

Errors of Deixis Usage in French Narrative Texts A Case of Indonesian Students

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ABSTRACT

Several previous studies in foreign language learning have shown that obstacles and difficulties encountered by learners cause the production of language errors, including errors in the use of deixis. This study aims to investigate the use of deixis in students' French narrative texts and the most frequent errors in the use of deixis. This study was conducted using a qualitative descriptive research method. Thirty students from the Department of French Language Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia of the 2019/2020 academic year were involved as participants. The choice of these participants was assured on the technique of purposive sampling, in this case, those who had passed the course of Production *Écrite* 4 (level A2 of CEFR). The data were narrative texts produced by the participants which were analyzed using the theory of error analysis based on the category of surface strategy (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982) and the theory of deixis (Levinson, 1983). The findings show that there were 138 deixis errors. The most dominant deixis error was the type of misformation (78%), especially on the use of temporal deixis. This is because most of the participants cannot determine which forms of tense correspond to the context of sentences. This study is expected to enrich the knowledge of pragmatic studies and the theory of language error analysis.

Keywords: *Deixis, error analysis, narrative texts, pragmatics*

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of language, as a means of communication, cannot be separated from the context and situation which encompasses the language. This is consistent with what Malinowski, Whorf, Firth, and Halliday (as cited in Kress, 1976) asserted that the use of language is context-dependent and cannot be separated from the context of the situation. Therefore, for most language teachers today, when they are asked to identify the methodology they employ in their classrooms, they mention "communicative" as the methodology of choice (Richards, 2006).

The branch of language (linguistics) that specializes in the study of language and its context is called pragmatics. The ability to use language appropriately in a social context has become an object of inquiry in a wide range of disciplines including linguistics, applied linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, communication research, and cross-cultural studies is called pragmatic competence (Taguchi, 2009). One of the studies in the pragmatic field is the deixis. According

to Lyons (as cited in Green, 1992), deixis is an important part of human discourse. Deixis refers to a phenomenon where understanding the meaning of certain words and phrases in speech requires contextual information. Words or phrases that require contextual information to make sense are deictic (Levinson, 1983, as cited in Stapleton, 2017). Deictic words are an important pragmatic element because they are related to the context of the speech since these words do not have a constant meaning (Stapleton, 2017).

In the case of foreign language learners, they generally face problems using foreign languages to express their thoughts effectively (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Including one of them is deixis usage errors. In the case of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, for example, Abdullah (2015) found that learners faced many difficulties and problems in not recognizing the correct deictic word and its type. Besides, Al-Quraini (2019) also found that EFL learners still make mistakes in the use of temporal deixis. Similar problems are found

in other foreign language learning settings. Afifah and Widodo (2015) found that learners of German as foreign language experience difficulties and make mistakes in using person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. Besides, a study conducted by Tonapa, et al. (2018) revealed that the dominant error of deixis usage in German language learners' is person deixis.

Based on these findings, it can be illustrated that there is a tendency for errors in the use of deixis in foreign language learners, namely errors in person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. This is consistent with Fillmore's statement (as cited in Stapleton, 2017), that person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis are the most obvious manifestation of deictic categories in language. However, the previous research above does not provide information on deixis usage errors made among French learners, especially those in Indonesia.

There are various studies on French deixis in Indonesia, but no one has discussed yet the misuse of deixis by French learners. Existing studies only reveal the phenomenon of using deixis on various data objects, for example in French films (e.g. Kusumaningrum, 2016; Munthia, 2018), in French comics (e.g. Ella, 2017), in French novels (e.g. Hassyati, 2017), and on French song lyrics (e.g. Rahayu, 2016). Therefore, this research is important and relevant to be conducted to provide insight into the competence of French learners in Indonesia in terms of deixis usage.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Error Analysis

Error analysis is the main focus of second language study (Corder, 1967 as cited in Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982) This study analyzes the errors of usage of the deixis using the surface strategy taxonomy. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) describe this taxonomic analysis as follows:

2.1.1. Omission

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) suggest that omission errors are characterized by the absence of an element that should appear in a well-formed utility. For example:

"...l'un d'eux pour le sport d'aviron au lac «Danau Dendam Tak Sudah», Ø Bengkulu"

[one of them for the sport of rowing at lake "Danau Dendam Tak Sudah", Ø Bengkulu]

(Pramesti, et al., 2019).

