



Person and Social Deixis in Shamsi's Islamic Preaching to an Atheist

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Abstract

This study examines the use of person and social deixis in Shamsi's preaching, a Muslim preacher, in Islamic *da'wah* through debate with an atheist at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park, London. Using Levinson's (1983) theory of deixis, the research identifies the types and expressions of deixis used by the preacher when engaging with a non-believer. The data were taken from the DUS Dawah YouTube channel, specifically from a video titled "An Atheist Thinks It's Okay to Sleep with a Baby". The analysis adopts a descriptive qualitative method. The finding shows that Shamsi uses all types of person deixis. The most dominant is the second person such as you (as subject and object), your, and yourself, which appears 152 times (63,85%), followed by the first person such as I, me, my, we, us, and our used 57 times (23,94%), and third person forms such as he, him, she, her, anyone, someone, everyone, they, and them mentioned 29 times (12,18%). In terms of social deixis, Shamsi employs two categories. In the first category, relational social deixis, the most frequently used form is the referent honorific "Prophet" mentioned 9 times (60%). This is followed by formality level expressions, such as "the scholar(s)" which appear 4 times (26,66%) and "The Creator of Everything" mentioned 1 time (6,66%), and also audience honorifics "everyone" used 1 time (6,66%). Meanwhile, addressee honorifics do not appear in Shamsi's preaching, indicating that this form of honorifics was not used in the interaction. In the second category, absolute social deixis, Shamsi refers to himself with the phrase "I'm Muslim" used 1 time (16,66%) as an authorized speaker, while refers to his opponent with the phrase "as an atheist" mentioned 5 times (83,33%) as an authorized recipient. Overall, both person and social deixis used by Shamsi, functioned as powerful linguistic tools to engage intimacy and effectively convey his Islamic message, by defining identity, asserting authority, emphasizing ideological differences to an atheist in public space.

Keywords: *Person deixis; Social deixis; Islamic preaching; Cross-belief debate; Religious discourse*

Introduction

Da'wah activities are forms of communication and engagement with the community (Hamid & Uyuni, 2023). Islam is the religion that actively promotes *da'wah*. Aziz, as mentioned by Shukri (2022), stated that the main objective of *da'wah* is to invite non-Muslims to Islam, which in Islam is understood as leading people from the darkness of ignorance into the light of true faith. Among the many forms of *da'wah*, public debate is one of the most interactive and direct approaches.

It allows the preacher to clarify religious teachings, answer questions, and defend the Islamic faith, especially when facing different or opposing beliefs. This type of *da'wah* often happens in open spaces where the message can reach both participants and bystanders. In these interactions, the preacher not only shares Islamic teachings but also engages in direct discussion that allows clarification and defense of the faith. It becomes a meaningful way to respond to doubts and convey the core principles of Islam. This is important because people need to be guided and convinced of the truth that Islam offers for humanity's benefit (Shukri, 2022).

Shamsi is a well-known figure at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park, London, recognized for his role in Islamic *da'wah* and his lively debates with people of different beliefs and background. One of them is atheist who do not believe in God. Shamsi frequently discusses and explains topics like the core beliefs of Islam, the role of the Prophet Muhammad, and various interpretations of Islamic teachings. Shamsi adopts a more interactive approach, often engaging in direct dialogue and employing the Socratic method, where he guides his conversation partner to a particular conclusion through a series of questions. Socratic method is a key part of critical thinking because it encourages a structured, in-depth, and disciplined exploration of ideas while constantly testing their truth and logic (Paul & Elder, 2016). Shamsi takes a straightforward approach in discussing Islam and his dedication to open public dialogue through critical thinking.

Da'wah or preaching conducted by Shamsi at Speakers' Corner is a method of delivering religious messages directly to the public like Speakers' Corner. Speakers' Corner is located in Hyde Park, London. Since the middle 19th century, it has been known as a place that represents freedom of speech, where people can share their opinions openly, speak with confidence, and tell others what they believe is true (Parker, 2018). The outdoor setting or open space like Speakers' Corner makes the religious message accessible to anyone without restrictions. One important aspect of *da'wah* in an open space is the direct interaction between the preacher and the audience.

Da'wah delivered through public debates offers a direct and clear way for people to understand the preacher's message. This approach is essential in addressing community behaviors that deviate from social norms and values, helping prevent the spread of negative influences while encouraging actions that are beneficial both individually and collectively (Purwatiningsih & Nursatyo, 2024). Shamsi uses this opportunity to debate and discuss the beliefs of his audience or opponents, as well as to answer questions from people who may be curious or sceptic about Islam especially to atheists. To reach a wider audience, he usually uploads his videos through social media such as his YouTube channel DUS Dawah with hundreds of thousands of subscribers and high view counts, this platform demonstrates his significant influence in delivering Islamic messages at Speakers' Corner.

In these debates, interaction between the preacher and the questioners or audiences is inevitable, particularly in terms of addressing questioners or the audience and referring to various figures. In addition, pronouns are also used in discussions to make the conversation easier to follow. These terms of address carry contextual information that listeners need to understand to avoid any misunderstandings. This contextual information can be examined through the concept of deixis. Deixis refers to the phenomenon where understanding the meaning of certain words or expressions in a sentence depends on the contextual information (Simamora & Suryani, 2022). Deixis involves the use of language to point to something (e.g. people, places, or times) within a specific context. Deixis refers to "pointing via language" (Yule, 1996). Deixis is a linguistic phenomenon where certain words or phrases rely on context to convey meaning.

Understanding deixis helps speakers and interlocutor use deictic words more effectively, as these words rely on the connection between language and the context in which it is used (Minkhatunnakhriyah, Hidayat, & Alek, 2021). These deictic expressions or indexical can only be understood by knowing specific aspects of the situation in which they are used, such as the speaker's location, the time of speaking, or the participants' identities (Levinson, 1983). According to Levinson, deixis divides into five types, namely person deixis, time deixis, place deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis.

