
AN ANALYSIS OF DEIXIS IN CAMEROON SOCIAL MEDIA**SAWALDA MAINA DIEUDONNE**

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ABSTRACT

This contribution focuses on the study of deictic expressions in Cameroon Social Media. It aims to find out the various types of deixis guided by Levinson's (1983) theory of deixis composed of five types namely personal, temporal, spatial, social and discourse deixis. The study purposively uses a total of 464 francophone Cameroonian chats, 313 from WhatssAp, 118 from Facebook and 33 from. The data Messenger was collected through screenshots. To analyse the data obtained, the researcher applied a mixed method research .The findings show that the five types of deixis abound in all the selected social networks platforms. Besides, it is found that person deixis is predominant in the various posts and the that the second person 'you' represents the highest rate of deixis used by Cameroonians in WHAP, FBK and MSG platforms with an overall total of 104 (25.24%), 52 (42.98%) and 14 (48.28%) occurrences respectively. On the other hand, time or temporal deixis follows person deixis, being manifest through deictic words. Nonetheless, place or spatial deixis, attained via adverbs and demonstrative pronouns were also used so as to locate both writer and addressee in space. Finally, discourse deixis falls upon this, these and that, whereas, social deixis involves relational social deixis.

Keywords: Social Media, Meta, Deixis, Deictic Resources, Francophone Cameroonians.

1. INTRODUCTION

The electronic mediated communication (henceforth EMEC) has become nowadays the most powerful linguistic means. This has led to a field of linguistic investigation known as "Internet linguistics" (see Crystal 2005, 2006; Herring 2001, 2012; Baron 2003) cited in Tabe (2018). Regarding e-discourse, Crystal (2006) remarks that technology offers opportunities for linguistic research: Netspeak is a relatively new prospect for scholarly study. Crystal summarises that "once in a lifetime" chance is provided by the emerging means of communication. An innovative scholarly research of *"Internet Linguistics"* contains a comparative research of the variations of e-discourse and the expansion of language revolution inside these means of communication. Graddol (1997) corroborates the above standpoint that the innovative electronic communications increases the rise of new variety of language.

In this respect, we can undoubtedly affirm that the trend of these developments is likely to grow at a considerable pace in the years ahead, following Yus (2011) who sees cybermedia in constant evolution and new qualities constantly added, altering the position of the medium. Thus, more and more people are joining internet, triggering the rise of the number of Facebook users, and the same atmosphere is prevalent on WhatsApp and Messenger. Hence, EMEC has significantly impacted language through its users, metamorphosing to its innovations and usage via all the dimensions of language levels among which is deixis. It is revealed so far that the innovations in EMEC relate to English

spelling (Tabe & Zaazra, 2021), Netspeak and neologisms (Agwetang & Florine, 2021), lexical expression (Zaazra, 2022).

Levinson (1983, p.54) defines deixis as the structure in language with the aim to indicate person, place, time, social distinctions and roles in discourse (Levinson 1983, P. 54). Levinson's opinion relates that deixis focuses in analysing word, phrase or utterance which directly relates to a person, time, place, social or discourse. It is therefore concerned with the encoding of many different aspects of the circumstances surrounding the utterance and the relationship between the structure of language and context in which they are being used. While Crystal (2011) sees it as " a term used in linguistic theory to subsume those features of language which refer directly to the personal, temporal or locational characteristics of the situation within which an utterance takes place , whose meaning is thus relative to that situation". To share and emphasise Levinson's viewpoint, Hamdaoui (2015) and Gjergji (2015) pinpoint the use of deixis as the way to trace entities to temporal, spatial, social, and discourse context, to refer or point as the case of *I, you, there, now, tomorrow* or modifiers that accompany referring expressions such as *that* and *this*; it is pointing via language Yule (1996, P.9).

The interpretation of deictic expressions is context dependent of the occurrences (Fareed & Mariam, 2021) revealing connection between context and the speaker's communicative intention. Following Hamdaoui (2015), the speaker and the audiences should share the same context to be able to interpret the deictic expressions. Some authors investigate reference meaning (Sinaga & Marpaun, 2020); Gelabert, 2004) to determine the extra-linguistic and linguistic forms of deixis. Many researchers in the domain of Pragmatics have looked at deixis studies, but the corpus and the informing sources were not the same and those done in Cameroon are rare. This study therefore aims at analysing the linguistic deixis which are collected on Cameroon social Media platforms.

