

Contributions of the deixis clarified to the reading comprehension competence of the 6th graders

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Abstract

Deixis are generally expressed as words or phrases whose meaning changes depending on who is talking, who is listening, where and when it is spoken (I, you, here, there, yesterday etc.). Foreign language learners have difficulties in decoding deixis in reading and listening skills. Therefore, this study aims at discussing how well the 6th graders are able to comprehend deixis in a written discourse. In order to collect data, twenty-two students have divided into two groups with even numbers as control and experimental groups. The 6th graders in experimental group have been given three different written texts in which deixis are clarified in parenthesis just after the use deictic words whereas the 6th graders in control group have been given the same three different written texts without identified deixis. The data have been collected through the reading comprehension questions after each text used in both groups. The findings have been analyzed by the SPSS 22 version program and t-test. As a result, the analysis indicates that there is a significant difference between the graders in both groups. The 6th graders in the experimental group seem more successful in reading comprehension than those in the control group because of the deictic words clarified.

Keywords

Deixis;
comprehension
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Introduction

In a written text, deictic words can be simulated to the neurons in a brain. As deictic words are neurons of the context, if there is neural disconnection, contextual error or

incomprehension between these deictic words in a context, comprehension the text correctly is not possible for the readers. Even if all the words in the text are known by the readers and all grammatical structures are understood, if the deictic words in the text are not decoded correctly, the readers are unable to comprehend the text appropriately. Unless it is clear to whom exactly the deictic word 'she' refers to or where 'there' is pointing to in a text, it is not possible for the reader to comprehend or enjoy what they read.

It is necessary to make a text comprehensible for readers in foreign language learning. Therefore, the aim of the study is to discuss the contribution of the deictic words clarified in the text to the reading comprehension competence of the learners.

Literature review

One of the four basic skills in foreign language learning is reading comprehension. Reading comprehension skills are very important for learners both during their educational life and for their further academic studies (Windiarsi P., 2006). Nowadays, the importance of reading comprehension skill is increasing day by day, where a lot of information is presented mostly as reading texts on the internet. In addition, many exams that students encounter in their education life will be in the form of written texts. In order to cope with this situation, it is necessary to have a very good reading comprehension ability.

The notion of reading comprehension, which is accepted as a complex activity, has been defined in different ways over the years. Nuttall (1996) defines that reading comprehension is to receive the message from a written discourse by the reader as the writer intended. According to Varzegar (1995), reading comprehension consists of two important processes; decoding and demessaging. Decoding is the understanding of words, phrases and sentences in written discourse, while demessaging is the scriptual, schematic and pragmatic side of written discourse. Demessaging cannot be expected to occur without decoding. The importance of deixis in reading comprehension emerges during the decoding process. If the deixis in the

written discourse cannot be decoded correctly by the reader, there is a problem from the first process of reading comprehension.

Deictic words have different meanings each time, depending on the person who wrote the text or read the text, the speaker, the listener, the place where it is uttered, and the time when it is uttered (I, we, you, this, that, here, there, now, yesterday, tomorrow, next year and etc.). In every speech, *here* does not always refer to the same place, *yesterday* does not always refer to the same date, and *I* does not always refer to the same person. Although Al-Saif (2008, p. 67) gave different naming of deixis from different researchers, such as *pure index* by Pierce (1932), *symbol* by Bühler (1934), *indexical symbol* by Burks (1948), *indicator* by Goodman (1951), *indexical expression* by Bar-Hiller (1954), and *shifter* by Jespersen (1965) and Jakobson (1971), the word deixis originates from the Greek '*deiktikos*' (deictic), meaning '*pointing*'. Deixis has been defined in different ways by linguistic researchers. For instance, Levinson (1983, p. 54) defined that "deixis concerns the ways in which language encode or grammaticalize features of the context of utterance or speech event, and thus also concerns ways in which interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of the context of utterance". According to Yule (1996, p. 9), "deixis is a form referring that is tied to the speakers context, with the most basic distinction between deictic expressions being 'near speaker' versus 'away from speaker'".

