

## **A Pragmatic Comparative Study of Deixis in Relation to Absurd Drama**

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to identify and analyze the dominant types of deictic expressions in two famous plays of the Absurd Theatre: Harold Pinter's "The Birthday party" and Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot", and to compare these on the basis of the deixis found in both texts by adopting Levinson's (1983) model. Plays categorized under this heading make them different from traditional plays . This is because language is different and the characters who use and speak it for communicating ideas and meanings are different . The study is qualitative where the researcher reads, collects the data from the utterances in the two scripts, and finally counts the frequency of all types of deictic expressions so as to state the function of each type.

The findings revealed that the five types of deixis: person, place or spatial, time or temporal, discourse and social were all employed in the two texts . The study concludes : first , this employment is intended to facilitate the readers' understanding of words and phrases that could not completely comprehended in the absence of additional and textual information . Secondly, deictic expressions are prominent features in the plays of the Absurd Theatre. Thirdly, deixis can contribute, to a great extent, to complete the ideas and meanings that absurd playwrights writers like Pinter , Beckett and others sought to convey in their plays.

**Keywords: Pragmatics, Deixis, Deictic Expressions, Absurd Theatre**

### **Introduction**

To be able to communicate with others , we need language as a means and an instrument of communication. People use language for everything they do; interact with others by sending meanings and messages and express emotions and knowledge about life. However, although language is used for communication, sometimes , the utterances delivered by a speaker to a hearer or an addressee have a sense of ambiguity. In English , sometimes , the addressee or hearer encounters a difficulty in comprehending what the speaker tries to say, about whom, when and

where. This situation can cause a real problem in the process of communication .Therefore , context is essential for both hearer or addressee to understand the meaning of the speaker's message. Some very common words in our language , like” here” and “there”, “this” or “that” , “now” and “then” , " yesterday " "today" or "tomorrow" as well as pronouns like:( you, me, she, him, it, them) cannot be understood at all if we do not know their situational context in the sense that some sentences of English are virtually impossible to comprehend unless we know who is speaking, about whom , where and when .

Expressions such as “today” and “there” are examples of the bits of language that we can understand in terms of the speaker's intended meaning. Such expressions are technically known as **deictic expressions** from the Greek word “deixis”, means “pointing “. So, words are “deictic” if their semantic meaning is fixed but their denotational meaning depending on time and place. The present study is a pragmatic study intending to focus on one of the key notions in the field of pragmatics , i.e. “deixis”.

### **Theoretical Background**

This part of the study consists of the following topics: Pragmatics as a main field of linguistics , the concept of deixis, deixis and drama , deixis and context, and the adopted model. It also tackles the differences between traditional drama and modem drama in comparison with the **Absurd Theater** ( henceforth **AT** ).

#### **Pragmatics**

One of the fields of linguistics that examines how language used in interaction, is called Pragmatics. Yule (1996:3) defines pragmatics as "the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). In Levinson's words ( 1983 : 9 ), pragmatics is *“the study of these relations between language and context that are grammaticalized or encoded in the structure of a language”* According to Thomas ( 1995 : 22 ) Pragmatics is *“meaning in interaction”* within its field, people use words in order to refer to something. Lyons (1981: 171) states that pragmatics is *“the study of actual utterances ; the study of use rather than meaning; the study of that part of meaning which is not purely truth-conditional ”*.

In relation to deixis , Levinson ( 1983:55 ) affirms that " deixis belongs to the domain of pragmatics because it directly concerns the relationship between the structure of languages and the context in which they are used. Moreover , Locastro ( 2003 : 42 ) adds that "words that refer to things , places and people in world , and indeed all languages may be regarded as referential in nature ". In other words, referring that is made by the speaker or writer aims at enabling the hearer or reader to identify a person, a place, or a thing in a particular text.

#### **The Concept of Deixis**

The term " deixis " is derived from the classical Greek word "deiktikos" (deictic ). It has been called by several scholars and linguists by different names , all of which share the same meaning

, such as "indicating" or "pointing" (Levinson, 1983 : 35) ; "pointing" (Verschieren, 1999:18); "to show" or "to point" (Allott, 2010 : 54); "pointing" (Yule, 2020: 152) .

Yule ( 1996: 9 ) defines " deixis " as *"a technical term for one of the most fundamental things we do with utterances"*. (Crystal, 1999: 83 ) and ( 2008 : 133 ) defines "deixis " as *"a grammatical category used in linguistics to subsume those characteristics of language that refer indirectly to the personal, temporal and locational features of the situation within which a speech event or a certain utterance takes place, and whose meaning is thus relative to that situation, like( I/ you, now/ then, here / there, this / that )"*

Furthermore, "deixis" is used in linguistics to indicate the function of personal and demonstrative pronouns, of tense and a variety of other grammatical and lexical features which connect utterances to the spatio- temporal coordinates of the act of utterance (Lyons, 1977:637). Short ( 1996 : 100) states that "the use of dexis is one of the ways in which writers persuade readers to imagine a fictional world when they read poems, novels and plays . One of the most important phenomena that cannot be ignored by the scientific consideration of language use is "anchoring " of language in real world, which is achieved by "pointing" .This phenomenon is called " deixis " and the pointers are called " indexical expressions" or "indexicals". These are essentially involved in four dimensions: time, space, social and discourse (Veschieren, 1999:18). According to Yule (1996 : 9), "deictic expressions" are among the first forms to be uttered by very young children and can be used to indicate people, location and time of an utterance. He (2014:128) says that sentences that include words such as, "here" and "there", "this" or "that", "now" or "then", "yesterday", "today" or "tomorrow" , as well as pronouns like (me, you, he, she ,it, him, them),are virtually hard to comprehend unless knowing who is speaking, about whom, where and when, i.e. knowing the speaker, why are they said , the place and time of their utterance. For example:

- (1) You'll have to bring it back **tomorrow** because she isn't **here today**.