2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research is guided by Levinson's (1983) theory of deixis. As far as deixis is concerned, it linguistic phenomenon whether to be classified in the field of semantics or pragmatics triggers wide discussion. Nonetheless, Levinson (1983) description of deixis as a fundamental part of natural language and so deeply grammaticalised, shows that it could be seen as an essential part of semantics in one hand. On the other hand, it is directly linked to the relation between structures of language and the contexts in which they are being used, as such falling in the backdrop of pragmatics. Therefore, this research uses the domain of pragmatics to analyse data.

Levinson (1983) puts forward two comprehensive approaches related to the study of deixis, that is, the philosophical approach and the descriptive approach. While the philosophical approach tells how truth conditional semantics relates to natural language expressions such as deixis, the descriptive pragmatic approach describes how deixis is where the categories of person, time and space appear. These three categories are generally accepted by most linguists, but some add additional categories to their theories, e.g. discourse deixis or social deixis (see for example Fillmore, 1975; Lyons, 1968). Person deixis is expressed through pronouns and concerns the encoding of roles of participants in a speech event. Space or place deixis on their part is expressed through demonstratives or adverbials and concerns the encoding of locations in relation to the location of the participants in a speech event. Time deixis treats the notion of temporal points and spans in relation to the time at which an utterance was communicated (Levinson, 1983, p. 62).

Within the use of deictic expressions, a further distinction can be drawn between gestural and symbolic use. Gestural use is the fundamental one, keeping in mind Lyons description of the canonical situation of utterance, where the deictic expressions can be interpreted only when accompanied by some kind of physical demonstration. In contrast, interpretation of the symbolic use simply demands knowledge about the spatio-temporal parameters of the situation of the utterance (Lyons, 1977, p. 172).

3. RELATED STUDIES

Some researchers have discovered various linguistic innovations in SM in Cameroon. They are related to linguistic features (Tabe, 2012), orality and literacy (Tabe, 2008, pp.194-209), identity construction (Anchimbe, 2010), e-sentence (Tabe, 2013a). Tabe (2016, pp.131-163) addresses the forms of linguistic humour in Cameroon social media and found indicators of humour like flouting of Gricean maxims, spelling variations and sound devices humour. In addition, (Tabe, 2017, pp.59-88) tackles multilingualism in Cameroon social media. The aim of the study was to find out the language used by social media platforms and the value of English and French after 50 years of multilingualism. The findings reveal the use of English, French, Kamtok or Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE), Fran-Anglais, and mixture of languages on these media platforms. Furthermore, Tabe (2013b, pp.79-99) addresses the impact of technologies in language teaching and learning. In another study, Tabe (2018) examined how Cameroonians form words in social media (SM) contexts. The aim is to explore the kind of morphological processes they adopt and the extent to which these word formation processes occur on e-mail, Facebook, and Yahoo Messenger. After analyzing 230 informal e-mails and chats, the results revealed that Cameroonians espouse and alter some of the English word formation mechanisms to suit the context of SM. These studies point to the fact that researchers are interested in language use on social media in Cameroon, but works on deixis are yet to be undertaken.

Also, Ngouo (2020) critically analysed Facebook contradictory discourses and conversations on the future of the English-speaking regions of Cameroon Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a methodological and theoretical approach. The findings of the study shows that there are two opposing views on Facebook: the separatists' and the pro-unionists' positions. Similarly, Fombo (2021) analysed Cameroonian activists hate posts on Facebook related to the Anglophone crisis from a speech act perspective. Data for this study comprises of 88 hate speeches collected from activists Facebook profiles. Results from the analysis reveal four types of speech acts used by activists which include: declarative, commissives, directives and assertives. Moreover, James and Sawalda (2021) investigate "hate speech" from a Pragma-stylistic perspective on Twitter and Facebook. The study purposively uses a sample of (155) Tweets and (308) Facebook posts from the 3rd of December 2017 to the end of February 2020 as data for the study. The findings indicate that the majority of hate speech by Cameroonian activists centered on the incitement of violence, ethnic group criticism, accusation, threat, and challenge, the laying of more emphasis on ethnic group criticism and offence.

