

A Pragmatic Analysis of Deictic Expressions in Mohbad's Hip Hop Songs

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Abstract

This study examines the creative use of deixis in selected lyrics of the late Nigerian Hip-hop singer, Mohbad, with a focus on how deictic expressions contribute to meaning, interpretation, and audience engagement. Drawing from Levinson's framework on deixis – person, spatial, temporal, discourse and social – the paper investigates how Mohbad's linguistic choices encode identity, proximity, and context in his lyrics. The study employs a qualitative method, selecting representative songs that exhibit strong deictic elements. The findings reveal that person deixis prominently establishes artist-listener relationships, while temporal and spatial deixis position narratives within specific moments and places. Discourse deixis is used to create cohesion across lyrics, and social deixis highlights power relations and societal dynamics. The paper concludes that Mohbad's use of deixis enhances lyrical depth, fostering relatability and immersive storytelling. The paper contributes to discourse analysis in Nigerian music studies, emphasising the pragmatic strategies artistes employ to connect with their audience.

Introduction

Music is a form of a poetry pronounced according to a certain tone, rhythm, time and melody to form harmony. It is structured with rhythm, melody, and harmony, making it the same with poetry (Cook, 1998). According to Cross, 2001; Koelsch, 2010; Sloboda, 2005 and Levitin, (2006), music is more than just a form of art; it is a vital part of human life that influences emotions, culture, education, health, and social interactions. Hip hop music is a common kind of music predominantly sung among the young people worldwide, including Nigeria. It was a movement that began in New York dated back to the early 1970s; and it started as a form of protest against the effects of post-industrial decline, political discourse and a rapidly changing economy (Ogunleye, 2015; Adedeji, 2013; Olutola, 2020; Oloruntoba, 2017).

There are different views to what has come to be known as hip hop in the domain of music, culture and dance. It is both a revolutionary movement of the culture of a set of people that gave them a tone to voice out their feelings over an unacceptable conduct, as well as a genre that provides a means of livelihood, especially in a continent filled with economic hardship and unemployment. Ordinarily, it began in the South Bronx, New York in the 1970s, as a kind of protest against the adverse effects of post-industrial decline, political discourse and rapidly changing economy. (Chang 2005; Rose, 1994; Schloss, 2009; Forman, 2004; George, 1998). It started in Nigeria around 1980 and early 1990s, also as a form of protest against military mismanagement of the economy, which led to the devaluation of the Naira, and job loss. It was influence by the America hip hop culture. The movement started in Lagos, and it was used by the youth as a means of escape from the crisis the country was experiencing. (Adedeji, 2013; Obidike, 2020; Osumare, 2012).

One good thing about this period was that these songs were recorded in CDs and made available to homes, since there were very few record labels to sign musicians. Also, videos

were expensive, but cheap computer editing softwares were available which made the CDs affordable. The new discovery and reliance on music made the youth to be independent of government and make a living for themselves. It also gave them the opportunity to use their music to criticise and also expose the wrong doings of the government and call for a change of leadership style for the good of the people. Popular hip hop singers as at that period included Junior & Pretty, Daniel 'Danny' Wilson, Plantashun Boiz, Remedies with members Eedri Abdulkareem, Eddy Remedy & Tony Tetuila. (Ogunleye, 2015; Oloruntoba, 2017; Osumare, 2012)

In the late 1990s, some abroad-based hip hop artists returned to Nigeria. Their return was significant because it added colour to the early Nigerian hip-hop scene. At that period, the musical genre was still developing and artists who had exposure abroad injected fresh ideas, production techniques and lyrical styles that help define the movement (Okunola, 2024). Some of them included eLDee da Don of Trybesmen, U.G.O, Madarocka and the S.O.U.R.C.E. Intl Clique, and from Europe, JJC and the 419 squad became a part of mainstream Nigerian music after the collapse of pop trends like Yo-pop. These up-rising artists in Nigeria began to localize hip hop and make songs in English and any other Nigerian language as a means of self-expression, thus making Nigerian hip hop multilingual. Other hip hop singers known to us in this modern period and who have made a name for themselves all over the world included Olamide, 9ice, Tuface (2Baba), Phyno, M.I. Abaga, Wizkid, Reminisce, Falz, Naira marley, Ycee. These artists have played pivotal roles in shaping Nigerian hip hop, each bringing their unique styles and perspectives to the genre. Their contributions have not only enriched the Nigerian music industry, but have also placed Nigerian hip hop as a formidable force of the global scene (Eze, 2020; Okunola, 2024; Liadi, 2012).

