The Realization of Deixis in Students’ Writing at Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Lampung

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Abstract

Through the final product of writing, students can communicate their ideas, thoughts, and feelings to the reader. Deixis is one of the branches in pragmatics and one of the writing components that have to be noticed by the students to communicate the meaning in writing. This study is aimed at finding out the realization of deixis in students’ writing text at STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Lampung, and also to explain the difficulties faced by the students and teacher roles to overcome the students’ difficulties. The researcher uses descriptive qualitative in analyzing data. There are three methods which are used in this study; they are document, observation, and interview. The results of this study showed that the realization of person deixis is more dominant since the students as the writers position themselves as the main characters of their own stories. Place deixis was realized through demonstrative pronoun, English adverb, and English preposition. The use of the proximal form of place deixis is more dominant rather than the distal form of place deixis. Time deixis was realized through past time, present time, future time, and adverbial of time. Social deixis was also realized through relational social deixis (used in informal situation) and absolute social deixis (used in formal situation). The students used discourse deixis in the form of demonstrative this/that and discourse marker. Further, there were difficulties faced by students in using deixis and the methods that used by the teacher to overcome the students’ difficulties. Hence, it is expected that the findings of this study can improve the students’ knowledge in pragmatics and deixis in general; especially they will apply appropriate deixis in order to develop their writing abilities.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the communication tools through the word. It is supported by Brown (2001, p.357) who states that writing is a transaction with words whereby writers let themselves share their ideas freely without much consideration of what people presently think, feel and perceive. For the EFL learners, they may use linguistic forms to express the meaning in the different context in the forms of discourse or utterance. To avoid any misunderstanding between writers and readers, the writers are supposed to know the context and topic in order to be able to follow up in a discussion. Thus, context is something to do with Pragmatics.

According to Levinson (1983, p.3), pragmatics is the study of the relationship between the language and the context, which is a basis in understanding the meaning of language. In line with this, pragmatics is the study of the aspect of the relationship between language and context that are relevant to the writing grammar. One of the issues within pragmatics study is deixis. According to Levinson (1983, p.55), deixis belongs to the domain of pragmatics because it is directly concerned with the relationship between the structure of language and the contexts in which they used. Thus, deixis concerns of the ways in which language encode or grammaticalize features of the context of utterance. By this understanding, the EFL learners faced the difficulties to identify deictic terms to understand a word of a sentence because of the meaning of the word. Sometimes, they always used the same deictic word in their writing. Further, many of them also have difficulties in understanding to use and to interpret the meaning of deixis. Since their program do not provide pragmatics as a compulsory subject except linguistics, semantics, and grammar. Dealing with the students’ problems in writing, the realization of deixis is needed as the way to explain how the students are able to arrange the appropriate personal deixis, time deixis, place deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis that represent the field of their writing.

Further, person deixis deal with the correct identification of the grammatical persons used to refer to speaker and addressee and concerns the encoding of the role of participants in the speech event in which the utterance in question is delivered (Levinson, 1983, p.62). It is in the form of the first-person deixis, second-person deixis, and third person deixis.

Time or temporal deixis is a reference to the time relative to a temporal reference point, this point is the moment of the utterance at which of the time of speaking (or written inscribed) (Levinson (1983, p.62). The deictic items that use reference can only be determined in relation to the time of the utterance in which they occur. Tenses also belong to time deixes, as the timeline is divided into three domains: present, past, and future.

Place deixis concerns the encoding of spatial location relative to the location of the participants in the speech event (Levinson, 1983, p.79). It can come up in the form of adverb (here, there) and demonstrative pronouns (this and that). The terms of proximal and distal are also used in place deixes. Further, discourse deixis is a deictic reference to a portion of discourse relative to the speaker’s current location in the discourse and concerns the use of expressions within some utterance to refer to some portion of the discourse that contains that utterance (including the utterance itself) (Levinson, 1983, p.85).

Moreover, Social deixes do not deal with three main components (person, place and time) of the coordinate system of subjective orientation, but they show how different social rankings and the participants of communication utter relationships within society via language. Social deixis divided into two basic kinds that are relational and absolute social deixis (Levinson, 1983, p.90).

