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Deixis in Most Rev. Dr. P. K. Boafo's Address at the 50th Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, Ghana

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Abstract:

This study examined the use of deixis in Most Rev. P. K. Boafo's address at the 50th annual conference of the Methodist Church Ghana. Most Rev. Dr. Boafo is the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana. It is a descriptive qualitative study which employs the textual analytical method. Hank's (2005) deictic field was employed in the analysis. The findings revealed that Boafo systematically sets up the deictic field by issuing several persons, spatial, temporal, social and discourse deictic elements in a subsequent plain field referred to as "ground zero". The Bishop's deployment of deixis in the address creates a deictic field where the congregation is thrust at the deictic centre, and the Bishop and his administration are set in binary opposition. The placing of the congregation at the deictic centre and the use of the person deixis such as "we", "our", and "us" create a closer relationship and harmonious management of the Church and, thus, bring the Bishop and the Church closer to the deictic centre where the congregation assesses his administration and himself favourably as a competent, spiritual and godly leader.

Keywords: Deixis, deictic field, methodist church Ghana, communication, religious discourse

1. Introduction

Language is the unique feature that marks man out from other creations. Many linguists have defined language from different perspectives. Hence, there are those whose interest is in dialects and those who speak them, words and their histories, the difference in systems, language as an art medium, uses of language, etc. For instance, Crystal (1971) defines language in terms of functions as the frequently used and most highly developed form of human communication. Njoku and Basil (2011) view language as basic to all human communications the world over. Therefore, the bottom line of language is communication. In this study, language is seen as a social tool whose primary function is to enable people to express, define and share their feelings, opinions, values, and experiences. Fosu (2014) refers to this use of language to communicate knowledge, skills and information as transactional. The meaning or understanding of the central evidence of language and its use is derived from the study. The major contributor to meaning in language use is the ability of the interactants to understand the linguistic elements and other socio-cultural cues employed in communication (Halliday, 1994; Fosu, 2014).

In daily communication, people select different linguistic forms to express meaning in different contexts of use. These linguistic forms must be closely connected for coherence to take place. Determining the meaning of various kinds of linguistic expressions is not a simple task because the reader or the hearer has to be able to understand and interpret the writer's/speaker's meaning. Deixis is one of the most basic things to do with utterances to achieve coherence, cohesion, and, therefore, effective communication. Studying deixis means learning one aspect of natural languages that requires such reference to know (at least) who the speaker and the hearer are, the place and the time of speaking in which the deictic terms are used.

1.1. Deixis

The role of context in helping to determine reference is largely concerned with ways in which the interpretation of utterance depends on the analysis of the context of utterance. It is generally acknowledged that perception of and orientations in space are determinant factors in human actions and interactions. Therefore, speech heavily depends on knowledge of the context: where, when, and by whom a sentence is uttered. These three dimensions are traditionally seen as the deictic centre of all linguistic events without which no linguistic expression can be properly interpreted. Bühler (1934) captures the deictic centre as the *Origo* (The reference point in relation to which a deictic expression is to be interpreted.) and goes on to demonstrate the same on a larger canvas with the phrase "Here, Now, I"; where *here* is for spatial deixis, *now* for temporal deixis and *I* for person deixis. Emphasizing the fact that context is the centre of all deictic anchorage, Hank (2005:19) asserts that "Deixis occupies a central place in the study of context because it is the single most obvious way in which the speech setting is embedded in language structure itself."

Deixis refers to words and phrases such as "me", "there", or "before the election", which cannot be fully understood without additional contextual information. Yule (1985) explains that deictic expressions are generally bits of

language that can only be understood in terms of the speaker's intended meaning. Therefore, deixis is a word with a reference point that is speaker-/writer-dependent and is determined by the speaker or writer's position in space and time.