According to Levinson (1983, p. 68), there are five types of deixis; person, time (temporal), place (spatial), discourse and social deixis. Personal deixis concern pronouns and grammatically are divided into three categories; first person pronouns, second person pronouns and third person pronouns, and each category has both singular and plural forms. First person pronouns are used for referring to the speaker/writer (I, me, myself, mine and my) in the singular form, or the speakers/writers (we, us, ourselves, ours and our) in the plural form. Second person pronouns refer to the addressee or addressees/interlocutors/hearers /readers (you, your, yours, yourselves and yourself) in an utterance. Third person pronouns (they, he, she, themselves, his her and etc.) are used to designate other than the speaker and the interlocutors.

Time or temporal deixis are related to the moments of the utterance; before the moment of utterance, at the time of utterance or after the time of the utterance (Purba et al., 2014). Time deixis can be both time adverbials, such as *yesterday*, *now*, *tomorrow* and tense markers, such as present and past on verbs (e.g. *studies* and *studied*). According to Levinson (1983), time deictic words are important to distinguish the moment of the utterance from the moment of the reception. For instance, the time-deictic word ‘*now*’ in a written text does not mean *now* anymore when it is received by the reader; it means ‘*past*’.

Place or spatial deixis can be demonstratives/determiners (*this*, *that*), adverbs of places (*here*, *there*) or verbs (*come*, *go*, *bring*, *take*). Abidin (2019) states that place deixis is related to the locations of the participants in the speech. In English place-deictic words are the adverbs (*here* and *there*) and the demonstratives or determiners (*this* and *that*). Whereas ‘*this*’ and ‘*here*’ shows things or people are near the speaker, ‘*that*’ and ‘*there*’ shows things and people are far from the speaker (Purba et al., 2014). Although not mentioned in many deixis studies, some verbs, such as ‘*come-go*’ and ‘*bring-take/send*’ are also considered place-deictic words, since these verbs are also about location of the speaker in a speech (Clark, 1974; Levinson, 1983, p. 83). For example, when the speaker says ‘*come* or *bring*’, it means getting closer to the speaker’ location, or the speaker says ‘*go* or *take/send*’, it means about movement far away from the speaker’s location.

Discourse deixis is also named as text deixis. Levinson (1983) states that discourse deixis concerns some expressions which refer to some parts of discourse in an utterance and it is related to the speaker's current “location” in the discourse. Discourse deixis can be temporal location (*this* and *that*) of the utterance or spatial of the utterance (*next* and *last*) and their references can be both anaphoric (backward of the utterance), such as ‘*last* chapter’, ‘*previous* topic’ and ‘*that* example’ and cataphoric (forward of the utterance), such as ‘*next* chapter’, ‘*following* topic’ and ‘*this* example’. According to Al-Saif (2008), they are used to take the hearer’s or reader’s attention to the meaning of a clause, a sentence, a paragraph in utterance, or the whole story.

Social deixis concerns about the social identities of participants or non-participants in a speech event, or the social relationship between them (Levinson, 1983). They can be polite pronouns, titles of participants, kinship terms, names and honorifics. Social deixis can reflect the social status of the speakers, the hearers or even the status of the non-participants mentioned in the utterance (Windiarsi P., 2006). There are two types of social deixis: *relational social deixis* and *absolute social deixis*. Whereas relational social deixis shows distance or closeness between the speaker and the addressee, such as *my husband, Sir, Honey, and Mr. Özturan*, absolute social deixis shows a simple reference to the absolute status of the addressee without ranking of the participants, such as *President, Prime minister and General*.

The relationship between deixis and reading comprehension has been the subject of some linguistic researches, as in Windiarsi P's study (2006). The study aimed to measure the effect of students' recognition of deixis on their reading comprehension. According to the findings of the study, there is a positive relationship between students' mastery of deixis and their reading comprehension skills. According to Windiarsi P. (2006), deixis helps the student to comprehend the text in case the learners get stuck in understanding the text due to unknown words.