There were several studies related to deixis. Quinto (2014) focused on the study of deixis in speech. This study confirmed that it was useful to analyze deixis in a speech to clarify the reference of the speaker, so that, the listener catches the point of the speech. By learning this speech, the writer can get many experiences and
knowledge especially the power of language. Hutauruk (2018) studied deixis in writing texts. The result of her study showed that deixis can be found in daily life communication in written form, without realizing we use it for example when the readers get a new text, they need to get information about who are the speaker and the hearer, where, and when the events take place. The information can be accessed the understanding of the written text.

Moreover, Rosmawati (2013) and Khalilli (2017) investigated deixis in the novel. The result of their research showed that the most dominant deixis found in that novel is personal deixis. It was related to the existence of characters as the deriving narrative and forming a storyline. They also found place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis, and social deixis in the novel. Ekowati and Sofwan (2014) investigated deixis in conversation. The result of their study showed that pragmatics is something to do with context, and so is deixis. The use of deixis can carry implicit meaning to listeners. We need to seek the actual meaning of what a speaker says. Different circumstances lead people to have a different thought in their mind.

However, the previous study only observed the use of deixis in the form of novels, speeches, short stories, and etc. They were also observing students competence in interpreting deixis. This current study attempts to examine the realization of deixis in students writing texts using Levinson (1983) theory, find out the students difficulties in using deixis, and explain the teacher's roles to overcome the students' difficulties. Thus, none of the previous studies analyzed the students' writing texts, students' difficulties in using deixis, and teacher roles to overcome the students' difficulties.

METHOD

This research particularly applied a qualitative case study which attempted to describe, explore, and explain the way of presenting deixis in the writing text employed by English Department of STKIP Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Lampung students. The participants of the study were 15 students of the second semester selected have passed on the subjects of writing 1.

In this study, numbers of the instrument are applied to answer research questions. The researcher used documents, interviews, and observations. The document was in the form of a worksheet that distributed to the students. The students are required to write their own experiences when they felt under pressure. The interview was pointed out for the teacher in the form of question concerning how the students face difficulties in using deixis and how the teacher roles to overcome the students' difficulties. Further, observation used to obtain data about teaching-learning activities in the class.

In collecting the data, the researcher created a worksheet in the form of a writing test. Then, the researcher gave the worksheet to the teacher which will be distributed to the students. The student and asked them to write based on the topic given by the researcher in the worksheet. Finally, the final product of writing text made by second-semester students as document analysis of the study was collected and ready to be analyzed. Further, there was an interview sheet which intended to the lecturer in writing 2 lessons. The last step, the researcher made an observation sheet to observe the teaching-learning activity in the classroom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part reported the findings and the discussions of data analysis to answer the research questions of this research. It is divided into seven parts and explained as follow.

Person Deixis in Students’ Writing

The analysis of person deixis in students' writing texts divided into three parts. First, the first-person deixis, it was divided into two parts; first-person singular and first-person plural. The analysis of 1st person showed that the students put themselves as the main subject in their writing texts since 1st person is the person who
speaks the utterance. Here the examples from the students' writing texts:

1. I have an experience when I was in Junior High School.

2. We had to get out of the car.

The students used 1st person plural “I” and “We” as subject pronoun. The deictic word “I” can be categorized as first singular person that refers to the student as the speaker while “We” categorized as first person plural. Therefore, the deictic words “I” and “we” used to show their own experiences in their writing text. As stated by Hutauruk (2018), she argued that the writer used the first-person deixis “I” to refer itself who expressed her/his feeling, her/his understanding, and her/his thinking. The deictic word “we” was a deictic expression that usually indicated that the writer used the deictic word “we” in the text as the representation of the other writer including the reader.

Second, the second-person deixis, the 2nd person singular in their writing text encoded by the use of the deictic words “You” and “Your”. The deictic word “You” could be interpreted as the addressee or someone who has direct contact with the 1st person. In the data, the researcher did not found the 2nd plural person deixis. As Pratiwi (2018) point out that the second person deixis is a deictic reference to a person or people identified as addressee, such as you, yourself, yourselves, your, yours. Here an example from the students’ writing texts:

3. “Would you mind if I make a call from your phone?”

The example above showed that the 2nd person singular showed the dialogue occurred between speakers with the interlocutor. The student used the deictic word “You” in the example refers to the woman as the interlocutor. The speaker that was the student used the 2nd person singular “Your” as the possessive pronoun of “You” refers to the interlocutor’s phone.