1.2. Deictic Marker

A deictic marker is deixis, which refers to a word or phrase that points to the time, place or situation in which a speaker speaks. It is expressed in English by personal pronouns, demonstratives, adverbs and tense. These markers are: this, that, those, now, soon, then, here, there, I, you etc. Deictic markers give reference to when an event happens. For instance: now, yesterday, then, tomorrow, today, last month, some months ago. A sentence such as 'Kofi was here yesterday.' gives a reference or points to the time Kofi came here – "yesterday".

Place as a deictic marker gives reference to a location or where a conversation or an event happened. Example: here, there, Winneba, market, school, home, Church, that house. Example: I eat in this room.

Another point to consider in the deictic marker is the addresser and addressee. The expression may point to the person addressing or being addressed in a conversation. It often uses the first person pronoun "I or me." for the speaker and the second person "you" for the addressee. Sentences such as "I am a student." are first person pronouns, giving reference to the speaker as "I" and "You visited us." They give reference to "you" as the addressee.

Therefore, Deixis is a reference whose interpretation is relative to the context of utterance, such as who is speaking, the time or place of speaking, the gestures of the speaker, the current location in the discourse and the topic of the discourse. They are the first words acquired by children. In order to be interpreted correctly, the speaker and listener have to share the same context, and they are particularly useful in face-to-face communication.

Deictic expressions fall into four categories:

- Personal Deixis: Any expression used to point to a person: me, you, I, him, them, he, we and her. Example: I gave it to her.
- Time Deixis: These are words/phrases used to point to time: now, then, tonight, today, yesterday, last week, after the rainy season, during the competition, etc. Example: They were at home then.
- Special or Place Deixis: These are words used to point to a location: here, there, etc. E.g. here it is.
- Discourse Deixis: This refers to segments of unfolding discourse. They are used to mark the relationship between the prior and upcoming utterances in a text. In other words, they act as glue between different trains of thought in a discourse. E.g.: but, however, conversely, subsequently, and all in all.

Deixis has been regarded by scholars as an instrument of persuasion, and ideological posturing and religious speeches readily fall into this functional canvas of deixis (Al-Tekreeti, 2016). Religious discourse is a veritable tool in the hands of the clergy in their attempt to sell their views and beliefs to their congregation with the sole aim of reshaping their minds to agree with theirs and thereby win them over to God.

1.3. Religious Discourse

Whereas discourse analysis has been examined in a variety of disciplines, it is rarely used in religious studies in a systematic and methodical approach (Wetherell, 2001). This could partly be explained by the peculiar characteristics of religious language, which is often esoteric. However, this paradox exactly makes religious studies an interesting field to explore (Gubrium, 2014). Although various scholars of religion speak about discourse as it has become a fad in academia, their studies remain quite theoretical and only seldom use discourse analysis in a methodical/technical manner (Cruse, 2006). In any case, religious discourse has become an important field of study in various ways by various language researchers. Thus, it has gained grounds in discourse studies, and researchers have developed a great interest in its development and expansion.

Religious discourse exhibits many features that make it an interesting area for linguists. According to Akpowowo (2002), the language of Christianity has different purposes, ranging from communicating information to asserting religious truth. Apart from its religious purposes, the Bible, the sacred book of the Christian religion, and other religion-related texts possess a linguistic value which attracts linguists and language analysts.

1.3.1. Discourse and Tenor

Tenor has to do with the relationship between a speaker and the addressee(s) in a given situation and is often characterized by greater or lesser formality (Leech, 2008). Tenors can be formal or informal, polite or familiar and impersonal or personal. If the relationship between the speaker and addressee is official and distant, for example, in a legal document, the tenor will be formal, and if it is close and intimate, for example, a conversation between friends, the tenor will be informal. A formal discourse will have complex sentences and polysyllabic vocabulary, while in an informal discourse, there will be simple sentences and monosyllabic vocabulary.

Halliday (1978:143) conceptualizes tenor as "the cluster of socially meaningful participant relationships, both permanent attributes ... and relationships that are specific to the situation, including the speech roles." He modeled tenor as three distinct features, namely: Agentive Role, Social Hierarchy and Social Distance. The discourse of homilies within Halliday's systemic understanding of register is that register is an aspect of the context of the situation. Thus, in the analysis of the register of religious text as this, we have the following: the Church setting forms the field, the speaker and the audience represent the level of tenor, and the mode is written/formal.

