

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of The Study

Understanding the context of an utterance is important in communication to avoid misunderstandings. Pragmatics is the study of the relation between language and context (Levinson, 1983), and one of its branches is deixis. In simple terms, deixis refers to words that point to something. As mentioned by Al-Hindawi and Saffah (2021), deixis plays an important role in studying context because it clearly shows how the situation of speech is expressed in language. Levinson (1983) divides deixis into five types: personal, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social (p. 62).

Among these, personal deixis is particularly significant because it directly reflects how a speaker positions themselves in relation to others through the use of pronouns. Although personal deixis is limited in form, its meaning can change depending on the context, which aligns with the main idea of pragmatics that the meaning of an utterance cannot be separated from its situation and social context. Despite its significance, Wibowo and Nailufar (2018) note that deixis is an interesting topic, but unfortunately, people tend to be unfamiliar with this term. This makes deixis an important area to study, especially in literary works where it can help reveal character development.

*A Christmas Carol*, a novel first published in 1843, is one of the well-known English classic novels written by Charles Dickens. Unlike most novels, *A Christmas Carol* is divided into five parts called “staves” rather than chapters.

Dickens chose the term “stave”, a musical term, to match the title *A Christmas Carol* and to present the story in the form of a Christmas song or carol. The story is about Ebenezer Scrooge, an old, greedy man who hates Christmas and cares little about the people around him. On Christmas Eve, he is visited by three spirits who show him visions of his past, present, and future. Through these experiences, he begins to change and eventually becomes a kinder and more generous person.

*A Christmas Carol* has been studied from various aspects, including literary and linguistic aspect. Rulinsantica (2021) identified the types of deixis in the novel but did not examine their relationship to character development. Puspita and Rokhman (2016) analyzed Scrooge’s character development through a literary approach without focusing on linguistic features such as deixis. Chandra (2022) explored the social conditions portrayed in the novel through a structuralist approach, focusing on intrinsic and social aspects rather than language.

While these studies contribute to the understanding of *A Christmas Carol*, none specifically examine how personal deixis reflects Scrooge’s characterization. They either focus on identifying types of deixis, analyzing characterization through literary approaches, or examining social aspects of the novel. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by examining how personal deixis and the linguistic features surrounding it reveal Scrooge’s characterization in the novel.

In pragmatics, meaning depends on context. The same pronoun can convey different meanings depending on the situation, the addressee, and the words surrounding it. Therefore, this study analyzes personal deixis by considering the context and linguistic features that accompany it, since these elements help

determine its meaning and interpretation. Based on this idea, this study aims to analyze personal deixis in Scrooge's utterances across the five staves of *A Christmas Carol*. By examining personal deixis together with the linguistic features and context surrounding it, this study seeks to reveal Scrooge's characterization as reflected in his utterances throughout the novel.

## 1.2 Research Problems

In line with the background of the study, the author developed two research questions to be discussed further, specifically:

1. What kinds of personal deixis are used by Scrooge at different stages of the novel in *A Christmas Carol*?
2. How do Scrooge's personal deixis reflect the changes in his characterization throughout the story?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to analyze how personal deixis helps reveal Scrooge's characterization in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. This study aims to identify the use of personal deixis in Scrooge's utterances and explain how its contextual meaning, together with the surrounding linguistic features, reflects his characterization. Through this analysis, the study seeks to describe Scrooge's characterization change at different stages of the story.

#### 1.4 Previous Studies

The author divided the review of previous studies into three categories: The first category provides studies that use the same object, which is *A Christmas Carol*. The second category includes studies that apply the same theory of personal deixis in literary works, especially novels. Last, the author also included studies related to the topic, particularly studies that discuss character development in the novel.

The first previous study was conducted by Rulinsantica (2021), titled *Deixis in Charles Dickens A Christmas Carol*. The study used a qualitative method to find the types of deixis and their interpretation in *A Christmas Carol* by applying theories from Levinson (1983) and Palmer (1976). The result shows that there are three types of deixis in the novel, which are personal, temporal, and spatial deixis.

The study also shows that the main character has an important role in the story by presenting the theme of life and showing the effects from the past, present, and future. While both studies examine deixis in *A Christmas Carol*, they have different focuses. Rulinsantica's study identifies and interprets the types of deixis found in the novel, while the present study focuses on how personal deixis and the linguistic features surrounding it reflect Scrooge's character development. Therefore, this study goes beyond identifying deixis by connecting it to characterization.

Another study by Puspita and Rokhman (2016), titled *Character Changes Reflected in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, examines Scrooge's character development using an objective approach. The study found that Scrooge changes from a greedy, lonely, and miserly person into someone more caring and sociable

after being visited by the three spirits, who show him his past, present, and possible future. T

he study concludes that these supernatural visits are the main cause of Scrooge's character development. However, the analysis focuses on character changes from a literary perspective and does not examine the linguistic aspects of the text, such as personal deixis. Therefore, the present study differs by examining how Scrooge's changing characterization is reflected through personal deixis and supported by other linguistic features, such as lexical choice, modality, and sentence structure.

The next previous study is *The Analysis of the Social Condition Portrayed in A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens* by Chandra (2022). This study uses a structuralism approach to analyze intrinsic elements, such as characters, plot, setting, and theme, and also focuses on social realities in the novel. The results show issues like social inequality, charity, commercial aspects of Christmas, and belief in the supernatural.

The researcher also looks at Scrooge's changes from a miserly man into a generous person who embraces the Christmas spirit. Similar to the previous study, this study has a different focus from the present study. While Chandra's study focuses on social conditions and intrinsic elements in the novel, the present study focuses on how personal deixis and the linguistic features surrounding it reflect Scrooge's characterization that changes as the story goes on.