Third, the third-person deixis, the students used 3rd person deixis to encode of reference to person and entities that are neither speakers nor addressee of the utterance in their writing texts. The third singular person deixis that found in the students’ writing texts were he, him, his, she, her, it. The third plural person were they, them, their. It has proven by Gedutytė et.al (2013), the third person deixis were the determinative personal pronouns ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’, ‘they’ were impure deictic. They reveal more than just the person, they revel gender and the number of the pronoun. Here the examples from the students’ writing texts:

4. She asked permission to sit at my bench.

5. They asked to borrow my phone and send a message to their friends.

From the students’ writing texts, the deictic word “She” in the example above referred to the young woman who asked permission to the student to sit at his bench. Then, second deictic “She” still referred to the young woman who already sat at the student’s bench without asking permission. Further, the deictic word “They” referred to a couple of men who borrowed the student’s phone. There was also 3rd person plural “Their” instead of the pronoun “They”. The deictic word “Their” was a possessive pronoun that belonged to a couple of men’s friend.

Place Deixis in Students’ Writing

Place deixis concerned the encoding of spatial locations relative to the location of the participants in the speech event. In the analysis, the researcher focused on the use of place deixis in proximal form (close to the speaker) and distal form (not proximal, sometimes close to the addressee). As stated by Gjergji (2015), there is proximal place deixis (close to the speaker) such as thi and these, and distal place deixis (sometimes close to the addressee) such as that and those. Each may be used either as a pronoun or a combination with a noun. Here the examples from the students’ writing texts:

6. I hope I can do my best at this University.

7. I pleased her even she had already sat there before asking permission.
The words “at this university” in the example above was place deixis. It identified as a proximal form because the place deixis “at this university” could mean an object proximal or near from the student’s location (in this case, “this” referred to the place where the text was delivered). It could be mean as proximal because the student as the writer wanted to deliver a message to the reader that she was in the university when she wrote the story. It had proven by Hutagalung (2017) who argued that “This” can mean the object beyond the pragmatically given area is close to the speaker’s location at the coding time. Further, the student also used place deixis “there” in the example above. It was distal form because it meant an object far to the student’s location. The word “There” meant to the chair that far away from the student at that time. As stated by Hutagalung (2017) that “there” means distant from the speaker location at coding time or proximal to addresses at a receiving time.

Time Deixis in Students’ Writing

Time deixis concerns the encoding temporal points and spans relative to the time at which an utterance uttered. As stated by Ekowati (2014) that time deixes give a specific point of time of the utterance. English needs tenses system which indicates when an action happens to give a specific time of the action. Further, the researcher focused on the use of time deixis in the form of past time, present time, and future time in the students’ writing texts. Here the examples from the students’ writing texts:

(8) Two years ago, I went to Yogyakarta for a study tour with all my classmates.

(9) This is an unforgettable day in my life.

(10) She texted me “Putri, tomorrow we’re going to the beach, do you want to join us?”.

In the example above, the words “two years ago” identified as time deixis that referred to the year before the student delivered the story. The year before was in 2017 because the story was delivered by the student in 2019. It was past time deixis that identified as a distal term. The words “two years ago” bring the reader to the past condition when she went on holiday with her classmates.

Moreover, the words “is” and “an unforgettable day” in the example above referred to the day when the story delivered by the student. The word “is” referred to time deixis that identified as a proximal term. It showed the present condition. In addition, the word “an unforgettable day” referred to a memorable day for the student as the writer. Although, the word “is” did not show additional particle or adverbial of time to indicate time reference. The clause used simple present tense that refers to the present time.

The deictic word “tomorrow” indicated to the future time. Since, it referred to the day after the time speaking. In the example above, the students used the deictic word “tomorrow” to show to the readers about the text that she received from her friend to take her to the beach. Moreover, “tomorrow” was the day when they should go to the beach. It has proven by Dylgjeri et.al (2013), in English, time deixis is expressed by adverbs of time and tense markers on the verb. There are two tenses in English that are morphologically marked on verbs. They are the present and the past. To refer to events taking place in the future English uses modal verbs, will or shall and the phrasal modal is going to.

