LEXICAL DENSITY OF READING TEXT IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK FOR GRADE XI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the lexical density especially the lexical items of English reading texts in the textbook for senior high school. The objectives of the study are to find out the level difficulties of lexical density used in reading text of English textbook and the reason why is level difficulties of lexical density used the way it is in reading text of English textbook. This study was conducted by descriptive method with qualitative approach. The data of this research were the English reading texts of of Bahasa Inggris textbook for grade XI senior high school published by Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. The result of the analysis showed that: (1) The level difficulties of lexical density that used in reading text of English textbook is medium lexical density. (2) The lexical density of narrative text entitled The Enchanted Fish have 401 content words and 581 grammatical function with total percentage of lexical density 40.83%, the lexical density of descriptive text entitled Cheetahs have 162 content words and 137 grammatical function with total percentage of lexical density 54.18%, and the lexical density of explanation text entitled Earthquakes have 307 content words and 226 grammatical function with total percentage of lexical density 57.59%.

Keywords: Lexical Density, English Reading Texts

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Textbook is a key component of most subjects in classroom. It plays an important role in teaching-learning process because it is used to convey the teaching materials to students, to facilitate the teaching-learning process. Beside that it can be a source for teacher who has limited teaching experience. It is provided in many subjects in school like English textbook, science textbook, social textbook, religion textbook, civic textbook, etc.

Reading material is one of the contents of the textbook besides listening instruction, some exercises, writing task and some conversation scripts. Reading material is usually in the form of text that is used to teach reading like pronouncing words, comprehending the content of the text, getting vocabulary, and also understanding of grammar. Through the text, the students can get information and the knowledge and also the vocabulary and the grammar. It is provided in some types which are called as genre. The types of genre are arranged well based on the curriculum.

In the reading section, every student usually get difficulties in comprehending a long text or a dense text such as narrative text. When they found narrative text with long and many paragraph, they would get bored firstly. Getting bored makes them get difficulties in comprehending the text. But in fact the main point of difficult text is the lexical density of the text, in which the more lexical items the text has, the more difficult the text is. If the text is formed in grammatical configuration, the text is not too difficult. While if the text is formed in lexical configuration, the text is categorized in difficult text.

Lexical density is a condition of the words_ proportion in the text. It shows the ratio of lexical items to grammatical items. Lexical items consist of noun, adjective, verb, and some adverbs while grammatical items consist of determiner, pronoun, most preposition, conjunction, finite verb, and some classes of adverb. Lexical density shows the complexity of words within text. It describes the development of lexical in the written language.

The density of text is often unavailable for the student's level. Sometimes, the students who are at the first level of senior high school get a text that has most lexical items which make the students difficult to understand the text. The amount of lexical items in a text can influence the lenght of a text and measure the level of difficulty of the text. The more the lexical items, the text has the more difficult the student has. The lexical items are known as an open system in which one word can have more than one meaning.

Based on the explanations above, there are several reasons why the writer chooses the textbook. First, it is one of the textbooks that is suitable with the current curriculum. Second, it is often used by some schools in Medan so it is important to know whether the reading texts are appropriate for the students. Third, the writer wants to know the lexical density of reading text in the textbook. Moreover, in order to comprehend the thesis, the writer will take Halliday's theory because he mentions briefly and clearly about the lexical density.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 THEORICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Reading Text

Tiedemann (2011), states that reading text is a tool of reading, because it is an instrument that is used to read. The form may be in visual signs and symbols including written alphabetic text. Harmer (1998), emphasize that reading text provides opportunities to study vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and the way to construct paragraph, sentence, and text. Siahaan and Shinoda (2008), emphasize that define text as a meaningful linguistics unit in a context. A linguistic unit is a phoneme or a morpheme or a phrase or a clause, or a sentence or a discourse.

According to Christie (2011), genre is a technical term for a particular instance of a text type. Hyland (2008), defines genre is a term for grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations. Moreover, Ardini (2010), states that genre is dealing with particular types which have particular purposes. There are three important elements to be considered in genre, namely social purpose, generic structure, and language features. So, it can be conclude that genre is a kind of text that has particular purpose and important elements. The three genres will be discussed briefly as follows.