The fourth previous study is by Nimanuhoel. (2017), titled *The Analysis of Non-Literal Meaning in Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens*. This research uses a

descriptive qualitative method to analyze non-literal meanings in the novel. The findings show various figures of speech such as simile, hyperbole, personification, irony, metaphor, and others, with simile as the most dominant. The study highlights how non-literal meanings help readers understand the deeper message of the story. While Nimanuhoel's study examines deeper meanings through non-literal language and literary devices, it does not use a pragmatic approach. In contrast, the present study uses personal deixis and its surrounding linguistic features to examine Scrooge's characterization from a pragmatic perspective.

The next relevant previous study is *Deixis Analysis in A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, conducted by Emad Khalili. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method to analyze five types of deixis in the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, based on Levinson (1983) theory: person, time, place, discourse, and social deixis. The data were collected through documentation by reading, identifying, and classifying deictic words in the novel. The results of this study show a total of 510 deixis, with social deixis being the most dominant, which is 32%.

The study mainly focuses on identifying deictic expressions and explaining their referents in the text. Similar to the previous studies, it has a different focus from the present study. Besides using a different object, the study does not examine character development. In contrast, the present study focuses on how personal deixis and the linguistic features surrounding it reflect Scrooge's characterization throughout the novel. By examining the use of personal deixis across the five staves, this study reveals the shift in Scrooge's characterization as the story progresses.

The sixth previous study was a thesis by Solihah et al. (2022), titled *An Analysis of Deixis in "Catching the Sun" Novel by Tony Parsons*. This study used a qualitative descriptive method to identify the types of deixis and what they refer to in the dialogues from chapter 9 of the novel. The study found five types of deixis: person, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixis, with person deixis being the most dominant (411 times).

Similar to the previous studies, this research focuses on identifying and interpreting deixis rather than examining character development. In contrast, the present study investigates how personal deixis and the linguistic features surrounding it reflect Scrooge's character development. This study also uses a different literary work as its object of analysis and examines how Scrooge's characterization changes across the five staves.

Another recent previous study is titled *Pragmatic Analysis of Person Deixis and Its Function in Encanto* by Khoiriyah and Rosdiana (2025). This study analyzes first-, second-, and third-person deixis in the film using a qualitative descriptive method. The findings show that first-person deixis is the most dominant and that deixis supports the story's structure. Although this study claims that personal deixis can enrich characterization, it does not clearly explain how personal deixis contributes to characterization. The analysis mainly focuses on identifying the types and functions of personal deixis and does not show how the use of deixis reflects characterization throughout the story.

In contrast, the present study examines how personal deixis and its surrounding linguistic features reflect Scrooge's characterization. Rather than only

identifying deictic expressions and their functions, this study also analyzes how personal deixis, together with other linguistic features, reveals Scrooge's characterization across the five staves. In addition, the object of the study is different, as it analyzes a film rather than a novel.

Another recent study, *A Pragmatic Analysis of Deixis in the Film Damsel* (2023) by Widiarini (2025), applies Levinson's (1983) theory to analyze personal, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deixis in the film. The findings show that deixis helps build relationships, create cohesion, and highlight social and emotional themes. Similar to the previous studies, it focuses on identifying and analyzing the functions of deixis. However, it does not examine how deixis reflects characterization. In contrast, the present study focuses on how personal deixis and its surrounding linguistic features reflect Scrooge's characterization. The two studies also use different objects of analysis, namely a film and a novel.

The ninth previous study, titled *The Study of Social Deixis Used in the Film Avengers* by Mukhtaruddin et al. (2024), examines how social deixis affects character interactions, story development, and audience understanding using a qualitative method. The findings show that social deixis helps shape power relations, group identity, and emotional tone in the film. However, the study focuses on social deixis rather than personal deixis and does not specifically examine characterization. In addition, the study uses a film as its object of analysis, while the present study analyzes a novel.

Finally, the last previous study, titled *Character Development of Agatha Prenderghast in the Novel ParaNorman* by Hasanah (2018), examines Agatha's

characterization using Kenan's Characterization Theory and Chatman's Structuralism Theory. The study finds that Agatha is tough, strange, quick-tempered, innocent, and loving, and that plot, setting, and point of view influence her characterization.

Similar to the present study, it focuses on characterization. However, it uses a structural approach and does not examine linguistic features such as deixis. In contrast, the present study uses a pragmatic approach to analyze how personal deixis and its surrounding linguistic features reflect Scrooge's characterization. Nevertheless, this study helps provide a basic understanding of characterization.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the use of personal deixis as a tool to reveal characterization, especially the character change of the main character, Scrooge, in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Instead of analyzing all types of deixis in the novel, this research is limited to personal deixis found in Scrooge's utterances. The study focuses on how personal deixis, together with its surrounding linguistic features and context, reflects Scrooge's characterization at different stages of the story.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The author hopes that this study can provide both academic and practical contributions. Academically, it may offer a new perspective in linguistic and literary studies by showing how personal deixis and other linguistic features can help reveal characterization. Unlike previous studies that examine deixis or

characterization separately, this study explores how these two aspects work together in reflecting characterization, particularly in describing Scrooge's characterization across the five staves of the novel.

Practically, this study hopes to help readers understand that studying deixis is not only about language, but also about how a character's characterization can be reflected through what they say. It shows how the use of personal deixis reflects how characters position themselves and how they view others. It also hopes to help readers notice the distance or closeness between characters through the way they use language.