Another study on the relationship between Deixis and reading comprehension skills was conducted by Corrales et al. in 2020. The study has been carried out in Ecuador with the participation of 64 university students. The aim of the study is to investigate how well the deictic words taught to students can improve their reading comprehension abilities. Pre-test and post-tests were applied to collect data, and deictic words were taught in the classroom between the two tests. According to the research findings, it has been stated that English foreign language students succeed in reading comprehension questions using deictic words and improve their reading comprehension competence.

For some reason, foreign language learners may find it difficult to decode deixis in written texts. Interpretation of deictic words during speaking is much easier than reading, it is because gestures can help to refer to objects or people that are not referred to in speech (Demir-Lira et al., 2012). However, if there are no images associated with the text or the deictic words cannot be identified, it can be difficult to interpret the deictic words in a written text for reading comprehension.

As Al-Saif (2008) states, in order to interpret what has been said and what has been meant, it is essential to define the speaker, the time and the place of the utterance. While reading a text, identifying the speaker or speakers in a written dialogue is really difficult issue for learners. Contrary to paragraph texts, utterances have more owners in written dialogue sentences, so it can be difficult for the readers to decode the deixis in the dialogue. For instance, the deictic word 'I' used in a dialogue can mean as many different meanings as the number of people in that dialogue (Ayşe, Fatma, Mary and so on) depending on the person saying the utterance. Especially young learners may have bigger problem with this issue due to their narrow perception levels (cognitive development). Especially young learners cannot see the whole picture of a text because of their cognitive development. When they look at a paper, they focus on only one point of view. Even the answer of the question is written on the same paper but in different part, they cannot see the answer. In this case, when learning a foreign language for the sixth graders, interpreting deixis by referring to the previous sentences can be quite harder.

All in all, meaning is an important element among the factors that affect reading comprehension and for comprehending the meaning of a text, decoding the message is a priority process of reading comprehension. It is assumed that clarifying deixis in the text can contribute to readers receiving the message of the text. Therefore, in this study how well the 6th graders are able to comprehend deixis in a written discourse will be discussed.

In addition, gender differences in language learning one of the common research topics. The general assumption is that females are better at language learning than males (Wightman, 2020), and many research findings confirm this. Burman et al. (2008) have conducted a study on this subject at Northwestern University. The research is carried out with the participation of 62 students between the ages of 9 and 15, with equal numbers of male and female students. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) is used as participants complete a variety of writing, spelling, and reading tasks. As a result of the study, it is seen that different areas of the brains of girls and boys are activated in language acquisition, and girls' brains are more active in this process. In addition, the research shows that the girls' brains are more active in

the abstract thinking and speech production parts in this process, while the auditory and visual areas are more active in the boys' brains. Another remarkable study on gender differences in language learning has been conducted by Silk et al. (2015). According to the findings of the study, in which 27,119 learners from 88 countries participate, it is seen that females are more successful than males in writing and speaking skills; however, gender gap has not been found in listening and reading skills.

Considering these gender gaps in language learning, this study has also aimed to examine whether there is a significant difference in female and male students' reading comprehension competence in terms of deictic words clarified.

Research questions

In parallel with the main purpose of the study, the following research questions will be answered:

- How well do the deictic words clarified contribute reading comprehension competence of the sixth graders?
- Are there any significant differences between female and male students' reading comprehension competence in terms of deictic words clarified?

Method

The current study has been permitted to be published by the authors. The references of the relevant studies mentioned in the study are given in the reference part.

Participants

In order to find out the effects of deictic words clarified to the reading comprehension competence of the 6th graders, 22 sixth graders have taken part in the research; 11 of them as a control group and 11 of them as an experimental group. In the experimental group, 5 male and 6 female students; in the control group, 4 male and 7 female students have participated.

Table 1. The distribution of the participants according to their group and gender

		<i>Participants</i>		
		Control Group	Experimental Group	Gender Total
<i>Gender</i>	Male	4	5	9
	Female	7	6	13
	Participants Total	11	11	22

Instruments

So as to validate the study, three different types of written discourse (text, dialogue and sentence) have been papered with total 24 comprehensions questions; 12 questions for a text (Part A), 8 questions for a dialogue (Part B) and 5 questions for the sentences (Part C). The questions have been created to evaluate the students' reading comprehension skills and especially to see if deictic words clarified help the learners answer the questions. Discourse deixis and social deixis, which are more complex, have not been included in the study due to the fact that the participants are in the younger age group (11-12); therefore, only person, time and place deixis have been involved to the study. Unlike the control group, the experimental group have been given the deictic words by underlining in the written discourses with the references of the deictic words in the context like in the example "***They*** (*Jessica's Father and grandfather*) are planting vegetables ***there*** (*in the garden*).".

