# DISCOURSE DEIXIS IN BELLE'S UTTERANCES IN *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* (2017): A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

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**Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi penggunaan discourse deixis dalam ujaran Belle, tokoh utama dalam film Beauty and the Beast (2017). Fokus penelitian ini adalah menganalisis bagaimana Belle merujuk pada bagian sebelumnya atau yang akan datang dalam wacana melalui deixis, berdasarkan teori yang dikemukakan oleh Levinson (1983). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, dengan data yang diambil dari diaolog Belle dalam film tersebut. Sebanyak 29 data ditemukan, yang terdiri dari 21 referensi anafora dan 8 referensi katafora. Analisis menunjukkan berbagai penggunaan referensi anaforis dan kataforis, serta adanya switch reference, yang mencerminkan bagaimana Belle menjaga koherensi dan struktur dalam komunikasi. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang struktur wacana dalam narasi fiksi dari perspektif pragmatik.*

**Kata kunci :** Anafora, Beauty and the Beast (2017), Belle, Deiksis Wacana, Katafora, Pragmatik

*Abstract*

This study explores the use of discourse deixis in the utterances of Belle, the main character in the Beauty and the Beast (2017) movie. The focus is on analyzing how Belle refers to earlier or upcoming parts of the discourse through deixis, based on the theory proposed by Levinson (1983). The study uses a qualitative descriptive method, with data taken from Belle's dialogues in the movie. A total of 29 data were found, consisting of 21 references of anaphora and 8 references of cataphora. The analysis reveals several uses of anaphoric and cataphoric references, as well as instances of switch reference, reflecting how Belle maintains coherence and structure in communication. There findings contribute to a better understanding of discourse structure in fictional narratives from pragmatic perspective.
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**Keywords:** Anaphora, Beauty and the Beast, Cataphora, Discourse Deixis, Pragmatics, Switch Reference

**INTRODUCTION**

Deixis holds a central position in linguistic pragmatics, as it connects language to the context in which it is used. According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics is the study of the relationship between language and context, encompassing areas such as presupposition, speech acts, implicature, discourse structure, and deixis. Deixis refers to linguistic ecpressions whose interpretation relies heavily on contextual information, and Levinson (1983) identifies five main types: person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. Among these, dicourse deixis refers to expressions that point backward or forward within a conversation or text, such as anaphora and cataphora, which serve to maintain coherence and guide the listener or reader through the flow of discourse. In addition, switch reference is often considered a related concept in discourse deixis, referring to how language signals whether the subject of a following clause remains the same or shifts, which further supports claridty in reference tracking.

Despite their significance, both discourse deixis and switch reference in spoken dialogues, especially in cinematic contexts, remain underexplored. This study focuses on analyzing these pragmatic features in the utterances of Belle, the main character in *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) movie, directed by Bill Condon. The film offers rich linguistic data, as Belle's dialogues reflect personal development, interaction, and narrative continuity. The aim of this research is to identify the types and functions of discourse deixis, including anaphora, cataphora, and switch reference, found in her speech, contributing to a deeper understanding of pragmatic features in movie dialogues.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study conducted with qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Muchtar (2013, p.10) explain that descriptive qualitative research method is a method used by researches to find theories or knowledge related to research at a certain time. This was due to the fact that this study focused on deixis field as part of human communication that help human as the user of language to perform the more understandable communication by giving ways to refer things in a discourse. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on analyzing discourse deixis in the utterances of the main character, Belle, in the *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) movie. Data were collected through direct observation of the movie, transcription of dialogue, and identification of deictic words such as pronouns and demonstratives. This

method aims to collect and understand data in non-numerical forms, such as words and observations.

**Time and Place of the Study**

This study was conducted at Bangka Belitung University from when this study was written until this study was completed. In February 2025, the data for this study were collected and classified into anaphora, cataphora and switch reference based on the theory of discourse deixis from Levinson's pragmatic framework. From March to May 2025, all data were analyzed in depth to answer the research question. Finally, in June, the last step was taken to conclude the analysis and complete research.