Unlike the above, research that deal with deixis have been conducted out of Cameroon. Overall, research on deixis has demonstrated that the most frequent types of deixis used by interlocutors is person deixis (Faizah, 2009; Yulfi, 2017; Suhair, 2019; Kholifatul, Surya & Setya, 2019). Anderson and Keenan (1985) provide a typological context for deictics in all languages. While languages vary in the number of deictic expressions available, all languages do have a way of encoding 'I' and 'you', as well as 'here' and 'there'. Lambrecht (1994, p.38)

states, “Deictic expressions allow a speaker to directly designate elements of the text external world by ‘pointing’ to them.” With these deictic terms, the speaker provides a point of orientation from which an addressee can interpret and relate the given expression.

Besides, research on a variety of languages have provided evidence of deictic expressions marking certain participants as more prominent (Barr, 1979; Herring, 1994 & Lothers, 1996). Additionally, deictic may be used to differentiate between information that is new or more accessible, and relate to how far back within a text a referent was used, all of which relate to givenness (Givón, 1983; Kirsner, 1979; Gundel, Hedberg, Zacharski, 1993 & Herring, 1994). While Bonnie (1989) investigates demonstrative pronouns used as deictic to refer to the interpretation of one or more clauses and argue that a restricted set of discourse segments yield what such demonstrative pronouns can point to and a restricted set of what Nunberg (1979) calls ‘referring functions’ yield what they can refer to by virtue of that pointing.

Moreover, Eragbe and Yakubu (2015) identify the use of deictic expressions in Boko Haram insurgency in the Far-North Cameroon in order to explore the incidences and functions of deictic expressions in the reports by the media. The results of the investigation show that media reporters use person, time or temporal and place or spatial deixis to locate the participants in discourse. The study by Hassanah (2006) focuses on deictic expressions and identified five kinds of deixis utilised in the Gladiator movie manuscript, namely personal, place, time, discourse and social deixis. It was noted that the forms of deixis present in the Gladiator movie manuscript were distinguished based on their functions in the sentences. Additionally, Faricha (2007) examines deixis in the National Section of *The Jakarta Post*. The findings reveal that deixis in the National Section of *The Jakarta Post* consists of person, time, place, discourse and social deixis. Another work by Setyawati (2013) shows that deixis in the novel, *Emma*, by Jane Austen is composed of four types namely person, spatial, temporal and discourse deixis.

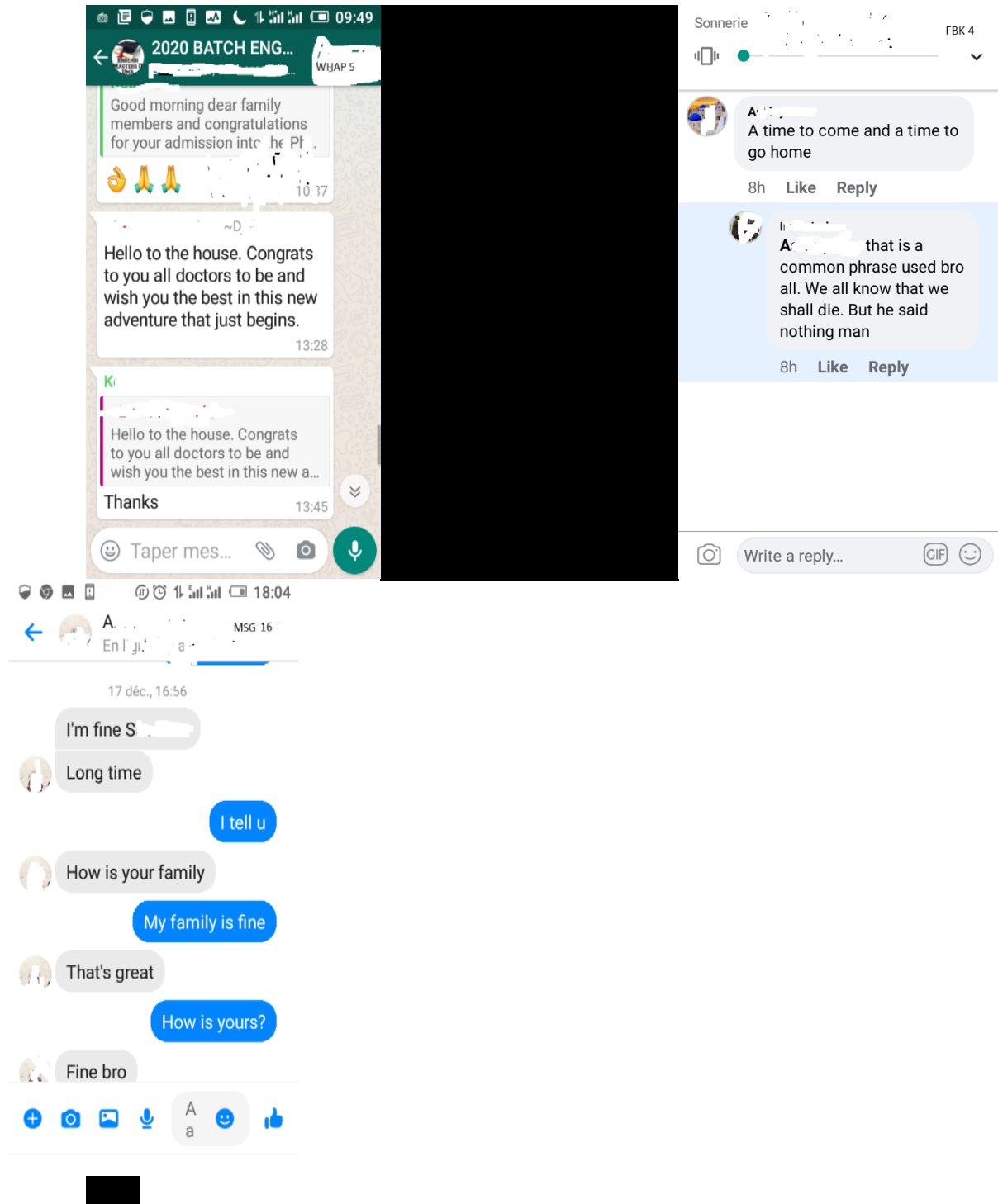
Even though various researchers have conducted studies on deictic expressions, the corpus and the informing sources were not the same and those done if they exist on Social Media are not numerous. Reading through the previous related studies, the researcher found that most studies focused mainly on analysing deixis in novels, poems and magazine, as well as reports. Inasmuch the informing source of the previous studies are not related to SM and there is no record on deixis analysis in Cameroon, the focus of this research endeavor is therefore to analyse deixis on Cameroon Social Media.

