

Research Article

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The Use of Temporal Deixis in Portraying Time Displacement and Sequences of Event in Short Stories

Hajar Hujjatul Muthmainnah^a, Oktiva Herry Chandra^b

^a*English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang, 50274, Indonesia*

^b*English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang, 50274, Indonesia*

hajarhujjatul20@gmail.com

Abstract

This thesis deals with how readers understand the sequences of event and time displacement in the literary works especially short story. Temporal deixis, as one of deixis types, have an important role along with tense to help readers understand the story. This thesis identifies the sequences of event, describes time displacement and sequence event in short story by using temporal deixis and tense, and explains the use of temporal deixis in short stories. The result shows that four selected short stories contain temporal deixis and change of tense. In conclusion, the four selected short stories contain temporal deixis and change of tense to signify time displacement from present to past and vice versa.

Keywords: temporal deixis; time displacement; sequences of event; tense; short story

1. Background of the Study

Most people are surrounded with literary works. Even literary works affect the reader's life. Likewise, the written literary works are influenced by human life. According to Klarer, literature is all written expression with the restriction, but not every written document can be included as literature [1]. In order to understand the literary works, the reader needs to understand the sequence of events in a story. The reader concerns and uses the context to avoid misunderstanding in reading literary works. In addition, the reader deals with utterances and plot of the story. One of literary work which is short story has an element namely setting. Nurgiyantoro divides setting into setting of place, time, and social setting. Setting of time helps the reader to imagine when and where the event occurs. Besides, setting of time helps the reader to understand the event happened in past time, present time, or future time [2].

This study aims to get answers for research problems which are what are the sequences of event in short stories, how does the author use temporal deixis and tense to describe time displacement and sequences of event in short stories, and why does the author use temporal deixis in telling short stories. This study have three objectives which are to identify the sequences of event in short stories, to describe time displacement and sequences of event by using temporal deixis and tense, and to explain the use of temporal deixis in telling short stories.

There are many previous studies which discussed about deixis. One of previous studies discussed about temporal deixis in short story. The research on temporal deixis conducted by Ananda, Yulmiati, and Riza (2017) focused on identifying temporal deixis in proximal and distal form. The research entitled *An Analysis Temporal Deixis Found in Maupassant's Short Story "An Affair of State"* had purpose to describe many kinds of temporal deixis and the use of context in short story by using Yule theory. The gap between the previous study and a study conducted by the writer is the objective of the study.

In this thesis, the writer focused on the analysis of temporal deixis and tense to describe time displacement and sequences of event in four short stories. To limit the object of the study, the writer observed only four short stories among thousand short stories in a website namely Reedsy Prompts. The writer chose only four short stories because they have different themes with similar ways in telling the stories. The four short stories were entitled *The Beauty of Senseless* by Laila Lavender, *Come to Atlanta* by Marsha Kurbatova, *1:20 AM* by Isabelle Saadatmand, and *Perfect Memory* by Elisabeth Motes. The short stories were first published between 2020 and 2021.

2. LITERARY REVIEW

2.1. Short Story

As one of literary works, short story is defined as impression of unity because short story can be read in one sitting according to Klarer [1]. The range of words in short story are approximately from 1.000-20.000 words. The length of story affects the plot of the story which focuses in central action. Short story is less detailed compared to novel because short story focuses in main character, setting, and location.

2.2. Temporal Deixis

As branch of pragmatics, deixis represents people, space, and time according to the context. One of deixis types namely temporal deixis relies on the relevant time or moment of utterance. Levinson states that measuring and counting time in language have to be important cycles of day and night, lunar month, season and years [3]. "Today" as one of temporal deixis refers to present time while "last night" refers to past time. "Today" shows that the event occurs in the present. "Last night" shows that the event occurs in the past. Readers are able to understand when the event occurs through temporal deixis.

2.3. Tense

Time displacement cannot be separated with the use of tense. Tense is used to modify form of verb to express time and action of event. Types of tense included present tense, past tense, and future tense. Greenbaum and Quirk said that present tense expresses state present, the habitual present, and the instantaneous present. Greenbaum and Quirk explains past tense as referring a situation or event in the past [4]. Meanwhile, Comrie describes future tense as a situation or event that will happen at the moment of speaking [5].

