

The Use of Deixis in Students' Writing of Descriptive Texts

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the types of deixis, and the deixis used, and to analyze the reason deixis used in the students' writing descriptive text at the tenth grade MIA 2 high school Kemala Bhayangkari Medan. This research used descriptive qualitative research where the participants were 20 students who took English class. The result of this research showed five types of deixis, how the deixis are used, and the reason deixis is used in their writing using Levinson's theory (1983). Five types of deixis are spatial deixis, temporal deixis, person deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis. From 20 total data, the researcher found 186 deictic words in the students' writing. 84 or 45% in the spatial deixis, 40 or 22% in the person deixis, 25 or 13% in the temporal deixis, 22 or 12% in the discourse deixis, and 15 or 8% in the social deixis. Therefore, the reasons students used deixis are: to indicate a specific location, chronology of events, to convey a personal point of view, to incorporate cultural and social signifiers, and to create a strong and coherent connection.

KEYWORDS

deixis; descriptive writing; students' writing

INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential tool for communicating through language. According to Brown (2001), writing is a verbal exchange in which writers freely communicate their ideas without giving any concern to what other people may be experiencing, thinking, or witnessing at the time. It implies that writing helps people to communicate better because it allows them to put their ideas, feelings, and opinions into words. Writing has also been shown to increase the effectiveness of communicating extremely complex ideas.

Writing is a way to verbally express ideas and emotions to other people. Writing may help someone absorb information, make connections between ideas, organize thoughts into a coherent concept, absorb knowledge, and learn actively-especially when learning is done in writing (Hairston, 1986). In the modern world, writing skills are becoming more and more important, particularly in the fields of education and second and foreign language learning (Weigle, 2002).

Writing produces ordered thoughts that are logical and uses proper language to provide clearer meaning. The primary goal of writing is to make meaning clear since this helps to establish communication with readers. As a result, the writer should arrange each paragraph such that it makes sense in context.

According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics is the field of study that examines the utilization of language and its connection to the surrounding context. This study is crucial for elucidating language comprehension as it necessitates making inferences between the stated information and the presumed or previously stated information. Meyer (2009)

defined pragmatics as the examination of how language usage is shaped by both social and linguistic factors. Pragmatics is concerned with the study of language usage within a specific context, taking into account the influence of context on speech and the intentions of speakers in their choice of words. It also encompasses the examination of how individuals interact during language use. Pragmatics, a field of linguistics, has been demonstrated to promote the contextual use of language by language users. It suggests that language is employed when suitable. Language is necessary to convey meaning that is dependent on the context.

Deixis can assist writers in employing language more efficiently to communicate meaning. Unconsciously, we utilize deixis in our daily communication, regardless of whether it is oral or written, formal or informal. When readers receive a new message, it is essential for them to have clear information about the speaker, the listener, the location, and the timing of the occurrences. Deixis, a branch of pragmatics, focuses on how languages express or grammaticalize aspects of the environment in which speech occurs. Levinson (1983) argues that the understanding of utterances is influenced by the examination of the specific environment in which they are made. Authors must consider the strategic use of deixis to successfully convey meaning in writing, as it establishes the connection between language structure and context.

As part of the Curriculum 2013, tenth graders are required to study descriptive text as writing material. Descriptive text is a type of text that provides the reader with information or a detailed depiction (Fitriani et al, 2019). This type of writing provides factual information on various subjects, such as individuals, animals, items, and places. Suminar and Putri (2018) define a descriptive text as a form of writing that imparts knowledge and understanding to readers by providing clear descriptions of people, animals, objects, or places.

Referring to Basic Competence point 3.7, Compile concise and straightforward descriptive writings, both oral and written, about tourist sites and renowned historical buildings. Consider the social functions, text structures, and linguistic aspects, ensuring accuracy and contextual relevance. It highlights the necessity for tenth-grade students to comprehend the significance of a descriptive text in both written and oral formats. In order to create a descriptive text effectively, the students must first comprehend the importance of a descriptive text.