1. Reading Text Based Genre

• Narrative Text

Narrative text is a written or oral text which tells fictional or   nonfictional event in the past, this kind of text is supposed to entertain or amuse the reader and as a good lesson as well. Narrative text has sequences of event

which contains conflict, climax, and solved by the resolution. It can be found easily in a form short story, novel, film script, legend or folktale, personal experience and so on.

- **Descriptive Text**

Descriptive Text is a text which says what a person or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing. In a broad sense, description, as explained by Kane (2000), defined description is about sensory experience how something looks, sounds, tastes. Mostly it is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception. Thus, if we conclude it from Kane's explanation above, the descriptive text is meaningful text that describes the experience related to the senses, such as what shape, sound, taste is. So, it can be said that this descriptive text is a text that explains about whether a person or an object is like, whether its form, its properties, its amount and others. The purpose of the descriptive text is clear, that is to describe, represent or reveal a person or an object, either abstract or concrete.

- **Explanation Text**

Explanation is a text which tells processes relating to forming of natural, social, scientific and cultural phenomena. Explanation text is to say 'why' and 'how' of the forming of the phenomena. Explanation is a text which tells processes relating to forming of natural, social, scientific, and cultural phenomena. The purpose of explanation text is to explain how or why something happens. According to Mark Anderson and Kathy

Anderson (1997), says that the explanation text type is often used to tell how and why thing (phenomena) occur in nature.

2. Lexical Density

Lexical density is a term that is used in text analysis. Introducing the concept of lexical density, Ure distinguishes between words with lexical proporties, and those without. According to Ure (1971), items that do not have lexical properties can be described "purely in terms of grammar", meaning that such words (or items) possess a more grammatical-syntactic function than a lexical items. Ure concludes that the large majority of the spoken texts have a lexical density of under 40%, while a large majority of the written texts have a lexical density of 40% or higher.

Johansson (2008), explains that density is the term most often used for describing the proportion of content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and often also adverbs) to the total number of words. Nunan (2011) state that lexical density referred to the number of lexical content of function words per clause. Based on the explanation above, lexical density is a measure of text that is known from the percentage of the content words or lexical items in the analyzed text. In addition, Halliday (1985), give more detail explanation about lexical density. He points out the importance of discriminating between lexical items and grammatical items. There are two ways of finding the lexical density: The ration between the number of content words and the total number of running words. Lexical items are often called content words, grammatical items are function words. Sholicatun (2011),

states that high lexical density measures of around 60-70%, quite lexical density measures of around 50-60%, and a lower lexical density measures of around 40-50%. Moreover, Rahmansyah (2014), states that the higher lexical density of a text is more information there is and more difficult it is to understand by the readers. If the text has more grammatical items than lexical items it is categorized to the lower lexical density. On the contrary, if the text has more lexical items than the grammatical items, it is categorized to the high lexical density.

A. Lexical Items

Thornbury and Slade (2006), states that content words are words that carry a high information load such as noun, adjective, lexical verb and some adverb. Moreover, Halliday (1985), defines lexical items as part of an open system rather than closed set because it is possible to new items can be added. In conclusion, lexical items or content words are parts that carry high information in text and called as open claasses in which new words can be added. These are parts of lexical item or content words: noun, verb, adverb, adjective

B. Grammatical Items

According to Halliday (1985), grammatical items are those that function in closed system because the new words are not easily added. In English language grammatical items might be determiner, pronoun, preposition, conjunction, numeral, and auxiliary verb.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study concerned with analyzing the content of a textbook, in this case the object is the reading text of an English textbook entitled Bahasa Inggris for Grade XI Senior High School published by Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia.

In conducting this research, descriptive qualitative design is applied. Patton and Cochran (2012), states that Qualitative research is characterized by it aims, which related to understanding some aspect of social life, and its methods which (in general) generated words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis. It means that describing, identifying and analyzing the text are the way to analyze the data of the study. The descriptive research means that the data of this study are described or explained.

1. Reading

   The first step is reading the textbook, *English Textbook* for Senior high School published by Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Indonesia.

2. Identification

   After the researcher read the reading text in the English textbook, the next step is identify the genre of every text.

3. Classification

   The next step of this research is classification. In this case, the researcher classifies the text based on its genre.

A. The Technique of Analyzing Data

After collecting the data, it will be analyzed by performing descriptive analysis. The writer will select 4 item of 8 reading text from each of the genre and will represented the result in the table.