It is noteworthy that the hip hop music in no small measure has greatly influenced the Nigeria youth. It has given the young people opportunity to articulate their experience, frustrations and aspirations. This is done through the incorporation of indigenous languages and local cultural elements, thereby fostering a sense of identity and community among the youth (Obidike, 2020). The kind of music is also used to address pressing societal issues, including political corruption, social injustice, and economic challenges. This enables the young people to be aware politically and socially and be alert to take action when necessary. It also serves as educational tool, as it enhances language development and and critical thinking; as well as therapeutic as it affects positively, strengthening mental health and helping to process emotions and experiences. (Adedeji, 2013; Oloruntoba, 2017).

Hip hop is, however, not without danger. It is believed that its videos negatively impact adolescents moral behaviour, as violence, substance abuse, and explicit content in the videos, may influence the attitude and behaviours of these young ones (Gbogi, 2016). Some hip hop songs also modify criminal attitude, such as cybercrime, and drug abuse. The youth can be motivate to pick up such habit, as a social norm. Women in hip hop songs are are portrayed as mere object of sex. This can shape the perception of those who listen to such music and pick up a disrespectful tendencies towards women, also the dressing styles is always not acceptable in the society while violence and aggression are usually promoted in their videos (Ayobolu & Adebusuyi, 2024). One can only hope that these challenges will be addressed to save the future of the young people in our society.

However, little was known about Mohbad, who became prominent after his controversial and tragic death on September 12, 2023 at age 27. His death angered a set of young people all over the country, and led to a protest both home and abroad, calling on the Nigerian government to question one Fashola, popular known as Naira Marley, also a musician and a record label signee and Sam Larry, a music promoter claiming they should know about his death. According to reports, Aloba had reported to the police about Marley's harassment of him after he decided to quit his record label and seek another manager to manage his music affairs. He was one artiste whose memory would linger for a long time in the minds of music lovers, especially hip hop. His original name was Ilerioluwa Oladimeji Aloba. He was born a gifted Nigerian hip hop artiste; born on June 8, 1996 in Ketu, Lagos and died in 2023. He was a rapper, a singer and a songwriter. Some of his best hit songs includes 'Ponmo', Peace, Beast and Sorry, Feel God and KPK. After his death in September 2023, he was ranked number 1 on turn table's official artiste. (Aggrey, 2023; legit, 2023; examiner, 2023; gistlover, 2023).

The concern of this paper is to determine the communicative value of the lyrics of selected songs of Mohbad. Music is one of the means songwriters use to communicate their thoughts; however, not many study have been carried out in this area to explore the communicative strategies employed by singers to pass across their messages. We therefore believe that with the knowledge of pragmatics and deixis, song readers will grasp the communicative strategies employed by the songwriters to decode meaning within their lines.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the use of deictic expressions in the lyrics of Mohbad's songs with a view to describing his pragmatic use of the linguistic reference to convey meaning, identity, and social context in his music. The specific objectives of the paper are to: identify and categorise the types of deixis in selected lyrics of Mohbad, analyse their contribution to meaning construction and interpretation in Mohbad's lyrics, and discuss the pragmatic functions of deictic expressions in establishing audience engagement and lyrical coherence.

Review of Related Works

Pragmatics is described as the way meaning is conveyed by speakers or writers and interpreted by the listeners or readers. The analyst in a pragmatic description should explain the intended meaning from the lyrics of the song so as to understand the songwriter's message. (Claurin, Parjolo, Penina, and Rosina, 2023; Yule, 1996). Also, Crystal (1998) describes deixis as a Greek word; and it is a linguistic element that directly refers to the situation in which an utterance occurs. This direct reference can either be personal, temporal or locational features of the situation of the utterance. Through the analysis of deixis, one can understand the dialogue, utterance or sentence of whatever mode of communication, especially as sentences make particular reference to people, places, season or objects. The actual message of the speaker comes to limelight the moment the reader is able to know who, where and when the statement was made and directed.

Crowther (1995) describes a song as a typical brief piece of music words that constitute song lyrics. Lyrics provide additional medium via which one communicate their sentiments and emotions to another person. People listen to a song with the intention of deciphering the intended meaning. It should however be noted that meaning of lyrics are opened to a number

of interpretations. There are few studies on deictic expressions in Nigerian music; however, the available ones provide valuable insights into how deictic elements function within Nigerian linguistic and cultural contexts. Language plays a crucial role in Nigerian hip hop. It serves as a medium for cultural expression and identity construction. Artists often incorporate vernacular languages, such as Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin, into their lyrics. This practice reinforces cultural identity and challenges linguistic imperialism. Okunola (2024), in his study titled 'Identity and cultural expression in Nigerian hip hop' highlights how artists like Olamide and 9ice utilise local dialects to forge distinct cultural identities and engage in social commentary.