This sentence , out of its situational context , is completely vague . It contains a number of expressions that depend on knowledge of the physical context for their interpretation .

### **Deixis and Context**

Context is an essential factor in linguistic pragmatics. It plays a vital role in the interpretation of utterances and expressions (Cruse, 2006 : 35). For Leech (1983 : 13), context is a relevant aspect of the physical as well as the social setting in which an utterance is used. It is thus, a background knowledge assumed to be shared by a speaker and a hearer in the sense that it contributes to the hearer's interpretation of what the speaker means by a given utterance. According to Dilley ( 1999 : 3 ) , context is a linguistic device by means of which people are able to reveal hidden meanings and deeper understanding , or to forward certain kinds of interpretation and notably forms of explanation. Chapman ( 2011: 40-41 ) stresses that context is vitally significant in the interpretation of deictic expressions . This is due to the fact that deixis is a category of expressions whose very purpose is linked entirely to the context in which expressions are used. For example:

(2) *I* am pleased to meet *you*.

(3) William met Martha *yesterday*.

(4) When William met Martha she was standing right *there*.

In order to understand what is being communicated, we need to fill in information from the context of utterances (2, 3, and 4). The italicised bold words indicate how this extra information points to some aspects of the context that are related to their interpretation. In (2), there are two examples of person deixis ' which in their semantic interpretation specify a speaker ( **I** ) and a hearer ( **you** ) . However, the individuality of these participants is dependent on context. In (3), the expression "**yesterday**" belongs to "time/temporal deixis". Again, although we know something about its meaning, we need information about the context before making sure what day it denotes. Similarly, in (4), we need to know about the context in which the "place / spatial deixis", "**there**" takes place, i.e the location of the speaker and hearer.

### Deixis in Terms of Levinson's (1983) Model

This section is dedicated to explain the phenomenon of deixis in terms of Stephen C. Levinson's (1983) Model. In his book *Pragmatics*, he proposes five types of deixis, namely: **person deixis**, **time deixis**, **place deixis**, **discourse deixis** and **social deixis**.

#### 1. Person Deixis

**Person deixis** is reflected directly in the grammatical categories of person. The basic grammatical distinctions are the categories of first, second and third person. The first and second person refer to interlocutors of the speech event of the speaker and addressee. He explains that it is important to note that the third person is completely unlike the first or second person, in that it does not correspond to any particular participant-role in the speech event. So, the personal deictic expressions are most obviously manifested by using the pronominal systems, resulting the three-way distinction (Levinson, 1983: 68-69). Verschueren (1999: 17-20) mentions that first person pronouns like (*I, mine, my...*), second person pronouns such as (*you, your, yours*), and third person pronouns like (*he, she, it...*) are all regarded as **personal deixis**. For example:

(5) *I* might have some turnips. (Waiting for Godot, Act I)

(6) *you* are a great man.

(7) *I'm* going to call *him*. (The Birthday Party, Act I)

According to Huang (2007: 143), **person deixis** is marked by **vocatives**. **Vocatives** are NPs that are not syntactically or semantically incorporated as the arguments of a predicate. Rather, they are prosodically separated from the body of a sentence that may accompany them. **Vocatives** can be expressed by proper names, kinship terms and titles. **Vocatives**, in general, are divided into two types: **calls or summonses**, as in (8); and **addresses**, as in (9):

(8) *Hey you, you just scratched my car with your frisbee.* (Levinson, 1983: 71)

(9) *Is that you, **Petey**?* (The Birthday Party, Act I)

## 2. Time Deixis

Levinson (1983: 73) points out that **time deixis** makes ultimate reference to participant-role. Therefore, adverbs of time like *now*, for example, can be glossed to describe the moment at which the speaker is producing the utterance containing *now*. It is important to make a distinction between the **coding time (CT)** as the moment of production and the **receiving time (RT)** as the moment of reception. **Time deictic expressions** seem to be the natural and prominent cycles of day and night, months, seasons and years, including temporal adverbs like (*now, then, today, tomorrow, yesterday...*).

Grenoble (1998: 52) and Verschueren (1999: 18) suggest that **time deixis** is relative to the time of speech event. They can be expressed via using time adverbials such as (*now, soon, then, recently, today, tomorrow, yesterday...*) and complex time adverbials like (*next day, last Wednesday, this night...*). For example:

(10) *Pull the trigger **now**!* (Levinson, 1983: 74)

(11) *I was in London **then**.*

(12) ***Tomorrow** is a new day.*

According to Levinson (1983: 73), time can be traced through **tenses** that are relevant to the timings of an utterance. **Past tense** is used to indicate preceding events, **present time** to indicate events in the current point of time, and **future** to indicate events subsequent to the time of the utterance. For example

(13) He **went** to the cinema **yesterday**.

(14) He **is playing** the piano very well .

(15) I'll visit you **next week**.

Finally, Levinson (1983:79) states that **temporal deixis** is relevant to other deictic elements. **Greetings**, are usually time-restricted. For example:

(16) **Good morning**.