**Object of the Study**

The object of study is the main focus and target of a study to get answers form analyzing problems that happen in this study. The object of this study is a movie entitled *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) directed by Bill Condon, whish was distirbuted by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures and released in March 2017. This movie stars Emma Stone as Belle, Dan Stevens as Beast and Luke Evans as Gaston. This live action adaptation tells the story of Belle, a young woman who becomes a prisoner in a mysterious enchanted castle owned by a cursed prince, known as the Beast. Over time, Belle discovers the kindness and humanity hidden beneath the Beast's frightening appearance, and a unique bond develops between them. The movie features multiple characters, but this study focuses solely on the conversations of the main character, Belle, and analyzes the use of deictic words in her utterances.

**Data Collection**

This study uses a movie that includes conversations directly spoken by the characters as the source of data. The dialogues are analyzed to identify instances of discourse deixis. The data collection process followed several steps.

1. First, the researcher downloaded the movie *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) through the Disney+ app or the alternate website LK21, using subtitles to assist in understanding the conversations.
2. Second, the movie was watched multiple times to gain a thorough understanding of each scene and dialogue.
3. Third, the data were limited to utterances spoken by the main character, Belle.
4. Fourth, relevant utterances were identified, classified, and categorized based on the deictic expressions found.

5. Fifth, the selected data were organized into a table containing the utterance, the deictic word, and the intended meaning.

6. Sixth, the movie was watched repeatedly to ensure that the data collected were accurate and complete. Finally, all data gathered from the observations were compiled and prepared for further analysis.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis in this study applied a descriptive qualitative nmethod, as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2016), which focuses on generating descriptive data through observation of verbal behavior. The analysis process involved three main steps:

1. Identifying deictic expressions in the main character Belle's dialogues from *Beauty and the Beast* (2017),

2. Classifying them into anaphora, cataphora and switch reference based on on Levinson's (1983) theory of discourse deixis, and

3. Rechecking and verifying the data to ensure accuracy and consistency of classifications.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study analyzed the discourse deixis in Belle's utterances from *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) directed by Bill Condon. The analysis focused on identifying and classifying the types of deictic word and its function; anaphora, cataphora and switch reference, based on Levinson's (1983) theory.

**1. Anaphora**

Anaphora is the use of a word or phrase, such as pronoun or a definite noun phrase to refer to something previously mentioned in a conversation or text.

**Data 1**

**"Little town, *it* is a quiet village,"**

00:04:54 - 00:04:58

The pronoun *"it"* functions as an instance of *anaphora* of *discourse deixis*, as it refers back to the previously mentioned noun phrase *"little town."* Instead of repeating the noun, Belle uses *"it"* to maintain the cohesiveness of the discourse. This is consistent with Levinson's (1983) explanation that anaphoric helps to avoid redundancy by referring to something already introduced within the discourse. this utterance also exemplifies switch

reference, which refers to the shift in referential expression within a sentence. Belle initially introduces the subject using a noun phrase *"little town"*, and then shifts the referent into a pronoun *"it"*, even though the referent remains the same. This shift marks a change in linguistic form while maintaining the same discourse topic, showing how referential roles evolve throughout the utterance.

**Data 2**

**"To return *this* book to Pere Robert. It is about two lovers in fair Verona."**

1:18:00 - 1:18-09

The deictic word "*this*" in the phrase "this book" functions as a demonstrative pronoun and is categorized as discourse deixis. It serves as an anaphora by referring to a specific book already known in the context. The use of "this" highlights Belle's intention to return the book to Pere Robert, indicating the book is physically or contextually close to her. This deixis helps the audience identify the exact object being discussed. The book is already understood to exist by the second sentence; "it is about two lovers in fair Verona." And it supported by Belle's gestures that she pointed it first and clarifies what this book refers to by giving more detail about the book. The word "this" helps the audiences to understand which book is being talked about ands also suggests is the book is close to Belle. Moreover, the shift from the physical object "this book" to its content "about two lovers in fair Verona" can be understood as a case of switch reference.