Adegoju (2014) examines personal deixis in Nigerian literary works, examining how authors use deictic elements to establish connections between characters and readers. The study fosters a sense of shared experience and cultural identity, and underscores the importance of deixis in conveying social relationships and contextual grounding in Nigerian narratives. Hip hop in Nigeria has brought about what is known as 'glocalisation'. This was a term used by Eze (2020), in his work titled 'Glocalisation of Nigerian contemporary hip hop music'. The term 'glocalisation' refers to a reinterpretation of global musical elements within local contexts. Eze (2020) discusses how Nigerian artists combine American hip hop with indigenous sounds, particularly highlife music, creating a unique genre that resonates both locally and internationally. This mixture does not only preserve traditional musical forms, it also facilitates their global appreciation. In another study, specifically on gender dynamism, women are portrayed as sexual objects, emphasising their physical appearance over substance.

Eze (2020) also supports this position, using the music of Wizkid to express how the sexual objectification of women serves to enhance social status and commercial success. Omolabi (2023), adds that seductive dance steps, indecent outfits, which are parts of the lyrical contents, suggest these obnoxious submissions. This trend marks a departure from the more respectful representations in traditional Nigerian music genres. Also important is the influence of hip hop on Nigerian youth, as it is believed to have affected language use, fashion, and social behaviours. This was the concern of Chukwuma and Onwuekwe (2021), as they examine both the positive and negative effects of hip hop music on students in tertiary institutions. According to them, the genre fosters unity and raises social and political awareness; but, its promotion of behaviours such as indecent dressing and involvement in illicit activities are serious causes for concern. Furthermore, the concept of the 'street' is central to Nigerian hip hop, especially as it symbolises authenticity and grassroots connections. Onanuga (2020) explores how artists reference the 'street' to assert their identities and credibility. This serves as a recurring theme, reflecting shared experiences and societal challenges.

Conceptual Framework

Deixis refers to words or expressions whose meaning depends on context. It is a term derived from a Greek word, and could technically mean to point something using language (Yule & Stalnaker, 1996). It deals with the ways in which language encodes features of the context of utterance or speech event, and thus also deals with the ways in which the interpretation of utterance depends on the analysis of the context of that utterance. Deixis is the function of grammatical as well as lexical means relating a piece of language to its context in terms of its users, the time and place of its occurrence, and the people and objects it refers to. Yule classifies

deixis by indicating person (me, you), location (here, there), and time (now, then). It is the first area of study in linguistic pragmatics that caught the attention of scholars. The words used in this function are known as deictics, indexicals, or indexical expressions. Typical examples are pronouns, demonstratives, time and place adverbs, and some grammatical categories such as tense.

Levinson (1983, p. 68-94) classified deixis into five types: person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, social deixis and discourse deixis. Person Deixis includes the first person pronoun (I); the second person pronoun (You) and third person (she, he, it). It can be in the plural form and can as well be in the object position. Time Deixis are also as temporal deixis. It locates points or intervals on the time axis, using the moments of utterance as a point of reference. 'Now' and 'then' are common temporal deixis. Place deixis is concerned with the specification of location. It describes an object on one hand and locate them on the other. This and that, here and there are good example. Discourse Deixis is also concerned with ways in which an utterance signals its relation to surrounding text. For instance, now, still etc show relationship with what has gone before. Social Deixis on its own relates to aspects of sentences which are determined by certain realities of the social situation in which the speech act occurs. It encodes the social identities of participants, their status and relationship among participants. Examples include nicknames, informal names, and titles.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research design, focusing on a linguistic analysis of deictic expressions in selected lyrics of Mohbad. The research is descriptive and interpretative, examining the use of deixis within the artist's lyrics to understand their contextual meanings and communicative effects. The data for this study comprise selected lyrics from Mohbad's songs. The selection criteria include; songs that contain significant deictic expressions, songs that reflect key themes such as identity, place and time, and songs that have gained cultural or social significance. The concept of deixis as proposed by Levinson (1983) and Fillmore (1997) will be used to analyse the work. The analysis will classify deictic expressions into personal deixis, social deixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis and discourse deixis so as to understand the linguistic, contextual and social meanings embedded in his music. A textual analysis method will be used to identify and categorise deictic expressions. Each occurrence will be examined within its lyrical and cultural context. The analysis will focus on the frequency and distribution of deictic expressions, the communicative function of deixis in shaping meaning and audience engagement, the social cultural and pragmatic implications of deixis in Mohbad's lyrics.

Presentation and Discussion of Data

Five different songs of Mohbad are examined: *Tiff*, *Beast and Peace*, *KPK*, *As about me and Sorry*.

Data Presentation I: Tiff

Everyday for the thief one day for the owner (En-en-en-enta)

Won ti s'ojoro (imole) They have cheated (Imole).