In the first part (Part A), the following text with 12 reading comprehension questions has been given to the experimental group. In this part, personal deixis (I, my, we, he, it, they, she and her) and place deixis (there and here) have been asked.

"Hi, I'm Jessica. ***I***(*Jessica*) am ten years old. ***I*** (*Jessica*) live in a farm with ***my family*** (*Jessica's family*). ***We*** (*Jessica and Jessica's family*) have a lot of animals; sheep, cows, chickens, dog and cat. Today is busy day for ***my family*** (*Jessica's family*). ***My mother*** (*Jessica's mother*) is in the barn at the moment and ***she*** (*Jessica's mother*) is milking the cows ***there*** (*in the barn*). ***My brother*** (*Jessica's brother*) is in the garden and ***he*** (*Jessica' brother*) is taking the dog for a walk. ***My little sister's*** (*Jessica's sister*) favorite animal is the cat. ***She*** (*Jessica's sister*) is giving milk to ***it*** (*the cat*). ***My father*** (*Jessica's father*) is working in the garden

with my grandfather (Jessica's grandfather). They (Jessica's Father and grandfather) are planting vegetables there (in the garden). My grandmother (Jessica's grandmother) is in the coop and she (Jessica's grandmother) is feeding the chickens. I (Jessica) am helping her (Jessica's grandmother) to feed the chickens here (in the coop)."

1. Who is ten years old?
2. Who lives in the farm?
3. Who has got a lot of animals?
4. Where is Jessica's mother milking the cows?
5. Who is taking the dog for a walk?
6. Which animal is Jessica's little sister giving milk?
7. Who is working in the garden?
8. Who is planting vegetables?
9. Where are Jessica's father and grandfather planting vegetables?
10. Who is feeding the chickens?
11. Where is Jessica now?
12. Whom is Jessica helping now?

For example, in the 8 question of the text "*Who is planting vegetables?*" the aim is to see if the deictic words clarified (*They (Jessica's Father and grandfather) are planting vegetables...*) help the learners improve their reading comprehension competence. In order to answer this question, the learners in the control group are supposed to looking back to the previous information in the text (anaphoric reference) and to answer like "*Jessica's father and grandfather*".

In the second part (Part B), the following dialogue with 8 reading comprehension questions has been prepared for the experimental group. In this part, person deixis (I, we, us and he), time deixis (*on time*), and place deixis (*here* and *there*) have been asked.

Marko: Hello, Shin. This is Marko.

Shin: Hello, Marko.

Marko: What's up, Shin?

Shin: Nothing. I (Shin) am sitting at home and watching TV.

Marko: Me (Marko) too. Listen. Tom is here (Marko's house). We (Marko and Tom) are planning go to the zoo. Would you (Shin) like to come with us (Marko and Tom)?

Shin: That's sounds great!

Marko: Let us (Marko, Tom and Shin) meet in front of the zoo at 2 pm.

Shin: OK. See you (Marko and Tom) there (in front of the zoo) at 2 o'clock.

Marko: Shin, Tom must turn back at 4 pm. He (Tom) has got only two hours. Please, don't be late.

Shin: Don't worry, Marko. I (Shin) will be in front of the zoo on time (at 2 o'clock).

Marko: OK. Bye.

1. Who is watching TV?
2. Where is Tom now?
3. Who is planning go the zoo?
4. With whom is Shin going to go to the zoo?

5. Where is Shin going to be at 2 o'clock?
6. What time is Shin going to be in front of the zoo?
7. Who has got only two hours?
8. Who is going to meet in front of the the zoo?