In open preaching, especially in a debate format between a preacher and the addressee or audience, the use of person deixis and social deixis is very important because they help build emotional and social connections with the audience and the addressee. In addition, person deixis helps the speakers clarify their position, identity, and responsibility in their arguments. Meanwhile, social deixis, such as using respectful titles or addressing the opponent appropriately based on their social status, shows respect and politeness. This can reduce tension and create a more productive dialogue. Both types of deixis not only influence how the audience sees the speaker's credibility but also help deliver the message effectively without causing

unnecessary conflict. In debates, understanding person deixis and social deixis allows the speaker to adjust their language and communication style to fit the social and cultural context of the audience, making the message more relatable and easier to accept.

Levinson explain that person deixis is a way of indicating the role of participants in a conversation when an utterance is delivered (Levinson, 1983). Person deixis focuses on identifying the roles of participants in a conversation or speech event (Ritonga, 2023). It involves the use of personal pronouns, which are determined by the speaker's position in the interaction. Based on Levinson' theory, person deixis divided into three categories as follows.

1. First person

First person deixis refers to the speaker alone or both speakers or the speaker with a group they are part of (Sofya & Arifin, 2023). It is represented by singular pronouns such as I, me, my, myself, and mine, and plural pronouns such as we, us, ourselves, our, and ours. For example, "I pray every morning to start my day with peace". "I" and "my" refers to the speaker.

2. Second person

Second person deixis refers to the person or people being addressed. It is expressed through pronouns such as you, yourself, yourselves, your, and yours. For example, "You should visit the temple if you want to learn more about the local beliefs". "You" refers to the person being spoken to.

3. Third person

Third person deixis refers to those who are included in the conversation as subjects but are neither the speaker nor the direct listener (Khalid, Nazeer, & Ahmad, 2022). It often reflects the gender of the person or group being referred to, using pronouns such as he, she, him, himself, her, herself, they, their, and them. For example, "They celebrate Eid with their family every year". "They" refers to a group who are not the speaker or the listener.

Levinson in Heriyadi & Diana (2020), concerns that social deixis is aspect of sentences that reflect, establish, or determined by the social realities of the speaker or the social context of the event. Levinson divides social deixis into two forms. There are relational social deixis and absolute social deixis with explanations as follows.

1. Relational social deixis

Relational social deixis is related to the relative ranking or respect given by the speaker to the referent, addressee, audience, and setting. It is specifically divided into four types:

a) Speaker and referent (referent honorifics)

Referent honorifics are forms or terms that convey respect by the speaker to the referent (someone who is being talked). For example, "I met Doctor John at the hospital." Here, Doctor John is referred to with the respectful title "Doctor" mentioned by the speaker to indicate that John is an expert in the field of medicine.

b) Speaker and addressee (addressee honorifics)

This type of language is used by the speaker to show respect to the addressee or conversation partner. For example, "Don't do that, Ma'am". The use of "Ma'am" is a respect from the speaker to the addressee who older than the speaker even without adding the person's name. It can also involve mentioning the name of the conversation partner.

c) Speaker and bystander (bystander or audience honorifics)

Bystander honorifics are forms that are used by the speaker to signify respect to a bystander, including participants in the role of audience and non-participant overhearers (Huang, 2014). This occurs through names, titles, or expressions given to others or bystanders or audiences based on the surrounding context. For example, "Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your presence today". In this case, "ladies and gentlemen" is a form of bystander honorifics that shows respect towards the audience who is listening.

d) Speaker and setting (formality levels or social activity)

Formality levels indicate the respect shown between the speaker (or possibly other participants) and the setting or event of the speech. This deixis shows a softening of a word or meaning to avoid sounding rude to the interlocutor or audience in a speech event. For example, in a sensitive situation, people often say, "The janitor ensures that all classrooms are clean and ready for use each morning" rather than "The custodial worker ensures that all classrooms are clean and ready for use each morning". The term "janitor" may sound less respectful, whereas "custodial worker" is considered more polite and professional.

2. Absolute social deixis

Absolute social deixis refers to forms of language reserved for the speaker or addressee. It refers to expressions that are typically used in forms of address and do not involve any relational comparison between the speaker and the addressee (Nuryusticia & Nurrachman, 2021). Unlike relational deixis, absolute deixis is not based on interpersonal relationships but rather on fixed social roles. It is divided into two forms, as follows.

a) Authorized speaker

This deixis consists of language forms that are specifically intended to the speaker. For example, "On behalf of the university, I welcome all new students to the orientation ceremony." Here, the speaker has official authority to speak for the university. It shows that the speaker has an important role in the university, perhaps becoming the head of the university, so the speaker is worthy and has the right to speak on behalf of the university.

b) Authorized recipient

This deixis describes language forms intended for a recipient who has the right or authority to receive it. For example, "Colonel, please sign this report". The use of the rank "Colonel" as deixis indicates that the order or request is directed only to the person with that rank.

Levinson's theory provides a clear framework for understanding how deixis functions in speech event. Applying this theory to real life discourse can reveal how language reflects social dynamics in specific contexts, such as Islamic preaching through debate. In the context of debate in public spaces, the preacher or the opponent is not only delivering theological arguments but also actively shaping identity, showing respect or disagreement, and building social relationships through their language choices. This theory also explored of how seemingly simple linguistic forms such as the pronouns "I" and "you" as well as titles or forms of address can reflect social dynamics and identity construction in spontaneous and high-pressure communication settings like cross-belief debate.

The studies that focused on religious communication remain limited. The recent study that examined preaching was conducted by Tanjung and Muslim (2025) on Zakir Naik's preaching analyzed five types of deixis used during his interactions with individuals who ask questions to him. The previous study titled "Examining Deixis in Zakir Naik's Preaching Videos" focused on religious preaching in formal and planned settings, where the topics or themes are usually prepared in advance and located in a building or

room. Meanwhile, this study focuses specifically on person and social deixis are used in a spontaneous debate without any preparation by an Islamic preacher in an open public setting that is in Speakers' Corner at Hyde Park, London.

Furthermore, this research narrows its scope by examining how deixis is used in a preaching through debate addressed to a specific type of audience, that is an atheist. It can investigate how Shamsi, a Muslim preacher, employs person and social deixis when engaging with an atheist. Based on that, the researchers are interested in writing research "PERSON AND SOCIAL DEIXIS IN SHAMSI'S ISLAMIC PREACHING TO AN ATHEIST" aims to investigate the following research questions: What types of person and social deixis are used by Shamsi as a Muslim preacher engaging an atheist? What specific deictic expressions represent each type?

Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. This approach allows for a more detailed exploration of the data, focusing on meanings and interpretations. The researchers use theory of Stephen C. Levinson (1983), which explains person and social deixis. Since this study analyzes the words or phrases of a Muslim preacher facing an atheist in a public space, Levinson's theory is suitable because it focuses on how meaning of words or phrases depends on context.

The data used by the researchers is a *da'wah* video of Shamsi at Speakers' Corner, uploaded on the YouTube channel DUS Dawah. Speakers' Corner is located in Hyde Park, London. Since the middle 19th century, it has been known as a place that represents freedom of speech, where people can share their opinions openly, speak with confidence, and tell others what they believe is true (Parker, 2018). The video entitles "An Atheist Thinks It Could Be Okay to Sleep with a Baby". It has a duration of 11 minutes and 46 seconds, and was uploaded on July 1st, 2024.

The video was chosen due to its rich use of deictic expressions and the clear roles of speaker and addressee, It also featured a clear and active debate between a Muslim preacher and an atheist. Out of many videos on the same channel, this one was selected due to the strong back-and-forth exchange of ideas, where both sides ask questions and defend their beliefs. The conversation happens naturally and spontaneously, which makes it good for analyzing real deixis use in a public setting. The video's short length also helps make the transcription and analysis more focused and manageable.

The data collection technique use by the researchers includes watching and observing the video, then transcribing them. For the data analysis, the researchers apply Levinson's theory to identify person and social deixis in Shamsi's video by classifying the types and deictic expressions that appear

according to their types.

Results and Discussion

Person Deixis

Person deixis has the function of identifying participants (Hati, Yunus Laia, & Telaumbanua, 2021). It reveals how individuals position themselves and others in conversation. Based on Shamsi's video, the researchers identified the use of person deixis by the Islamic preacher, Shamsi, in his interaction with an atheist, as detailed below.

Table 1. Distribution of Person Deixis Used by Shamsi

		Expression	Frequency	Percentage
First person	First person singular	I	21	8,82%
		Me	14	5,88%
		My	7	2,94%
	First person plural	We	10	4,20%
		Us	3	1,26%
		Our	2	0,84%
		Second person	You (subject)	91
You (object)	27		11,34%	
Your	29		12,18%	
Yourself	5		2,10%	
Third person	Third person singular	He	6	2,52%
		Him	2	0,84%
		She	3	1,26%
		Her	1	0,42%
		Anyone	2	0,84%
		Someone	6	2,52%
		Everyone	4	1,68%
		Third person plural	They	3
	Them		2	0,84%
	TOTAL		238	100%

Note: Percentages are rounded to two decimal places. Total may not equal exactly 100% due to rounding.

1. First Person

Datum 43

0:09-1:14

John : "No, no. People tell me that Muhammad, correct me if I'm wrong, was Muhammad a perfect moral example?"

Shamsi : "I'm not going to come with this. Yes."

John : "Should we act like Muhammad now?"

Shamsi : "Now, listen to carefully. Not everything Prophet Muhammad *Shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* did, **we** have to follow it even the Muslim scholars spoke about it."

Context: Shamsi, a Muslim preacher, explains to John, an atheist, that not all actions done by the Prophet Muhammad must be followed today. The word "it" in his statement refers to the Prophet's marriage to Aisyah, who was still very young at that time. Shamsi points out that this happened in a different time and culture, so it should not be seen as something to copy in the present day. He also mentions that many Muslim scholars have discussed this issue and agree that some actions were based on specific historical situations and are not meant to be followed in all times.

In utterance "...**we** have to follow it...", Shamsi uses the first-person plural "we" to include himself and other Muslims. By saying "we have to follow it" he is talking about what Muslims generally believe or practice. This use of "we" shows that Shamsi is not only speaking for himself but also representing the Muslim community. It helps create a sense of shared belief and unity among Muslims. At the same time, it also shows that he is trying to explain religious teachings in a way that includes both himself and others. Using "we" makes his message feel more collective and inclusive, which is important when discussing religious guidance in front of John as atheist and the audience.

Datum 22

1:26-1:50

Shamsi : "Why no one saying we should follow him and this, because why? this is not something abnormal now but because getting married to 9 years old you become abnormal even though 300 years ago universally, we something normal, okay? because the girls back in those days was different. So, the point here is not everything Prophet Muhammad *'alaihi sallam* did, we have to follow so."

John : "What an immoral then."

Shamsi : "Give **me** objective criteria why is it an immoral?"

Context: John asks if Muslims should still copy everything Prophet Muhammad did. Shamsi answers that not every action of the Prophet must be followed exactly today, and many Muslim scholars agree with this view. He gives an example: the Prophet married a woman much older than him, but most Muslims today don't feel the need to follow that. He also explains that in the past, it was normal for young girls to marry earlier because of different cultural and physical conditions. Shamsi highlights that the context of the time is important when understanding religious actions. When John says the Prophet's actions were immoral, Shamsi challenges him by asking for a clear, objective reason to support that claim.

In the utterance "Give me objective criteria why is it an immoral?" the word "me" is a first-person singular that refers directly to Shamsi himself as the speaker. By using "me," Shamsi makes the request personal, emphasizing that he is directly asking John to provide a clear and objective explanation. In the context of deixis, "me" is an example of person deixis, as its meaning depends on who is speaking. This choice of words also shifts the burden of proof onto John, challenging him to explain his moral judgment using standards that are not just subjective, but that could apply to everyone.

2. *Second Person*

Datum 58

7:59-8:25

John : "Sure, a tiny slightly of a doubt, yes."

Shamsi : "So, there is doubt."

John : "Yes. How would you know if you'll answer me this question? How would you know if you were plugged in at a matrix?"

Shamsi : "No, I'm certain speaking to you, why? I'll show you if I take your phone, you'll be so certain to go to the police to tell them that Shamsi took my phone. You cannot talk "He could be who take my phone." Give me your phone, please?"

John : "No."

Shamsi : "See, see? So, you know deep down. You lie."