4. DATA AND METHOD

Data for this research was gathered through screenshots based on the francophone Cameroonian speakers of English content messages from Messenger, WhatsApp and Meta. All the content messages on these social media platforms were elicited around 2020-2022. Though informal, messages from Meta, WhatsApp and Messenger provide natural occurring data which may display aspects of deixis. The FBK and WHAP data are selected from group chats among colleagues on one hand, and among friends on the other hand. It also includes individuals’ chats and chats between the researcher and colleagues on MSG. A total of 464 screenshots constitute the primary data in this study. At the level of the analysis phase, the researcher keenly observed the structured data which reflect the concepts of deixis and coded them. Those on WhatsApp range from WHAP01 to WHAP 313, those on Facebook from FBK01 to FBK118, and the ones on Messenger from MSG01 to MSG 33. The corpus came from 243 participants among which

were 152 males and 91 females. It should be noted that all names on the chats have been cleared off for confidentiality. Some samples of screenshots collected are presented below:

Fig 1: Sample of data



More screenshots can be found in the appendix.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Person, time, place, discourse and social deictic expressions were found in Cameroonian WhatsApp, Facebook and Messenger platforms. These will be presented and discussed in turn.

5.1 Person deixis

Following Levinson (1983, p.62), person deixis refers to the role of participants within an utterance. Levinson's view seeks to find out respectively the speaker, the hearer, the target of the utterance, the recipient of the utterance, and then the source of the utterance. Between speaker and source of utterance are the hearer (recipient) and the addressee (target). Person deixis are observed in Cameroon social media. Their presence are shown through different types, category and frequencies of employment represented in table 1 below:

Table 1: General distribution of person deixis in Cameroon social media

No	Type	Category	Frequency			Total
			WhatsApp	Facebook	Messenger	
1	1st person	I	98 (23.79%)	19 (15.70%)	4 (13.79%)	121
		We	28 (6.80%)	9 (7.44%)	3 (10.35%)	40
		Our	26 (6.31%)	8 (6.61%)	2 (6.89%)	36
		My	21(5.09%)	4 (3.30%)	0 (0%)	25
		Me	13 (3.16%)	3 (2.48%)	0 (0%)	16
		Us	12 (2.91%)	1 (0.83%)	0 (0%)	13
2	2nd person	You	104 (25.24%)	52 (42.98%)	14 (48.28%)	170
		Your	12(2.91%)	7 (5.79%)	3 (10.35%)	22
3	3rd person	It	38 (9.22%)	11(9.09%)	2 (6.89%)	51
		They	17 (4.12%)	4 (3.30%)	1 (3.45%)	22
		Him	13 (3.16%)	2 (1.65%)	0 (0%)	15
		He	10 (2.43%)	1 (0.83%)	0 (0%)	11
		Them	10 (2.43%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10
		She	5 (1.21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5
		His	2 (0.49%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2