In the second question of the dialogue “*Where is Tom now*”, in order to answer this question, the learners should decode the place deixis ‘*here*’ in the sentence “*Tom is here*”. In the dialogue, Marko says “*Tom is here*”, so the learners should be able to infer that Tom is close to Marko (speaker) and if Macro is at home, Tom is also at Marko's house. This process can be complex for learners. The deixis ‘*here*’ with explanation in the parentheses “*Tom is here (Marko's house)*” has been tested to see if it makes it easier to answer this question.

In the third part (Part C), the following sentences are given with their reading comprehension questions to the experimental group. In this part, person, time and place deixis (*by himself, then, there, two hours later and on time*) have been asked.

“Today, Ayşe is in Samsun. She (Ayşe) will be in İstanbul tomorrow. She (Ayşe) will visit Sultan Ahmet Mosque then (tomorrow).”

1. When will Ayşe visit Sultan Ahmet Mosque?

“It is 3 pm now. Hasan is doing homework at the moment. Two hours later (at 5 pm), he (Hasan) will watch TV.”

2. What time will Hasan watch TV?

“Sinem and Tuğçe will meet in front of the cinema. They (Sinem and Tuğçe) will be there (in front of the cinema) at 2 o'clock.”

3. Where will Sinem and Tuğçe be at 2 o'clock?

“Mert invited Murat to the theater; but Murat was busy and he (Murat) didn't go to the theater. Mert went to the theater by himself (only Mert).”

4. Did Mert go to the theater alone?

“There is a party at the Sunset Cafe at 5 pm. Gizem is hurry up now because she (Gizem) wants to be there (at the Sunset Cafe) on time (at 5 pm).”

5. What time does Gizem want to be at the Sunset Cafe?

For example, in the third question of the sentences “*Where will Sinem and Tuğçe be at 2 o'clock*”, the place deixis ‘*there*’ in the sentence “*They will be there (in front of the cinema)*” is asked to the learners. In the control group, the reference of this deixis has not been given in the parenthesis, the learners are supposed to go back the previous sentence “*Sinem and Tuğçe will meet in front of the cinema*” and decode the reference of the deixis (anaphoric reference) to answer the question.

Data collection procedures

The application of three different types of written discourses has been carried out in three sessions for both groups. In the first session, the text (Part A) with the reading comprehension questions has been given to the both groups. In the second session, the both groups have answered the questions of the dialogue (Part B). Finally, in the third session, the questions of the sentences (Part C) (sentences) have been answered by the groups.

Data analysis

After the implementation phase, the data have been analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 22 version and t-test to correlate the results in terms of gender differences and achievement differences for both groups and for each type (text, dialogue and sentence). Finally, the data of statistical analysis have been evaluated according to the success average of the control and experimental groups, and the gender differences.

Results

The First Research Question of the Study

The first research question of the study is “*How well do the deictic words clarified contribute reading comprehension competence of the sixth graders?*”. A correlation analysis has been carried out in order to measure the relationship between the two groups (control and experimental). Here are the group statistics tables;

Table 2. The mean of the Part-A and Part-B according to the t-test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Part A	-1,822	20	,083
Part B	-2,463	20	,023

As seen from the Table 2, there is not statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of total points from the Part A (text) ($p = 0.083 > 0.05$). However, the Part B (dialogue) shows a statistically significant

difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of total points from this part. The average correct answers of the experimental group is higher than the control group ($P = 0.023 < 0.05$).

Table 3. The test statistics for the Part-C according to the experimental and control groups

	Part C
Mann-Whitney U	20,000
Wilcoxon W	86,000
Z	-2,738
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,006
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	,007 ^b

As Table 3 illustrates, there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of total scores from the Part C (sentence). The average correct answers of the experimental group is higher than the control group ($p=0,07 < 0,05$).

The Second Research Question of the Study

The second research question of the study is “Are there any significant differences between female and male students' reading comprehension competence in terms of deictic words clarified?”. A correlation analysis has been carried out in order to measure the relationship between the two groups according to gender differences for each part (Part-A, Part-B and Part-C).