Context: Shamsi questions John's idea that people can never be completely sure about reality, using the example of the simulation theory. Shamsi keeps asking John if he is certain they are really talking, and John replies that he is almost certain, but still has a little doubt. To show the problem in John's thinking, Shamsi gives a simple example: if he took John's phone, John would definitely go to the police and report it, without any doubt or hesitation. Shamsi uses this to argue that in real life, people usually act with certainty, even if they say they have doubts.

From this, Shamsi concludes that John is not being honest about his uncertainty, because his actions would not match what he claims to believe.

In the utterance "See, see? So, **you** know deep down. **You** lie.", Shamsi uses the second person "you" to speak directly to John as an atheist. The pronoun clearly refers to John and functions as a subject, making him the main actor in Shamsi's statements. The word "you" is more often used to represent second person deixis. This supports earlier findings that identify "you" as the most frequently used form to indicate second person deixis (Gobel, Lihawa, & Hasanuddin, 2023).

By saying "you know deep down" and "you lie" he points out what he believes the other person truly feels and accuses him of not being honest. The use of "you" as the subject makes the statement very personal and direct. It shows that Shamsi is not speaking generally, but specifically targeting the person he is debating with. This kind of second person deixis helps create a confrontational tone and puts pressure on the opponent. It also helps Shamsi control the conversation and push his argument strongly by focusing attention on what the other person says and believes.

Datum 110

4:54-5:56

John : "Listen, philosophy is subjective right? Subjectively, I try and reason and find our way to what's right or wrong. We couldn't just think that what's written down in this book came from the Creator, therefore, that's all right and she's 9 years old. Alternatively, we could say we live in the real world and admit that God doesn't exist and try and work our way out right and wrong from there. I'm not glad that there is no objective morality. I think the world would be better with objective morality. In reality, there isn't any. So, we have to go from there and try and work out what's right or wrong. So, a lot of people will say, because of the suffering forces because of the risk of manipulation that a man in the 50 having sex."

Shamsi : "It's not because firstly, I'll say to you. Is marriage only sex for you?"

John : "Pardon?"

Shamsi : "Is a marriage only sex for **you**?"

John : "No."

Shamsi : "So, why use marriage? because why I know he's a buzz, buzzword, wait wait wait. No, no. Firstly, John, again, you digress the point. You cannot criticize anyone in the world because it's waste of time, because you don't believe there is

certainty. Do you believe there's absolute certainty?"

Context: Shamsi and John argue about morality and certainty. Shamsi starts by saying it is a fallacy to call a nine-year-old a child in that historical context. He then asks John, as an atheist, if such a marriage with a nine-year-old could be right. John answers that it could be possible, though he is not sure. Shamsi points out this uncertainty and says it shows weakness in John's view. John replies that philosophy is subjective, so people must use reason to decide what is right and wrong, since he believes there is no God and no objective morality. He admits he wishes objective morality existed but says it does not. Shamsi then asks if marriage is only about sex, and when John says no, Shamsi argues that John's point is misleading. He adds that without absolute certainty, John cannot fairly criticize others.

In the utterance "Is a marriage only sex for **you**?", the pronoun "'you'r" functions as an object and serves as a clear example of second person deixis. Here, Shamsi directs the question specifically to John. Shamsi places John at the center of the statement making him the receiver of the challenge. By using "you" in this way, Shamsi shifts the focus onto John's beliefs, requiring him to respond personally rather than speaking in general terms. This use of deixis allows Shamsi to press John for clarification and hold him accountable for his position. It also intensifies the interaction, as John cannot distance himself from the question directly targets him as the object.

Datum 205

11:13-11:46

Shamsi : "As an atheist, as an atheist, he has no problem objectively for a man sleep with a baby two months old. Do you have problem?"

John : "Would rather do you have."

Shamsi : "Objectively?"

John : "No, there's no objective."

Shamsi : "That's my point."

John : "Pardon?"

Shamsi : "So, you could be right?"

John : "Yes, it could be right."

Shamsi : "It could be right to sleep with two months and he judged Prophet Muhammad, he said, it could be right for a man to sleep with a baby two months old. Take care of **yourself**. This case is done, you know. This man, he is a stubborn. Take care of yourself. Bye-bye. Alhamdulillah."

Context: Shamsi tries to challenge John's atheist views by questioning where his moral values come from. Shamsi argues that without belief in

God, there is no solid or objective basis to say that certain actions like an adult sleeping with a two-month-old baby are truly wrong. When John admits that, as an atheist, he has no objective moral standard and such actions could possibly be seen as "right" depending on subjective viewpoint, Shamsi points out a serious problem in atheist thinking. He shows that John is judging Prophet Muhammad while also accepting that even extreme actions might be right if there is no fixed moral truth. Believing he has made a strong point, Shamsi ends the discussion by calling John "stubborn" and saying "Take care of yourself" and "Alhamdulillah," showing he is thankful and considers the debate finished. This moment shows a strong disagreement between absolute and relative views of morality.

In the utterance "Take care of yourself." The word "yourself" is a second person deixis that directly refers to John, the person Shamsi is addressing. By using "yourself" Shamsi makes the farewell personal, showing that he is ending the interaction directly with John. Although the phrase "Take care of yourself" is generally polite, in this context it carries a dismissive tone, signaling that Shamsi no longer wants to continue the debate. It functions both as a closing remark and a way to express finality in the argument. This shows how language can reflect not just grammar, but also reflect attitude and closure in a conversation.

3. Third Person

Datum 236

9:28-9:51

Shamsi : "Who gave your life?"

John : "My parents did, obviously."

Shamsi : "So, your parents gave your life?"

John : "My parents."

Shamsi : "Gave your life? your parents? So, so, if your parents gave your life."

John : "Yes."

Shamsi : "So, therefore, logic you dictate now that your parents have a power to give a life, correct? "

John : "Well, yes, to create us, yes. That's what we're here for."

Shamsi : "So, when you die how come your parents cry for you? why they cannot give your life again if it was them in the beginning?"

Context: Shamsi asks John's belief in his denial of God by asking a simple yet important question: "Who gave you life?" When John responds that his parents did, Shamsi follows up with a logical argument to challenge that idea. He explains that if parents truly had the power to give life, then they should also be able to bring someone back to life after death.

Since that is not possible, Shamsi points out that the power to give life does not belong to humans. Based on this reasoning, he concludes that life must come from a higher source, which is God, not just from human beings.