	Their	2 (0.49%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2
	Her	1(0.24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Total		412	121	29	562

Table 1 shows the types of person deixis that were found in the Cameroon social media under study counting 412 occurrences on WHAP, 121 occurrences on FBK and 29 occurrences on MSG. This gives a total of 562. The statistics show that the second person ‘you’ represents the highest rate of deixis used by Cameroonians in WHAP, FBK and MSG platforms with an overall total corresponding to 170, thus 104 (25.24%), 52 (42.98%) and 14 (48.28%) occurrences in WhatsApp, Facebook and Messenger respectively. The pronoun ‘I’ is also given a preferred attention as it occupies the second position with respectively 23.79%, 15.70% and 13.79%, given a total of 121 occurrences. The deixis ‘it’ takes the third position in frequency with 51 occurrences, that is, 38 (9.22%), 11(9.09%) and 2 (6.89%) respectively on WHAP, FBK and MSG. The pronoun ‘we’ is also frequently used with an overall rate of 40, respectively 28 (6.80%) on WHAP, 9 (7.44%) on FBK and 3 (10.35%) on MSG. ‘Our’ is the fifth in usage in WHAP, FBK and MSG with 36 occurrences, that is, 26 (6.31%), 8 (6.61%) and 2(6.89%) respectively. It is followed by “my” at the sixth position accordingly with 21 (5.09%) on WHAP, 4 (3.30%) on FBK, but inexistent on MSG, counting globally 25 occurrences. Other pronouns include respectively ‘they’ with 22 occurrences, 4.12% on WHAP, 3.30% on FBK and 3.45% on MSG; ‘your’ also appears with a rate of 2.91% on WHAP, 5.79% on FBK and 10.35% on MSG, giving 22 occurrences; ‘me’ with 16 occurrences, that is, 3 (2.48%) on WHAP, 3 (2.48%) on FBK but inexistent on MSG; ‘him’ with 15 occurrences, 13 (3.16%) on WHAP, 2 (1.65%) on FBK but absent on MSG, the total number of occurrences here is 15. Also, ‘us’ represents 13 occurrences with 2.91% on WHAP, 0.83% on FBK but inexistent on MSG. ‘Them’ is only used on WHAP with trends of 10 (2.43%). The least used deixis are ‘his’ 2 (0.49%), ‘their’ 2 (0.49%) and ‘her’ 1 (0.24%) only utilized on WHAP. Let’s consider the excerpts below for the uses and value of person deixis found in the data.

- (1) a- *I wish you* a very quick recovery brother. Where are *you* now? (WHAP 06-2020- male)
 - b- Thanks *I* am in Maroua bro (WHAP 06-2020- male)
- (2) *I* suggest that *you* get in touch with *her* mother and express *our* sympathy to the family... if *she* can accept this simple gesture from *us*. (WHAP 28-2021- male)
- (3) *I* propose that *we* collect something and assist *him*. (WHAP 91-2021- male)
- (4) *He* just as crazy as *his* father. (WHAP 311-2022- male)
- (5) *I* can see *you* want to spoil *my* sabbat ... not *me* (FBK 4-2021- female)
- (6) That is it *my* bro. *They* affirmed *their* leadership in Africa (FBK 30- 2022- male)

Levinson (1983, p.69) establishes that the pronominal systems work to indicate for first person: speaker inclusion (+S) as for ‘I’ in (1) a and b, ‘my’ and ‘me’ in (5) second person: addressee inclusion (+A) as for ‘you’ in ((1) a, ‘our’ and ‘us’ in (2), ‘we’ in (3); and third person: speaker and addressee exclusion (-S, A) as for ‘her’ and ‘she’ in (2), ‘him’ in (3), ‘he’ and ‘his’ in (4), ‘they’ and ‘their’ in (6). From the analysis, the abundant uses of ‘you’ at the first position and then ‘I’ shows clearly that the speaker ‘I’ inclusion is less frequent than the

hearer 'you' inclusion. So an emphasis is put on the hearer. It is worth noticing that the role interplayed among the interactants are interchangeable, that is, the hearer can become the speaker and vice versa as the discussion continues.

