretation. The analysis was conducted in three stages. First, all deixis expressions were classified into their respective categories. Second, the functions of these expressions were interpreted in relation to the context, the speaker's role, and the situational reference. Third, analyze how pragmatic strategies are used to achieve communicative goals and negotiate relationships. By Levinson's framework, this study conducts a comprehensive examination of the use of deixis and how pragmatic strategies are used to construct meaning, negotiate relationships between participants, and strengthen narrative coherence in the film *Lilo & Stitch* (2025).

FINDINGS

Based on the dialogue analysis from the film *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), which employed Levinson's five categories of deixis (Person, Spatial, Temporal, Discourse, and Social), the results detailing the frequency and percentage distribution for each type are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Types of Deixis

No	Types	Division	Deictic Expression	Frequencies
1	Personal Deixis	First Person	I/I'm	65/13
			Me	16
			Us	2
			My	17
			Mine	1
		Second Person	You/You're/Your	82
		Third Person	He	13
			She	11
			It	33
			They	3
			Him	7
			Her	11
			His	5
			Them	1
2	Spatial Deixis		Here	9
			There	13
			Far	1
			Room	2
3	Temporal Deixis		Now	4
			Today	2

			All the time	1
			One second	1
			Everytime	1
4	Discourse Deixis		This	11
			That	32
5	Social Deixis		Mrs.	1
			Sister	2
			Boy	3
Total				**363**

The data in Table 1 reveal that personal deixis constitutes the highest frequency among all categories, indicating that references to speakers, listeners, and third parties are the dominant linguistic feature in the film's dialogue. This high occurrence reflects the centrality of interpersonal interaction in shaping the characters' relationships and emotional dynamics, particularly between Lilo and Stitch. Discourse deixis appears as the second most frequent type, demonstrating its role in maintaining textual cohesion and guiding audience interpretation throughout the narrative. Spatial and temporal deixis occur less frequently but remain significant, as they situate events in particular settings and timeframes, contributing to the film's coherence and narrative progression. Meanwhile, social deixis appears least often, suggesting that formal address and honorifics play a more subtle role, primarily in signaling respect and hierarchy. To sum up, the quantitative distribution highlights that deixis in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) is predominantly used to express personal involvement and relational meaning, which aligns with the film's central themes of identity, belonging, and emotional connection.

After identifying the types and frequencies of deixis, this study further analyzes how each deictic expression operates pragmatically within the film's dialogue. Table 2 presents the classification of deictic expressions according to their pragmatic strategies, illustrating how Lilo and Stitch employ deixis to express intentions, negotiate relationships, and construct meaning within various communicative contexts. The data are organized based on the five categories of deixis proposed by Levinson (1983) personal, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social each accompanied by representative utterances from the film and the corresponding pragmatic functions. This classification provides a clearer understanding of how linguistic forms are strategically used by the characters to maintain coherence, convey emotion, and strengthen interpersonal dynamics in the narrative.

Table 2. The Pragmatic Strategies

No	Types of Deixis	Division	Data/Scenes	Utterances	Pragmatic Strategies
1	Person Deixis	First Deixis	Data 5 (08:48)	"He's a fish. **I** forget to tell you that."	Lilo uses "*I*" to reduce strange claims to mere simple memory lapses, asserting the autonomy of her personal views.
			Data 14 (13:27 - 14-58)	"***I've*** been more than good, Mrs. Kekoa. ***I've*** been doing very, very great at Hula. Made a ton of new friends there and all think I'm the coolest. ***I've*** been eating a lot of organic stuff. Sometimes **I** eat too much. And ***I've been*** eating five or ten times a day. Sometimes **I** eat so much, **I**…can't…breath."	"*I*" is used to emphasize one's qualities and behavior. Lilo excessively claims compliance as a means of self-defense to ward off criticism or scrutiny from authorities, despite inconsistencies.
			Data 160 (01:31:02)	"This is **my** family. **I** found it all on my own."	Stitch asserts emotional ownership of "*my family*" and the role of agent Stitch (*I found*) redefines himself, rejecting his identity as an experiment.
			Data 34 (30:13)	"Can **I** pet the dogs again? Hi, AJ."	Lilo uses "*I*" to seek permission to do things that fulfill her emotional and social needs (contact with animals).

