



THE USE OF DEIXIS IN STUDENTS' WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

**Mutia Olivia Indriastuti
Anni Holila Pulungan
Muhammad Natsir**

**English Applied Linguistic Study Program
Postgraduate Program-Universitas Negeri Medan**

Submitted September; Accepted October; Published December

ABSTRACT

Students are able to convey their ideas, emotions, and feelings to the reader through their piece of writing. One area of pragmatics called deixis is also one of the writing aspects that students must be aware of in order provide meaning in writing. This article was aimed to found how the reason deixis used in the students' writing descriptive text at the tenth grade MIA 2 high school Kemala Bhayangkari Medan. The data in the study is analyzed through descriptive qualitative. Three methods used include document analysis, observation, and interviews by the researcher. The result of this research showed five types of deixis, how the deixis used, and the reason deixis used in their writing using Levinson theory (1983). The results have revealed that the reason students used deixis are: to indicate a specific location, chronology events, to conveying a personal point of view, to incorporate cultural and social signifiers, and to create a strong and coherent connection. This study's results should help students learn more about how language works in real life and how words point to things. This will especially help them use the right words to improve their writing skills.

Keywords: *Deixis; Decriptive Writing; Realization; Levinson Theory*

How to Cite: Indriastuti, Mutia Olivia (2023). The Use of Deixis in Students' Writing Descriptive. *Jurnal Linguistik Terapan Pascasarjana Unimed*. 20 (3): 275-283.

ISSN: 2407-7410

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a crucial tool in communicating language. Brown (2001: 357) argues that writing is a transaction with words in which authors freely express their thoughts without much regard for what other people are currently thinking, feeling, or seeing. It means in order to

improve communication, writing enables individuals to express their thoughts, sentiments, and views in the form of a written piece and writing has been found to improve the effectiveness of very complicated concepts being communicated.

Deixis can help writers in using language more effectively to convey meaning. Without even realizing it, we employ deixis in everyday communication, whether it be spoken or written, formal or conversational. For instance, when readers get a new message, they need to know who is speaking and who is being heard, as well as where and when the events are taking place. As deixis, one of the areas of pragmatics is concerned with how languages encode or grammaticalize elements of the context of utterance or speech event. It also addresses how the interpretation of utterances depends on the study of that context of utterance, according to Levinson (1983:54). In order to determine the meaning of writing, authors need to think about how to effectively employ deixis, which reflects the link between language structure and context.

In the 10th-grade Curriculum 2013, students explore descriptive text, aiming to provide detailed information about people, animals, objects, or locations (Fitriani et al., 2019; Jayanti, 2019). Descriptive text, defined by Suminar and Putri (2018), enhances readers' knowledge through clear descriptions. Deixis, as highlighted by Meyer (2009), aids effective writing by referencing one word to another. Despite this, many students struggle with understanding deixis in various contexts. Writing, identified as a challenging subject (Karolina, 2006), requires accessible lessons and quality texts for effective teaching.

During the teaching practice program, the researcher observed that Senior High School students, particularly those in the tenth grade, had a limited comprehension of how to effectively articulate and convey their thoughts in writing. The students lack the ability to provide detailed descriptions of objects, places, and people due to a lack of ideas and errors in the use of deixis in their descriptive texts. Correct use of deixis is crucial for reader comprehension in students' final written pieces. Inappropriately using deixis can result in communication misunderstandings between writers and readers, leading to misinterpretation. Introducing deixis early in language learning is essential for tenth graders to enhance their writing as a communication tool. Tenth graders' descriptive writing, being part of the initial stage of formal English education, provides a suitable starting point for teaching proper deixis usage.

Based on the background above, the researcher is interested in investigating the reason deixis used in the students' writing descriptive text. This interest is backed by Maharatu and Kusumarasyati's research, which suggests that linguistically, deixis aids students in

composing their final written product more effectively by indicating and referring to other words.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative research design to examine tenth-grade students' descriptive writing, focusing on deixis types based on Levinson's theory. Lodico (2006) states that qualitative research gathers data through observation, interviews, and document analysis, often presenting findings orally or narratively. Similarly, this research, as a descriptive study, described deixis types found in students' descriptive texts through qualitative analysis of textual data.