Deixis can enhance students written composition by utilizing one word to refer to another. According to Meyer (2009), words have a role called deixis, which not only carries meaning but also serves to point to something. However, most students remain uncertain about how to comprehend the deixis they constantly meet throughout the act of writing, reading, watching, or listening to stories, short stories, or novels. According to Karolina (2006), writing is considered a particularly difficult subject for kids in school. Therefore, teachers must ensure that writing lessons are easily understandable and choose high-quality materials to use for teaching writing.

In order to analyze the descriptive text pertaining to the aforementioned cases, specific research investigations have been conducted. The study conducted by Ratnaningsih and Azizah (2019) focused on identifying and analyzing the potential technical errors that can arise when composing a descriptive paragraph. Their study aimed to investigate inconsistencies and errors in descriptive writing. The study revealed that the most common errors committed by pupils in their descriptive writing were related to capitalization and sentence structure. The research conducted by Maharatu (2018) involved analyzing the students' descriptive writing and collecting relevant data for the study. Based on the results, seventh-grade students demonstrated accurate usage of deixis in their descriptive writings.

The data collection's statistics confirmed that 91 percent of deixis words were used accurately, whereas 9 percent were used inaccurately.

A study by Maharatu (2018) examined the use of deixis in descriptive writing by seventh-grade students in Indonesia. The study found that 71% of students were proficient in using appropriate deixis. However, students face challenges in writing, including language, cognitive, and psychological issues. These issues can be identified through lack of ideas, linguistic complexity, and lack of subject matter proficiency.

The correct application of deixis aids the reader in comprehending the final written work produced by pupils. Improper utilization of deixis might result in a misinterpretation in the communication between the author and the recipient. It signifies the potential for the reader to misconstrue the writer's intended significance. Therefore, it is advisable to introduce deixis at an early stage of language acquisition to aid tenth graders in utilizing deixis accurately, thereby enhancing their writing as a means of communication. This study showcases the coexistence of descriptive writing and pupils in the initial phase of formal English teaching. Therefore, utilizing tenth graders' descriptive writing can be an effective starting point for instructing accurate deixis usage.

To address the writing issues faced by students, it is essential to understand the concept of deixis. Deixis refers to the linguistic mechanism via which students can appropriately express personal, temporal, spatial, social, and discourse-related references in their writing.

Person deixis refers to the accurate identification of the grammatical persons employed to refer to the speaker and addressee. It involves encoding the role of participants in the speech event during which the utterance is given (Levinson, 1983). The three forms of deixis are first-person deixis, second-person deixis, and third-person deixis.

Temporal deixis refers to the temporal relationship between a reference point and the moment of speech or inscription. This reference point is the specific time at which the speaking or writing occurs (Levinson, 1983). The deictic items that employ reference may solely be ascertained in connection to the temporal context of the utterance in which they are present. Tenses are categorized as temporal deixis, as they delineate the chronology into three distinct domains: present, past, and future.

Place deixis refers to the representation of spatial place in relation to the participants' location during a speech event (Levinson, 1983). It can manifest as adverbs such as "here" and "there," as well as demonstrative pronouns like "this" and "that." The phrases proximal and distal are also employed in spatial deixis. Discourse deixis refers to the use of expressions within an utterance to refer to a specific portion of the discourse, including the utterance itself. It is relative to the speaker's current location in the discourse. (Levinson, 1983).

Furthermore, Social deixis do not address the three fundamental elements (person, place, and time) of the coordinate system of subjective orientation. However, they do demonstrate how various social hierarchies and the individuals involved in communication express ties within society through language. Social deixis can be categorized into two primary types: relational and absolute social deixis (Levinson, 1983).