Table 4. The mean of the parts according to the t-test for the MALE participants in both groups

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Part A	-1,766	7	,121
Part B	-1,457	5,775	,197
Part C	-3,667	7	,008

In the Table 4 it is seen that there is not any difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of total points from both the Part A (text) and the Part B (dialogue) for the male participants (for Part-A $p=0.121 > 0,05$ and for

Part-B $p=0.197>0.05$). Nevertheless, according to the scores of the male participates in both groups, it is seen a statistically significant difference in the Part C (sentence). In addition, the average correct answer scores of the men in the experimental group is higher than in the control group ($p = 0.008 <0.05$).

Table 5. The mean of the parts according to the t-test for the FEMALE participants

t-test for Equality of Means			
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Part A	-,872	11	,402
Part B	-2,847	11	,016
Part C	-1,941	11	,078

As seen from the Table 5, according to the total scores of the female participants from the Part A (text) and the Part C (sentence) in both groups, there is not statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups (For the Part-A $p = 0.402 > 0.05$ and for the Part-C $p = 0.078 > 0.05$). However; it is seen a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of total scores in the Part B (dialogue) for the female participants. Additionally, the correct answers in the experimental group of the female participants is higher than average ($p = 0.016 <0.05$).

Table 6. The mean of the parts according to the t-test for the MALE and FEMALE participants in the experimental group

t-test for Equality of Means			
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Part A	,197	9	,848
Part B	-1,377	9	,202
Part C	-,316	9	,759

According to the t-test, scores of the male and female participants in the experimental group in terms of the average correct answer have not detected any significant difference in the Part A (text), Part B (dialogue) and Part C (sentences) (For Part-A $p=0,848>0,05$; For Part-B $p=0,202>0,05$; For Part-C $p=0,759>0,05$).

Table 7. The mean of the parts according to the t-test for the MALE and FEMALE participants in the control group

t-test for Equality of Means			
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Part A	-1,102	9	,299
Part B	-1,975	9	,080
Part C	-2,181	9	,057

Similar to the experimental group, any significant difference between male and female participants in the control group has not been detected in terms of average correct answers in Part A (text), Part B (dialogue) and Part C (sentence), (For Part-A $p=0,299>0,05$; For the Part-B $p=0,08>0,05$; For Part-C $p=0,057>0,05$).

Discussion

According to the findings, it is seen that the learners have difficulty in decoding deictic words mostly in the dialogue (Part-B). There may be different reasons for this. First of all, the student must have a sufficient level of English vocabulary. If the student does not know the meaning of the pronoun "we", it is impossible to find the word or words that this deictic word refers to. Another reason may be the cognitive deficiency of the student. Although the student knows that the pronoun "we" means "biz" in Turkish and is plural, he/she needs to go back and analyze the people in the dialogue in order to find out to whom this pronoun refers to in the dialogue. In addition, as Demir-Lira et al. (2012) stated, unlike spoken dialogue, due to lack of gestures used by the speakers to help refer deictic words in written dialogues it is possible that students have difficulty in identifying pronouns. Furthermore, as the owner of the utterances in the dialogue is changeable, it may be difficult to follow and extract the deictic words. The words referring to the deixis "we" in each line vary according to the person saying that sentence. This situation may have confused the learners. In the dialogues given to the learners in the experimental group, this

confusion may have been eliminated when reference expressions are given in parentheses next to each deictic words.

Secondly, the sentences part (Part C) has been challenging for the learners. Since there are not enough sentences to create a context for learners in the this part, which consists of a few sentences, the learners can get stuck by unknown words, thus they are likely to have more difficulty decoding deictic words (Windiarso P., 2006). Cognitive development theory is also in question in this part. In the example of "*It's 3 p.m. now. Hasan is doing homework at the moment. Two hours later, he will watch TV*", the cognitive level of learners should be sufficient to answer the question "*What time will Hasan watch TV*". It is observed that the majority of learners give "*At 3 pm*" instead of "*At 5 pm*" in response, since "*3*" is the only hour in the sentences.

In the text part (Part-A), the learners seem to have less difficulty decoding deictic words in written text. It may be because it is more meaningful to go from the whole to the part instead of going from the part to the whole in order to provide reading comprehension in the reading parts. Contrary to the sentences part, it is easier to create a context because there are more sentences in this part. Thus, it is easier to guess the meaning of unknown words, which can prevent learners from getting stuck by unknown words (Windiarso P., 2006). Additionally, compared to the dialogue part, the owner of the utterance in the text part is only one person, which means that all the person deixis '*I*' in the text refers only to '*Jessica*'.