**Data 3**

**"But she won't discover *that* it's him till chapter three,"**

00:07:35 - 00:07:39

The word "*that*" serves as a deictic expression and is categorized as discourse deixis because it refers to a previously mentioned or implied proposition — specifically, the concealed identity of a male character, who is likely Prince Charming in the book. According to Levinson (1983), discourse deixis involves expressions that refer to parts of the discourse itself, and in this case, "that" points to the narrative content that has been unfolding in the book. The word "that" acts as an anaphora, referencing back to the ongoing story already understood by Belle and perhaps hinted at in prior dialogue. This utterance includes a switch reference, shifting the focus from Belle's own present reality to the fictional world of the book she's reading.

**Data 4**

**"This is the Paris of my Childhood. *These* were borders of my life."**

1:17:56 – 1:18:00

The word '*these*' acts as the demonstrative pronoun that serves as an anaphora in a discourse deixis function. According to Levinson (1983), discourse deixis involves expressions that refer back to parts of the discourse itself rather than the immediate physical environment. In this case, 'these' refers to specific event that had already mentioned by Belle, which defined her life in the past and the word 'these' functions as discourse deixis which is pointing to the audiences toward a specific set of referents that have been introduced or mentioned earlier in the conversation. In this case, Belle previously mentioned about the childhood memories in Paris from her past, and she used the word 'these" to serves as a way to involve and emphasize those memories. Moreover, this utterance features a switch reference, shifting from Belle's current narration about her present self to her recollection of past experiences, effectively moving the discourse focus from present time to past events. This switch reference helps the audiences understand that Belle is moving between different temporal frames within the discourse, highlighting how her past life shaped who she is today.

## 2. Cataphora

Cataphora occurs when a pronoun or word refers to or point forward to the context tat comes after in the conversation or text.

**Data 5**

**"And for once *it* might be grand, to have someone understand."**

00:18:36 – 00:18:44

The pronoun *it* acts as e deictic word that functions as cataphora of discourse deixis. The word *it* in this sentence does not refer to the actual object but it refers to an abstract idea, which is described later in the phrase *to have someone understand.* This forward-referring nature gives *it* a cataphora function, as its meaning is only fully revealed later in the phrase. In Levinson's (1983) framework, discourse deixis refers to expressions that signal parts of the discourse itself, either previous (anaphora) or upcoming (cataphora). In this sentence, *"it"* anticipates the referent that is revealed later in the infinitival clause *"to have someone understand"*. Since the actual meaning of *"it"* is only made clear later in the discourse, this use qualifies as cataphora from the discourse deixis. This utterance shifts the focus from a general inner monologue about Belle's dissatisfaction with her life, to a more introspective emotional hope. The switch occurs between the broader situation of her mundane life and the personal longing for meaningful connection. This transition of narrative focus marks a referential shift in discourse, aligning with Levinson's view that deixis can index speaker

orientation and attention in shifting discourse segments.

**Data 6**

**"*This* is the Paris of my childhood,"**

1:17:50 – 1:17:55

The word "*this*" in this sentence acts as demonstrative pronoun, which serves as a deictic expression and functions as cataphora in discourse deixis, as defined by Levinson (1983). In this case, "*this*" does not initially provide a clear referent until the full clause is completed with "*the Paris of my childhood.*" From a switch reference perspective, the utterance moves the audience from a general or ambiguous reference "*this*" to a more specific and emotionally contextualized one "*the Paris of my childhood*". This shift invites the audience to transition from Belle's current perception to her internal, past-oriented reflection, a hallmark function of discourse deixis in shifting attentional focus, as outlined in Levinson's pragmatic theory.