1.3.2. Discourse and Domain

Domain explains how language varies according to the activity in which it plays a part. Discourse varies according to the field in which it functions. Functions of language are different according to different fields or activities, which leads to the construction of different discourses. Explaining the characteristics of religious language, Crystal (1971) claims that not all religious genres fall into the category of the language of the liturgy. For example, the language of sermons has stylistically more in common with other varieties of public speaking. The language of theological character might be treated along with other examples of learned descriptive or discursive narrative. Discourse can convey information, express feelings, and persuade someone to do something, and we have referential, expressive, and conative functions that discourse performs. If religious sermons, for example, are to achieve their purpose, which is to impact morality, they have to be easy to interpret. The sentence structure must be simple with less subordination.

1.4. A Brief History of the Methodist Church Ghana (MCG)

The Methodist Church Ghana (MCG) came into existence as a result of the missionary activities of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMSS), which was inaugurated with the arrival of Joseph Rhodes Dunwell in January 1835 in the Gold Coast (Ghana). By 1854, the Church had been organized into Circuits, which constituted a District with Rev. Thomas B. Freeman as Chairman. In 1934, when the Methodist Mission in the Gold Coast (Ghana) celebrated its Centenary anniversary, it had 125 225 members worshipping in 767 Societies. In July 1961, the Methodist church became autonomous and was called the MCG, based on a Deed of Foundation. This Deed of Foundation is enshrined in the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Church. In 1999, the Church resolved to be governed by the episcopacy system headed by a Presiding Bishop, Lay President and Bishops.

1.4.1. Governing Structure of MCG

Currently, MCG is one of the leading mainline churches in Ghana, with socio-economic and social development projects dotted across all the regions in the country. It has grown progressively over the years. MCG has 20 Dioceses presided over by Bishops. In addition, there are two Mission Dioceses: one in the northern part of Ghana and the other in North America. Dioceses are made up of Circuits, and a Circuit has two or more Societies. Societies are the direct local contact points for church members and the community.

There are 3 top-level decision-making bodies in MCG: Conference, General Purpose Council (GPC) and Synods. The Church also has a Board of Trustees and Lay Movement. There are 4 General Directorate at the head office overseeing the administrative operations of the Church:

- General Directorate for Ministries (GDM)
- General Directorate for Education and Youth Development (GDEY)
- General Directorate for Social Services (GDSS)
- General Directorate for Finance and Development (GDFD)

Each General Directorate has a General Director with 3 to 5 Directors serving various offices. In addition, there are other Directorates under the Executives. The 4 General Directorates are replicated at the Diocesan, Circuit and Society levels in the form of administrative committees. The Church has Standing Committees, Quarterly Meetings and Leaders Meetings, and Lay Movement Councils (The Methodist Church Ghana Strategic Plane 2022-2028 Agenda for Growth).

1.4.2. Current Profile of MCG

According to the *Strategic Plan Agenda for Revival & Growth* published by the MCG in 2022, MCG, as of 2020, is made up of 352 Circuits, with 4,934 Societies across the Connexion. The Church has a total of 1,057 ministries, of which 915 are ordained, 143 are probationers, and 187 are supernumeraries. The Christian Community (Total Membership) of TMCG was 879,953, comprising 874,326 members in Ghana and 5,627 members in North America.