Table 3.1. Classification of Lexical items in the Reading Text

NO	Title of Reading Text	Genre	Types of Lexical Item				Total Items
			N%	Adj %	V %	Adv %	

Where:

N : Noun   V : Verb

Adj : Adjective   Adv : Adverb

Table 3.2. The Percentage of Lexical Density in the Reading Text

NO	Title of Reading Text	Genre	Lexical Items / Content words	Grammatical Items / Function Words	Total Words	Lexical Density (%)

In order to analyze the Lexical Density of the texts, the writer would use the following steps of the Halliday's formula:

1. Selecting the text based on the four genres which has found in Bahasa Inggris Textbook namely, narrative, recount, descriptive, and explanation.

2. Identifying which one includes the lexical items (content words) and

which one includes grammatical items (functional words) in reading text.

3. Labelling the lexical items in bold written and grammatical items in italic written.

4. Counting the number of lexical items (content words) and grammatical items (functional words).

5. Counting the percentage of lexical density by employing the Halliday's formula:

$$\text{Lexical Density} = \frac{\text{Number of content words}}{\text{Total number of words}} \times 100$$

6. Drawing the conclusion based on the result of lexical density in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook for the eleventh grade students of Senior High School.

4. DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

a. DATA ANALYSIS

There are three types of lexical density, the first one is high lexical density measures of around 60-70%, the second is medium lexical density measures of around 50-60%, and the third is lower lexical density measures of around 40-50%. Scholiatun (2011:25).

b. FINDINGS

the findings of this study for clustering technique will be shown as below.

1. After analyzing the data, researcher found that thelevel difficulties of lexical density that used in reading text of English textbook for grade XI Senior High School is medium lexical density. From 3 text that analyzed by researcher, 2 of the text is medium level, that is the text with title "Cheetah" and "Earthquakes".

2. Level of lexical density used the way it is in reading text of English textbook for grade XI Senior High School because lexical density is a term that is used in text. The degree of lexical density on the text will influence the ability of students to understand the English text.

c. DISSCUSSION

In this research, researcher found that "Bahasa Inggris" textbook for grade XI Senior High School that published by Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia is good enough to use by the students. The reading text in this book categorized as medium, not easy and not too hard to understand by the students, so the students will not boring when study.

The findings of this research was similar to some previous study. Pratiwi (2014), found in her research that the reading text is categorized medium between 4 and 4.9. Hidayat (2015), found in his research that 6 reading text in medium category, meaning that the most reading texts are easy enough to be comprehended by the students. After researcher analyzed the reading passages, which can be seen on tables below:

Table 4.2. Lexical Density percentage of the reading texts

No	Title	Genre	Content Words	Grammatical Function	Lexical Density
1	The Enchanted Fish	Narrative	401	581	40.83%
2	Cheetahs	Descriptive	162	137	54.18%
3	Earthquakes	Explanation	307	226	57.59%

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

a. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the lexical density of reading texts in English textbook for grade XI Senior High School, it can be concluded that the more lexical items (noun, adjective, verb, and adverb) the text has, the more difficult the text is, but in the textbook there are no reading text has high lexical density. The most lexical items and the highest lexical density among the three text was found in the explanation text entitled "earthquakes" (307 items) which is categorized to the medium lexical density and the text is not too difficult.

The reason why is lexical density used the way they are is because a text have to be in accordance with students ability, if a text hard to understand by students, they will be tired, confused, and getting bored when study. That is why the teacher need to know which appropriate teaching media to used.

b. SUGGESTION

Based on the conclusion to the findings pointed above, the following suggestions are needed to be considered in conducting the related research. For the book authors, this study may be as a consideration in arranging a textbook. They can use this study to present textbook with balance composition between lexical items and grammatical items of reading text.

1. For students, this study might increase the knowledge and ability in English reading text. In understanding meaning of a text, the students need to connect their background knowledge of lexical words to the new knowledge to comprehend the new one.

2. For English teachers, this study might increase knowledge about lexical density, and it could be a consideration in choosing textbook to be taught to students. They can apply the result of this study as feedback on their teaching activities to decide the appropriate strategy in teaching the reading texts, so their students can be better in reading skill.

3. For further researchers, since this study focuses on a textbook, this researcher need other researchers to conduct it with same material analysis (textbook) to support the finding which the researcher has been done, the goal is to compare one study with other study. In addition, constructive critics and advise are really accepted and appreciated for the sake of this research perfection.

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