The phrase above indicates the omission which refers to spatial deixis. Respondents did this by omitting the preposition of place which is "au" ["at"] which is used to indicate the location of a place. The sentence should be "*l'un d'eux pour le sport d'aviron au lac «Danau Dendam Tak Sudah», à Bengkulu*" [one of them for the sport of rowing at lake "Danau Dendam Tak Sudah", at Bengkulu] (Pramesti, et al., 2019).

2.1.2. Addition

According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), additional errors are the opposite of omissions. They are characterized by the presence of an element that must not appear in a well-formed utterance. For example:

"Elle n'est pas rit"

[She doesn't laugh].

(Chachu, 2016).

The phrase above refers to the temporal deixis. There is the addition of the auxiliary *être* which is included in the temporal deixis as well as a probable case of transliteration since the verb in French has been placed at the end of the sentence as is the case in English in negation form. Normally in French, the verb is surrounded by the negation markers *ne* and *pas*. While in English, there is just one negation marker; "not", and it precedes the verb. The sentence should be "*Elle ne Ø rit pas*" (Chachu, 2016).

2.1.3. Misformation

According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), deformation errors are characterized using the wrong shape of the morpheme or structure. For example:

"Je suis passée un bonne journée"

[I had a good day].

(Hazlina, et al., 2011).

The phrase above refers to temporal deixis. In French, the meaning of the verb "*passer*" which is followed by the auxiliary "*être*" it means an act of movement with continuous movement, whereas when it is combined with "*avoir*", it means passing through an object (Drivaud, 2017). The sentence should be "*Je suis passée une bonne journée*", because the conjugated verb « *passer* » (*passée*) combines with "*être*".

2.1.4. Misordering

According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), ordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in a statement. For example:

“...*parce que les femmes sont toujours travaillent*”
[...because the women always work].
(Chachu, 2016).

In this phrase refers to temporal deixis. There is an error while ordering the description and the verb. The correct form in French, the verb “*travaillent*” (to work) comes before the adverb of time “*toujours*” (always), because the adverb’s position in French is located after the conjugated verb (Paryatun, 2015). The sentence should be “...*parce que les femmes travaillent toujours*”.

2.2. Deixis

According to Levinson (1983), the term deixis is borrowed from the Greek word to designate or denote and it has a standard example or center of demonstration use, the pronouns as the first person and the second person, the tenses, specific tenses and spatial adverbs such as “now” and “here” and various other grammatical features are directly related to the state of speech. The only clearest way in the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structure of language itself is through the phenomenon of deixis (Levinson, 1983).

Deixis has five forms among others: (1) person deixis; (2) spatial deixis; (3) temporal deixis; (4) social deixis; and (5) the deixis of discourse (Levinson, 1983). However, this study works only on three types of deixis such as person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. This is due to the fact that this three deixis are the most obvious manifestation of deictic categories. According to Fillmore (as cited in Stapleton, 2017), the most obvious manifestation of deictic categories in language is found in the system of pronouns, demonstratives, and tenses where personal pronoun is the embodiment of person deixis, the demonstrative is the embodiment of spatial deixis, and tenses is the manifestations of temporal deixis. Here are explanations of three forms of deixis:

2.2.1. Person Deixis

According to Levinson (1983), the deixis of the person is reflected directly in the grammatical categories of person. “For example:

« *Pourriez-vous donner ça à Camille?* »
[Could you give this to Camille?].
(Aprilia, et al, 2019).

The word in bold is the deixis of the second person which refers to the interlocutor.