MCG has 4 types of memberships:

- Full members
- Junior members
- Catechumens
- Adherents

Over the past 15 years, MCG has been growing at an annual rate of 2% - 3%. It is estimated that 39% of Full Members attend Class Meetings, while 46% of members attend church services regularly. A total of 318,310 (36%) of the Ghana Christian Community are members of the 10 organizations of the Church. Below is the breakdown:

S/N	Organization	Members	Branches
1.	Men's Fellowship	20,091	809
2.	Women's Fellowship	53,039	2,516
3.	Christ Little Band	17,457	657
4.	Susanna Wesley Mission Auxiliary	20,397	809
5.	Guild	20,634	694
6.	Choir	28,977	1,275
7.	Singing Band	32,114	1713
8.	Boys and Girls Brigade	32,386	584
9.	Girls Fellowship	30,831	1,172
10.	Youth Fellowship	62,384	2,221

Table 1

Source: *The Methodist Church Ghana Strategic Plan 2022-2028 Agenda for Growth: Page 25*

2. Statement of the Problem

Whereas many existing research studies into the various fields formed by religious writings have been exclusively preoccupied with biblical texts, this study examines a religious conference text. Again, many researchers have analyzed deixis from different angles and in different discourses. For instance, Muchamad (2020) conducted a study on deixis and referenced it in the Jakarta Post. The results showed that all types of deixis were found in Jakarta Post, namely: person, spatial, time, discourse and social, the dominant type being person deixis. Mwinwelle et al. (2019) conducted a comparative study on the use of personal deixis in the concession speeches of Akuffo Addo and John Mahama in 2012 and 2016. The study reveals the dominance in the first-person singular and plural pronominals by speakers to position themselves together with their parties in angle despite their defeats. David et al (2019) review personal deixis in Buhari's 2019 Victory and Democracy Day Speeches. Lagu (2020) examines the deictic expressions of selected speeches of Yemi Obasanjo. It identifies the audience's influence on Obasanjo's use of deixis in his speech. Omwoyo et al. (2021) investigate the significance of deixis in inaugural presidential speeches from East Africa. He realizes that presidents in East Africa used deixis in their inaugurals to perform specific roles and achieve desired effects. Mensah et al. (2022) also explored the use of deictic expressions in the 64th Independence Day Celebration Speech Delivered by Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo. It was realized that first-person pronouns dominated the text and that the speaker achieved the desired effect by calling on Ghanaians to exhibit teamwork, unity, commitment, and sacrifice to tackle the global COVID-19 pandemic. Also, another study by Syafryadin et al. (2020) compared person deixis among two languages and English teachers, and the results showed that English teachers were dominant in using person deixis. In the same vein, Maulana, in 2016, conducted a research entitled *A pragmatic study on deixis in the song lyric of Harris J's "Salam Album"*. She used documentary techniques to collect data, and the result showed that the person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis were the dominant types in the songs compared to other deixis types.

Due to the paucity of studies about deixis in religious discourse, this study sets out to investigate deixis in the 50th annual conference address of the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church, Ghana. To the best of my knowledge, there is no such study on this address so far, and this study aims to fill in this gap.

3. Research Questions

This study seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

- What are the dominant deictic features in the Presiding Bishop's address?
- What effects do the deictic choices create on the congregation?
- Of what relevance are the deictic field and deictic centre as analytical tools in the explication of the use of deixis in a narrative universe?

4. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study is based on William Hanks's (2005) *Deictic Field*. However, references were constantly made to Karl Bühler's *Deictic Centre* and Ground Zero, as cited in Otagburuagu and Ugwu's (2016) study. It is a qualitative study which is based on descriptive textual analysis. According to Hank, "the deictic field is a single field composed of, first, the position of communicative agents relative to the participant frameworks they occupy; second, the position occupied by objects of reference and third, the multiple dimensions whereby the former have access to the later." Here, the "communicative agents" refer to person deixis in a narrative universe; "participant framework" addresses the issue of deictic position in a narrative universe (whether at subject position – speaker, object position – audience, or deictic centre – reference point to which a deictic expression is to be interpreted) while "object of reference" could be any of the deictic elements in a narrative universe.