## 3. Place Deixis

Levinson (1983: 79) reports that **place deixis** concerns the specification of locations relative to anchorage points in a speech event. This type of deixis is expressed notably by the use of adverbs of place, like (*here, there, anywhere*), and demonstratives like (*this, that, these and those*). For example:

(17) *So you're down **here** on holiday?* (The Birthday Party, Act II)

(18) ***This** is where I used to live.*

In addition, Verschueren (1999: 19) and Locastro (2012: 25) confirm that **Place / spatial deixis** can also be described by some motion verbs such as (*go and come*) as in the following:

(19) *Nothing happens, nobody **comes**, nobody **goes**.* (Waiting for Godot, Act I)

Levinson (1983: 80) and Meyer (2009: 186) conclude that the adverbs *here* and *there* and the demonstratives *this* and *that* are often thought of as simple contrasts. While *here* and *this* mean **proximal** to the speaker's location, *there* and *that* mean **distal** from the speaker's location as in the following example:

(20) *Bring that here and take this there.*

#### 4. Discourse Deixis

According to Decker (2001: 55-56), **discourse deixis** concerns the use of expressions within some utterance to designate some portion of the discourse that involves that utterance (including the utterance itself). Verschueren (1999: 21) mentions that **discourse deixis** is concerned with the use of linguistic expressions within some utterance to refer to current, earlier or following discourse in the same spoken or written discourse. For instance, the expressions like (*in conclusion, to the contrary, first, finally, then ...*).

(21) *In this chapter, we will discuss the theory of politeness.*

(22) *First, we will go through the woods.*

Huang (2007: 173) indicates that some lexical terms that are claimed to trigger a conventional implicature such as (*anyway, but, even, however, moreover, so, well...*) can also take a discourse deictic function when they occur initially in an utterance as in the following examples:

(23) *After all, it is always morning somewhere in the earth.*

(24) *But I am liberal* (Waiting for Godot, Act I)

Levinson (1983: 85) stresses that since discourse unfolds in time, it seems natural that **temporal-deictic** expressions such as (*last week, next Thursday...*) can be used to refer to portions of the discourse. Similarly, we also have **spatial-deictic** words that can be used as discourse deixis such as (*this* and *that*). While the former is used to express a forthcoming portion as in (25), the latter is used to refer to a preceding portion as in (26):

(25) *I bet you haven't read this story.*

(26) *That was the funniest story I've ever heard.*

#### 5. Social Deixis

Levinson (1983: 89) restricts **social deixis** to those aspects of language structure that encode the social identities of participants or the social relation between those participants, or between one of them and other persons or entities referred to.

Following Huang (2007: 169-170), **Social Deixis** can be expressed by different types of names such as first name (*James*), last name (*Bond*), and a combination of both such as (*James Bond*). **Social deixis** can also be described by the use of kinship terms (*uncle, cousin*), titles borrowed from names of occupations (*doctor*), ranks in specific social/professional groups (*colonel, lieutenant*), and other sources (*Sir, Mr., Mrs., miss, madam*). In addition, it can be expressed by the use of address forms which include a title and the last name such as (*Mr. Lakoff, Dr. Cram, Lady Huxley*). Below are some examples of **social deixis**:

(27) *You're not Mr. Godot, Sir?* (Waiting for Godot, Act I)

(28) *Is everything alright, doctor?*

Moreover, according to Green (1992: 25), **social deixis** can be seen through the use of certain old English terms with archaic second person pronouns such as (*thee, thy, thou...*) as in the following example:

(29) *Thy voice was at sweet tremble in my ear.* (John Keats, *The Eve of St Agnes*, Part 35, Line 308)

### Deixis and Drama

There are some aspects of language that their role in communication must be acknowledged. Typically, the study of deixis is definitely one of these aspects. Deixis (pointing via language) is essentially concerned with the way in which language is encoded through the use of the situational context of utterance in a speech event. It is also concerned with the ways in which the interpretation of an utterance depends entirely on the analysis of that context (Levinson, 1983: 62). Communication can be delivered through literary works such as drama, novel, poetry and / or short story in which the author / writer / poet communicates with his readers through the use of language. Typically, drama is the manifestation of an active attitude of the author to address matters of humans or characters on the stage. Thus, summarising Lyons (1995: 275), an expression can be regarded as **deixis** if its reference is indicating someone or entities, moving or changing, depending on the **I, here, now'** axis, i.e. the speaker, the time and the place of the utterance.

Elam (1980: 87) reports that **dramatic discourse** is invariably designated by a performativity, and above all by a potential gesturality, which the language of narrative does not generally possess since its context is described rather than pragmatically pointed to, and that **deixis** "creates the possibility of exchanging information operating to the sensori-motor rather than the symbolic level." What this means is that it contains the speaker's body directly in the speech event. Thus, the language of drama calls for the intervention of the actor's body in the completion of its meaning, or as J. L. Styan (1971:23) puts it, the words as spoken are definitely tied to the movements of the actors who speak them. For example, the following extract between Meg and Stanley about the anniversary of his birthday shows that the body movement of the actor/actress is significant through the use of deictic expressions that help the audience understand the meaning clearly:

**Meg:** It's your birthday, Stan, I was going to keep it a secret until tonight.

**Stanley:** No.

**Meg:** It is. I've brought you a present. (She goes to the sideboard, picks up the parcel, and places it on the table in front of him.) **Here.** Go on. Open it.

**Stanley:** What is this?

**Meg:** It is your present. (P.25)

Meg's movement towards that sideboard gives more detail to the audience to conceptualize the meaning of (**here**) appropriately through the context and via the involvement of the body movements of the actor as well.

### Traditional Drama and Modern Drama Vs Absurd Drama

The **dramatic text** is a literary genre which is most like naturally occurring conversation. This is because it involves ‘character-to-character’ interaction (Short, 1996: 168). **Drama** is not simply made of words, but of “*sights and sound, stillness and motion, noise and silence, relationships and responses*” (Styan: 1975: vii).