2.2.2. Spatial Deixis

The spatial deixis concerns the coding of the spatial localization for the localization of the participant in a speech (Levinson, 1983). The most common words are the pronouns this/that and these/those. The other expressions that fall into this category (spatial deixis) are adverbs here/there and prepositions in/on (Levinson, 1983, as cited in Stapleton, 2017). For example:

« ***cet** enfant, **cet** homme* »
[This kid, this man].
(Chollet & Robert, 2009).

The word in bold “*cet*” is the demonstrative adjective which has a masculine genre. It refers to the objects namely “*enfant*” and “*homme*” which also has a masculine genre.

2.2.3. Temporal deixis

According to Levinson (1983), the temporal deixis concerns the coding of the temporal points and the interval in relation to the moment at which an utterance was spoken (or a written message inscribed). In general, the temporal deixis is described as adverb of time, such as now, yesterday and then (Levinson 1983). For example:

« *Maxime passe ses vacances au bord de la mer avec des amis, il est heureux.* »
[Maxime spends his holidays by the sea with friends, he is happy].
(Chollet & Robert, 2009).

The sentence is included in present tense because it describes the state, action or moment that explains the speaker (Chollet & Robert, 2009). The verb “*passe*” means “*spends*” in this phrase or like the verb “*aller*” (to go) somewhere (Drivaud, 2017). Furthermore the verbs (“*spends*” and “*is*”) are conjugated in present tense.

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

The participant of this study was the students of French Department at one public university in Bandung chosen by purposive sampling techniques. The logic of criterion sampling is to review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 1990). In line with that, the criteria used in this study were students of the 4th semester of the 2019/2020 academic year who passed the course of *Production Écrite 4* (writing for elementary level). The reason for choosing these participants is that the students were

considered to be able to write a narrative text, because the material from that course referred to the A2 level of CEFR. There were 41 students who met the criteria, however, only 30 students were willing to participate in this research.

3.2. Data Collection

The researcher collected the data from 30 students. The students were asked to write a narrative text in French which the theme is “unforgettable experiences”. They had to write 60 to 80 words referred to the DELF level A2. However, due to the pandemic situation, the data collection process is conducted in an online setting where the students send their text by email.

3.3. Data Analysis

In this study, the researchers used data analysis techniques based on the theories of Miles, Huberman and Saldaña. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), there are three steps to follow in analyzing the data, namely: (1) Data condensation is used to reduce the data. In the data condensation, the researchers used the method of encoding the sentences in students’ narrative texts which contained errors in the use of the deixis. Tables were used to sort and rank the data obtained based on the theory described in the previous chapter; (2) Data display (data presentation) that presents the results of the data analysis which contains the number of errors in the use of the deixis. It appeared most often based on the theory described in the previous chapter in tabular form; (3) Conclusion drawings that are made based on data that has been reduced and presented which can answer the research question.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Total occurrences of errors of deixis usage

No	Frequency		
	Type of errors	Total	(%)
1.	Misformation	108	78%
2.	Omission	21	15%
3.	Addition	6	5%
4.	Misordering	3	2%
Total		138	100%

In Table 1, the results of data analysis of this study found the omission category up to 15%, the addition is up to 5%, the misformation up to 78%, and misordering up to 2%. Table 1 shows an explanation of the types of errors in the use of deixis and their frequent occurrence.

Based on Table 1 above, it can be seen that misformation errors are the most dominant errors (78%, up to 108 times) made by students. The same finding is also found in the study of Afifah and Widodo (2015) where 75% of errors are misformation errors. Tonapa, et al. (2018) also found the same thing where 85.35% of errors in the use of deixis were dominated by types of misformation errors.

In this study, the misformation error was found in the use of all types of deixis: person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis. However, the most dominant misformation error was the misuse of temporal deixis. Meanwhile, in the study of Afifah and Widodo (2015); Tonapa, et al. (2018) the dominant error in using deixis is person deixis.

The following is a description of some examples of errors in the use of deixis in this study:

4.1. Misformation

Here are the explanations of misformation which are contained in students’ narrative texts:

4.1.1. Misformation of Person Deixis

Deixis formation errors of people found in 30 narrative texts as incorrect formation of personal pronouns (people pronouns) here is one of the examples of the data:

RES6-K4

"Un froid temps me fait porter un manteau quand moi à l'extérieur."