2.4. Aspect

Tense and aspect are often considered the same even though both are different. Comrie relates aspect with internal time of situation. Perfective and imperfective are kinds of aspect to indicate a situation. Perfective is a complete situation while imperfective is an incomplete situation [5].

3. METHOD

3.1. Data and Data Source

The data is utterances which contain temporal deixis and change of tense from present to past, past to present, present to future, and past to future. For the data source, the writer used short stories. The short stories were taken from a website namely Reedsy Prompts. The writer only took four short stories among thousand stories in the website.

3.2. Method of Collecting Data

This study uses non-participatory observation to collect the data. Non-participatory observation is when the observer observes events, activities, and interactions without participating directly.

3.3. Method of Analysing Data

The writer used some steps in analysing the data. First, the writer identified time displacement from present to past or past to present that appears in the short stories. Second, the writer made sequences of event. Third, the writer described time displacement and sequences of event by using temporal deixis and tense in short stories. Then, the writer explained the use of temporal deixis in short stories.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Sequences of Event in The Beauty of Senseless

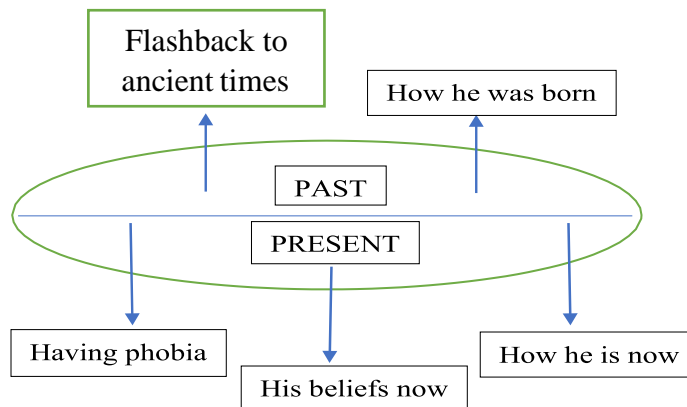


Figure 1. Sequences of Event in The Beauty of Senseless

When the author tells the events in short story, there is usually a change from one particular time to another. The change is indicated by the change of tenses. When the author tells event in the present, the author uses present tense. When the author moves to the event in the past, the author uses past tense. Time displacement from present to past by using tense can be seen from the following examples:

4.2. Time Displacement by Using Tense and Temporal Deixis in *The Beauty of Senseless*

4.2.1. Present to Past

Present : I have a phobia of tech-related things, such as modern phones, televisions, iPads, laptops, tablets, headphones, ear pods, smartwatches, and so on. **Has anyone tried to** think of how Ancient people, such as the Romans, Greeks, Mycenaeans, Minoans, Phoenicians, Egyptians all tried to live without using any technology?

Past : Romans were the ones who first invented a tool called an aqueduct, kind of like modern day dams. **They were** also the ones to build roads which connected their entire empire. **The government** in which many places have nowadays, such as a republic, **was also influenced** by the Romans.

Greeks were the ones who made many inventions and were the ones who first started using the concept of geometry

From the data above, readers can see that time displacement is from present to past. The present time is indicated by the use of present tense in sentences “I have a phobia...” and “Has anyone tried...” with the use of “have” and “has”. Then, the author moves to past time. The past time is indicated by the use of past tense in sentences “Romans were

the ones...”, “They were also...”, “The government... was also influenced”, and “Greeks were the ones...” with the use of “were” and “was also influenced”. To mark temporal deixis from present to past, it can be seen from the change of tense. The change of tense from present to past already indicates that the story is away from the speaker or categorized as distal. After describing the events in the past, the author returns to the present time. Then, the author moves to past time and back to present again. The next pattern can be seen below.