Several studies were conducted on the topic of deixis. Quinto (2014) conducted research on the analysis of deixis in spoken language. This study validated the utility of analyzing deixis in a speech to elucidate the speaker's reference, thus enabling the listener to comprehend the main message of the speech. Through the acquisition of this speech, the writer can get numerous experiences and information, particularly regarding the potency of words. Hutauruk (2018) conducted a study on deixis in written texts. The findings of her research demonstrated that deixis is present in written communication in everyday life, often without conscious awareness. For instance, when readers encounter a new text, they

instinctively seek information about the identities of the speaker and the listener, as well as the location and timing of the events described. The information can be retrieved by comprehension of the written word.

In addition, Rosmawatykha (2013) and Khalilli (2017) conducted research on deixis in the novel. The research findings indicate that the prevailing form of deixis identified in the novel is personal deixis. The topic pertained to the presence of characters as the fundamental basis for constructing a narrative and developing a plot. In addition, the novel contains instances of location deixis, temporal deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis. Ekowati and Sofwan (2014) conducted a study on deixis in conversation. The findings of their investigation demonstrated that pragmatics and deixis are both closely linked to the environment in which they occur. Deixis has the ability to convey implicit significance to recipients. We must endeavor to ascertain the precise significance of the speaker's words. Varying conditions elicit distinct thoughts in individuals' minds.

However, the previous study solely examined the utilization of deixis in literary works such as novels, speeches, short tales, and similar genres. In addition, they assessed the students' proficiency in deciphering deixis. This current study seeks to evaluate the sorts of deixis in students composing papers using Levinson (1983) theory. Therefore, none of the prior studies examined the students' written texts, namely those of a descriptive form.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research utilized a qualitative case study methodology to comprehensively depict, investigate, and explain the types of deixis used in students' writing descriptive text employed by 10th grade in senior high school SMA Kemala Bayangkari I and consists of 20 students. The data for this study were gathered by documentation and observation. The researcher began collecting data by creating worksheets in the form of writing tests. In this case, the researcher was just the creator of the document that would be evaluated. While the teacher was teaching descriptive text, the researcher gave the worksheet to the teacher. The teacher distributed the researcher's worksheet to each student and instructed the tenth graders to write descriptive text based on the topic presented by the researcher in the worksheet. For the last, the tenth graders' final product of descriptive writing as a document analysis of the research is collected and ready to be evaluated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and conclusions derived from the research. Upon analysing the data, the researcher identified deictic words employed in descriptive texts. The result was determined by utilising Stephen C Levinson's (1983) hypothesis, which posited that there are five categories of deixis. All forms of deixis were present in the texts. This study also incorporates selected excerpts from each source to exemplify certain aspects. The data is analysed by the researcher in order to obtain the outcome. The researcher identified a total of 186 instances of deixis. Additionally, the researcher quantifies both the total number and percentage of each form of deixis in order to provide a clear presentation of the research findings. The researchers employed the table classification provided below:

Table 1. Types of Deixis in the Students' Writing at the Tenth Grade MIA 2 SMA Kemala Bhayangkari 1 Medan

No	Type of Deixis	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
1	Spatial Deixis	84	45
2	Person Deixis	40	22
3	Temporal Deixis	25	13
4	Discourse Deixis	22	12
5	Social Deixis	15	8
Total		186	100

As shown in Table 1, the researcher's conclusion is that there are five distinct forms of deixis present in the students' descriptive writing. These categories include spatial deixis, person deixis, temporal deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis. The table indicates that there are 84 terms related to spatial deixis, 40 words related to person deixis, 25 words related to temporal deixis, 22 words related to discourse deixis, and 15 words related to social deixis. Consequently, the data set contains a total of 186 deictic phrases.