The data of the research was students' writing descriptive texts that the sentences containing deixis type theory. The theory (Levinson, 1983) is that deixis has five types among others. those are: person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis. This research focuses on the reason deixis used in the students' writing descriptive text. The authors will explain why the deixis used by the students.

The source of this data was taken from the descriptive texts written by students, aligning with Lofland's notion that qualitative research primarily relies on words and actions. Secondary data encompassed various sources supporting the study, including materials on deixis theory, students' descriptive writing, and additional information from books or the internet.

This study gathered data through documentation and observation methods. As Shamsuddin and Damaianti (2011: 108) classify documents into four categories: public records, personal documents, physical materials, and researcher-generated documents. In this research, data sources comprised students' descriptive writing collected through worksheets. The researcher then reviewed the data, noting deixis words used in document analysis, arranging them systematically in a table for easy reference in the first stage. Next, they revisited the structured data in the second stage. In the final stage, the researcher quantified correct and incorrect deixis usage in each descriptive writing by counting occurrences and graphing the results. The analysis was then represented using word data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Levinson (1983) emphasized the significance of deixis within the realm of pragmatics as it aids in the interpretation of sentence meanings by relying on contextual cues. This section aims to explore why students used deixis in their Descriptive Writing.

1. To Indicate a Specific Location

According to the analyzed data, students used deixis to denote a particular location. The students used the term "in order to" to indicate the setting of the story. The students used the proximate form to demonstrate to the readers the nearby place that the tale authors wished to emphasize in their narratives.

SIJS: *"kenapa saya gunain deixis ditulisan saya, karena deixis membantu menciptakan gambaran yang lebih jelas dalam pikiran pembaca tentang lokasi, ruang, atau posisi sesuatu. Dengan demikian, tulisan saya menjadi lebih mudah dipahami dan menarik bagi pembaca, karena mereka dapat membayangkan situasi atau objek yang saya deskripsikan dengan lebih tepat."*

"As for why I use deixis in my writing, it helps to create a clearer picture in the reader's mind of the location, space or position of something. As such, my writing becomes more comprehensible and interesting to readers, as they can imagine the situation or object I'm describing more precisely."

MPM: *"Dalam penulisan deskriptif, penting untuk memberikan detail-detail yang sangat spesifik. Penggunaan deixis memungkinkan saya untuk merinci lokasi, arah, atau posisi objek atau subjek dengan lebih mendalam, sehingga pembaca dapat merasakan adanya kedalaman dalam deskripsi yang saya berikan."*

"In descriptive writing, it is often important to provide very specific details. The use of deixis allows me to detail the location, direction or position of the object or subject in more depth, so that the reader can feel the depth in my description."

This is in accordance with Levinson theory (1983), where Deixis refers to the speech event's placement as it relates to anchorage points. Deixis, put simply, can be used to convey the speaker's location or a location they are indicating.

2. Chronology Events

Based on the data and interviews that have been conducted, students used deixis in descriptive writing to provide a chronology event. It adds depth and precision to the description and allows readers to form a mental image of the events being described.

UH: *"Saya menggunakan deixis karena penggunaan deixis dalam tulisan deskriptif adalah upaya untuk memperkuat dan memperjelas narasi saya. Dalam tulisan deskriptif, sangat penting untuk membantu pembaca atau audiens saya mengikuti kronologi atau urutan"*

peristiwa dengan baik. Dengan menggunakan temporal deixis, seperti kata-kata "kemudian," "setelah itu," "sebelumnya," dan sejenisnya, saya memberikan petunjuk yang jelas tentang urutan waktu peristiwa yang saya deskripsikan."

"I use deixis because the use of deixis in descriptive writing is an attempt to strengthen and clarify my narrative. In descriptive writing, it is very important to help my readers or audience follow the chronology or sequence of events well. By using temporal deixis, such as the words "then," "after that," "before," and the like, I give clear clues about the time sequence of the events I am describing."