In utterance “Why **they** cannot give your life again if it was **them** in the beginning?”, Shamsi uses the third person plural “they” and “them” that refers to the parents of John. The use of “they” and “them” refers to people who are not directly part of the conversation, which is a common feature of third person deixis. Here, Shamsi uses “they” and “them” to question the idea that parents are the source of life. He argues that if parents could truly give life, then they should also be able to bring their child back to life after death. By using third person deixis, Shamsi creates an example that sounds logical and easy to follow, while also pointing out what he believes is a weakness in the opponent’s belief. This shows that third person deixis is used to explain ideas clearly and make the argument stronger by giving relatable examples.

Datum 231

3:41-3:59

Shamsi : “John, you just admit it, John, you just admit it to us, to everyone here that your criteria is subjective?”

John : “Yes.”

Shamsi : “Which means?”

John : “Everyone’s criteria is subjective.”

Shamsi : “I was speaking to follow you, okay? It doesn’t mean because you have subjective, therefore, **everyone**, you don’t know **everyone** in the world, do you?”

Context: Shamsi and John talk about how people decide what is right or wrong. Shamsi asks John if his way of judging morality is based on personal opinion, and John agrees. Then, John adds that everyone’s moral judgment is also based on personal views. Shamsi disagrees and says that John cannot speak for all people around the world because he doesn’t know them. He reminds John to focus on his own beliefs instead of assuming that everyone thinks the same way. John should talk about his own views; not claim they apply to everyone. This moment shows that Shamsi believes not all people rely on personal opinion, some may have clear moral standards. The conversation shows the difference between John’s belief in subjective morality and Shamsi’s view that some moral values can be objective.

In Shamsi’s utterance “It doesn’t mean because you have subjective, therefore, **everyone**, you don’t know **everyone** in the world, do you?”, the word “everyone” is a third person singular. Shamsi uses

"everyone" as a pronoun to wider audience, possibly those around him or the general public, in order to emphasize that John cannot speak on behalf of all people. He challenges John's claim by saying, "you don't know everyone in the world, do you?" This shows that Shamsi is using "everyone" to distance John from making universal statements. By doing so, Shamsi maintains control over the argument and points out the limits of John's perspective. Therefore, the word "everyone" here is not only a third person singular pronoun, but also a deictic reference that helps Shamsi frame the debate in terms of what can or cannot be assumed about others.

Datum 225

3:11-3:38

John : "I got this. Right there. He is giving you objectivity. I think you miss the statement, I'm an atheist I don't think the God."

Shamsi : "You should be the last person as an atheist because Prophet Muhammad got married to Aisyah, she's an atheist. As an atheist, you don't have no objective criteria."

John : "You don't either, you have subjective."

Shamsi : "John, you know what you doing? you know what you're doing?"

John : "What am I doing?"

Shamsi : "Like **someone** tell you, you raped a woman instead of defending yourself, you keep someone too. That's what you doing."

Context: John and Shamsi are arguing about morality and religion. John, as an atheist, questions the idea that believing in God automatically gives someone a clear and objective sense of right and wrong. He says that even religious morals can still be based on personal opinions. Shamsi replies by saying that John, as an atheist, has no solid standard to judge moral actions, like the marriage of Prophet Muhammad to Aisyah. When John says that religious people also follow personal opinions, Shamsi accuses him of avoiding the real issue. He compares John's way of arguing to someone who is accused of a serious crime, like rape, but instead of defending himself, tries to blame someone else. With this example, Shamsi is saying that John is not answering the main point, but just trying to distract. This part of their debate shows how both are questioning each other's way of thinking about morality.

In utterance "Like **someone** tell you...", the word "someone" is a third person singular that refers to an unspecified person. Shamsi uses "someone" to create a general example, not about a real person, but to illustrate a point. Shamsi compares John's reasoning to a person who,

when accused of a serious crime, does not defend themselves but instead tries to blame another person. The use of “someone” makes the scenario easier to imagine and more relatable to the audience. It shows how language can be used to build analogies and strengthen arguments.

Based on the data and analysis of person deixis, Shamsi’s language use reveals patterns that reflect his communication strategies and roles within the interaction. Shamsi predominantly used second person deixis such as you, your, and yourself a total of 152 times (63,85%). Especially the pronoun “you” used 118 times, indicating his strong focus on addressing and challenging his interlocutor directly. The pronoun “you” appears in two forms: as a subject, used 91 times (38.23%), and as an object, used 27 times (11.34%). When “you” is used as a subject, Shamsi actively places John at the center of the statement, making him directly responsible for the action or belief (e.g., “You know deep down. You lie”).

In contrast, when “you” is used as an object, John becomes the receiver of Shamsi’s assertion or challenge (e.g., “Is a marriage only sex for you?”), which shifts the focus from John’s own actions to how he responds to Shamsi’s claims. By consistently using second person deixis, Shamsi shows that he is not only confronts John’s arguments but also engages him as both the actor and the target, reinforcing Shamsi’s control over the debate and strengthening his role as a preacher committed to defending moral and religious values.

Shamsi’s use of first-person deixis was relatively lower but still important. Combined I, me, and my were total used 42 times (17,64%), suggesting he referred to himself occasionally to assert authority, explain his reasoning, or emphasize his beliefs. In line with previous research that the deictic “I” was also used to show the audience that the preacher was speaking from a personal perspective and expressing his own thoughts and feelings (Mohammed Saleh Al-Hamzi, Sumarlam, Santosa, & Jamal, 2023). However, this was secondary to his direct engagement with John.

Shamsi also employed first person plural deixis such as we, us, and our that used total 15 times (6,3%) to indicate group identity, particularly in reference to Muslims or shared values. These inclusive forms helped him to create a sense of unity and contrast his worldview against that of the opponent, thus subtly drawing a line between in-group (believers) refers to Muslim and out-group (non-believers) refers to atheist. Additionally, Shamsi used third person deixis to refer to external subjects or examples. Shamsi used a wider variety of third person such as he, him, she, her, anyone, someone, everyone, they, and them that mentioned total 29 times (12,18%) which indicates that he incorporated more references to role model (e.g. Prophet Muhammad), and others (e.g. general people or imagined situations) to support his points that more varied and complex.