		Data 162 (01:34:50)	"**I** think you should join the Marines."	In data 162 dan 163, Lilo uses *"I"* to take on the role of controller or decision maker, projecting maturity and self-sacrifice for the sake of the listener (Nani).
		Data 163 (01:35:04)	"But **I** want you to go. And plus, that's what Mama and Papa would like too."	
		Data 44 (35:06)	"Remember, **we** don't hurt chickens, okay?"	Lilo uses *"we"* to create ethical boundaries and social norms, linguistically integrating Stitch into the family's morals.
		Data 7 (11:17 – 11:22)	"That must be so stressful for you. How about you just leave **me** alone to die?"	Lilo uses *"me"* as the target of her drama (leave me alone to die) to protest Nani's emotional pressure.
		Data 164 (01:35:16)	"They told **me** so."	Lilo uses *"me"* as the recipient of facts (told me so) supported by external references (They), to win arguments or justify her behavior.
		Data 148 (01:25:06)	"Stitch is down there! He saved **me**. Let go!"	Lilo uses *"me"* as the target of rescue, pragmatically changing Stitch's status from a threat to a positive agent directly tied to herself.
		Data 122 (01:05:45)	"Remember when Papa took **us** camping out here?"	Lilo uses *"us"* to refer to the activities of the nuclear family involving the missing parents, reinforcing the historical sibling bond.
	Second Deixis	Data 3 (07:42)	"**You're** free. Go, go!"	*"You"* functions as a subject referring to a non-human entity. Lilo linguistically assigns subject status and autonomy (freedom) to animals, reflecting her unique view of all creatures.
		Data 53 (37:58-38:06)	"Come on. I'm gonna take **you** to my favorite sport. **You're** gonna love it. Come on… come in the water with me. It's so fun. It's just water."	The repetition of *"you"* serves as a persuasive strategy to draw Stitch into his emotional sphere and cultural environment (swimming).
		Data 91 (50:19)	"Did **you** have a family?"	Lilo uses *"you"* to ask about the experience of losing Stitch, which is a step toward identifying shared suffering and strengthening family bonds.
		Data 117 (55:46)	"Now, it's **your** turn."	The use of *"your turn"* serves to shift roles and responsibilities, affirming Lilo's recognition that Stitch is a teammate with equal obligations.
		Data 130 (01:10:38)	"**You're** not bad. **You** just do bad things sometimes."	Lilo uses the repetition of *"You"* as a declaration of unconditional acceptance; Lilo separates Stitch's identity from his bad behavior.
		Data 137 (01:13:06)	"What are **you** doing?"	Lilo uses *"you"* directly to challenge the foreign authority (Jumba) that is invading their home, demanding an explanation for the aggression.
	Third Deixis	Data 92 (50:28)	"That's close like mama and papa. The people at home who give you lots of	Lilo uses *"They"* to define and idealize the concept of family (unconditional warmth and