Social Deixis in Students’ Writing

Social deixis showed how the difference of social status and the participants of communication express the relationships in society through language. It was in line with Khalili (2017), he stated that social deixis refers to the social ranking and positions between the speaker and the addressee in the society using language. The researcher focused on the analysis of social deixis in the form of relational social deixis and absolute social deixis. Here the examples from the students’ writing texts:

(11) I went there with my parents and my sister by riding a car
I asked to my lecturer “Sorry Sir, what is my fault? So you ask me to get out from this class?”

There was social deixis “my parents” and “my sister” in the example above. The deictic words “my parents” and “my sister” showed the social relationship between the student as the writer with her parents and her sister. The student as the writer wanted to explain to the reader that she was a daughter and sister. In her story, the student went to her grandma’s house by riding a car with her parents and her sister. So, the student used relational social deixis since they had a kindship relationship as a daughter, parents, and sibling. It was proven by Khalili (2017) who argued that relational Social Deixis refers to some social characteristic and features of referent apart from deictic reference to a social relationship between the speaker and addressee. For example are lexical objects (e.g. my wife, professor, cousin, etc).

Moreover, from the findings of the data, the student put a little conversation between the student and his lecturer. It used to make the reader easier to understand the context of the story. In the example above, the student used “Sir” to mention his lecturer when he asked about his fault that caused him to be expelled from the class. The deictic word “Sir” was absolute social deixis since the writer showed his formal respect at the class to his colleagues. It was in line with Khalili (2017) who argue that absolute Social Deixis refers to a deictic reference including no relations of the ranking or the place of the speaker and addressee. For examples: your highness, Mr. President, your majesty, etc.

Discourse Deixis in Students’ Writing

Discourse deixis was a deictic reference to the portion of discourse relative to the speaker’s current “location” in the discourse. As stated by Pangaribuan et.al (2015), discourse deixis, also referred to as text deixis, refers to the use of expressions within an utterance. Discourse deixis also refers to a portion of a discourse relative to the speaker’s current location in the discourse. The researcher divided discourse deixis into two parts; they were the demonstrative that/this and the discourse marker. Here the examples from the students’ writing texts:

(13) My best friend supported me in that situation.
(14) This is an unforgettable day in my life.
(15) It was like a nightmare but it was a real disaster in this town

The word “that” in the example above identified as discourse deictic expression because it referred to a prior portion of the discourse. After analyzing all of the data, discourse deixis “that” referred to a bad situation that the student had in the past. It meant that the student as the writer delivered to the reader about her situation when she bullied in the past. Then, her best friend supported her in that situation. Further, there was also discourse deixis “this” in the example above. The word “this” could be categorized as discourse deixis which was used to point out the student unforgettable day. It referred to an upcoming portion of the discourse, while the student explained her unforgettable day in the next notion. It was in line with Pangaribuan et.al (2015) who argued that demonstrative ‘this’ can be used to refer to a forthcoming of the discourse, and ‘that’ to a precise portion.

Moreover, the discourse deixis “but” also found in the example above. The deictic word “but” was a discourse marker since it refers to a referent previously mentioned. In the example above, the student wanted to show to the reader about her experience when the earthquake disaster happened in her town. She thought it was a nightmare, and then she used the word “but” to contrast with her thought. It was a real disaster. It was proven by Ekowati (2014), in her study she argued that discourse deixis is deictic reference to a portion of a discourse relative to the speaker’s current location in the discourse, such as so, but, above, below, last, previous, proceeding, next or following, furthermore (usually used in texts).
**Students’ Difficulties in Using Deixis**

From the data analysis, the researcher found several difficulties faced by the students in using deixis. First, the students have difficulties in using time deixis. The students were inconsistent in the use of grammatical features. In the instruction of the worksheet, they asked to write their own experiences when they felt under pressure in the past. It meant, they should use simple past tense in their writing texts to show the time that happened in their stories. In fact, there were some of them used the simple present tense in their writing texts. Even there was no additional particle or an adverbial particle of time to indicate time reference. As stated by Zaim et.al (2015), students were incorrect to identify the specific time of utterance or speech event made by a character. This was caused by their understanding of grammar is low, especially about the tenses used.