Everyday for the thief, one-day for the owner

Won ti s'ojoro (imole)

*She'bajose Marlians ni
Won waa Fe ma corner mi (won paro)
Won tun Fe bother mi (I get padlock)
But Oluwa cover mi
Won pe Daddy mi
Won threaten Mummy mi
They wan take the peace in me
Won Fe m'Olorun mi
Ararararara,ara,ara
Won ti s'ojoro, Ara,ara
Ararararara,ara,ara
Won ti s'ojoro (Won ti s'ojoro)
I no go gree(oh,no,no)*

*[Chorus]
Everyday for the thief one day for the owner
Paso wonder, fuck their gunner
Emi Messi,I no be loser
Won Fe ki Ronaldo gba comer
Barcelona for the corner
Hmm,won Fe kin wo Sapa
I don stop to smoke ganja
Mo dupe f'Oluwa hallelujah*

*[Verse 2]
Zzz,ko ja
Black, ko bad
Dollar, mo rise
Why is Naira falling down?
Kosi much but mo guide
Mi o fresh but mo fine
Won riran, mo sight.
In the darkness I am the light oh.*

*Oro kan o gbe mi lokan
Ebe Mi make I shup up(Ebe mi, ebe mi)
Humm, cause mo fe soro kan
But appreciation po gan
Fun' awon to da mi mo
Mo ti muyan ghan oh
Hmm, yeah*

*Everyday for the thief
One day for the owner
Everyday for the thief
One day for the owner
Everyday*

Data Presentation II: Ko Por Ke (KPK)

*Plenty enemies
wey dey follow me
Maje ko mu mi even if nah dying minutes
Emi omo ghetto moti di ajilomotor
My grace nah auto, automatic
Won fe bami ya photo, photo*

*Emi ti gbera (On God)
Lati 4:30 (On God)
Won le won bati (On God)
Won mu won file (On God)
My drip on check, otu wa on point (On God)
Imole (On God)
O wa le (On God)
(On God)*

*When I dey Ikorodu sapa mumi moma ronnu
I don work taya, I don pray taya
I don go mountain of fire
I know there's a day
All my pains will go away
Till then I party away*

*I know there's a day
All my pains will go away
Till then I smoke it away
I feel good parara
Omo iya mi malo roonu
I feel good parara*

*Emi omo ghetto
Moti di ajilomotor
My grace nah auto, automatic
Wanfe bami ya photo, photo*

Emi ti gbera (On God)

Lati 4:30 (On God)
Wanle wan bati (On God)
Wan mu wan file (On God)
My drip on check, otu wa on point (On God)
Imole (On God)
Owale (On God)
(On God)

Plenty enemies wey dey follow me
Maje ko mu mi
Imole

Data presentation III: Beast and Peace

Imole
Ahnn

Mo silent mood but beast ni mi
Mole cause violence but still peace ni mi
You don't have to hurt me, before you win
You don't have to kill somebody before you sin
Oosha le browse, lai de lo sub o
Oode le go far without God o
So moduro ti oluwa
So ko ki n se iru wa
Even tiwon funyin ni abo pelu spoon

Eo le joju wa
Emi ma de ti bad
Lati aye ladiladi
Lati 1990
To n lu beat patipati
Emi timo feel bad
Mo de tun feel good
Now mo n feel better
Surulere bi ojuelegba
Toripe mo wo okan , wonsope mo wa on drug
Now mowa on top , life mi ode ni contour
Mopawon ni naija , motun pawon ni london
Funwon ni kpk, ponmo, light boy mo n tana
(Light boy mo ntanaaa ooo)

Ahhh
Mummy mi ati daddy mi

Won kan lon question mi
Won ni ibo lotiri vibe yii
Shey owo demon
Awon tan senior mi
Won bere where you see money
Awon timo julo, won photocopy mi
First cashout mi, omo iya mo de fira bazooka
Moko fun awon sharp shooter
Emabinu tonba da sita
Traa ta ta ta ta ta ta

Awon tonfe shame mi
Wo, emi wa shameless
Wonfe stain white but mowa stainless
Awon niggas ton leave me
Won o le ri realness
Toripe silence mi
No mean say na weakness
Shoutout si iba j, diarra pelu hayan
Cy, darosha, prime boy, spending
With my daddy, dad mi wa splendid
Ologo, zomo, tia, bella
(Chukwuchilly)
Soul
Black
Oshamo
Wooni iru eh
Iru tooni
Ko ki n se original
Oofe, ofesumoni
But ko ki n se oun gangan

Data Presentation IV: Ask About Me

Ask about me, ask about me ('bout me)
Wọn tí lé mí, but wọn mù mí (mu mí)
Ọmọ Ọlọrun, kólé sù mí
Seke-sekebula ('bula)
I'm still getting my mula (mula)
Dollar pẹlú naira (naira)
Ikú tó pá ìyá teacher (teacher), ò lé pá àwọn nigga