4.2.2. Present to past, then back to present

Present : I strongly believe to cure my hearing loss, **I don’t need to** wear some tiny piece stuffed in my ear, because **my brain knows** that there is a piece of technology smushed inside my precious ear. If only Doctor Caldwell, and my parents would consider my point of view.

Past : I was born by hearing nothing, and it has been **twelve years** since I have suffered this...so my parents could only homeschool me. Well, they think that since I am going to eight grade, (and they think that once you are in eighth grade, you will need to start interacting and developing connections with others just to help me get a good high school education, college, and possibly get a decent job) I need to start going to school. **I cried. I was sad**, because to be honest, **I really didn’t like** the idea of a piece of technology crammed into my ear.

Present : Now, imagine that your parents bought you a pet spider, and they say that this spider is exceedingly small, a baby one, and that it won’t hurt you at all. Will that make you feel any better? **I mean going into** your own room will make you feel scared, frightened about what the spider is feasting on right now. Did you imagine all of that? Good. Because **that is exactly how I feel** about hearing aids.

From the data above, there are two times displacement which are present to past and back to present again. The present time is indicated by the use of present tense in sentences “I strongly believe...”, “I don’t need...”, and “my brain knows...” with the use of “believe”, “don’t need”, and “knows”. Then, the author moves to past time by using past tense. The use of past tense is indicated by the sentences such as “I was born...”, “I cried.”, “I was sad... I really didn’t like...”. Was, cried, and didn’t are the past form. To mark temporal deixis, the author uses twelve years. The change of tense from present to past indicates that the story is away from the speaker or categorized as distal. After describing the events in the past, the author returns to present by using present tense and temporal deixis now. The use of present tense is indicated by sentences “Now, imagine that...”, “I mean going to...”, “...that is exactly...”. The use of temporal deixis now shows that the situation occurs in the present or at the moment of speaking. The change of tense from past to present is indicated that the story is near the speaker or categorized as proximal.

4.2.3. Present to Future

Present : Because that is exactly how **I feel** about hearing aids.

Future : But sometimes I get nightmares, that this hearing aids **will** turn on me.

The data above shows time displacement from present to future. The present time is expressed with the use of present tense "...that is exactly how I feel...". Is and feel are present form. After that, the author moves to future by using future tense. The use of future tense is expressed with in the sentence "..., that this hearing aids will turn on me". Will is future form.

4.3 *The Use of Temporal Deixis in The Beauty of Senseless*

Temporal deixis can be used in short story because temporal deixis can refer the time context of the situation and when the event happen. The use of temporal deixis in short story can be seen in *The Beauty of Senseless* by Laila Lavender. In the first displacement, there is time displacement from present to past by using tense. The change of tense from present to past can be marked as temporal deixis. The change of tense shows the subject "I" talking about his phobia then moving to past by telling about ancient times. The second displacement contains two temporal deixis which are twelve years and now. The author uses temporal deixis twelve years to show how long the subject "I" is not able to hear anything. The subject "I" invites the reader to imagine something at the moment of speaking by using temporal deixis now. In the third displacement, there is time displacement from present to future by using tense. The change of tense from present to future can be marked as temporal deixis. The change of tense shows the subject "I" is still afraid the hearing aids will turn on him.

4.4 *Aspect Displacement in The Beauty of Senseless*

A displacement in the story is marked by a change of aspect through the use of tense. There are two aspect markers from the data :

...these ancient dudes **achieved** so much more than anyone could ever imagine!
This question **has been haunting** me since I could even remember.

The data above indicates perfective and imperfective. The sentence "this question has been haunting..." is the imperfective aspect because it shows the situation in progress or incomplete situation. The sentence "... these ancient dudes achieved..." is perfective aspect because the situation is already finished.

5. CONCLUSION

From the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the four selected short stories contain temporal deixis and change of tense to signify time displacement from present to past and vice versa. The use of temporal deixis helps the reader to understand time context and the exact time of situation happened. When the author wants to describe situation in the present, the author uses present tense. Meanwhile, the author uses past tense to describe

situation in the past. The sequences of event help the reader to imagine time displacement in the story. The four selected short stories also contain two aspect markers which are perfective and imperfective.

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