Traditional drama followed a mode of writing which is different from that of modern drama. Elam (2002: 129) distinguishes between two modes of narration: **histoire**, the mode of narration of events used in the past, and **discourse**, the mode of narration used in present. **Histoire** is an objective mode of narration which eliminates the speaking subject and addressee(s) with all the deictic references being distal from the narration. **Discourse** is a subjective mode of narration which denotes the interlocutors and their speaking situation/event. In other words, “*histoire abstracts the énoncé — the utterance produced — from its context, while discourse gives prominence to the énonciation, the act of producing the utterance within a given context.*” In the old mode of writing, the chorus role was significant” As for the **AT**, Zhu (2013: 1463) mentions that language has no fixed regularities. Characters often speak in disorder. For example, the two tramps argue on the question of when will Godot arrive. A moment later, they simply change their conversation to another completely different subject. Thus, the language of the **AT** is ambiguous and disorganised.

While traditional drama is easy to understand( i.e .its contents and themes are clear), the drama of the **AT** is difficult to understand due to its style and purpose .Though a lot of obstacles exist for people to understand the themes and language of the **AT**, many researchers and specialists still try to explore it. In the **AT**, the audience is confronted with characters whose motivations and actions remain largely incomprehensible. “*The more mysterious their actions and nature are, the less humanistic the characters become.*” (Zhu, 2013: 1464).

Whereas traditional drama has regular plots, the **AT** has a thoroughly different plot. The difference is that the plot of the **AT** is fractured and scattered. Generally speaking, traditional drama and modern drama are arranged in time, place or logical order. Sometimes readers can easily infer what the protagonists would do according to their words and sense. Other times the author gives us some clues to deduce the plot. Therefore, it is not difficult to read and enjoy the traditional drama and the modern drama. In contrast, the **AT** is surprising or obscure, and most of the time it has no end or results. For example, in *TBP*, audience cannot guess the result of the play. They even do not know what the characters will do or say in the next step. From the beginning to the end, we do not know what the characters are referring to and what they are talking about. Thus, an artistic feature between the traditional drama and the modern drama on one side, and the **AT** on the other side is the anti-plot (Zhu, 2013: 1464).

### **The Practical Part**

Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter are well – known around the world as absurd playwrights that they are called as the fathers of the **AT**. Their plays Beckett’s “ *Waiting for Godot*” (henceforth **WFG**) and Pinter’s “*The Birthday Party*” (henceforth **TBP** ) are regarded as the most significant plays ever written in the history of **AT**. This part consists of an introduction to Beckett’s **WFG** and Pinter’s **TBP**. It also shows the analysis and discussion of the results of the study. Finally, this part presents the final concluding remarks.



### An Introduction to Beckett's *WFG* and Pinter's *TBP*

Beckett's *WFG* and Pinter's *TBP* depict the existential philosophy that is combined with particular dramatic elements to create a style which could not be logically explained. *WFG* is about two men: **Vladimir** (nicknamed **Didi**) and **Estragon** (nicknamed (**Gogo**), companions for years, wait on a country road for an unknown person named Mr. Godot. While waiting, they speculate about the mysterious Godot, contemplate suicide and attempt to tell a joke (Lawley, 2008: 1). In his book *Reassessing the Theatre of the Absurd*, Bennet (2011: 27), states that part of the immediate confusion generated by the play is its lack of a conventional plot. The play is best summarized by the following line from the play: "*Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful.*"

On the other hand, Pinter's *TBP* which was written in 1957, depicts a tragedy arisen out of insecurity. It takes place in perhaps Pinter's favourite setting, "*the living-room of a house in a seaside town.*" The play is about Stanely Webber, an erstwhile piano player whose life at a rundown seaside boarding house is disrupted by the unexpected arrival of the two mysterious and sinister strangers Goldberg and McCann, who terrorize him and eventually take him away ( Bennet ,2011: 53) and (Tallur, 2005: 121).

### Data Analysis

Following Levinson's (1983) model of deixis, this section displays the frequency, percentage, and analysis of deictic expressions for each type of deixis found in the two plays.

#### 1. Person Deixis

There are (**4812, 50.48%**) person deictic expressions (**2409**) in *WFG* and (**2403**) in *TBP*. This category mainly operates through the use of first, second and third person pronouns as well as vocatives. First person pronouns appear (**994, 41.26%**) in *WFG* and (**841, 34.99%**) in *TBP*. Second person pronouns appear (**756, 31.46%**) in *TBP* and (**530, 22%**) in *WFG*. Third person pronouns appear (**853, 35.40%**) in *WFG* and (**722, 30.04%**) in *TBP*. Vocatives appear (**84, 3.49%**) in *TBP* and (**32, 1.32%**) in *WFG*. Next are some prominent examples taken from the two plays:

(30) **Stanley:** *I'm afraid you and your friend will have to find other accommodation.* (*TBP*, Act II, p. 32)

(31) **Vladimir:** *You're a hard man to get on with, Gogo.* (*WFG*, Act II, p. 58)

(32) **Meg:** *I have got **it** made inside.* (*TBP*, Act I, p. 7)

(33) *What about hanging **ourselves**?* (*WFG*, 1, p.13)

The subject pronoun *I* in (30) has been used deictically which refers to the speaker Stanley. After having met Goldberg and McCann, he acts as if he is the manager of the boardinghouse and tells the two men that they should leave the house and look for another one to spend their stay. Sentence (31) is addressed to Estragon. Being nervous about the senselessness and poor memory of Estragon, Vladimir describes him as a man that one cannot go on with easily. The subject pronoun *you* here refers to Estragon. In sentence (32), Petey has finished his breakfast, and he

now wants to go off for his work. Meg tells him that he has not drunk his tea. *"That is all right. No time now,"* Petey replies. Meg says that the tea is ready inside the kitchen. Thus, the object pronoun *it* pertains the tea. Sentence (33) is uttered by Estragon and the reflexive pronoun *ourselves* refers to both Vladimir and Estragon as they contemplate about what to do while waiting for the coming of Godot.