Kí ló ńfọ lókè oh? (Fó lókè)
Èyẹ ló ńfọ lókè oh (fó lókè)

*Kí ló ñ rìn ni'le? (Rìn ni'le)
Àwọn èyàn ló má ñrìn ni'le, mà tẹ mí mọ'le, oh-oh
Má tẹ ojú ilẹ mọ'le, kò máà bà dọbale
Ìwọ lómá f'Èkó le, ko f'Èkó le fún wá*

*One man soldier, męta-męta, gbosa
Awilo Logomba, fún mi l'owó mí biza
Kese-kese, kasa, Casa-Casablanca
I open Bible Chapter, I stepped on the Satan
Mó p'ẹ̀şù dànù, mó kàn l'ẹ̀şẹ kàn
O tamurege, Jigan, oh-oh, why? Oh-oh, why?*

*They don't know, they don't know
They don't know, they don't know
I don go (they don't know)
They wan' know, they wan' know
They wan' know, they wan' know where I'm going (I don go)*

*Kí ló fà frapapapa? Kí ló fà pattern yẹn?
Wọn fẹ ká mí mọ 'beyẹn
Ọpọn tí sún finally, ọpọn tí sún finally
À ò bà ẹlẹnu méjì şere mọ*

*Ask about me, ask about me ('bout me)
Wọn tí lé mí, but wọn mù mí
Ọmọ Ọlọrun, kólé sù mí
Seke-sekebula ('bula)
I'm still getting my mula (mula)
Dollar pẹlú naira (naira)
Ikú tó pá iyá teacher (teacher), ò lé pá àwọn nigga*

*Kí ló ñfó lókè o? (Fó lókè)
Eyẹ ló ñfó lókè o (fó lókè)
Kí ló ñ rìn ni'le? (Rìn ni'le)
Àwọn èyàn ló má ñrìn ni'le, mà tẹ mí mọ'le, oh-oh
Má tẹ ojú ilẹ mọ'le, kò máà bà dọbale
Ìwọ lómá f'Èkó le, ko f'Èkó le fún wá*

*One man soldier, męta-męta, gbosa
Awilo Logomba, fún mi l'owó mí biza
Kese-kese, kasa, Casa-Casablanca
I open Bible Chapter, I stepped on the Satan*

*Mó p'èşù dànù, mó kàn l'ẹşẹ kàn
O tamurege, Jigan, oh-oh, why? Oh-oh, why?*

Data Presentation V: Sorry

[Verse]

*This kind life, e tire me
Daddy no get salary
Ten years I no see money
Step mother no care
Landlord e dey worry
My brothers are hungry
Daddy gather money make I go poly
I go poly but I no go class
Daddy I am sorry
I don dey do Yahoo
I don dey take banku
Omo pastor ni woti aye
Mummy just dey pray
Daddy just dey pray for me
Make e better for me
Me I no go school
Only thing I fit do
Music me I choose*

[Chorus]

*This kind life e tire me
Esu biri biri ke bo mi o
Iwaju loloko yi wa mi lo
Eyin loloko yi wa mi lo mi
Mi o mo ye o, mi o mo
Esu biri biri ke bo mi o
Iwaju loloko yi wa mi lo
Eyin loloko yi wa mi lo
Mi o mo ye o, mi o mo*

Pragmatic Use of Deictic Expressions in the Lyrics of Selected Songs of Mohbad

1. Personal deixis, as identified in the songs, which relates to the speaker, and portrays him as a victim of betrayal included: **Tiff**: The use of first-person pronoun 'I' (Emi) which presents his circumstance. **'Won'** (they) relates to an unspecified group, possibly the oppressors. **'Mi'** (my) indicates possession, explaining the oppression he was going through. **Ko Por Ke**: **'Emi Messi'** (I am Messi), **'I no go gree'** (I won't allow that), **'Won pe Daddy mi'** (They called my Dad), **'Won threaten Mummy mi'** (They threatened my Mum). **'Plenty enemies wey dey follow me'**, **'Emi omo ghetto'**, **'I don work taya, I don pray taya'** The use of 'me', 'I', and