The deictic field, in Hank's perspective deictic centre is based on the practice and foregrounds which exist in the embedding of language in social fields. Through this embedding, social relations of power, conflict and value are merged with the deictic field. This notion of the deictic field has much in common with that of Bühler (1934) but differs from it in that the former is based on practice and foregrounds the embedding of language in social fields. Through this embedding, social relations of power, conflict and value are merged with the deictic field. Therefore, the framework adopted in this paper provides not only the method of analyzing deictic expressions but also raises issues and concerns regarding social

implications brought about by the use of deictic expressions. Furthermore, the notion of the deictic field herein is enriched by concepts drawn from Bühler (1934), particularly those of 'ground zero' and 'deictic centre' or 'origo'. Drawing from the works of Bühler (1934) and Goffman (1967), Hank explains that his framework adapts the field concept to the semiotic structure of deixis, where the result is "an analysis of deictic practice as an emergent construal of socially embedded deictic fields involving practical equivalences, counterpart relations among objects and rules of thumb (Hank, 2005: 191).

Ground Zero is the moment before the first person expression is issued. At this point, the deictic field is free from any deictic expression. When a speaker begins to make utterances, and the first deictic expression is issued, the ground zero begins to get occupied with different context-based information through a process called "deictic reference". Hank explains that deictic reference takes place in every field in which agents communicate with language. Therefore, to be the object of reference in a deictic field is to be thrust into a position. The two acts of taking up and thrusting into a position are both performed by the speaker. Consequently, the speaker has the power to use deixis in such a way that he situates himself and other communicative agents in a manner that judgment by other communicative agents will be favourable to him.

Origo is a reference point in relation to which a deictic expression is to be interpreted. It is also called the *deictic centre*. The deictic centre captures the present time, location, participant role and social relevance of the speaker. Consequently, in deictic reference, establishing a deictic centre is important as it facilitates the identification of other times, locations, participant roles and social statuses in the field.

4.1. Method of Data Analysis

The analysis is based on Fillmor's classification of deixis types as cited in Otagburuagu & Ugwu's (2016) study – person, place, time, social and discourse deixis.

Person Deixis: This is the grammatical persons involved in a communicative event. First and second person pronouns refer to the speaking and hearing speech – participant(s). Third-person pronouns are the non-speech or the narrated participant. This study started the analysis by x-raying the kinds of personal pronouns used by the Presiding Bishop in his speech. The analysis traced the roles assigned to persons involved in the speech to establish the position of each person relative to the deictic centre to ascertain how the distance established would help to reveal the overall idea advanced in the address.

The data was equally examined through the lens of spatial deixis, which is a deictic reference to the location relative to the location of a participant. Temporal deixis and its frequency of occurrence were also examined. The purpose was to determine the different periods of time involved in the address and their semantic import. Social deixis, which is contextually defined in this study as the marking of social relationships in a narrative universe with either direct or indirect reference to the social statuses of the agents, was equally analyzed.

5. Text Analysis

5.1. The Structure of the Text

The address is presented in a pamphlet form. It has 1089 paragraphs and 55 pages. The content is divided into the following subheadings:

- Welcome
- Appreciation
- The Methodist Church Ghana Theme 2023
- The New Methodist Constitution
- Creation of New Dioceses
- End of Tenures and Superannuations
- Presiding Bishop's Pastoral Visits
- General Directorate for Education and Youth Development
- General Directorate for Finance and Development
- General Directorate for Ministries
- General Directorate for Social Services
- Methodist Relief and Rural Development (MDRS)
- Planning Research and Growth Directorate The Methodist Strategic Plan – Agenda for Revival and Growth
- Methodist Investments and Properties Limited (MIPL)
- The Church and National Issues
- Conclusion

5.2. Question 1

What are the dominant deictic features in the Presiding Bishop's address?