According to table 1, it was concluded that spatial deixis was the most frequently used deixis in students' descriptive writing. Spatial deixis, which includes words like "here," "there," "this," and "that" that indicate location or direction, is commonly found in students' descriptive writing because it enhances the creation of vivid imagery. Through the utilization of spatial deixis, students can effectively guide their readers in understanding the depicted scene or environment, hence facilitating their ability to mentally image and actively connect with the material. It imparts a feeling of location and background, enhancing the narrative with vivid and engaging details. Additionally, spatial deixis aids in arranging the details and structuring the story by drawing the reader's attention to certain elements within the depicted area. However, social deixis is less likely to be incorporated into students' descriptive text for several reasons. One potential explanation may lie in the prioritization on physical depiction or sensory particulars in descriptive writing, rather than placing emphasis on social dimensions. In addition, students may be more inclined to describe concrete components rather than abstract social circumstances in their writing due to their familiarity or comfort. Lack of awareness or comprehension of how to employ social deixis effectively could also contribute to their little usage in student writing.

Types of Deixis Used by Students' in the Descriptive Text

The research inquiry might be resolved by analyzing the data collected in the study through document analysis. In this section, the researcher presented an analysis of the study's data. The data analysis indicated that among the descriptive writing generated by 20 tenth graders, a total of 186 deictic words were employed. The description of the data analysis is as follows:

Person Deixis

The analysis of person deixis in students' writing texts is divided into three parts. The first-person deixis is separated into two parts: first-person singular and first-person plural. The analysis of the first-person perspective revealed that the students consistently positioned themselves as the primary topic in their written writings. This is because the first person

perspective represents the individual who is expressing the utterance. Below are the examples extracted from the written texts of the students:

a. Singular Person Deixis

The following were the example of singular person deixis that were found in students' writing.

- a. **I** was amazed by the sight in front of me. (BAS, 2023)
- b. **I** have promised to be back to this place again (NOS, 2023)

The inclusion of the deictic word "I" in the data indicates the presence of personal deixis in the text. The deictic word 'I' denotes first person deixis and refers to the individual who is the primary subject of the text. The pronoun in question is categorized as a subject pronoun. It is used to refer to the character who assumes the role of the speaker and engages in conversation with other characters, who are the recipients of the speaker's message, on their pleasure or satisfaction. The deictic term I am referring to is the writer's expression of astonishment in her work as the initial speaker. The deictic marker "I" in the given data (b) relates to the individual who spoke at the event, specifically the writer herself. The pronoun "I" is used in the text to represent the speaker, indicating that the speaker is referring to themselves.

In addition, the utilization of the first person singular deixis I can identify the occurrence of 'proximal' deixis. The pronoun "I" in the text refers to the addressor, who is the writer. This choice is influenced by the writer's position and involvement in the interaction, as well as the contextual information that relates to their feelings.

b. Plural Person Deixis

The following were the example of prular person deixis that were found in students' writing.

- a. **We** arrived on time. (NZ, 2023)
- b. **They** enjoy their life. (PIC, 2023)

The subject pronoun "we" in the data (a) encompasses both the speaker and the addressee. In this instance, the individual reached their location punctually. The term "person" in the data (b) specifically denotes individuals who are local residents of Bali. However, 'they' is classified as a subject pronoun.

Spatial Deixis

The notion of distance is crucial in spatial deixis as it relates to the relative location of individuals and objects. Spatial deixis can be categorized into two distinct forms: distant and proximal. Spatial deixis is primarily conveyed by locative adverbs such as "there" and "here," as well as demonstratives and determiners like "this" and "that" (Cruse, 2000: 320). The researcher discovered the presence of spatial deixis words in the descriptive writing of tenth graders, with a prevalence of 45%, which represents the largest proportion of deictic words in students' descriptive writing.

a. Distal Form

Deictic expressions serve the purpose of indicating the temporal and spatial context, as well as the participants involved in a communication. They enable us to discern what is proximate to the speaker and what is distant. This term is characterized as distal, meaning it is away from the speaker. Examples of distal terms include "that," "there," and "then" (Levinson, 1983). The data that will be analyzed is as follows in students' descriptive writing.