**Data 7**

**"Who said *that?***

00:27:40 – 00:27:42

The word *that* is a demonstrative pronoun and acts as deictic word in a discourse deixis referring to the previously heard but unseen speech. In this context, that functions as a cataphoric reference within discourse deixis, because it refers forward to something that will be revealed shortly — namely, the characters Cogsworth and Lumière, who are enchanted objects capable of speech. At the moment this sentence is uttered, the referent of "*that*" is not yet visible or known to Belle, nor to the audience. Instead, it acts as a placeholder for the upcoming discourse referent. The focus of attention shifts from Belle herself (as the listener of the voice) to an unknown third party (the speaker of *"that"*). This transition in reference encourages the audience to shift their mental focus and anticipate who or what might be the source of the voice — setting up a moment of narrative suspense and audience engagement.

**3. Switch Reference**

Switch reference occurs when there is a shift in the discourse from one referent to another, often signaling a change in topic or focus. This helps guide the audience through the progression of Belle's thoughts, such as when she moves from a general comment to a specific emotional reaction or change of perspective. In the 29 data analyzed from Belle's utterances, switch reference emerges as a subtle yet significant aspect of discourse deixis.

This phenomenon is marked by the shifting of referents—often between people, events, or emotional states—which helps guide the listener through Belle's changing focus or perspective in the unfolding narrative.

**Data 8**

**"… and every year you bring *it*."**

00:14:08 00:14:10

The use of "*it*" demonstrates switch reference, where the speaker shifts from the explicit noun phrase "*a rose*" to the pronoun "*it*" in subsequent discourse. This change maintains cohesion in the conversation and avoids repetition. It supported by the previous conversation between Belle and her father. Her father asking Belle for what she wants from the market, and Belle answer "*a rose... like the one in the painting*". Make it the pronoun "*it*" demonstrates switch reference.

| Deictic Words | Number of Words | | |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| | Anaphora | Cataphora | Switch Reference |
| It | 11 | 2 | 13 |
| This | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| That | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| These | 1 | - | 1 |

Table 1. The Type and Function of Discourse Deixis

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

As summary, this study analyzed discourse deixis in Belle's utterances in the movie *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), focusing on how deictic expressions contribute to the structure and coherence of the film's narrative. Based on Levinson's (1983) theory, the analysis found that Belle frequently uses anaphora and cataphora to connect her dialogues with earlier and later parts of the discourse. These references help the audience follow the storyline smoothly and understand the development of events

through Belle's point of view. Additionally, switch reference was identified in several utterances, indicating shifts between scenes, time frames, or emotional states. Through these deictic strategies, Belle's dialogue supports both narrative progression and emotional engagement, showing how discourse deixis functions not only as a linguistic device but also as a cinematic tool to enrich the storytelling in the film.

**Suggestion**

This study suggest looking for broader references to other authors who use deixis, especially discourse deixis to analyze literary works. This study analyzed the use of discourse deixis in Belle's utterances in Beauty and the Beast (2017), focusing on anaphora, cataphora, and switch reference based on Levinson's (1983) theory. The findings show that discourse deixis plays a key role in maintaining coherence and emotional flow in Belle's dialogue, reflecting both the structure of the story and her character development.

For future research, it is suggested to explore discourse deixis in other characters or compare versions of *Beauty and the Beast*, including animated adaptations. Studies may also examine how deixis is handled in subtitles or dubbing to understand its role in cross-language coherence. Limiting the focus, as done in this study, can help maintain depth and clarity, but broader analyses may also offer richer insights when conducted with proper scope and resources.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Putri Nur Assyfa is an English Literature student at the University of Bangka Belitung. She was born in Bandung on September 11, 1999. Her friends usually call her Putri, Mput, or Cipa. In her free time, she enjoys watching movies, Korean dramas, and playing games. Her hobbies include traveling, trying new foods, and cooking. Although she is an introverted person, she finds joy in exploring stories and emotions through the lens of film and literature. She is also active on social media, where she often shares her interests, daily life, and favorite content related to pop culture and food.

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