5.2 Time deixis

According to Levinson (1983, p.62), time deixis is a reference to the time, most often towards the adverbs of time during the conversation. In the same vein, Renkema (2004, P.123) argues that time deixis is a reference to time relative to a temporal reference point and it is typically the moment of utterance. Time deixis is also prevalent in Cameroon social media as table 2 below shows.

Table 2: General distribution of time deixis

Type	Category	Frequency			Total
		WHAP	FBK	MSG	
Adverb of time	Tomorrow	8 (38.09%)	0	0	8
	Today	3 (14.29%)	0	0	3
	Now	3 (14.29%)	3 (100%)	0	6
	Tonight	2 (9.53%)	0	0	2
	This week	1 (4.76%)	0	0	1
	On Saturday	1 (4.76%)	0	0	1
	By Thursday	1 (4.76%)	0	0	1
	Next week	1 (4.76%)	0	0	1
	On Friday	1 (4.76%)	0	0	1
Total		21	3	0	24

Facts gleaned from table 2 reveals that time deixis is mostly used on WHAP. Among the overall total of 24 time deictic expressions that ensue from Cameroonian social media platforms, only 'now' appears thrice both on WHAP and FBK and others are prevalent only

on WHAP. ‘Tomorrow’ is highly employed corresponding to 38.09% of occurrences. ‘Now’ and ‘today’ follow with 3 (14.29%) and ends with ‘this week’, ‘on Saturday’, ‘by Thursday’, ‘next week’ and ‘on Friday’ which share equal occurrences with 1(4.76%). The following constitutes some selected samples of time deixis:

- (7) I am preparing the exam which will start *tomorrow* and finish *on Friday* (WHAP 120-2021- male)
- (8) A- Ok, but very busy *this week* maybe *next week* (WHAP 140-2022- male)
B- I wish to submit it *by Thursday* (WHAP 140-2022- male)
- (9) They will probably join us *tonight* (WHAP 154-2021- male)
- (10) Here is the topic for *today* (WHAP 169-2021-male)
- (11) Does a dwarf man drink alcohol *now* (FBK 116-2021-male)
- (12) ... we will start *tomorrow* after that with PRS *on Saturday* (WHAP 123-2021-male)

Levinson (1983) and Renkema (2004) definitions confirm the use of time deixis in the above examples. The different deixis in these illustrations include: ‘tomorrow’ and ‘Friday’ in example (7), ‘this week’ and ‘next week’ in (8) A, by Thursday in (8)B, ‘tonight’ in (9), ‘today’ in (10), ‘now’ in (11) and ‘on Saturday’ in (12).

5.3 Place Deixis

To Levinson (1983), place deixis is also described as spatial deixis, where the relative location of people and things is being indicated. The number of place deixis recorded in the data are contained in the following table 3:

Table 3: General distribution of place deixis

Type	Category	Frequency			Total
		WHAP	FBK	MSG	
Proximal	Here	8 (57.15%)	4 (57.14%)	1(100%)	13
Distal	There	6 (42.85%)	3 (42.86%)	0	9
Total		14	7	1	22

It is indicated in the above table 3 that there are two categories of place deixis found in Cameroon SM. “Here” which is the most prominent on those three platforms as it ranges from 8 (57.15%) on WHAP, to 4 (57.14%) on FBK and 1 (100%) on MSG with a total of 13 occurrences; and “there” with 9 occurrences, 6 (42.85%) on WHAP, 3 (42.86%) on FBK and inexistent on MSG respectively. The following instances are informative in this respect:

- (13) You know that I am in the bush. No network *here* unless I am in town (WHAP 86-2021-male)
- (14) Last time one was shared *here* (WHAP 214-2022-female)
- (15) She seems interesting *here* but we need money right now in our pockets... (WHAP 307-2022-female)
- (16) The real problem of the country because even in certain ministries *here* in Yaounde, we often note the same thing (FBK 22-2020-male)
- (17) I saw the comment on it, *here* it is (FBK 24-2020-male)