“Domestic tourists usually go **there** by bus or private cars, while foreign tourists like to join travel bureau because they don’t need to think of the transportation, accommodation, and itinerary.” (NA, 2023)

The term "there" in the sentence functions as a spatial deixis, denoting a particular location. In this context, "there" specifically refers to Borobudur Temple, as indicated by the preceding information. It serves as a locative adverb, expressing a distant or non-proximate location in relation to the speaker.

“Besides, become a nation Park, **this island** have be listed as World Heritage by UNESCO this is because you can see the komodo in this place. When, you come to **the place**, you should be accompanied by tour guide.” (SIJS, 2023)

The data presented above reveals that the demonstrative pronoun "this" is followed by the phrase "island" and refers specifically to the Komodo island. The writer endeavors to depict the Komodo Island in an alternative manner as the sender of communication. Given the context, the demonstrative pronoun "this" in the data above can be employed to specify the place.

b. Proximal Form

Deictic expressions serve the purpose of indicating the temporal and spatial context, as well as the participants involved in communication. They assist us in discerning the proximity of objects or individuals to the speaker. This is determined by one of the following terms: proximate (in close proximity to the speaker), such as this, here, now (Levinson, 1983). The investigation discovered certain data that will be analyzed below in the descriptive language written by the students.

“The air there is very different from the air **here**. There, the air is so fresh and very minimal pollution, different from here where even in the morning the air is not fresh,” (MPM, 2023)

Based on the provided data, the sentence contains an adverb of place that indicates a location in proximity to the speaker. The symbolic meaning of this phrase likely pertains to the inclusion of the addressor's location in the text. It can also be categorized as proximal deixis when the writer acts as the addressor or is directed towards him/her. The categorization process is influenced by the psychological factor, which is associated with the distance between the speaker and the objects being referred to, their relative position, and the context in which the speech occurs.

Temporal Deixis

Time deixis, according to Levinson (1983, p. 62), is the encoding of temporal points and spans relative to the time the utterance was spoken or a written message inscribed. So, the key point of time deixis is the 14 tense system, which only has two fundamental forms in English, the present and the past. Then, time deixis is an expression in reference to a certain point in time when the speaker produces the utterance.

The researcher detected the temporal deixis word in the descriptive writing of tenth graders, with a frequency of 13%. This represents the second highest occurrence of deictic terms in students' descriptive writing. The example of temporal deixis found in students' writing:

- a. “I love coming to this park since I was high school” (UH, 2023)
- b. “I feel better now” (SRJ, 2023)

The use of the deictic word "was" in the data suggests that the writer enjoyed visiting that park throughout her time in high school. It signifies that the writer is no longer enrolled in high school. In the past, she developed an affection for visiting that park. In data (b), the author recounts their improved state of well-being following a bee sting incident that occurred during their time at the beach. This sentence contains the time adverbial "now". This indicates that the term is deictic according to Yule's theory, specifically defined as temporal deixis because it specifies the time at which the writer composed this material. The deictic marker "now" was identified in the speech and pertains to the temporal deixis category. The term "now" functions as an adverb, denoting the occurrence of an event at the present moment. The speaker is endeavoring to highlight the disparity between her present condition, which is apart from her past state.

Social Deixis

Deixis include both interpersonal connections and hierarchical positions within a society. It involves the use of social cues to indicate the social rank or position of individuals involved in a conversation. One prominent use of social deixis is the utilization of linguistic features, such as politeness or ethical speech, as identified by Nababan (1987). Moreover, the students' writing exhibited distinct perspectives through the utilization of deixis in a social context, as seen by the data presented below:

- a. "The section symbolizes the effort and determination of the **people** to achieve the freedom of the Proclamation of Independence that occurred in August 1945. The monument has a section that forms a flame with a layer of gold of 35 kg." (RL, 2023)
- b. "**my father** bought some souvenirs to take home and as souvenirs" (DAS, 2023)

Social deixis is employed to ascertain the social status of an adversary (Hasanah, 2016). Within a societal framework, the writer astutely observed social inequalities between individuals who held positions of authority, were older, or possessed greater influence, as compared to others who expressed opposing viewpoints. Moreover, there were social inequalities in the way participants were involved in the production of social deixis, particularly in terms of the social connection between the writer and the reader, or the writer's reference to the topic.

Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis, also referred to as "text deixis," is the process of identifying the reference point within a given discourse part. The forms frequently employed to express deixis in conversation encompass personal and demonstrative pronouns, deixis of place, and other related elements. The study discovered that discourse deixis ranked lowest in terms of usage by students, with a total of 22 instances. Furthermore, the data presented below illustrates the use of deixis in students' writing.

- a. "We made the story printed in front of each picture, **it's** the main thing." (TK, 2023)
- b. "You can go early to see a scene **that** is not foggy and certainly not crowded." (A, 2023)

The term "it" in the context of data (a) is classified as discourse deixis and denotes the sentence that the speaker wrote in her preceding statement. The term "that" in data (b) is classified as discourse deixis and pertains to the previously mentioned situation described by the writer. Levinson (1983) states that Deixis discourse pertains to particular components of the discourse that have been established or are currently being formed. Deixis discourse can be employed to produce and comprehend the discourse as a whole

when there is a connection to pragmatic competence. By understanding this discussion, individuals enhance their ability to effectively utilize the practical aspects of language.

CONCLUSION

Student descriptive writing employs different sorts of deixis, including spatial, person, temporal, discourse, and social deixis. The dataset consists of 186 deictic phrases, which are distributed in the following manner: There are 84 words related to space, 40 words related to people, 25 words related to time, 22 words related to discourse, and 25 words related to social interaction that can be classified as deictic terms.

Conclusions can be derived from the research questions posed at the outset of this thesis. The use of first-person deixis was frequent, since it was evident that the students, in their role as writers, positioned themselves as the central figures in their own narratives. The second person deixis is employed to refer to a singular individual or the person being addressed. The 3rd person deixis is employed to refer to a person or object that is neither the speaker nor the addressee, and typically implies the gender associated with the statement.

The students employed place deixis to denote the specific location in which the narrative transpired. The students employed the proximal form to explicitly demonstrate to the readers the area in close proximity to them, so indicating the setting of the events in their stories. Unlike the proximal form of place deixis, the students also employed the distal form to signal to the readers a location that was far away from both the students as writers and the readers as recipients of the stories, thus signifying the occurrence of events in the stories.

The students' writing texts demonstrated the use of time deixis, which encompassed past, present, and future time, as well as adverbials of time. The pupils frequently utilize past time deixis to express their own prior experiences when they are required to write about them. The pupils utilized the present tense to demonstrate to the readers the recurring activity. Additionally, the students employed adverbial phrases denoting time to convey future occurrences.

The students' written texts exhibited social deixis, which was manifested through both relational social deixis and absolute social deixis. The students were accustomed to using relational social deixis in casual contexts. Unlike relational social deixis, the students employed absolute relational social deixis in formal contexts.

The students employed discourse deixis by utilizing the demonstratives "this" and "that" to indicate reference to either the preceding or subsequent segment of conversation, depending on the placement of the demonstrative. Additionally, the students employed discourse markers that indicated discourse deixis. The discourse markers "so," "but," and "furthermore" are used to refer back to a previously specified reference.

When it comes to writing, it is highly recommended that readers or future researchers explore alternative research methods, such as cross-cultural analysis. This approach examines deixis across different languages and cultures, uncovering intriguing variations in how people perceive and employ deixis. Consequently, it broadens our understanding of linguistic diversity. Alternatively Exploring how deixis is handled in digital communication through technological tools like chatbots and virtual assistants can offer valuable understanding of how technology understands and responds to contextual signals.

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