'Emi' (Yoruba for 'I') focuses on the singer's struggles. 'Plenty enemies' refers to unidentified adversaries. The personal deixis in this lyrics focus on the struggle of the speaker, especially as he was determined to be successful. The personal deixis tells his story of hardship and determination to succeed. **Beast and Peace:** 'Mo silent mood but beast nimi' (I am in silent mode, but I am a beast), 'You don't have to hurt me, before you win', 'Awon to n fe shame mi' (Those who want to shame me), 'Mummy mi ati daddy mi' (My mom and dad). The use of 'Mo' (I), 'Mi' (me), 'Emi' (I) indicates self-reference. 'Awon' (they/those people) refers to external entities which could refer to haters, enemies, adversaries. 'Mummy mi ati daddy mi' also indicate close relatives. **Ask about me:** 'Wọn ti lémí, but wọn ò múmí' (They have chased me, but they couldn't catch me), 'Ọmọ Ọlọrun kó lè sùmí' (As a God's child, I cannot be tired), 'They wan know where I'm going', 'Wọn' (they) refers to unnamed adversaries. 'Mi' (me) and 'I' emphasise personal struggles. 'Ọmọ Ọlọrun' (child of God) strengthens identity and resilience. **Sorry:** 'Daddy no get salary', 'My brothers are hungry', 'Me I no go school', 'Mummy just dey pray', 'I don dey do Yahoo'. 'Daddy', 'Mummy', 'My brothers' all reflects family ties. 'I' indicates that the singer is expressing personal struggles.

2. Temporal deixis points at time. It reflects resolution of the issues raised by the speaker. This is made visible through phrases as we have in **Tiff:** such as 'one day for the owner' which depicts a future requital for the evil; 'I don stop' (I have stopped), meaning a change of attitude, especially from doing what was bad or unacceptable, and such is telling on the present. 'Everyday for the thief, one day for the owner', 'I don stop to smoke ganja'. **Ko Por Ke:** 'Lati 4:30', 'I know there's a day all my pains will go away', 'Till then I party away'. "Lati 4:30" (From 4:30) indicates a particular time. 'There's a day' reflects a day in the future when he will struggle no more. 'Till then' shows a rescind to fate, and get the best out of the present. **Beast and Peace:** 'Lati 1990' (Since 1990), 'Now mo n feel better' (Now I feel better). 'Lati 1990' relates to the past, while 'Now' talks about the present. **Ask about me:** 'They wan know where I'm going', 'Ọpon tí sùn finálly" (The status has finally changed, meaning I have moved forward). 'Going' suggests a future trajectory. 'status' suggest 'change', progress, 'movement'. **Sorry:** 'Ten years I no see mummy', 'I don dey do Yahoo'. 'Ten years' represents a long period of struggle for the singer, even in the absence of his mother. Also, "don dey" as represented in the lyrics suggested an ongoing he embarked on as a way out.

3. Spatial deixis reflects location. It adds metaphorical depth in the lyrics (e.g. financial struggle). Examples as found in each lyrics include, **Tiff:** 'Barcelona for the corner', 'Won Fe kin wo Sapa'. 'Corner' suggests being hidden i.e. hide his fame, do not want me to be heard. It is being used figuratively. 'Wo Sapa' metaphorically represents financial hardship, i.e. go hungry. (They want me to go broke). **Ko Poh Ke:** 'When I dey Ikorodu' 'Ikorodu' is a specific location (in Lagos, Nigeria), indicating what he went through before he became. **Beast and Peace:** 'Surulere bi Ojuelegba' (Surulere like Ojuelegba), "Mopawon ni Naija, motun pawon ni London" (I influenced them in Nigeria, I influenced them in London). 'Surulere' and 'Ojuelegba' are locations in Lagos, Nigeria, and form the usages of the singer, they represent struggle. 'Naija' (Nigeria) and 'London' also represent the locations the singer

has travelled to to influence people. **Ask About Me:** 'Kíló n fò lókè ó' (What is flying up?), "Kíló n rìn nílé" (What is walking on the ground?), "Máté ojú ilé mọ̀lẹ̀" (Bow your head to the ground) The contrast between 'lókè' (up) and 'nílé' (down) suggests movement, status shifts, or spiritual imagery. The contrast between 'lókè' (up) and 'nílé' (down) suggests movement, status shifts, or spiritual imagery. **Sorry:** 'Iwaju loloko yi wamilo', 'eyi loloko nwomilo' (Forward is where I am going, this is the path I will take). The lyrics use 'iwaju' (**forward**) to suggest progress towards a particular target, possibly a metaphor denoting progress in life.

4. Social deixis reflects social situations. It underscores personal relationships. Examples in the lyrics **Tiff** include: The rhetorical question about 'Marlians' indicates his past affiliation with the group. 'Ararararara' serves as an interjection, stressing the pains of the betrayal. 'Won Fe m'Olorun mi' suggests an attempt by the betrayal to know the source of his power. 'She'bajose Marlians ni' (We did Marlians together?), 'Ararararara', 'Won Fe m'Olorun mi' (They want to know my God). **Ko Por Ke:** 'On God', 'Imole'. 'On God' is repeated as a refrain, strengthen faith in God's power to save and deliver. 'Imole' means light and it shows his personality, as he's called. It could also mean a call for divine favour. **Beast and Peace:** 'Oosha le browse, lai de lo sub o' (meaning, through the methaphysical powers, one can browse without subscribing). 'Won ni' (They said) introduces reported discourse structure), 'Won ni ibo lotiri vibe yii' (They ask, where did you get this vibe from?). 'Oosha le browse' is a metaphor indicating smooth operation without struggle. **Ask About Me:** The repeat of 'Ask about me, ask about me', 'I open Bible chapter, I step on the Satan', 'Ask about me' is repeated, reinforcing self-confidence and reputation. 'I open Bible chapter' references religious discourse. **Sorry:** 'This kind life e tire me', 'Make e better for me'. 'This kind life' indicates he wasn't happy living the bad life, may be the group he associated with. It was a kind of regret for what he's involved in for survival. Also, 'Make e better for me' introduces a hope that possibly he would put an end to the negative habit and change for better.