				*hugs and kisses. And **they're** there for you. Even when…"*	support) to Stitch, making it a standard to strive for.
			Data 94 (50:50)	*"Maybe my parents talked to your parents and **they're** sent us to each other."*	Lilo uses *"they"* to justify her unexpected relationship with Stitch, claiming destiny or intervention from absent parents (idealized authority figures).
			Data 132 (01:11:01)	*"But that doesn't mean **they** aren't good."*	Lilo uses *"they"* to generalize that people who do bad things can still be good, as a strategy to protect Stitch from the stigma of destructive actions.
			Data 133 (01:11:22)	*"**He's** not an animal. **He's** my friend."*	*"He"* is used to reject the negative categorization (animal) given by Jumba, affirming Stitch's status as an equal entity and member of the family (my friend).
			Data 147 (01:25:02)	*"**He's** still down there!"*	Lilo uses *"He"* to indicate Stitch's location and condition in critical moments, prioritizing Stitch in the midst of danger.
			Data 35 (30:35)	*"But it makes **them** happy."*	Lilo uses *"them"* to justify her actions (wanting to give the dog candy) as an attempt to bring happiness to the referent, affirming her concern for the dog.
			Data 107 (53:32)	*"**His** name is Stitch."*	Lilo uses *"His"* to give Stitch a name, which is a symbolic step to integrate Stitch into the legitimate social sphere in front of Cobra Bubbles (the authority figure).
			Data 64 (41:54)	*"Nope. I read **her** text messages."*	*"Her"* is used to identify the source of information (Nani's text message), as Lilo's controller of Nani (absent referent).
			Data 39 (33:45)	*"I like **him**. Come here boy."*	In data 39 and 155, Lilo uses *"him"* to express affection and protect Stitch from threats, highlighting their emotional bond.
			Data 155 (01:30:01)	*"No! Hey! Leave **him** alone! Let **him** stay!"*	
			Data 18 (16:28)	*"**It's** better than listening to you."*	Lilo uses *"It"* as a neutral reference to insult Nani's communication (indirect insult), showing a preference for nonverbal entertainment.
			Data 153 (01:28:39)	*"**It's** the family picture!"*	Stitch uses *"It"* to emphasize the symbolic value and importance of physical objects (family pictures) that are visual representations of family.
2	Temporal Deixis		Data 22 (20:24)	*"I shoved Mertle Edmonds **today**."*	Lilo uses *"today"* to emphasize the temporal accuracy of her actions, that she pushed Mertle, her dance partner, positioning the event as a current fact relevant to report to Nani.
			Data 36 (32:01)	*"Is it bath day **today**?"*	Lilo uses *"today"* as a question to confirm that routines or schedules have been followed,

					demonstrating her dependence on structured schedules.
			Data 69 (44:42)	"Not right **now**, Stitch."	Lilo uses *"not right now"* to set an urgent time limit (urgency) caused by Stitch's chaos, communicating the need to prioritize tasks (Nani's work).
			Data 72 (46:22)	"I'm giving him a bath right **now**."	Affirming that the action is happening at the time of speaking. Lilo uses *"right now"* to show her initiative in taking care of Stitch (giving him a bath), as a defense that she is actively responsible to Nani.
			Data 84 (49:20 – 49:27)	"This is Kapu, okay? That means "off limits." Don't ever, ever touch this. **Now** be good."	Lilo uses *"Now"* to emphasize the urgency and obedience to her command, reinforcing Lilo's role as an authority figure to Stitch.
			Data 97 (51:09)	**"Now**, follow what I do."	Lilo uses *"Now"* to mark the transition from explanation to action, directing Stitch's (the listener's) focus to the activity that will be done immediately.
			Data 89 (50:02)	"We used to go to the beach **all the time**. She used to be fun. I wish you could have met her then."	Lilo uses *"all the time"* to encode a period of happiness that is now lost (before the death of her parents), pragmatically expressing her longing and sadness to Stitch.
			Data 116 (55:37)	"Lesson number two. Don't wreck stuff. It's really fragile. So, you can't break it **every time** when you…"	Lilo uses "every time," which refers to recurring past events, as the basis for establishing present rules (can't break it), using Stitch's history as justification.
3	Spatial Deixis		*Data 139 (01:14:27)*	"That's **Mama and Papa's room**."	Lilo uses *"Mama and Papa's room"* to mark the most sacred and private area of the house, warning Jumba not to violate her parents' memories.
			Data 19 (16:32)	"I'm already in my **room**."	*"In my room"* is used to define physical and communication boundaries, as well as to forcibly end interactions with Nani in order to claim her personal space.
			Data 39 (33:45)	"I like him. Come here boy."	*"Here"* is used as a motion command to draw the referent (Stitch) closer to the deictic center (Lilo), facilitating the desired emotional interaction.
			Data 158 (01:30:44)	"Come here, Stitch."	Lilo uses *"here"* as an urgent invitation to take shelter near her, emphasizing that Stitch's safety can only be found near her.
			Data 28 (21:29-21:54)	"Oh, my gosh. I have to make a wish. You out! You can't be here."	*"Here"* is used to emphasize the need for Lilo's exclusive space for her personal ritual (making a wish), and to reject Nani's presence.
			Data 60 (40:54)	"It's so boring **here**."	"Here" is used to negatively assess Nani's workplace