SRJ: *"Saya menggunakan deixis karena penggunaan deixis dapat memberikan sentuhan emosional dalam deskripsi saya. Misalnya, dengan menggambarkan peristiwa-peristiwa dalam urutan waktu yang tepat, saya dapat menciptakan perasaan antisipasi, ketegangan, atau kebahagiaan yang sesuai dengan konteks cerita atau deskripsi tersebut."*

"I use deixis because it can provide an emotional touch in my descriptions. For example, by describing events in the right time sequence, I can create a feeling of anticipation, suspense or happiness that fits the context of the story or description."

This is in accordance with Levinson (1983), where he explain that deixis concerns the encoding of temporal points and spans relative to the time at which the utterance was spoken (or a written message inscribed).

3. To Conveying a Personal Point of View

Based on the data and interviews that have been conducted, the reason students also used deixis is to conveying a personal point of view. This helps them connect with the reader on a more emotional level. By using pronouns or other person-dependent words, students can draw the reader into the narrative.

NZ: *"Saya menggunakan deixis karena saya ingin menyampaikan sudut pandang pribadi dalam tulisan saya. Dengan merujuk kepada "saya" atau "kami," saya dapat menyertakan pandangan, pendapat, atau pengalaman pribadi dalam deskripsi saya. Menggunakan deixis juga dapat membantu saya dalam memperjelas pemahaman pembaca terhadap objek atau situasi yang saya deskripsikan. Dengan merujuk kepada "ini," "itu," atau "mereka," saya dapat memberikan petunjuk jelas tentang apa yang sedang dibahas dalam teks, sehingga pembaca dapat mengikuti cerita dengan lebih baik."*

“I use deixis because I want to convey a personal point of view in my writing. By referring to "I" or "we," I can include personal views, opinions, or experiences in my descriptions. Using deixis can also help me to clarify the reader's understanding of the object or situation I am describing. By referring to "this," "that," or "they," I can give clear clues about what is being discussed in the text, so that readers can follow the story better.”

This is in line with Levinson (1983), Deixis is the process of encoding the participants' roles in the speech event that the utterance is conveying. We can infer from Levinson's argument that the deixis pertains to the participants in the speech event and also conveying a personal point of view.

4. To Incorporate Cultural and Social Signifiers

The results of the analysis and interviews showed that the reason some students used deixis is as a way to incorporate cultural and social signifiers, which can be particularly relevant in descriptive writing. For example, mentioning someone's attire, accent, or mannerisms can provide insight into their background and culture.

RL: *“Saya menggunakan social deixis dalam tulisan deskriptif saya karena itu membantu saya dalam menciptakan koneksi dan resonansi dengan pembaca. Selain itu, penggunaan social deixis juga memungkinkan saya untuk menunjukkan rasa hormat atau sopan santun terhadap pembaca. Dengan menggunakan kata-kata yang sesuai, seperti 'Bapak/Ibu,' saya menunjukkan penghargaan terhadap pembaca, terutama jika tulisan saya berisi informasi atau panduan yang bersifat formal.”*

“I use deixis in my descriptive writing because it helps me in creating connection and resonance with the reader. In addition, the use of social deixis also allows me to show respect or courtesy towards the reader. By using appropriate words, such as 'Mr. / Ms.,' I show respect for the reader, especially if my writing contains information or guidance of a formal nature.”

This is similar to Levinson's (1983) theory, in which he explains that deixis relates to the linguistic elements within sentences that mirror, establish, or are determined by the particular social reality of the context in which the speech act occurs. Based on the evidence and theory, it can be argued that students use deixis to comprehend cultural and social signifiers.

5. To Create a Strong and Coherent Connection

From the results of the analysis and interviews, the reason of some students use deixis in descriptive writing is to create a strong and coherent connection between different parts of their text. They used discourse deixis to ensure that readers can clearly understand the reference points within the text. It eliminates ambiguity by indicating what a particular word or phrase refers to.