[Cold weather makes me wear a coat when I'm outside.]

From the data above, it can be found that the use of person deixis, which was a grammatical error and a misformation error. The correct sentence should be " Un froid temps me fait porter un manteau quand j'étais à l'extérieur ". It can be seen that the respondent made an error in the formation of the subject. “moi” is a tonic pronoun, it should use the personal pronoun because the sentence has an affirmative sentence structure (Chollet & Robert, 2009).

4.1.2. Misformation of Spatial Deixis

Spatial deixis formation errors found in 30 narrative texts in the form of the preposition place formation. Here is one of the examples of the data:

RES1-K8

"Ensuite, le premier jour à Sapporo, j'ai joué le bateau-banane dans le nord Safari Sapporo."

[Then on the first day in Sapporo, I played the banana boat in the North Safari Sapporo].

From the data above, we found the use of the spatial deixis, which was a grammatical error, namely a misformation error. The correct sentence should be "*Ensuite, le premier jour à Sapporo, j'ai joué le bateau-banane au nord Safari Sapporo*". It founds that the respondent misused the preposition of place "*dans*" which refers to a place, namely Safari Sapporo. The use of the preposition of place is described as a region or a department, if to explain the direction of a compass or a coordinate using the preposition "*au*" or "*à l'*" (Chollet & Robert, 2009). So, the preposition of the right place is "*au*", because the word north is a masculine form.

4.1.3. Misformation of Temporal Deixis

Temporal deixis formation errors found in 30 narrative texts in the form of verb formations. Here is one of the examples of the data:

RE26-K2

"Cette expérience a été réellement unique et inoubliable pour moi, quand j'ai une chance d'être en colocation avec 4 étrangers géniaux."

[This experience was truly unique and unforgettable for me, when I have the chance to share a flat with 4 brilliant strangers].

The data above is the sentence in the form of a past tense containing a tenses error. The correct sentence should be "*Cette expérience a été réellement unique inoubliable pour moi, quand j'ai eu une chance d'être en colocation avec 4 étrangers géniaux.*" There was incorrect verb formation to have conjugated in present tense form because the respondent relates an event in the past tense, it should be conjugated to the past tense because the sentence described a situation in the past and only occurs in the past just then, no duration (Chollet & Robert, 2009).

4.2. Omission

Here are the explanations of omission which are contained in students' narrative texts:

4.2.1. Omission of Person Deixis

The error of omission contained in the narrative texts made by the 30 respondents is the omission of the person deixis appears 5 times in the form of omission of personal pronouns subjects. Here is one of the examples of the data:

RES1-K4

"Le premier jour, je me suis reposée à la maison et seule une fois sortie pour déjeuner à Akihabara."

[The first day I rested at home and alone after going out for lunch in Akihabara.]

From the data above, we found errors in the use of the person deixis which are grammatical errors, namely errors of omission. The correct sentence should be "*Le premier jour, je me suis reposée à la maison et seule une fois je suis sortie pour déjeuner à Akihabara.*". We can see that the respondent made the disappearance on the subject, namely "*Je*" which designated the respondent who recounted a personal experience that is not forgotten. "*Je*" is a subject pronoun (subject) used to represent a person or thing that does an action described by a verb, the pronoun (person pronoun) is usually found before the verb (Chollet & Robert, 2009.). There were no personal subject pronouns (subjects) that represent a person taking the action described by verb out.

4.2.2. Omission of Temporal Deixis

The error of omission contained in the narrative texts made by the 30 respondents is the omission of temporal deixis appears 14 times. Here is one of the examples of the data:

RES4-K1

"Il un peu cher mais c'était extraordinaire! Le soir, j'ai vu le coucher de soleil sur ma chambre."