						(boring), linking Lilo's discomfort to a place she shouldn't be.
				Data 122 (01:05:45)	*"Remember when Papa took us camping out **here**?"*	*"Out here"* associates the current physical location with happy memories of the past (camping), using space as an anchor for family bonds.
				Data 14 (13:27-14:58)	*"I've been more than good, Mrs. Kekoa. I've been doing very, very great at Hula. Made a ton of new friends **there** and all think I'm the coolest. I've been eating a lot of organic stuff. Sometimes I eat too much. And I've been eating five or ten times a day. Sometimes I eat so much, I…can't…breath."*	*"There"* is used to indicate the location of Lilo's school, which is far from the speaker (Mrs. Kekoa), supporting Lilo's claim about the "new friends" she made there.
				Data 147 (01:25:02)	*"He's still down **there**!"*	In the data 147,148, and 149 is *"Down there"* identifies the critical location and is used repeatedly to draw the attention of the listeners, Nani and David, to the dangerous location, demanding immediate action by emphasizing that Stitch (an important reference) is in a distant and dangerous place.
				Data 148 (01:25:06)	*"Stitch is down **there**! He saved me. Let go!"*	
				Data 149 (01:25:06)	*"We have to go save Stitch! He's still down **there**! Go save him! Please!"*	
4	Discourse Deixis			*Data 139 (01:14:27)*	***"That's** Mama and Papa's room."*	*"That's"* marks a specific and significant informative claim for Jumba, emphasizing the importance of information about the room.
				Data 101 (52:10)	*"Nani, Nani! You have to see **this**."*	Call for Attention to Discourse Content, using *"this"* to refer to the event to be presented (nonverbal content), as a transitional strategy to force Nani to focus on what Lilo wants to show.
				Data 135 (01:12:35)	*"I don't know. **This** is the only phone number I could find."*	*"This"* refers to the physical object (phone number) that Lilo found. Discursively, *"this"* is used to limit and validate the source of information, justifying why she only has that number.
				Data 160 (01:31:02)	*"**This** is my family. I found it all on my own."*	Stitch uses *"this"* as a final declaration that defines his social category, concluding his new identity to the galactic authorities.
5	Social Deixis			*Data 14 (14:27-14-58)*	*"I've been more than good, **Mrs. Kekoa**. I've been doing very, very great at Hula. Made a ton of new friends there and all think I'm the coolest. I've been eating a lot of organic stuff. Sometimes I eat too much. And I've been eating five or ten times a day. Sometimes I eat so much, I…can't…breath."*	Lilo uses the formal address *"Mrs"* to acknowledge authority, as a compliance strategy to gain acceptance.

		Data 29 (21:57)	"*No, it's not, **Sister**.*"	Lilo uses "*Sister*" to request or demand to be treated as a close relative rather than a foster child, asserting their interpersonal equality beyond the role of caregiver.
		Data 171 (01:38:33)	"*Good night, **Sister**.*"	"*Sister*" is used as a loving closing greeting, to reconfirm blood ties and peace at the end of the film.
		Data 54 (38:36)	"*Oh, so you like trouble, huh? Come on, **boy**.*"	Lilo uses the "*boy*" to establish Stitch in a lower social hierarchy (pet status), affirming Lilo's role as Stitch's owner or controller in the early stages of their relationship.
		Data 68 (43:22)	"*You hungry, **boy**?*"	The use of "*boy*" expresses functional concern, affirming Lilo's role as the caregiver responsible for Stitch's basic needs, while maintaining the hierarchy of authority.