Social Deixis

Social deixis refers to the social meaning carried in certain expressions, such as indicators of social status and the level of familiarity between speaker (Hidayah & Saraswati, 2024). It includes references and expressions that reflect the social status or identity of the people being referred to (Susanti, Lestari, & Wafa, 2023). In addition, it refers to expressions that reflect social respect and indicate the relationship between participants, such as social status, family roles, or positions within a community (Sofya & Arifin, 2023). Social deixis plays an important role in understanding how speakers express social relationships and respect through language. In the cross believe debate between Shamsi and John, social deixis is used not only to deliver arguments but also to manage interaction in a respectful or strategic way.

As a Muslim preacher, Shamsi's way of referring to his opponent, the audience, and religious figures reflects different levels of politeness, authority, and the social roles he aims to establish during the interaction. Social deixis is generally divided into two main types: relational social deixis, which depends on the relationship between the speaker and others during the interaction, and absolute social deixis, which refers to fixed titles or social identities. The following section discusses both relational and absolute social deixis employed by Shamsi, a Muslim preacher, in his interaction with an atheist as shown in the video.

1. *Relational Social Deixis*

Relational social deixis is related to the relative ranking or respect given by the speaker to the referent, addressee, audience, and setting. The analysis of relational social deixis in the video reveals the following specific explanations.

Table 2. Distribution of Relational Social Deixis Used by Shamsi

	Expression	Frequency	Percentage
Speaker and referent (Referent honorifics)	Prophet	9	60%
Speaker and addressee (Addressee honorifics)	-	0	0%
Speaker and bystander (Bystander or audience)	Everyone	1	6,66%

honorifics)			
Speaker and setting	The Creator of Everything	1	6,66%
(Formality levels or social activity)	The scholar(s)	4	26,66%
TOTAL		15	100%

Note: Percentages are rounded to two decimal places. Total may not equal exactly 100% due to rounding.

a) Speaker and Referent (Referent Honorifics)

Datum 241

3:52-4:11

John : "Everyone's criteria is subjective. "

Shamsi : "I was speaking to follow you, okay? It doesn't mean because you have subjective, therefore, everyone, you don't know everyone in the world, do you? "

John : "Okay. "

Shamsi : "Okay, so, stick to yourself. So, if your criteria is subjective. "

John : "Yes. "

Shamsi : "Which means it could be right or wrong? "

John : "Yes. "

Shamsi : "So, therefore, you know you have to make up your mind first before speaking about **Prophet** Muhammad, you agree?"

Context: Shamsi responds to John's criticism of the Prophet Muhammad's marriage to Aisyah by questioning the basis of John's moral judgment. Shamsi explains that as an atheist, John does not have an objective moral standard and instead uses personal or subjective opinions to judge right and wrong. Shamsi argues that if morality is based only on personal opinions, it becomes weak and unreliable, especially when judging historical figures (Prophet Muhammad) who lived in very different times and cultures. He then concludes that before making such criticisms, John should first be clear and consistent about his own moral beliefs.

In utterance "...you have to make up your mind first before speaking about **Prophet** Muhammad...", Shamsi uses the term "Prophet" before mentioning the name "Muhammad." The word "Prophet" is a religious title that carries great honor and respect

in Islam. By using this title, Shamsi acknowledges Muhammad not just as a historical figure, but as a messenger of God, which sets him apart from ordinary people. This form of address shows reverence and is commonly used among Muslims to recognize the special status of the Prophet. Therefore, the use of the word "Prophet" is already a form of referent honorific, because it highlights the speaker's respect for the person being mentioned.

b) *Speaker and Bystander (Bystander or Audience Honorifics)*

Datum 250

8:28-8:53

John : "No. As I said, there is a tiny possibility. Some people, like Elon Musk for example."

Shamsi : "Forget about Elon Musk. Just John and Shamsi."

John : "Some people take possibility we live in a simulation very seriously. I don't take it very seriously but."

Shamsi : "Are you certain speaking to me right now?"

John : "Not 100%. 99.99%."

Shamsi : "My conclusion, everyone, therefore, you standing here criticizing anything doesn't make any sense because you."

Context: In this conversation, Shamsi responds to John's uncertainty about reality by discussing the idea of simulation theory. John explains that although he does not fully believe all people are living in a simulation, he admits that some people, like Elon Musk, take the idea seriously. When Shamsi asks if John is certain they are really talking in person, John answers that he is 99.99% sure, which shows he still has a small amount of doubt. Shamsi uses this to question how strong John's views really are. He argues that if someone is not fully sure about basic things like reality, then their opinions, especially on serious or moral topics, become weak. Based on this, Shamsi concludes that John's arguments are not reliable because they are based on uncertain beliefs.

In utterance "My conclusion, everyone, therefore, you standing here...", Shamsi calls "everyone" to refer to all the people present around him, whether they are actively involved in the conversation or just observing. This word serves to indicate that the conclusion conveyed by Shamsi is not only for his interlocutor, but also for everyone who hears, thus creating a sense of involvement. The use of the word "everyone" also indicates a sufficient level of politeness, in accordance with the atmosphere

of an informal debate in a park that is being watched by many people. It sounds respectful yet remains casual. In this context, "everyone" implies respect for the audience as important participants in understanding or receiving Shamsi's message. The use of "everyone" can be seen as polite because it acknowledges the presence of all audiences including his conversation partner. It creates a sense of inclusion and respect by addressing the group collectively rather than ignoring their presence. If "everyone" in the third person is used as a pronoun, then here it is used as a way to call or directly address the people around Shamsi. Therefore, the word "everyone" qualifies as a form of bystander or audience honorifics, as it is used by Shamsi as the speaker to address the audience who is watching the debate.

c) *Speaker and Setting (Formality Levels or Social Activity)*

Datum 252

6:26-7:16

Shamsi : "Could you be wrong? my point is you know what Allah spoke about you, John? You know Allah spoke about you, John. Allah spoke about you in the Qur'an. I'll say what's Allah said. Allah said about this so powerful, what you demonstrating to us, Allah mentioned in the Quran 1.400 years ago. The new atheism movement, yeah, new atheism movement, Allah mentioned it in the Quran, okay? the meaning of it, of course, as one of a scholars said. Allah said in the Quran about the story of Moses and Pharaoh when Pharaoh asked Moses "who is the Lord of everything?"