Social Deixis indicates social hierarchy or relationships. Examples in **Tiff** and other lyrics include: Examples include 'Daddy' and 'Mummy' rather than 'Father' and 'Mother'. This suggests an informal, familial relationship, adding emotional weight. 'Won pe Daddy mi' (They called my Dad), 'Won threaten Mummy mi' (They threatened my Mum). this explicates the relationship between him and his parents.

'Ko Por Ke: Omo iya mi malo roonu' (Child of my mother, don't be bothered). The phrase "Omo iya mi" (My mother's child) shows intimacy with someone or himself. He's probably sympathising either with a younger relative or himself. **Beast and Peace:** 'Awon tan senior mi' (Those who are my seniors), "Awon timo julo, won photocopy mi" (Those who are bigger than me, they copy me). 'Senior mi' acknowledges respect for higher-status individuals, while 'Photocopy mi' is discouraging imitation. **Ask About Me:** 'Máté m'imọ̀lẹ̀' (don't cover my fame), "One man soldier", "Ọmọ Ọlọrun" (Child of God). 'One man soldier' suggests self-reliance; the speaker is like saying 'I am alone, but I can defend myself'. 'Ọmọ Ọlọrun' **indicates** a divine status. **Sorry:** 'Omo pastor ti woti aye' (A pastor's child has entered the world), 'Step mother no care'. 'Omo pastor' indicates a contradiction between expected

morality and reality - as the son of a pastor, he's expected to be a role model; but opposite is the case. **'Step mother'** indicates a polygamous home, possibly the father has another wife.

5. Discourse deixis reflects an aspect of the discourse. It helps to structure the song's meaning. Examples in the lyrics include, **Tiff**: The rhetorical question about 'Marlians' indicates his past affiliation with the group. **'Ararararara'** serves as an interjection, stressing the pains of the betrayal. **'Won Fe m'Olorun mi'** suggests an attempt by the betrayal to know the source of his power. **'Se 'bajose Marlians ni'** (We did Marlians together?), **'Ararararara'**, **'Won Fe m'Olorun mi'** (They want to know my God). **Ko Por Ke**: **'On God'**, **'Imole'**. **'On God'** is repeated as a refrain, strengthen faith in God's power to save and deliver. **'Imole'** means light and it shows his personality, as he's called. It could also mean a call for divine favour. **Beast and Peace**: **'Oosha le browse, lai de lo sub o'** (meaning, through the methaphysical powers, one can browse without subscribing). **'Won ni'** (They said) introduces reported discourse structure), **'Won ni ibo lotiri vibe yii'** (They ask, where did you get this vibe from?). **'Oosha le browse'** is a metaphor indicating smooth operation without struggle. **Ask About Me**: **'Ask about me, ask about me'**, **'I open Bible chapter, I step on the Satan'**, **'Ask about me'** is repeated, reinforcing self-confidence and reputation. **'I open Bible chapter'** references religious discourse. **Sorry**: **'This kind life e tire me'**, **'Make e better for me'**. **'This kind life'** indicates he wasn't happy living the bad life, may be the group he associated with. It was a kind of regret for what he's involved in for survival. Also, **'Make e better for me'** introduces a hope that possibly he would put an end to the negative habit and change for better.

Tabular representation of deixis in the lyrics of five selected songs

Types of Deixis	Personal	Spacial	Temporal	Discourse	Social
Tiff	'Emi Messi' (I Messi), 'I no go gree' (I won't agree), 'Won pe Daddy mi' (They called my Dad), 'Won threaten Mommy mi' (They threatened my Mum)	'Barcelona for the corner' , 'Won Fe ki n wo Sapa' (They want me to go broke)	'Everyday for the thief, one day for the owner' , 'I don stop to smoke ganja'	'Se 'bajose Marlians ni' (We did Marlians together?), 'Ararararara' , 'Won Fe m'Olorun mi' (They want to know my God)	'Won pe Daddy mi' (They called my Dad), 'Won threaten Mummy mi' (They threatened my Mum)
Ko Poh Ke	'Plenty enemies wey dey follow me' , 'Emi omo ghetto' , 'I don work taya, I don pray taya'	'When I dey Ikorodu'	'Lati 4:30' , 'I know there's a day all my pains will go away' , 'Till then I party away'	'On God' , 'Imole'	'Omo iya mi malo roonu' (Child of my mother, don't worry)