The findings presented in the tables above indicate that personal deixis occurs most frequently in the film, followed by discourse, spatial, temporal, and social deixis. This distribution suggests that references to participants (such as *I, you, he, we*) are central to constructing meaning and maintaining interpersonal relationships within the dialogue. The dominance of personal deixis reflects the film's emphasis on identity, emotional connection, and familial roles among the characters. Meanwhile, the presence of spatial and temporal deixis demonstrates how linguistic references to place and time contribute to narrative coherence and situational clarity. The relatively lower occurrence of social deixis indicates that formal address and status markers play a more limited, yet significant role in expressing respect and hierarchy. The data show that deixis in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) is a pragmatic device that supports character development, thematic depth, and narrative cohesion.

DISCUSSIONS

Based on the findings of deixis and pragmatic strategies above in the film *Lilo and Stitch* (2025), the following is the interpretation.

Personal Deixis

Personal or person deictics are words or expressions in language that are used to encode or refer to the role of participants in a speech event (conversation), and their reference changes depending on who is the center of orientation (who is speaking). There are three types of personal deictics, namely first person, second person, and third person.

First Person

The first person refers to the speaker or the group that includes the speaker. First-Person Personal Deixis (*I, me, my, we, us*) in the film Lilo and Stitch reveals that a key mechanism for Lilo and Stitch is to negotiate identity and reinforce collective bonds. The use of *"I"* essentially functions as an Ego Autonomy Strategy, where Lilo pragmatically struggles to maintain personal boundaries amidst social scrutiny. This is manifested through the Reduction of Responsibility (*I forget*, Data 5), which subtly reframes strange claims as mere lapses of memory, and Hyperbolic Self-Defense (*I've been good*, Data 14), which is used to deflect authority criticism. Even Stitch employs the *"I"* and *"my"* strategy for Claims of Ownership and Agency (*my family. I found it*, Data 160), linguistically rejecting his experimental identity in favor of the family identity he creates himself. Meanwhile, (*we and us*) pragmatically encode the success of family formation. The use of "*we*" functions as the Establishment of Inclusive Norms (*we don't hurt chickens,* Data 44), which actively integrates Stitch into the moral and ethical unit of the family. Furthermore, "*us*" is used to Reinforce Historical Bonds (*took us camping,* Data 122), consolidating the Lilo-Nani sibling relationship through shared family memories. Additionally, the object pronoun "*me*" plays a crucial role in the Transformation of Affective Roles (*He saved me,* Data 148), where Lilo

pragmatically shifts Stitch's status from threat to savior, reinforcing their emotional bond through lived experiences together.

Second Person

The second person refers to the listener (addressee) or the party addressed by the speaker. Second-Person (*you/your*) demonstrates Lilo's pragmatic ability to create, negotiate, and reaffirm social bonds with Stitch, transcending species boundaries. The use of *"you"* in data 3 is linguistically employed to grant subject status and autonomy to non-human entities (chicken), reflecting Lilo's inclusive worldview. Towards Stitch, *"you"* serves as an integration tool, where its repetition functions as a persuasive strategy to draw Stitch into her personal environment in data 53, and as an empathy-seeking strategy to recognize shared suffering (*Did you have a family?*, Data 91). In data 130 (*You're not bad*), the affirmative function of *"you"* serves as a declaration of unconditional acceptance, pragmatically separating Stitch's intrinsic identity from his destructive behavior. Furthermore, *"your"* is used to establish an equivalent functional role (*your turn*, Data 117), recognizing Stitch as a partner, while *"you"* is also used to challenge foreign authority (Jumba, Data 137), asserting Lilo's territorial boundaries. Thus, Lilo's second person deixis uses language to redefine the listener's status from a threat to a valued member, or to build a family.