John : "Yeah."

Shamsi : "So, Moses answered by saying The Creator of the Heavens and the Earth and that which in between if you have any certainty. **The scholar**, one of **the scholars** said, meaning, if you have no certainty that God exists and you should be in the world alone, you have no certainty about nothing else and this exactly who you are because you don't believe in God, you have no certainty about nothing else."

Context: Shamsi draws a connection between John's uncertainty about God and a passage from the Qur'an. He tells John that his attitude as an atheist was already described in the Qur'an 1,400 years ago, particularly through the story of Moses and Pharaoh. Shamsi refers to the moment when Pharaoh asked Moses about

the Lord of everything, and Moses replied that God is the Creator of the heavens, the Earth, and everything in between if one has certainty. Shamsi then cites a scholar's interpretation, explaining that if a person has no certainty about God's existence, they will also lack certainty about everything else in life. He applies this explanation to John, suggesting that John's lack of belief in God reflects a broader uncertainty that affects his entire worldview. Through this argument, Shamsi aims to show that John's doubt is not new or unique, but something already addressed in religious teachings long ago.

In Shamsi's utterance "**The scholar**, one of **the scholars** said...", Shamsi uses the expression "the scholar(s)" to refer to a respected religious figure, that is, individuals with deep knowledge of Islam who are commonly relied on as trusted sources in preaching. Although "the scholar(s)" is a reference to a third party, in this context it also reflects the formality levels, where religious knowledge and scholarly views are valued. By mentioning a scholar, Shamsi shows that the discussion is not casual but part of a serious, structured debate that involves trusted sources. In addition, it supports his argument.

Datum 251

2:53-3:11

John : "So, my point is simply this. There is no...so some people like you believe you have objective morality because the invisible man."

Shamsi : "I don't believe in a man. Stop talking about Christianity. I'm not Christian, I'm Muslim."

John : "The invisible spirit."

Shamsi : "I don't believe it. How do you still call it spirit?"

John : "Whatever, whatever way is your God, Allah."

Shamsi : "**The Creator of Everything.**"

Context: John continues to argue that objective morality does not exist. He criticizes religious belief by referring to God as an "invisible man," implying that belief in a divine being is irrational or imaginary. Shamsi quickly responds by clarifying that he is not a Christian and does not believe in God as a "man," but as a Muslim, he believes in Allah. When John tries to rephrase by calling God an "invisible spirit," Shamsi again disagrees, questioning John's use of that term. Finally, John refers to God as "whatever your God is, Allah," and Shamsi firmly answers that Allah is "The Creator of Everything." This exchange shows a misunderstanding between

the two speakers. John tries to generalize all religious belief, while Shamsi insists on making a clear distinction between Islamic and Christian concepts of God. The conversation reflects the tension between atheism and belief in God.

In the phrase “**The Creator of Everything**,” Shamsi uses a highly formal and respectful expression to refer to God, which in this context specifically means Allah, the God of Muslims. This phrase is not casual or conversational; instead, it reflects a high level of formality and reverence. Rather than using a common or simplified term like “God”, Shamsi chooses a title that emphasizes power, authority, and universality. In terms of deixis, this phrase also functions referentially, pointing to a specific being understood within the religious context, Allah in Islam. The formality of the phrase shows Shamsi’s intention to elevate the status of God beyond ordinary discussion and to make a clear distinction from the informal or mocking language used by John earlier, such as “invisible man” or “spirit.” Therefore, this phrase can be categorized as part of Speaker and Setting Formality Levels or Social Activity.

By using these specific expressions, Shamsi shows that he understands how to speak with respect and authority in a religious setting. When he mentions the Prophet Muhammad, he does not just say the name, but also adds respectful titles like “Prophet” that used 9 times (60%) which reflects how highly the Prophet is honored in Islam. Likewise, when he refers to Allah as “The Creator of Everything” used 1 time (6,66%), it shows his deep respect and recognition of God's greatness. In addition, Shamsi chooses to say “the scholar(s)” that used 4 times (26,66%) to show that his views are supported by trusted Islamic scholars, not just personal opinion.

These language choices help him sound more respectful, confident, and connected to Islamic teachings during the preaching through debate with an atheist. Additionally, Shamsi uses the word “everyone” mentioned 1 time (6,66%) when addressing the crowd around them, which acts as an audience honorific. This shows that he is aware of the wider listeners and aims to include them in the message, creating a collective sense of involvement and thus strengthening the impact of his *da’wah* in a public setting.

Interestingly, the analysis shows that addressee honorifics, which are typically used to show respect or social distance toward the person being directly addressed, are not present in Shamsi’s preaching during the debate. Throughout the interaction, Shamsi refers to his conversation partner, John, in direct and sometimes confrontational ways, frequently using the second person “you” used 118 times (the most dominant deixis) without attaching

honorific titles or polite forms. In west country, it is common to call by name to stranger, even a child to adult. This absence may reflect the nature of the debate itself, where the goal is not to maintain politeness conventions but to assert religious truths and defend faith through strong, clear language. The absence of addressee honorifics also emphasizes the ideological contrast between the preacher and his atheist opponent, where Shamsi's priority is clarity, conviction, and persuasive delivery rather than formal social politeness. This pragmatic choice aligns with his preaching style, which focuses on guiding or correcting rather than flattering the opponent.

2. Absolute Social Deixis

Absolute social deixis refers to forms of language reserved for the speaker or addressee. It found in the video of Shamsi that specifically presents the following findings explanations.

Table 3. Distribution of Absolute Social Deixis Used by Shamsi

	Expression	Frequency	Percentage
Authorized speaker	I'm Muslim	1	16.66%
Authorized recipient	As an atheist	5	83,33%
Total		6	100%

Note: Percentages are rounded to two decimal places. Total may not equal exactly 100% due to rounding.

a) Authorized Speaker

Datum 256

2:53-3:03

John : "So, my point is simply this. There is no...so some people like you believe you have objective morality because the invisible man."