Beast and Peace	‘Mo silent mood but beast nimi’ (I am in silent mode, but I am a beast), ‘You don’t have to hurt me, before you win’, ‘Awon to n fe shame mi’ (Those who want to put me to shame), ‘Mummy mi ati daddy mi’ (My mom and dad)	‘Surulere bi Ojuelegba’ (Surulere like Ojuelegba), ‘Mopawon ni Naija, motun pawon ni London’ (I influenced them in Nigeria, I influenced them in London)	‘Lati 1990’ (Since 1990), ‘Now’ mo n feel better’ (Now I feel better)	‘O o sha le browse, lai de lo sub o’ (You can’t browse without subscribing), ‘Won ni ibo loti ri vibe yii’ (They ask, where did you get this vibe from?)	‘Awon tan senior mi’ (Those who are my seniors), ‘Awon timo julo, won photocopy mi’ (Those who envy me, they duplicate my work)
Ask About Me	‘Wọn ti lémí, but wọn ò múmí’ (They chased me, but they couldn’t catch me), ‘Omọ Ọlọrun kọ lè sùmí’ (God’s child cannot be tired), ‘They wan know where I’m going’	‘Kíló n fò lókè ó’ (What is flying up?), ‘Kíló n rìn nílé’ (What is walking on the ground?), ‘Máté ojú ilé mọ̀lẹ’ (Don’t defame the ground)	‘They wan know where I’m going’, ‘Ọpọn tí sùn finally’ (I have finally moved forward)	‘Ask about me, ask about me’, ‘I open Bible chapter, I step on the Satan’	‘Máté m’imọ̀lẹ’ (Do not trample on my right), ‘One man soldier’, ‘Omọ Ọlọrun’ (Child of God)
Sorry	‘Daddy no get salary’, ‘My brothers are hungry’, ‘Me I no go school’, ‘Mummy just dey pray’, ‘I don dey do Yahoo’	‘Iwaju loloko yi wa n milo, eyin loloko iwamilo’ (Either the driver is driving me forward or backward)	‘Ten years I no see mommy’, ‘I don dey do Yahoo’	‘This kind life e tire me’, ‘Make e better for me’	‘Omo pastor ti wonu aye’ (A pastor’s child has mixed up with the world), ‘Step mother no care’

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of the five selected lyrics of Mohbad, the study identifies several patterns in the use of deixis and they include:

- a) The frequent use of Personal deixis, especially the first-person pronouns (I, me, my) suggests a strong emphasis on personal experiences, the struggle for survival, deviation

from what is acceptable in the society, regrets and self-identity. They portray a strong self-image, reflecting themes of resilience, ambition, and struggle.

- b) Second-person pronouns such as you, your, etc. are used to address the audience directly, creating intimacy or issuing directives. It is like the singer is telling stories in an attempt to connect with his audience. Also, we, us and plural pronouns, such as they, reflect collective identity, sometimes referring to the artist and his fan base, his crew, or the society at large.
- c) Spatial deixis are also employed in the lyrics to geographical locations; and the singer used these areas to reference his journey to fame. The locations that are vital to his success, such as Lagos, Surulere, Ojuelegba, and even the streets. Spatial deixis helps to reflect the hopes of a better future he was looking forward to. The expressions help to reference his moving from struggle to success.
- d) Temporal deixis also contrast between the past and the present. He uses 'then' and 'now' to show both the struggles of the past, the mistakes, the regrets, the wrong connections, among other and the expectation of a successful tomorrow. Some of the lyrics show a progression of time, associating the past experiences with his present achievements. This enhances emotional depth and helps the audience relate to his journey. The deixis in his lyrics helps bridge gaps between artist and audience, reinforcing his authenticity.
- e) Discourse deixis also refer to previous statements within a song or contrast different ideas. It basically contrast life before and life after fame. Such deixis is also used to express important messages or themes.
- f) Mohbad uses street slang expressions as a form of social deixis to connect with his audience. This is regarded as informal or street-style language, to connect with the audience or his fans. However, this does not mean respect are not given to those who deserve it. He shows he's well cultured.

From this findings, it can be implied that deixis functions in Nigerian music, and it contributes to its sociolinguistic studies on popular culture. The deixis Mohbad reflects in his lyrics reference the common themes in the Nigerian society such as economic struggles, youth aspirations, and community ties. His choice of deixis also enhance audience connection, making his music impactful.

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