The deictic words found in the text are broken into the following:

Person deixis	268
Place/Spatial deixis	47
Time/Temporal deixis	23
Social deixis	22
Discourse deixis	1,093

The deictic field is referred to as *ground zero* before the first deictic reference is made. This is the time the field is plain and free from any deictic element and their corresponding roles. Therefore, on the eve of 16 August 2022, the Presiding Bishop, Most Rev. Boafo, established the ground zero. As soon as he issued the first deictic reference in his first sentence on 17 August 2022, the deictic field began to be filled with different persons, spatial, temporal and social relations, which created certain effects in the address. The first deictic reference is captured in Rev. Boafo's first sentence:

- Extract 1: With great pleasure and much gratitude to God, I welcome you all, in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to the official opening ceremony of the Golden Jubilee Conference in Winneba. (page 1)

This above sentence contains 4 deictic words which can be broken into:

First-person deixis "I"	1
Second person plural objective "you"	1
First-person plural possessive "our"	1
Temporal deixis "Winneba"	1

5.2.1. Personal Deixis in the Text

The most used deictic category in the address is person deixis. The address contains 268 person deixis, which can be classified into the following:

First-person singular, subjective "I"	32
First-person plural, subjective "we"	47
First-person plural, objective "us"	12
First-person plural possessive "our"	30
Second person singular/plural, subjective/objective "you"	34
Third person plural, subjective "they"	33
Third person plural, objective "them"	21
Total	268

The role assigned to persons involved in the address exposes the position of each person relative to the deictic centre and shows how the distance established aids the understanding of the meaning of the text.

Boafo's deployment of second person and third person deixis to refer to Methodists/Christians places his addressees at the *origo* or *deictic centre* and himself near the deictic centre. The second person deixis establishes a near-the-other relationship between the speaker and his addressees, while his use of the third person to refer to ministers/Methodists/Christians/other workers in the Methodist church connotes a far-apart relationship relative to the speaker.

His predominant use of "we" and "our" in the address indexes a closer relationship, shared principle and common aspiration between Rev. Boafo and the Methodist Christian community in Ghana. He uses it to buttress the fact that he, a priest, and the Christian community have an equal share in the kingdom of God and to let the congregation know that he, despite being the spiritual/administrative father of the Church, is part and parcel of the Church. Boafo has, therefore, issued more second person pronoun in the text to achieve the desired symmetry.

Let's examine some extracts from the text to buttress these points:

- (a) First person singular, subjective "I"
 - Extract 1: I thank the Lay President, William Orleans Oduro Esq. and the Administrative Bishop, Rt. Rev. Michael Agyakwa Bossman for their support throughout the year. (Page 2)
- (b) First person plural, subjective "we"
 - Extract 2: We have acquired enough graded teaching materials from the Rafiki Foundation. (page 3)
- (c) First person plural, objective "us"
 - Extract 3: I am very grateful to members at all levels who have never ceased to pray for us and the administration. (page 2)
- (d) First person plural possessive "our"
 - Extract 4: Our church services must be kept within the planned durations and avoid stretching the congregations. (page 52)
- (e) Second person singular/plural, subjective/objective "you"
 - Extract 5: I welcome all of you and thank you for honouring our invitation. (page 1)
- (f) Third person plural, subjective "they."
 - Extract 6: They went out there to serve where they were needed most with their families. (page 7)
- (g) Third person plural, objective "them"
 - Extract 7: The Conferences were informed, and arrangements were made to meet them virtually. (page 35)

5.2.2. Place/Spatial Deixis

Place deixis has the second highest frequency ratio in Boafo's deployment of deictic elements. The communicative event takes place in a physical location in Winneba, as we can see in the address (pages 1 & 55). However, Boafo's use of "Conference", "the Methodist Church Ghana", and "The Church" makes them the spatial deictic centre. The de-emphasis on "Winneba" and the emphasis on "Conference", "the Methodist Church Ghana", and "the Church" is understandable since the speaker is addressing not only Methodist members in Winneba but also the entire Methodist Church members in Ghana and extension across the world. The Methodist Christians' deictic centre could attract the audience to favour the

speaker in the discourse as they would surely identify themselves more with Christianity (Methodism), which is the faith they hold dear to and will want to protect. Rev. Boafo's use of Conference, the Methodist Church, Ghana and the Church aids in setting up a deictic field where the Methodist Christians in Ghana assess him and his administration favourably.