Third Person

Third person refers to people or entities who are neither speakers nor listeners. Third-Person personal deixis (*he, him, his, they*) functions pragmatically as Lilo's tool to build an affirmative identity and idealize the concept of family, challenging the negative categorization from the outside world. Lilo uses pronouns like *"He"* (Data 133) to reject the negative categorization (*not an animal*) given by Jumba, explicitly affirming Stitch's status as an equal entity and family member. Stitch's identity is conveyed through the possessive *"His"* (*His name is Stitch*, Data 107), which is a symbolic step toward social integration in front of authority (Cobra Bubbles). The plural pronoun *"they"* is used strategically to idealize family; referring to absent parents (Data 92) to define standards of unconditional love and used to separate identity from bad actions (*They aren't good*, Data 132) as a strategy to protect Stitch from stigma. In addition, *"It"* is used pragmatically for indirect insults (Data 18) or to emphasize the symbolic value of an object (*family picture!*, Data 153). Thus, Third-Person deixis becomes a cognitive defense strategy for Lilo, in which he linguistically creates a supportive value system and reinforces the status of his newly recognized family members.

Temporal Deixis

Temporal deixis refers to time based on the speaker's perspective at the moment of utterance. Temporal deixis (Levinson, 1983) shows how Lilo pragmatically uses temporal expressions to manage accountability, assert urgency, and express nostalgic longing related to the trauma of loss. The findings on temporal deixis data above indicate two main strategies: proximal time control and distal time expression. First, Lilo uses proximal adverbs such as *"today"* in data 22, 36 and *"right now"* or *"now"* in data 69, 72, 84, 97 to Control and Assert Urgency around the time of utterance (coding time). The use of *"today"* and *"right now"* functions as an Active Accountability Claim in data 72, where Lilo shows her initiative in taking care of Stitch as a self-defense to Nani. Meanwhile, *"now"* is used imperatively to Emphasize Priority Limits and Immediate Compliance in data 69 and 84, reinforcing Lilo's role as an authority figure over Stitch. Second, Lilo uses distal time expressions to address the past. "*All the time*" in data 89 pragmatically encodes a Lost Period of Happiness, which functions as an expression of nostalgic longing and implicitly justifies her current emotional needs to Stitch. In contrast, "*every time*" in data 116, which refers to repeated past events, is used to Establish Present Rules, where Lilo uses Stitch's history of destructive behavior as justification to limit his actions. Overall, in Temporal Deixis, Lilo uses language to define the temporal boundaries of her actions and to process past trauma in her current interactions.

Spatial Deixis

Spatial deixis refers to the physical location of objects or people relative to the speaker's location. In the findings on spatial deixis above, pragmatically Lilo uses location expressions to establish, maintain, and evaluate territories, which is an important strategy for characters who feel they have no control over their environment. There are three main strategies in the use of spatial deixis: First, Lilo

uses proximal and demonstrative location markers to Establish Personal Sovereignty Boundaries. The phrase *"in my room"* (Data 19) and the demonstrative *"That's Mama and Papa's room"* (Data 139) function to mark physical space as a private and sacred deictic zone that must be respected, even by Nani and Jumba. This strategy is also used exclusively in rituals, where *"You can't be here"* (Data 28) denies Nani's presence for the sake of Lilo's Claim for Exclusive Spatial Need. Secondly, the adverbs *"here"* and *"Come here"* (Data 39 and 158) function for Bonding and Security Consolidation. This command draws the referent (Stitch) to the deictic center (Lilo) to facilitate emotional interaction in crisis situations and serves as an urgent invitation to seek shelter (Data 158), affirming that Stitch's security can only be found near Lilo. *"Here"* is also used to Negatively Evaluate Space, as in *"boring here"* (Data 60), associating Lilo's discomfort with an undesirable place. And third, Lilo uses distal locations for referential purposes and urges action. The adverb *"down there"* (Data 147-149) functions to Identify Critical Locations and is repeatedly used to Demand Immediate Action from the listeners (Nani and David) by emphasizing the location of danger. Meanwhile, *"there"* in the school context (Data 14) is used to Support the Credibility of her Claim by pointing to a location far from the speaker. Overall, in this Spatial Deixis, Lilo uses location markers to manage the context of interaction, process memories *"out here"* (Data 122), and assert control over her environment.

Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis refers to the use of deictic expressions that point to parts of the discourse itself (either backward or forward). It refers to the text or the utterance itself, not to person/time/place (Levinson, 1983). Discursive Deixis involves the use of deictic expressions, such as the demonstratives *"this"* and *"that,"* to refer to parts of the discourse itself, segments of ideas, or objects relevant to the context of the utterance. In this film, discursive deixis functions as a pragmatic tool to control the listener's focus and establish the boundaries of information validity. Lilo's use of *"this"* functions as an Attention Call for Discourse Content (*You have to see*, Data 101). In this context, *"this"* acts as a transitional strategy, forcing Nani to shift focus from verbal interaction to the non-verbal event that Lilo is about to present. Lilo also uses *"this"* to delimit and validate his information source (*This is the only phone number I could find*, Data 135), which pragmatically justifies the limitations of the resources he has to the phone's recipient. Stitch's strategy, where *"this"* is used as a categorical declaration that is final (*This is my family*, Data 160). Although it has a spatial dimension (referring to the group present), discursively *"this"* functions to assert his new identity in front of the galactic authority. This declaration closes to all previous discourse regarding his identity as Experiment 626. Similarly, although (*That's Mama and Papa's room,* Data 139) is primarily spatial, *"that's"* discursively marks an informative claim that is significant to Jumba, emphasizing the importance of the information or memory attached to that room. In addition, this discourse deixis in *Lilo and Stitch* (2025) uses demonstratives to control the narrative, either by drawing the listener's focus to what is important or by establishing the boundaries of validity and defining new social categories.

Social Deixis

Social deixis refers to the social status, class, or honorary relationship between the speaker and listener, or the speaker and the person being referred to. The findings of social deixis data above indicate that Lilo uses forms of address and status markers to assert, alter, and stabilize hierarchy in her interactions. The data clearly differentiates Lilo's strategies toward institutional authority figures, fraternal bonds, and ownership relationships. First, with respect to external authority figures, Lilo uses formal honorifics such as *'Mrs. Kekoa'* (Data 14). The use of these formal terms of address functions as a Compliance Strategy that pragmatically acknowledges hierarchical status, reflecting Lilo's effort to gain acceptance or avoid scrutiny. Second, toward Nani, Lilo uses the kinship term *'Sister'* (Data 171), which functions as an Affirmation of Absolute Emotional Bond that reconfirms their familial ties and peace, stabilizing their interpersonal relationship beyond the supervised caregiver role. Third, toward Stitch, Lilo uses the term *'boy'* (Data 54, 68); the use of this address functions to Establish an Initial Dominant Hierarchy and Reinforce the Caregiver Role, placing Stitch in a lower status (pet). However, the pragmatic function of 'boy' later shifts to an expression of Functional Care *'You hungry, boy?'* (Data 68), which indicates that although the caregiving hierarchy is maintained, the main focus is on fulfilling Stitch's basic needs, transforming him from an object of control into a subject who is cared for under the protection of the family.

CONCLUSION

The analysis identified five major categories of deixis (personal, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social) and demonstrated that these forms function not merely as grammatical markers but as pragmatic tools for constructing meaning, establishing relationships, and reinforcing narrative coherence within cinematic discourse. The findings reveal that personal deixis dominates the film's dialogue, serving as a key mechanism through which the characters negotiate identity, emotional connection, and interpersonal roles. Temporal and spatial deixis further anchor the discourse by situating events within specific timeframes and locations, thereby maintaining the continuity of narrative and emotional development. Discourse deixis operates as a cohesive device that guides audience attention and demarcates significant moments in interaction, while social deixis encodes respect, hierarchy, and solidarity, reflecting the sociocultural dimensions of communication between characters.

Additionally, deixis in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) is not merely a linguistic element but a pragmatic strategy that connects language, identity, and emotion. Through deictic, the film demonstrates how communication between human and non-human characters can symbolize broader social meanings such as belonging, empathy, and family. The study thereby contributes to pragmatic research by extending the application of Levinson's framework to multimodal narrative media, illustrating how deixis operates dynamically across linguistic and visual modes. Pedagogically, these findings suggest that analyzing deixis in films can serve as an effective and engaging resource for teaching pragmatics, helping learners understand how meaning operates dynamically in real communicative contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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