TK: *“Alasan saya menggunakan deixis, seperti kata ganti "ini," "itu," atau "terakhir," karena saya berusaha untuk membuat pembaca merasa seolah-olah mereka terlibat secara langsung dalam narasi atau deskripsi yang saya buat. Hal ini memungkinkan mereka untuk lebih merasakan dan memahami pengalaman yang saya ceritakan. Selain itu, menggunakan deixis juga membantu menjaga kohesi dan koherensi dalam teks saya, sehingga pembaca tidak bingung atau kehilangan pemahaman saat membaca tulisan saya. Selain itu, deixis juga membantu saya dalam mengatur urutan dan hubungan antara informasi yang disajikan. Dengan menggunakan kata-kata seperti "sebelumnya" atau "selanjutnya," saya dapat memberi tahu pembaca tentang urutan kronologis atau hubungan logis antara peristiwa atau elemen dalam tulisan saya. Ini membuat tulisan deskriptif saya lebih mudah diikuti dan dipahami.”*

“The reason I use deixis, such as the pronouns "this," "that," or "last," is because I strive to make the reader feel as if they are directly involved in the narrative or description I am creating. This allows them to better feel and understand the experience I am recounting. In addition, using deixis also helps to maintain cohesion and coherence in my text, so that readers are not confused or lose understanding when reading my writing. In addition, deixis also helps me to organize the order and relationship between the information presented. By using words like "before" or "next," I can inform the reader of the chronological order or logical relationship between events or elements in my writing. This makes my descriptive writing easier to follow and understand.”

It relates to Levinson (1982) theory where he clarifies that the meaning of deixis is the encoding of references to specific parts of the discourse that are being discussed at the time the utterance (which includes the text referencing expression) occurs. Therefore, Based on the data and theory, it can be concluded that students also use deixis to create a strong and coherent connection.

From the analysis, it was found that the students use spatial deixis because they want to indicate specific location. They use person deixis to conveying a personal point of view. Temporal deixis used by them because they want to provide a chronological event. For discourse deixis used because they want to create a strong and coherent connect, and the students used social deixis to incorporate cultural and social signifiers.

CONCLUSION

There are some findings about the reason of deixis used in students' descriptive writing. From the students questionnaire, it's indicate that the reason they used deixis are: to indicate a specific location, chronology events, to conveying a personal point of view, to incorporate cultural and social signifiers, and to create a strong and coherent connection. Overall, the students used deixis to make their writing more precise, personal, culturally rich, and well-connected.

Using deixis correctly helps the reader in understanding the final piece of writing produced by students. Inappropriate usage of deixis can lead to a misunderstanding in communication between the writer and the reader. It means that it is possible for the reader to misinterpret the writer's intended meaning. Deixis should thus be introduced early on in language learning to assist tenth graders in using deixis correctly to promote their writing as a form of communication.

REFERENCES

- Bachmann, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Second Ed. San Fransisco. Longman.
- Fitriani, Y., Mulyadi, M., & Jayanti, F. G. (2019). An Analysis of English Department Students' Ability In Writing Argumentative Essay. *JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy)*, 3(2), 96-107.
- Fromkin, V., and all (2003). *An introduction to Language*. United States of America: Thomson Place, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Hasanah, N. U. (2021). The Use of Deixis In Students' Speech Text at Ma'had Sunan Ampel Al-Aly Dormitory Universitas Islam Negeri Malang. *EDUTECH: Journal of Education and Technology*.

- Karolina, I. (2006). *Teaching Narrative Text in Improving Writing to the Tenth grade Students of SMA Negeri 1 Petarukan, Pematang*.
- Levinson, S.C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.
- Lodico, G, Marguerite, Dean T. Spaulding, Katherine H. Voegtle. (2006). *Methods in Educational Research from Theory to Practice*. San Fransisco. Jossey Bass.
- Meyer, C.F. (2009). *Introducing English Linguistics*. New York: United States of America. Cambridge University Press.
- Suminar, R. P., & Putri, G. (2018). *The Effectiveness of TTW (Think-Talk-Write) Strategy in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text*. *Academic Journal Perspective: Education, Language, and Literature*, 2 (2), 300-305.