Second, the students also have difficulties in using discourse deixis. Some of the students used the same and repeat discourse deixis continuously. During the interview, the lecturer also said that it happened since they have limited vocabularies. Although they have gotten basic material about pronoun, preposition and demonstrative in the previous semester, they still have limited vocabularies to share their ideas. It was in line with Wicaksono (2019), he investigated students competence in interpreting deixis in descriptive text. He stated that Discourse deixis is difficult for the students to understand especially in the form of writing because it is learned merely in the pragmatics course.

**Teacher’s Roles to Overcome Students Difficulties**

In order to collect the data related to this research question, the researcher applied the interview and observation as the instruments. From the interview with the teacher and observation in the classroom, the researcher found several methods used by the lecturer to overcome students' difficulties. First, the method used by the lectures was a discussion activity. It used to exchange the student’s ideas with others about the error they did in their writing. Based on the lecturer’s answer, this method gives more beneficial to reduce the writing error. The students felt free to discuss with their friend. Therefore, it could solve their main problem in learning writing. It also was in accordance with the lecture done as long as the researcher also did observation in the classroom. In line with Indrilla et.all (2018) said that the teacher is a very important part in the process of teaching writing. As educators, teachers must ensure that their students learn something useful, beneficial and lasting for their future.

Second, the lecturer opened the opportunities for students who still have difficulties in writing to have direct discussion face to face between the lecturer and the students. Based on the lecturer’s answer during the interview, she said that this method was more effective to apply in the classroom activity since the student could put more attention to her explanation. It was stated by Indrilla et.all (2018) that three roles of the teacher in the teaching and learning process of writing are as a motivator, a resource (giving clarification and facilitation), and a feedback provider.

The last method was lecturer feedback. It could solve the student's problem when the lecturer gives feedback from the writing error made by the students. The students could know what their fault and know how to correct it. It did by the lecturer when the researcher did observation in her classroom when the teaching-learning process. As stated by Haris et.al (2018), teachers may offer feedback for the students’ writing in order to improve writing ability. It is also hoped that teachers can distribute the result of the research to the students, thus students will know their weaknesses.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on research questions that were asked at the beginning of this thesis, some conclusions can be drawn. The 1st person deixis appeared many times since it could be seen that the students as the writers position themselves as
the main characters of their own stories. The 2nd person deixis used to refer to one person or addressee. Then, the 3rd person deixis used to a referent not identified as the speaker or the addressee and usually imply the gender that the utterance refers to.

The students used place deixis to refer to the place where the story happened. The students used the proximal form to show to the readers the location that was close to them as the writers of the stories to indicate the location happened in their stories. In contrast with proximal form of place deixis, the students also used the distal form to show to the readers the location that was far away from them as the writers of the stories to indicate the location happened in their stories.

Time deixis was realized through past time, present time, future time, and adverbial of time in the students writing texts. The students also often to use the past time indicated of time deixis since they asked to write their own experiences in the past. The students used the present time to show to the readers the activity that occurs regularly. Then, the students also used adverbial of time to express future time.

Social deixis was realized through relational social deixis and absolute social deixis in the students writing texts. The students were used to relational social deixis in informal situations. In contrast with relational social deixis, the students used absolute relational social deixis in the formal situations.

The students used discourse deixis in the form of demonstrative this/that to encode reference to the prior or the upcoming portion of discourse depends on the location of demonstrative this/that. Meanwhile, the students also used discourse marker that identified of discourse deixis. Discourse marker so, but, and furthermore referred to a referent previously mentioned.

From the data analysis, the researcher has found out three methods used by the lecturer to overcome the students' difficulties. First, the method used by the lectures was a discussion activity. Second, the lecturer opened the opportunities for students who still have difficulties in writing to have direct discussion face to face between the lecturer and the students. The last method was lecturer feedback.

Since that there were many errors did by the students in their writing texts. The teacher should improve the using of deixis in appropriate way based on the students need to to seek the actual meaning of what a student writes. Moreover, it is better for the future study for continued study that has the same interest on the students writing texts as the subject of the study. The researcher hopes that the writing ability of English students will be better.

In addition, this current study only focuses on examining the realization of deixis and the students' difficulties in using deixis in their written texts without providing criteria for scoring systems of their written texts. Therefore, it is better for further researchers to provide criteria for a scoring system on students' writing results to consider whether they already know about the use of deixis or not.

REFERENCES