Here are some extracts from the address:

- Extract 10: ... I welcome you all in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to the official opening ceremony of the Golden Jubilee Conference in *Winneba*. (page 1)
- Extract 11: *The Church* is living up to its mandate of spreading scriptural holiness and reforming the land. (page 9)
- Extract 12: At this *Conference*, we would be receiving five new Bishops for the Tarkwa, Sekondi, Nkawkaw, Ho and the North American Dioceses.
- Extract 13: The vision of the *Methodist Church Ghana* envisages that education received in our schools will be based on academic excellence and development of individual ... (page 15)

5.2.3. Time/Temporal Deixis

Bishop Boafo makes use of temporal deixis 29 times in the narrative universe. Such temporal deictic items include *regularly, after, in the light of the situation, now, in the year under review, at the end of the planning period, when, then, later*.

The phrasal temporal deixis occurs more in the text than the single-word temporal deixis. Given the distribution of temporal deixis, the origo seems to be the activities of the Church over the years before the 50th Conference. As the spiritual/ administrative leader of the Church, it is his duty to review and report on the activities of different dioceses, organizations and directorates under his administration. This reference to the past activities as *then* and *now* and his reference to the possible leadership control after the Conference as *when* thrust both his previous administration before the Conference and his possible administration after the Conference in a binary opposition and the Methodist members in Ghana at the deictic centre. Rev. Boafo effectively set up a temporal deictic field where the person deictic centre, Methodist members, would hold favourable judgment for him and his administration.

Let us examine some of those temporal deixis in the text:

- Extract 14: The station has been very useful in the education of our members and in reaching out to the members who are infirm and cannot attend Church services *regularly*. (page 10)
- Extract 15: *After* nearly three years of hard work, the Planning ... (page 43)
- Extract 16: *In the light of the situation*, I charge the General Directorate for ... (page 38)
- Extract 17: We are *now* engaging the NSS Secretariat on the possibilities of ... (pages 28-29)
- Extract 18: *In the year under review*, the YDM, together with the Children Ministry, presented a joint ... (page 20)

5.2.4. Social Deixis

The social deixis is the least in the distribution of the Rev Boafo's address. Social deixis, as pointed out earlier, gives information on the social statuses of deictic agents, especially personal deictic agents. Social deixis are represented in the text with such expressions as *the members, the youth, the Coordinator, the Methodist Evangelists, Dioceses, Circuit and Societies, Christians, and ministers*.

It is evident that *members* index the Methodist Church members and not the other Christians who belong to other denominations in Ghana. Rev. Boafo, therefore, uses the social deictic category to present the congregation and the various societies and directorates that make up the Methodist Church Ghana as the greatest and the most important pillar of the Church and not necessarily the ministers.

Below are some extracts from the text:

- Extract 19: *The members* met us at the outskirts of the town with the Brigade or Brass Bands. (page 8)
- Extract 20: ... *the youth* were at the forefront. (page 18)
- Extract 21: *Directorate, Dioceses, Circuits and Societies* are charged to apply these guidelines for the formulation of their annual action programmes. (page 50)
- Extract 22: *The Coordinator* is putting in place plans to reach out to various... (page 29)
- Extract 23: *The Methodist Evangelists* continue to support the missions of the Church through the Connexion. (page 29)

5.2.5. Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis refers to portions of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance is located (Levinson, 1983). That is to say that discourse deixis are expressions used to refer to certain discourse that contains the utterance and how they relate to the co-text. Discourse deictic elements indicate prior or succeeding parts of the discourse: the words and phrases that indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse. They run commentary on the text, and with expressions such as 'but', 'therefore', 'in conclusion', 'actually', and 'all in all', they construct discourse and manage the current utterance in chronological order. They refer to either anaphorically (backward reference) or cataphorically (forward reference) with the help of both demonstratives and adverbials (Suleymanova, 2018). Such deictic words can be used to express anticipation of upcoming utterances; for example, "here" and "that". Examples: "**Here** comes the bride" and "**That** was a true report."