In terms of the gender differences, any significant difference between the abilities of decoding deictic words and reading comprehension competence of the male and female participants in both groups has not been detected. This finding is in parallel with the research results of Silk et al. (2015), in which there is not any significant difference between the reading and listening skills of male and female learners.

Conclusions

This study investigated the effects of the deictic words clarified to the reading comprehension competence. Findings show that students have really big problems in interpreting deictic words in a written discourse. As, in general, the average correct

answer score of the participants in the experimental group seems higher than the control group, it can be said that if deictic words are clarified in a discourse well, students are able to comprehend the texts better. It is because the most of the students do not know if they have to look at the previous (anaphoric references) or further (cataphoric references) information to decode the deictic words, while reading a written discourse, students need to guidance for understanding about relationships of the deictic words and their references in the context. As Windiarsi P (2006) states, if learners master the clarification of deixis, their reading comprehension competence improves.

Last but not least, the findings of the study shows that clarifying deictic words in written discourse may contribute to the reading comprehension competence of learners. In order to improve the reading comprehension skills of the learners, deictic words should be taught to foreign language learners.

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Notes on the contributors

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Appendix

A.1. A text with reading comprehension questions for the control group:

PART A:

Please, read the text below and answer the questions related to the text.

"Hi,

I'm Jessica. I'm ten years old. I live in a farm with my family. We have a lot of animals; sheep, cows, chickens, dog and cat. Today is busy day for my family. My mother is in the barn at the moment and she is milking the cows there. My brother is in the garden and he is taking the dog for a walk. My little sister's favorite animal is the cat. She is giving milk to it. My father is working in the garden with my grandfather. They are planting vegetables there. My grandmother is in the coop and she is feeding the chickens. I am helping her to feed the chickens here"

Who is ten years old?

Who lives in the farm?

Who has got a lot of animals?

Where is Jessica's mother milking the cows?

Who is taking the dog for a walk?

Which animal is Jessica's little sister giving milk?

Who is working in the garden?

Who is planting vegetables?

Where are Jessica's father and grandfather planting vegetables?

Who is feeding the chickens?

Where is Jessica now?

Whom is Jessica helping now?

A.2. A text with reading comprehension questions for the experimental group:

PART A':

Please, read the text below and answer the questions related to the text.

"Hi,

I'm Jessica. I (Jessica) am ten years old. I (Jessica) live in a farm with my family (Jessica's family). We (Jessica and Jessica's family) have a lot of animals; sheep, cows, chickens, dog and cat. Today is busy day for my family (Jessica's family). My mother (Jessica's mother) is in the barn at the moment and she (Jessica's mother) is milking the cows there (in the barn). My brother (Jessica's brother) is in the garden and he (Jessica's brother) is taking the dog for a walk. My little sister's (Jessica's sister) favorite animal is the cat. She (Jessica's sister) is giving milk to it (the cat). My father (Jessica's father) is working in the garden with my grandfather (Jessica's grandfather). They (Jessica's Father and grandfather) are planting vegetables there (in the garden). My grandmother (Jessica's grandmother) is in the coop and she (Jessica's grandmother) is feeding the chickens. I (Jessica) am helping her (Jessica's grandmother) to feed the chickens here (in the coop)."

1. Who is ten years old?

2. Who lives in the farm?

3. Who has got a lot of animals?

4. Where is Jessica's mother milking the cows?

5. Who is taking the dog for a walk?

6. Which animal is Jessica's little sister giving milk?

7. Who is working in the garden?

8. Who is planting vegetables?

Where are Jessica's father and grandfather planting vegetables?

Who is feeding the chickens?

Where is Jessica now?

Whom is Jessica helping now?

A.3. A dialogue with reading comprehension questions for the control group:

PART B:

Please, read the dialogue below and answer the questions about the dialogue.

Marko : Hello, Shin. This is Marko.