## 2. Time Deixis

Time deixis has been used considerably in the two plays. There are (3101, 32.53%) of time deictic expressions (1703) in *TBP* and (1398) in *WFG*. This type of deixis operates by using tense and adverbs of time. Tense category appears (1587, 93.18%) in *TBP* and (1276, 91.27%) in *WFG*. Time adverbials appear (122, 8.72%) in *WFG* and (166, 6.81%) in *TBP*. A number of prominent examples are listed below:

(34) **Pozzo:** *I don't remember having met anyone yesterday.* (*WFG*, Act II, p. 84)

(35) **Goldberg:** *If we hadn't come today, we'd have come tomorrow.* (*TBP*, Act I, p. 21)

(36) **Vladimir:** *Charming evening we're having.* (*WFG*, Act I, p. 30)

(37) **Stanley:** *Why did you choose this house?* (*TBP*, Act II, p. 29)

(38) **Vladimir:** *We'll come back tomorrow.* (*WFG*, Act I, p. 10)

(39) **Stanley:** *I'm not in the mood for a party tonight.* (*TBP*, Act II, p. 27)

*Yesterday* in (34), *today* and *tomorrow* in (35) pre-empted the calendrical or absolute ways of referring to the relevant days. *Yesterday* indicates the diurnal span preceding today. *Today* glosses as the diurnal span including the coding time and *tomorrow* refers to the diurnal span following day. Sentence (36) indicates present tense. It is uttered by Vladimir when he and Estragon sing and play with Pozzo and Lucky. The utterance tells us that they are having good time around now. In contrast, sentence (37) marks past tense. Sentence (38) refers to future time which can be noticed easily by the use of the auxiliary verb *will* and the adverb of time *tomorrow*. In sentence (39) *tonight* designates proximal time. Being suspicious of the sudden arrival of Goldberg and McCann, Stanley States that he is not in the mood for the party which is intended to happen this night.

## 3. Place Deixis

Place deixis appears (600, 6.29%), (319) in *TBP* and (281) in *WFG*. This type of deixis operates by using motion verbs, adverbs of place, demonstratives and particles. Motion verbs appear (141, 50.17%) in *WFG* and (126, 38.29%) in *TBP*. Adverbs of place appear (107, 35.56%) in *TBP* and (81, 28.82%) in *WFG*. Demonstratives appear (72, 18 21.88%) in *TBP* and (50, 17.79%) in *WFG*. Particles appear (14, 4.25%) in *TBP* and (9, 3.20%) in *WFG*. Some of prominent examples are listed next:

(40) **Estragon:** *Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful.* (*WFG*, Act I, p. 37)

(41) **Estragon:** *He should be here.* (*WFG*, Act I, p. 10)

(42) **Meg:** *This house is on the list.* (*TBP*, Act I, p. 8)

(43) **Stanley:** *who gave you the right to take away my tea?* (*TBP*, Act I. p: 11)

(44) **Vladimir:** *All the same... that tree ... (turning towards)* (*WFG*, Act I. p: 11)

(45) **Vladimir:** *Those two.* (WFG, Act I, p: 44)

The verb *goes* and *comes* in (40) signify a location that is near and away (**proximal** and **distal**) from the speaker or addressee. The verbs show that nobody happens to go far away from Vladimir and Estragon or comes towards them. There is nobody but Vladimir and Estragon waiting all that hollow time for "*Nothing to be do.*" The adverb of place *here* in (41) refers to a close location from the speaker or addressee. Estragon insinuates that Godot should be in this specific place where they are standing the moment of speaking. *This* in (42) refers to a referent that is proximal to the speaker or addressee. *This* pertains the boardinghouse as it is claimed by Meg to be one of the finest and well known in the area. The particle *away* in (43) marks the distal meaning as Stanley insults Meg of taking his cup of tea from the table to the kitchen. However, *that* in (44) and *those* in (45) signify referents that are distal from the speaker or addressee. Being puzzled whether this place is where they were yesterday or not, they examine the place. In an attempt to remember the place, Vladimir tells Estragon that "*that tree... that bog*" are familiar and the place looks the same. The first *that* refers to the tree while the second *that* points to the bog as Vladimir and Estragon are distal from them. *Those* marks both Pozzo and Lucky as Vladimir and Estragon, away from them, make a conversation on how both changed.

#### 4. Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis appears (525, 5.50%), (290) in *WFG* and (235) in *TBP*. Discourse deixis shows the relationship between one speech event and a portion of discourse. According to Verschueren (1999: 21), discourse deixis refers to earlier, simultaneous or following discourse. Some of the most prominent example are:

(46) **Vladimir:** *But it is not Godot.* (WFG, Act II, p. 74)

(47) **Pozzo:** *No good will come out of this.* (WFG, Act I, p. 25)

(48) **Stanley:** *Then what are they.* (TBP, Act I, p. 23)

(49) **Lulu:** *That was a wonderful speech.* (TBP, Act II, p. 44)

(50) **Estragon:** *Well they were a kind of grey.* (Act II, p. 63)

(51) **Stanley:** *Anyway, this house is not your cup of tea.* (TBP, Act II, p. 34)

(52) **Lulu:** *So you're not coming out for a walk?* (TBP, Act I, p. 17)

(53) **Goldberg:** *Besides, I was a very busy man.* (TBP, Act I, p. 18)