[It a bit pricey but it was amazing! In the evening, I saw the sunset over my room]

From the data above, it can be found the temporal deixis error is a grammatical error, namely an omission error. The correct sentence should be "*Il était un peu cher mais c'était extraordinaire! Le soir, j'ai vu le coucher de soleil sur ma chambre.*" We then see that the interviewee removed the verb, which is "being" come after the subject used to represent someone in the story (Chollet &

Robert, 2009). The correct verb to present the action is the verb “être” because the verb functions as an attribute of the subject (Drivaud, 2017).

4.3. Addition

Here are the explanations of addition which are contained in students’ narrative texts:

4.3.1. Addition of Spatial Deixis

The spatial deixis contained in 30 students’ narrative texts in the form of adding the preposition of place. Here is one of the examples of the data:

RES1-K11

“À Sapporo, j’ai visité au zoo de Ashiyama aussi, j’y voyais les performances de pingouin qui vont de pair.”

[In Sapporo, also visit Ashiyama Zoo, see the penguin performances that go hand in hand]

From the data above, we found the errors in the use of the spatial deixis, which is a grammatical error, namely an additional error. The correct sentence should be “À Sapporo, j’ai visité le zoo de Ashiyama aussi, j’y voyais les performances de pingouin qui allait de pair.” We then see that the respondent added the preposition of place, that was “au” which refers to a place. “Au” is a preposition of place used to indicate a place or a destination (Chollet & Robert, 2009). According to the sentence, there is a preposition of place, that was “au” which should not be included since the verb “visiter” is used to designate a place and does not require the preposition of place (Drivaud, 2017).

4.3.2. Addition of Temporal Deixis

Errors in adding temporal deixis found in narrative texts contained in 30 students’ narrative texts in the form of adding preposition of place (prepositions of place), verb and preposition “de” (preposition de), here is one of the examples of the data:

RES5-K2

“Le premier jour, nous avons rencontré avec ma famille de Singajaya.”

[On the first day, we met with my family from Singajaya.]

Data above is the phrase in the form of a past composition contained addition errors at the temporal deixis. The correct sentence should be “Le premier jour, nous avons rencontré ma famille de Singajaya”. More clearly in the sentence, there is an addition of

unnecessary preposition that connect the verb “rencontre”, because that verb did not require with preposition (Drivaud, 2018).

4.4. Misordering

Here are the explanations of misordering which are contained in students’ narrative texts:

Misordering of Temporal Deixis

Errors in the form of deixis of people found in 30 narrative texts in the form of verb formations Here is one of the examples of the data:

RES9-K1

“C’était inoubliables moment que je ne suis jamais oublié.”

[It was an unforgettable moment that I will never forget.]

From the data above, we found errors in the use of the temporal deixis, which is a grammatical error, namely an ordering error. The correct sentence should be “C’était un moment inoubliable que je ne suis jamais oublié”. It can be seen that the respondent misused in ordering the sentence. Since the word “c’est” is included in the presentative sentence which requires the word be followed by a noun, an adjective, an adverb and a clause (Chollet & Robert, 2009). Therefore, the correct arrangement is followed by the word “un moment”, then followed by the word “inoubliables”.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results, it was found that there were 138 errors of deixis usage in 30 narrative texts. These errors were found in all of deixis types: person deixis, spatial deixis, and temporal deixis, where according to Fillmore (as cited in Stapleton, 2017), these three types of deixis are the most obvious manifestation of deictic categories in language.

Based on the taxonomy of Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), the findings show that these errors consist of misformation (78%), omission (15%), addition (5%), and misordering as much as 2%. The dominant type of deixis misuse is temporal deixis.

Thus, it can be concluded that students often make misformation errors, especially in the use of temporal deixis. This misformation was also found in previous studies (see Afifah & Widodo, 2015; Tonapa, et al. 2018). This provides an initial perspective that learners

of foreign languages, including French, tend to make this type of error. This can also be justified by several other findings that illustrate that French learners, in their language performance, tend to make misformation errors (see Assa'diyah, 2017; Pramesti, et al., 2019).

This study has limitations in not conducting an analysis of the causes of these errors. However, this study is expected to contribute to providing initial insight into the competence of French learners in using deixis. Thus, it is hoped that further research can more explore the problems to get bigger and more useful results.

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