Shin : Hello, Marko.

Marko : What's up, Shin?

Shin : Nothing. I am sitting at home and watching TV.

Marko : Me too. Listen. Tom is here. We are planning go to the zoo. Would you like to come with us?

Shin : That's sounds great!

Marko : Let's meet in front of the zoo at 2 pm.

Shin : OK. See you there at 2 o'clock.

Marko : Shin, Tom must turn back at 4 pm. He has got only two hours. Please, don't be late.

Shin : Don't worry, Marko. I will be there on time.

Marko : OK. Bye.

Who is watching TV?

Where is Tom now?

Who is planning go the zoo?

With whom is Shin going to go to the zoo?

Where is Shin going to be at 2 o'clock?

What time is Shin going to be in front of the zoo?

Who has got only two hours?

Who is going to meet in front of the zoo?

A.4. A dialogue with reading comprehension questions for the experimental group:

PART B':

Please, read the dialogue below and answer the questions about the dialogue.

Marko : Hello, Shin. This is Marko.

Shin : Hello, Marko.

Marko : What's up, Shin?

Shin : Nothing. I (Shin) am sitting at home and watching TV.

Marko : Me (Marko) too. Listen. Tom is here (Marko's house). We (Marko and Tom) are planning go to the zoo. Would you (Shin) like to come with us (Marko and Tom)?

Shin : That's sounds great!

Marko : Let us (Marko, Tom and Shin) meet in front of the zoo at 2 pm.

Shin : OK. See you(Marko and Tom) there (in front of the zoo) at 2 o'clock.

Marko : Shin, Tom must turn back at 4 pm. He (Tom) has got only two hours. Please, don't be late.

Shin : Don't worry, Marko. I (Shin) will be in front of the zoo on time (at 2 o'clock).

Marko : OK. Bye.

1. Who is watching TV?

Where is Tom now?

Who is planning go the zoo?

With whom is Shin going to go to the zoo?

Where is Shin going to be at 2 o'clock?

What time is Shin going to be in front of the zoo?

Who has got only two hours?

Who is going to meet in front of the zoo?

A.5. Sentences with reading comprehension questions for the control group:**PART C:**

Please, read the sentences below and answer the questions about the sentences.

Today, Ayşe is in Samsun. She will be in İstanbul tomorrow. She will visit Sultan Ahmet Mosque then.

When will Ayşe visit Sultan Ahmet Mosque?

It is 3 pm now. Hasan is doing homework at the moment. Two hours later, he will watch TV.

What time will Hasan watch TV?

Sinem and Tuğçe will meet in front of the cinema. They will be there at 2 o'clock.

Where will Sinem and Tuğçe be at 2 o'clock?

Mert invited Murat to the theater; but Murat was busy and he didn't go to the theater. Mert went to the theater by himself.

Did Mert go to the theater alone?

There is a party at the Sunset Cafe at 5 pm. Gizem is hurry up now because she wants to be there on time.

What time does Gizem want to be at the Sunset Cafe?

A.6. Sentences with reading comprehension questions for the experimental group:**PART C':**

Please, read the sentences below and answer the questions about the sentences.

Today, Ayşe is in Samsun. She (Ayşe) will be in İstanbul tomorrow. She (Ayşe) will visit Sultan Ahmet Mosque then (tomorrow).

When will Ayşe visit Sultan Ahmet Mosque?

It is 3 pm now. Hasan is doing homework at the moment. Two hours later (at 5 pm), he (Hasan) will watch TV.

What time will Hasan watch TV?

Sinem and Tuğçe will meet in front of the cinema. They (Sinem and Tuğçe) will be there (in front of the cinema) at 2 o'clock.

Where will Sinem and Tuğçe be at 2 o'clock?

Mert invited Murat to the theater; but Murat was busy and he (Murat) didn't go to the theater. Mert

went to the theater by himself (only Mert).

Did Mert go to the theater alone?

There is a party at the Sunset Cafe at 5 pm. Gizem is hurry up now because she (Gizem) wants to be there (at the Sunset Cafe) on time (at 5 pm).

What time does Gizem want to be at the Sunset Cafe?