*But* in (46) is used by Vladimir to express something that is the opposite to the previous discourse. The demonstrative pronoun *this* in (47) is used to reflect discourse deixis. Here, it can be used to point out to the current discourse. Being asked by Vladimir and Estragon, Pozzo becomes nervous claiming that a short while you were calling me sir. By asking questions, they will receive nothing good. *This* refers to Pozzo's speech "*a moment ago you were calling me sir in fear and trembling.*" The discourse marker *then* in (48) marks the result of the previous discourse. Stanley nervously tells Meg to remember the names of the two gentlemen who arrives to the boardinghouse. *That* in (49) relates the current discourse with the preceding discourse. Lulu applauds the way Goldberg speaks about the party and the way he describes Meg's devotion, and for his heartfelt congratulation to Stanley on his birthday. *Well* in (50) marks the starting of a new topic in a conversation. Estragon, does not know where he left his boots the

night before. Vladimir tells him that his boots are there at the very spot he left them yesterday, but Estragon replies that these are not his. He even does not know the colour stating “*these are black, mine were brown,*” and when he is asked by Vladimir if he is sure his boots were black, he starts another discourse saying mine were a kind of grey.

In (51) Stanley is having a sharp conversation with Goldberg and McCann. They bother him. Stanley gets annoyed, nervously tells the men that he is the master of this house and you cannot judge or decide anything. The discourse marker *anyway* functions as a continuation marker to mark a result from the preceding speech, making boundaries to force the two men leave the house “*without any more fuss.*” Lulu in (52) offers Stanley a walk out and have a fresh air saying “*it’s lovely out.*” After a while, Stanley changes his mind and decides to stay home. The discourse marker *so* introduces a result or decision which looks back to the preceding discourse, Stanley’s rejection to go out. *Besides* in (53) is employed to introduce information which supports what has been mentioned before, to give an advice in this sentence. McCann feels this is not the right house. Settling in an armchair, Goldberg gives him an advice to relief his nerve.

## 5. Social Deixis

Social deixis appears (494, 5.18%), (282) in *TBP* and (212) in *WFG*. According to Huang (2007: 163), social deixis is concerned with the codification of the social status of the speaker, the hearer and/or a third person. This type of deixis refers to the level of relationship between people rather than to information. A number of the most significant examples are:

(54) **Boy:** *I mind the goats, Sir.* (*WFG*, Act I, p. 47)

(55) **Meg:** *And I’ll invite Lulu this afternoon.* (*TBP*, Act I, p. 22)

(56) **Pozzo:** *Thank you, dear fellow.* (*WFG*, Act I, p. 32)

(57) **Pozzo:** *Gentlemen, you’ve been... civil to me.* (*WFG*, Act I, p. 35)

(58) **Vladimir:** *You have a message from Mr. Godot?* (*WFG*, Act II, p. 87)

(59) **Vladimir:** *Mr. Pozzo! Come back! We won’t hurt you!* (*WFG*, Act II, p. 79)

(60) **Goldberg:** *Your wife makes a nice cup of tea, Mr. Boles, you know that?* (*TBP*, Act III, p. 56)

(61) **Goldberg:** *Not on the lady, on the gentleman.* (*TBP*, Act I, p. 42)

(62) **Goldberg:** *Madam, you will look like a tulip.* (*TBP*, Act I, p. 22)

(63) **McCann:** *You know, sir, you’re a bit depressed for a man on his birthday.* (*TBP*, Act II, p. 29)

The boy in (54) addresses Vladimir as *sir*. Pozzo in (57) calls Vladimir and Estragon as *gentlemen*. *Mr. Godot* in (58) and *Mr. Pozzo* in (59) are used as forms of address by Vladimir to refer to Godot and Pozzo, respectively. In *The Birthday Party*, **Goldberg** in (60) addresses Petey as *Mr. Boles*. In (61) Goldberg also addresses the attendants of the party as *ladies* (Meg and Lulu) and *gentlemen* (Stanley and McCann). *Madam* in (62) marks Meg. *Sir* in (63) is used by McCann to address Stanley.

## A Comparative Analysis of the Two Plays

The linguistic phenomenon of deixis is seen as a key feature the authors employ to make the meaning of the utterances the characters produce clear. Table (1) presents the occurrences and percentages of each type of deixis in both plays:

**Table (1): Occurrences and Percentages of Deixis in *WFG* and *TBP***

S/N	Types of Deixis	WFG	TBP	Total	Percentage
1	Person deixis	2409	2403	4812	50.48%
2	Time deixis	1398	1703	3101	32.53%
3	Place deixis	281	319	600	6.29%
4	Discourse deixis	290	235	525	5.50%
5	Social deixis	212	282	494	5.18%
<b>Total</b>		<b>4590</b>	<b>4942</b>	<b>9532</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to this table, both plays have a considerable number of deictic expressions, (**4942**) for *TBP* and (**4590**) for *WFG*. The use of such a great number of deictic expressions is merely due to the genre followed in writing the plays, a drama in this case, and to the style of the school of absurdism.