Shamsi : "Stop talking about Christianity. I'm not Christian, **I'm Muslim.**"

Context: John attempts to criticize the idea of objective morality by referring to belief in what he calls "the invisible man," a phrase often used to mock religious belief, particularly in Christianity. However, Shamsi quickly interrupts and clarifies that he is not a Christian but a Muslim, and that his beliefs are based on Islamic teachings, not Christian doctrine. By distancing himself from Christian concepts and reaffirming his Islamic identity, Shamsi emphasizes that his understanding of morality and belief in God comes from a different theological framework, one that should be

addressed accurately in the discussion.

In utterance "I'm not Christian, **I'm Muslim**," Shamsi uses the expression "I'm Muslim" to assert his identity and clarify his authority as a speaker in the context of the discussion. By explicitly stating that he is Muslim, Shamsi positions himself as an authorized speaker who is qualified to speak about Islamic beliefs, values, and teachings. This declaration also serves to reject being associated with a religious identity (Christianity) that does not represent him, thus reinforcing his position as a legitimate representative of Islam in the debate.

b) Authorized Recipient

Datum 257

3:07-3:27

John : "Whatever, whatever way is your God, Allah."

Shamsi : "The Creator of Everything."

John : "I got this. Right there. He is giving you objectivity. I think you miss the statement, I'm an atheist I don't think the God."

Shamsi : "You should be the last person as an atheist because Prophet Muhammad got married to Aisyah as an atheist. **As an atheist**, you don't have no objective criteria."

Context: John responds to Shamsi's statement about God by recognizing that, according to Shamsi's belief, Allah is the Creator of everything and the source of objective morality. However, John then makes it clear again that he is an atheist and does not believe in God. Shamsi replies by arguing that, as an atheist, John has no objective foundation for making moral judgments. He brings up the issue of the Prophet Muhammad's marriage to Aisyah, not as a defense, but to highlight that someone who does not follow an objective moral standard should not be the one to criticize religious traditions. Shamsi's main point is that without a fixed and unchanging moral source like belief in God, moral judgments become based only on personal views, which makes such criticism less reliable.

In the utterance "**As an atheist**, you don't have no objective criteria," "atheist" is a label or designation given to John, referring to a specific identity or belief considered relevant by Shamsi. "Atheist" is used to refer to John's status or belief in the context of the conversation, specifically as someone who does not believe in God. As the authorized recipient, John is the legitimate recipient of this address because Shamsi is directing his statement

specifically to him.

When Shamsi debates with John, Shamsi refers to John as “atheist” that used 5 times (83,33%) a label that not only describes John’s belief system but also as a form of authorized recipient. This term clearly marks the ideological difference between the two, and by using it repeatedly, Shamsi positions John as an outsider to the religious group, which helps him strengthen the contrast between Islamic beliefs and non-belief in the debate context. Furthermore, in one utterance, Shamsi says “I’m Muslim” used 1 time (16,66%) to assert his identity and clarify his authority in the discussion. By stating this, he presents himself as an authorized speaker as it shows that his arguments are grounded in Islamic belief. It also allows him to distance himself from religious perspectives that do not represent him, such as Christianity.

Conclusion

This study explored the types and expressions of person and social deixis used by Shamsi, a Muslim preacher, when preaching through debate with an atheist at Speakers’ Corner. The analysis shows that Shamsi employed all three types of person deixis: first, second, and third person. Among them, second person deixis such as you (as subject and object), your, and yourself mentioned 152 times (63,85%) was the most dominant. The use of second person made Shamsi’s statements feel personal and targeted, allowing him to challenge his opponent directly, focus attention on John’s statements, and maintain control over the flow of the conversation.

Meanwhile, first person deixis included singular forms such as I, me, and my mentioned 42 times (17,64%) and plural forms such as we, us, and our that used 15 times (6,3%), which Shamsi used to express belief, assert authority, and build group identity especially when contrasting Muslims with non-believers. Third person deixis appeared less frequently, with singular form such as he, him, she, her, anyone, someone, and everyone were used 24 times (10,08%) and plural form they and them used 5 times (2,1%), often used to refer to general people or imagined situations.

In terms of social deixis, the most frequently used was referent honorifics, with “Prophet” mentioned 9 times (60%) highlighting Shamsi’s reverence and acknowledgment of the Prophet’s high status in Islam. Under relational deixis, Shamsi also used “everyone” used 1 time (6,66%) as an audience honorific, aimed at involving the surrounding listeners and creating a collective sense of engagement. For speaker and setting deixis, he used terms like “the scholar(s)” used 4 times (26,66%), which reflect formal religious authority and strengthen his arguments. Additionally, he also refers to Allah as “The Creator of Everything” used 1 time (6,66%), it shows his deep respect and recognition of God’s greatness.

However, the analysis found no use of addressee honorifics, indicating that Shamsi addressed his opponent directly and assertively without using polite titles or respectful forms typically associated with such deixis. This absence reflects the nature of the debate, where Shamsi prioritized strong religious assertions over social politeness, especially when engaging with a non-believer. In terms of absolute social deixis, Shamsi identified himself mentioned 1 time with the phrase "I'm Muslim" (16,66%) as an authorized speaker to show that himself is a Muslim and part of Islam, while he labeled John as "atheist" mentioned 5 times (83,33%) to define his ideological position as an authorized recipient.

Overall, his deixis choices, both person and social, functioned as powerful linguistic tools to engage intimacy and effectively convey his Islamic message, by defining identity, asserting authority, emphasizing ideological differences to an atheist in public space.

While these findings offer useful insights into person and social deixis in Islamic preaching through debate, certain limitations must be acknowledged. It focuses on one video titled "An Atheist Thinks It Could Be Okay to Sleep with a Baby" which shows one specific interaction between Shamsi and an atheist. Since this is a single case, the findings only reflect the use of deixis in that moment and may not represent all of Shamsi's preaching or other types of religious communication. His language style and deixis choices might change depending on the topic, audience, or situation.

In addition, this research only examines two kinds of deixis: person deixis and social deixis. It does not include time deixis, space deixis, or discourse deixis, which are also part of Levinson's theory (1983). These other types were not studied in order to keep the focus clear and the analysis more detailed. Future studies are encouraged to look at more data, types of deixis, and different speakers or events to get a broader understanding.

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