The table below displays a number of discourse markers with their ranks identified in the inaugural speeches.

Deixis	Rank
Also	41
Again	99
After	35
Then	53
Yet	20
So	31
Since	33
Among	45
That	44
But	106
If	26
Next	83
Also	109
Another	29
Because	202
Conclusion	06
Hence	19
However	43
in addition	21
Therefore	42
Or	11
While	16

Table 2: Discourse Deixis and Their Ranks

Here are some examples from the text:

- Extract 24: We rejoice that *so* many friends from outside and within Ghana can be present with us. (page 1)
- Extract 25: *In addition*, they donated enough copies of R. Kent Hughes' book on Romans (page 3)
- Extract 26: The Conference will *also* see the end of the tenure of fourteen (14) Lay Chairmen who have worked for the past three years. (page 7)
- Extract 27: That the Teens Service will comprise those between the ages of 15-17 years (those in Senior High school. (Page 20)
- Extract 28: This is *because* there are *so* many Preachers today who mount out pulpits who do not believe in our Doctrines. (Page 27)

5.3. Question 2

What effects do the deictic choices create on the congregation?

The findings reflect tactical manipulation of pronominal elements by the speaker to curry favour and place himself as an effective administrative leader of a big organization such as the Methodist Church in Ghana. Rev. Boafo's use of two and three-participant deixis is strategic. He employs more strategies by switching back and forth from two to three-participant person deixis. The Bishop's preference for "we" as against the use of "I" in many places, as can be seen in the extracts above, indexes his deliberate attempt to establish an identity that is close to the congregation's collective persuasions and aspiration, in order to achieve what Adetunji (2012) terms "anchorage in... discourse." Examples:

- Extract 29: *We* have acquired enough graded teaching materials from... (page 3)
- Extract 30: *We* have spent the current years building the necessary database and structures for ... (page 43)

5.4. Question 3

Of what relevance are the deictic field and deictic centre as analytical tools in the explication of the use of deixis in a narrative universe?

Rev. Boafo's use of deixis to reflect 16 items he spoke on as itemized under the structure above, from Welcome to Conclusion, effectively endears him to the person deictic centre, the members of the Methodist Church Ghana. The high frequency of the term the Methodist Church Ghana (page 27), Members, the Directorate, the Societies, the Youth, and the Preachers (pages 10, 27, 29) makes them the spatial deictic centre. This helps set up a deictic field where the Methodist members assess the speaker and his administration favourably. Expressions like "Let *us* all rise to *our* mandate of equipping *the Church* for ministry to the world. *The Methodist Church Ghana* meeting this year in Winneba must allow the power of *the Holy Spirit* to direct all *our* decisions and deliberations." (Page 55) are all social deictic references that give information on the social statuses of the deictic agents in the deictic field.

6. Conclusion

Understanding the deixis is very important in understanding a text. Studying deixis means learning a very significant aspect of natural language. By applying the framework anchored on Hank's notion of *deictic field* and *ground zero/origo*, this paper found that Bishop Boafo strategically set up the deictic field in a manner that he and his

administration are thrust in binary position and the congregation at the deictic centre. Rev. Bofo uses personal pronouns to move from the binary position close to the deictic centre to create a sense of conviviality between himself and the Methodist Church Ghana members, while his administration is placed far from the deictic centre with the use of third pronominal forms. Another key finding of this study is the strategic use of deictic expressions by the Bishop to establish a sense of shared knowledge and identity within the religious community. By anchoring discourse in specific temporal and spatial contexts, these linguistic markers contribute to a cohesive institutional narrative, fostering a sense of belonging among stakeholders. Additionally, the study has highlighted how deictic expressions play a crucial role in the negotiation of power relations, as religious leaders utilize language to assert authority, define roles, and shape perceptions within the religious discourse. The insights gained from this analysis contribute to the ongoing dialogue on language and discourse, providing a foundation for continued exploration and understanding of communication within religious circles and beyond.

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