- (18) I don't have WhatsApp for now but you can text me *here* (MSG 23-2021-female)
 (19) Hope my name is *there* (WHAP 54-2020-male)
 (20) *There* is no way anyone can be against us if we bond together (WHAP 284-2022-male)
 (21) *There* is but one, that is forcing people to do things or change their behaviour (FBK 12-2020-male)
 (22) *There* are some "entrée en CM2" holders who think that they can lead anyhow (FBK 78-2020-male)

Bringing the presence of place deixis found in the corpus to the above definition by Levinson, the adverbs of place 'here' means close to the speaker's location (proximal) as in (13) "You know that I am in the bush. No network here unless I am in town" (WHAP 86-2021-male) to (18) "I don't have WhatsApp for now but you can text me here" (MSG 23-2021-female), and 'there' means away from the speaker's location (distal) as in (19) "Hope my name is there" (WHAP 54-2020-male) to (22) "There are some "entrée en CM2" holders who think that they can lead anyhow" (FBK 78-2020-male).

5.4 Discourse Deixis

A definition by Levinson (1983) stipulates that discourse deixis is related to the use of deictic expressions referring to some portion of discourse in an utterance that are still speaking on the same discourse. Table 4 below comprises the discourse deixis found in the data collected.

Table 4: General distribution of discourse deixis

Type	Category	Frequency			Total
		WHAP	FBK	MSG	
Proximal Demonstrative pronouns	This	29 (50%)	15 (60%)	3(75%)	47
	That	25(43.10%)	8 (32%)	1(25%)	34
Distal Demonstrative pronouns	Those	3 (5.17 %)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	5
	These	1 (1.73%)	0 (0)%	0 (0%)	1
Total		58	25	4	87

As seen in table 4, the discourse deixis counts 87 number of use on the three network sites. It is also clear that the statistics from the table above display the proximal demonstratives pronouns "this" is rated at 29 (50%) on WHAP, 15 (60%) on FBK and 3 (75%) on MSG with a total of 47 occurrences; and "that" counts 25 (43.10%) on WHAP, 8 (32%) on FBK and 1 (25%) on MSG ranked at 34 number of use as the most frequently used discourse deictic expression. The distal demonstrative "those" and "these" are also used but perceived to be low for "those" presents 3 (5.17%) on WHAP, 2 (8%) on FBK, so 5 occurrences and inexistent on MSG; and "these" is 1 (1.73%) on WHAP and inexistent on FBK and MSG. The sample of discourse deixis in Cameroon SM include:

- (23) Very glad to see *this* batchmate quite healthy (WHAP 12-2021-male)

- (24) mindful of our strong link in *this* family and our sense of solidarity... (WHAP 41-2021-male)
- (25) *This* is a process, it may be all through a year (WHAP 121-2022-male)
- (26) Where are my female colleagues of *this* house? (WHAP 145-2022-male)
- (27) Again, what is *that* my goodness (WHAP 11-2021-male)
- (28) *that* point of adding the trainees to this group was actually accepted (WHAP 200-2022-female)
- (29) *that* is great, may the almighty God set everything positive for you (MSG 01-2021-male)
- (31) *that* is exactly what one should do (FBK26-2021-male)
- (32) *that* is definitely enriching (FBK 120-2021-male)
- (33) Congrats to *those* who the names are on the list (WHAP 2-2020-female)
- (34) How have *those* who are PhD holders behaved differently? (FBK 78-2020-male)
- (35) The interests generated by *these* funds no one knows where it goes (WHAP 291-2022-male)

Following Levinson (1983) theory, it is crystal clear that in a discourse, ‘this’ and ‘these’ are used to point things or people near us and which are termed proximal and have according to Halliday and Hassan (1976) anaphoric (preceding text) or cataphoric (following text) referencing depending on the context in which the speech event is taking place as in (23) “very glad to see this batchmate quite healthy” (WHAP 12-2021-male) to (26) “Where are my female colleagues of this house?” (WHAP 145-2022-male) and (35) “The interests generated by these funds no one knows where it goes” (WHAP 291-2022-male). ‘That’ and ‘those’ in a text show that people or things pointed at are in a distance from the speaker’s location at the moment where the speech event is going on. They have anaphoric value in a text. The examples (27) “Again, what is that my goodness” (WHAP 11-2021-male) to (34) “How have those who are PhD holders behaved differently?” (FBK 78-2020-male) are informative in this respect.