It has been noticed that person deixis is the most type used in both plays. It recurs (**2409**) in *WFG* and (**2403**) in *TBP*, respectively. In the two plays, the category of first person pronouns appear with the highest frequency and occupies the highest percentage (**1835, 38.13%**). The category of third person pronouns appears second with (**1575, 32.73%**) followed by the category of second person pronouns which frequents (**1286, 26.72%**) times. The least category used is that of vocatives which recurs only (**115, 2.41%**) times in the two plays under analysis. The occurrences and percentages of the categories of person deixis are illustrated in the following table:

**Table (2): Occurrences and Percentages of Person Deixis in *WFG* and *TBP***

S/N	Types of Deixis	WFG	TBP	Total	Percentage
1	1 <sup>st</sup> Person Pronouns	994	841	1835	38.13%
2	3 <sup>rd</sup> Person Pronouns	853	722	1575	32.73%
3	2 <sup>nd</sup> Person Pronouns	530	756	1286	26.72%
4	Vocatives	32	84	116	2.41%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2409</b>	<b>2403</b>	<b>4812</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to this table, there are (4812) person deictic expressions in the two plays. The main reason behind using this number to meet the core point of absurdism, taking in nonsense utterances. Finding this great number is also due to the utterances produced by the characters. They use a lot of pronouns and address many utterances to their conversation partners.

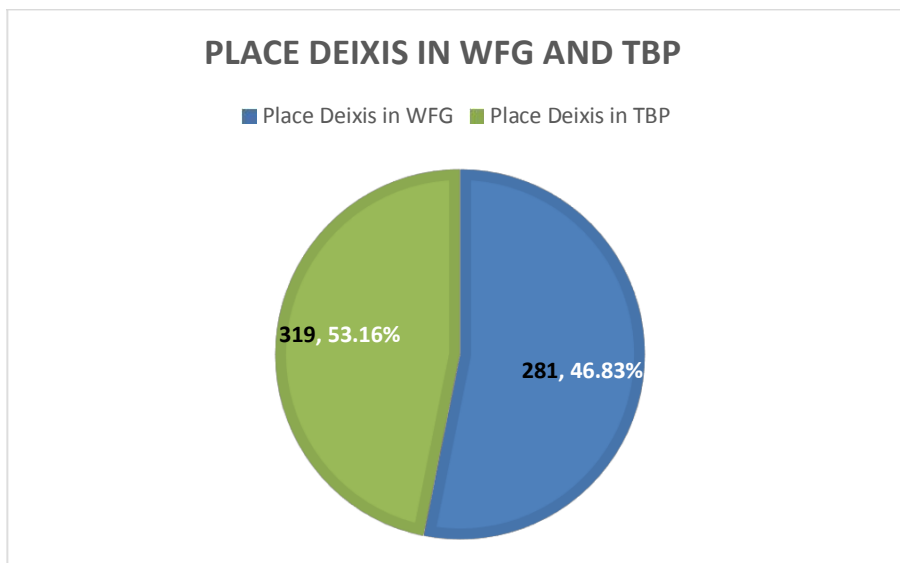
Time deixis appears (3101) times in both plays. It mainly operates through the use of tense category which appears (2863) times, and adverbs of time which recurs (238) times only. The following table shows the occurrences and percentages of the categories of time deixis:

**Table (3): Occurrences and Percentages of Time Deixis in *WFG* and *TBP***

S/N	Types of Deixis	WFG	TBP	Total	Percentage
1	Tense	1276	1587	2863	95.11%
2	Adverbs of time	122	116	238	7.90%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1398</b>	<b>1703</b>	<b>3101</b>	<b>100%</b>

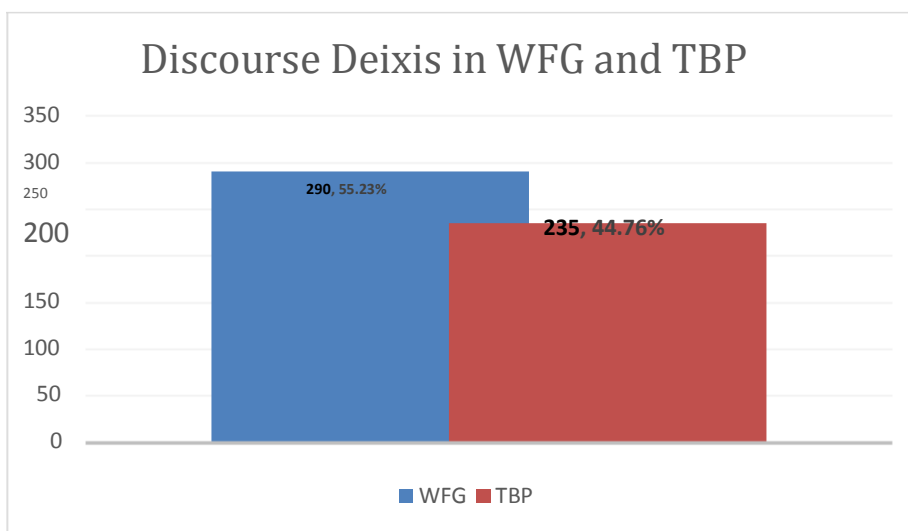
As table (3) reveals, the most category used is that of **tense**. This is mainly because the shift in tense procedure. The characters in both plays are seen to talk about their past doings, their present life as well as their near future moments. **Tense deixis** appears more in *TBP* (1587) than in *WFG* (1276). This is because of the length of *TBP* which consists of three acts and to the short fragmentary conversations uttered in comparison to *WFG's* two acts which are featured of having longer utterances. Adverbs of time appears (122) times in *WFG* and (116) times in *TBP*. The use of this small number is because of the few periods of time mentioned in both plays.