2.5 Social Deixis

Levinson (1983) states that “social deixis should set the limits to those aspects of language structure that encode the social identities of participants, or the social relationship between them, or between one of them and persons and entities referred to”. Levinson’s further development shows that social deixis relies on the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and hearer in such a way that the relationship between them can be relational “honorific’s usage between speaker and its referent, addressee, bystander, and/or setting” or absolute “authorized speaker and authorized recipients in a discourse”. The distribution of social deixis discovered in the Cameroon Social Media can be found in table 5 below:

Table 5: General distribution of social deixis

Type	Category	Frequency			Total
		WHAP	FBK	MSG	
Social	Mr	7 (53.85%)	3 (60%)	1 (33.33%)	11

deixis	Sir	4 (30.77%)	2 (40%)	1 (33.33%)	7
	Mrs	2 (15.38%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.33%)	3
Total		13	5	3	21

The findings in the preceding table show that the dominant social deixis in Cameroon SM is ‘Mr’ which has a total of 11 occurrences, 7 (53.85%) from WHAP, 3 (60%) from FBK and 1 (33.33%) from MSG. It is followed by ‘sir’ with 4 (30.77%), 2 (40%) and 1 (33.33%), hence 7 times. ‘Mrs’ is the least social deixis used with 2 (15.38%), inexistent on FBK and 1 (33.33%) which is equal to 3 times. In short, social deixis is used 21 times in all the platforms. They are represented through the samples below:

- (36) that is great *Mr...* (WHAP 49-2021-male)
 (37) Congratulations *Mr ...* (WHAP 102-2022-female)
 (38) *Mister* ‘miracle man’ (FBK2-2021-male)
 (39) Your *Mr* TB braggued about being able to erase COVID-19 (FBK 3-2021-male)
 (40) Good morning *sir* (MSG 02-2020-male)
 (41) thanks *Mrs ...* (WHAP 1-2021-male)
 (42) Thanks *Miss* (WHAP 50-2021-male)

In Cameroon social media, one can observe that, the interlocutors share some social link which goes from colleagues ‘that is great Mr...’ (36), ‘congratulations Mr...’ (37), to simply friends or superior ‘good morning sir...’ (40), ‘thanks Mrs...’ (41).

From the analysis done in this research endeavor, it is revealed that the five types of deixis propounded by Levinson in his theory were found in Cameroon social media platforms with diverse frequencies. The details are pictured in the table that follows:

Table 6: General distribution of deixis per type on social media

Types of deixis / Social network types	Person deixis	Time deixis	Place deixis	Discourse deixis	Social deixis	Total
WhatsApp	412 (73.30%)	17 (85%)	14 (63.64%)	58 (66.67%)	13 (61.90%)	514
Facebook	121 (21.54%)	3 (15%)	7 (31.82%)	25 (28.73%)	5 (23.80%)	161
Messenger	29 (5.16%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.54%)	4 (4.60%)	3 (14.3%)	37
Total	562	20	22	87	21	712

It is shown in table 6 above that the number of occurrences of deixis on the three platforms under study is 712. It is indicated globally that WHAP represents the most preferred network site used by the informants respectively with 412 personal, 17 time, 14 place, 58 discourse and 13 social deictic expressions and the overall total is ranked at 514 occurrences. FBK occupies the second position as it has recorded 121 personal, 3 time, 7 place, 25 discourse and 5 social deictic expressions which is equal to 161 occurrences and the least among them is MSG with 29 personal, 0 time, 1 place, 4 discourse and 3 social deixis with the total of 37 occurrences. It is worth to claim that the highest position of WHAP in the employment of deixis could be justified by the fact that it is also the most desired medium of sharing information among the users.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed deixis in Cameroon Social Media on the basis of Levinson's (1983) theory of deixis. This framework was considered as a broader and less abstract approach for examining how deixis is used and to what extent on different social network sites among Francophone Cameroonians. After investigation and analysis, statistics from the data analysed reveal that this research identified the five deixis put forward by Levinson which include: person deixis, time deixis, place deixis, discourse deixis and social deixis. The dominant medium used for communication among the three social network sites under this study is WhatsApp with the highest personal deixis prominence, which is 412 occurrences. After which comes Facebook with also person deixis representing the highest number of occurrences as it is used 121 times.

The current research presents some limitations which opens the way to a new area of research in pragmatics that takes into account the contribution of affective sources of information to speaker meaning and the corpus. Therefore, it is necessary to further a semiotic research on deixis and reconsider all Cameroonian users of Social Media as the informants.

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Appendix