There are (281) spatial deictic expressions in *WGF* and (319) in *TBP*. This increase in number is due to the characters' speech as they are seen to talk about the places they went to and sometimes the doings that they did there. Place deixis, in both plays, operate by using verbs of motion, place adverbials, demonstratives and particles. The following figure illustrates the number of occurrences and percentages of **place deixis** in both plays:



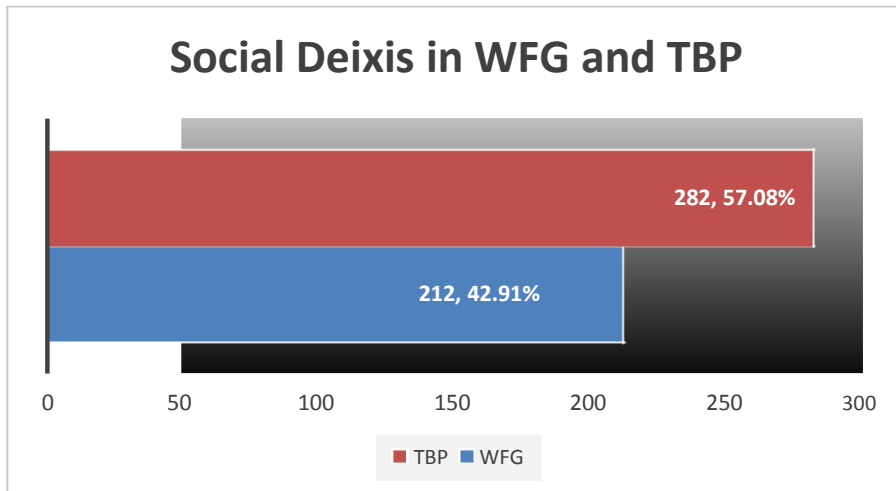
**Figure (1): Occurrences and Percentages of Place Deixis in *WFG* and *TBP***

Concerning discourse deixis, they appear more in *WFG* (290) times than in *TBP* (235) times. The characters in *WFG*, most of the time, refer to previous, simultaneous and next speeches by the use of the demonstratives *this* and *that*. Moreover, they often contradict themselves by interrupting their own utterances as well as the utterances their partners produce through the use certain linguistic tools such as *but* and certain discourse markers to show results of previous utterances like *then*. Figure (2) next presents the occurrences and percentages of discourse deictic expressions in both plays:



**Figure (2): Occurrences and Percentages of Discourse Deixis in *WFG* and *TBP***

The least type of deixis appeared in the texts under analysis is **social deixis**. It appears (282) times in *TBP* and (212) times in *WFG*. The following figure illustrates the occurrences and percentages of social deictic expressions in both plays:



**Figure (3): Occurrences and Percentages of Social Deixis in WFG and TBP**

According to the above figure, social deixis appears more in *TBP* than in *WFG*. This is primarily because *TBP* involves more characters. Furthermore, the characters address each other by using honorifics and titles as well as terms of endearment more than the characters of *WFG* use.

To conclude, it has been observed that deictic expressions play a vital role in the language of drama by allowing dramatic context to be manifested as an actual and dynamic world. The use of deixis in both *WFG* and *TBP* is fundamentally meant to convey the meaninglessness of language, collapse of common, and the absurdity of life as Beckett and Pinter want to convey. Deixis raises as an important inquiry; whether other plays of absurd theatre have such huge number of deixis in their plays to name it as one of the prominent features of *AT* or not? This question needs more research and other comparative studies to reach a conclusion.

### Conclusions

The results of the analysis of the plays *WFG* and *TBP* lead to certain conclusions. It has been found that there are (9350) deictic expressions, (4942) in *TBP* and (4590) in *WFG*. It has been noticed that **person deixis** is the most type used in both plays. It recurs (2409) in *WFG* and (2403) in *TBP*, respectively. Finding this great number is also due to the utterances produced by the characters. Moreover, these deictic expressions are reflected by the use of person pronouns especially first person. This is ascribed to the fact that most of the events of the two plays are narrated in first person narrator.

In the two plays, **time deixis** appears (3101) times in both plays. It mainly operates through the use of tense category and adverbs of time. This is because of the length of *TBP* which consists of three acts and to the short fragmentary conversations uttered in comparison to *WFG* two acts which are featured of having longer utterances. In other words, most of the uses of **time deixis** are reflected through tense category simply because the characters' speeches always revolve around their current and past life as well as future moments.



There are (281) **place / spatial deictic expressions** in *WFG* and (319) in *TBP*. It is fewer than the former two types of deixis in the sense that it mostly operates through the use of motion verbs and place adverbials. This signifies the continuous movement the characters do to complete their actions. Also, this low number of **place deixis** as compared to the previous types. This is because of character's speech as they are seen to talk about the places they went to and sometimes the doings that they did there. **Place deixis**, in both plays, are noticed to operate by using verbs of motion, place adverbials, demonstratives and particles. This increase in number is because of characters' speech as they are seen to talk about the places they went to and sometimes the doings that they did there.

Concerning **discourse deixis**, they appear more in *WFG* (290) times than in *TBP* (235) times. The characters in *WFG*, most of the time, refer to previous, simultaneous and next speeches by the use of the demonstratives *this* and *that*. Moreover, they often contradict themselves by interrupting their own utterances as well as the utterances their partners produce through the use certain linguistic tools such as *but* and certain discourse markers to show results of previous utterances like *then*.

The least type of deixis appeared in the texts under analysis is **social deixis**. It appears (282) times in *TBP* and (212) times in *WFG*. **Social deixis** appears more in *TBP* than in *WFG*. This is primarily because *TBP* involves more characters. Furthermore, the characters address each other by using honorifics and titles as well as terms of endearment more than the characters of *WFG* use. To conclude, it has been noticed that deictic expressions play a vital role in the language of drama by allowing dramatic context to be manifested as an actual and dynamic world. The use of deixis in both *WFG* and *TBP* is fundamentally meant to convey the meaninglessness of language, collapse of common, and the absurdity of life as Beckett and Pinter want to convey. The occurrences of the five types of deixis in both plays.

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