

LEXICAL DENSITY ON READING MATERIALS IN ENGLISH INTERLANGUAGE TEXTBOOK FOR THE TENTH-GRADE SCHOOL

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Abstract: Reading is one of the important language skills students have to master. Some forms of reading materials are written in English, and some are books, articles, and textbooks. English Interlanguage Textbook for the Tenth-Grade Senior High School was one of the reading materials chosen as the focus of this research. In terms of the content of the textbook, the teacher should be able to decide whether it is informative or not. The objectives of this research were (1) to find out the lexical density of the reading materials in the English Interlanguage textbook, and (2) to describe the lexical density of the reading materials in the English Interlanguage Textbook. In this research, the researcher chose qualitative research as the methodology. The data collected from the textbook showed that 9 reading materials were categorized into different kinds of text. Those were narrative text, recount text, descriptive text, and news item text. The lexical density of reading material in the English Interlanguage Textbook for the tenth grade of Senior High School was around 40% - 60%. It infers that the lexical density was sufficient. Also, the reading materials were clear, understandable, and suitable for students.

Keywords: Descriptive research; lexical density; textbook analysis

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of four important skills of English. It is a tendency for students nowadays to gain information. By reading a lot, they can get input for themselves in improving their knowledge. According to Sholichatun (2011, p. 6), reading may assist or train students in broadening their minds and perspectives when confronted with and resolving problems in their lives. In the educational area, reading should be mastered by students. For this reason, reading materials are created to help students in improving their reading skills and are provided in various. One of them is in textbook form. A textbook is a teaching-learning media that is developed by educators to teach. Many textbooks are created to support students in their learning process. A textbook usually presents the four main materials in English: listening materials, reading materials, writing materials, and speaking materials. In this research, reading materials was a major discussion. A textbook with appropriate materials assists students in improving their reading comprehension.

In the teaching-learning process, the textbook has an important role. Textbooks are potent representational tools that shape how students conceptualize themselves, others, and their interactions with one another (Hooks, as cited in Keles & Yazan, 2020, p. 3). The fact that English textbooks are available under the guidance of the National Curriculum Standard in Indonesia which means really useful and specifically needed by students and teachers. In this

case, the textbooks created sometimes have similar reading materials making teachers have some problems determining the right textbook to teach their students. That is why an appropriate textbook is needed to help teachers in teaching. On the other hand, an appropriate textbook can attract students' interest in reading. For this reason, choosing an appropriate textbook can be conducted by considering the lexical words of reading materials in a textbook. It is an important method that is used to make sure that the reading material is understandable for students. In terms of getting more information, the reading materials or the texts should be measured. In this case, the additional term is called lexical density.

Johansson, as cited in Waruwu (2018, p. 6) stated that lexical density was the most common term to describe the ratio of content words to total number words. It is counted to measure the lexical words in the reading materials. It is important to know because the high lexical density indicates a large of amount information words. However, low lexical density in reading material indicates relatively few information words. To find out how far a text has dense lexis, lexical density is measured by getting the percentage due to the number of content words divided by the total number of words in a text or book. According to Johansson (2008, p. 65), a Lexical density of 40% or more is found in the vast majority of written texts.

Content words are referred to as lexical since they work in lexical sets and are a component of an open system as opposed to closed sets (Halliday, as cited in Fan et. Al, 2013, p. 62). They consisted of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs with suitable and significant lexical meanings. On the other side, function words express grammatical relationships with other words within a sentence. Shi et al (2006, p. 62) stated that function words were termed closed-class words because languages resist alterations in the set of such terms. It indicated that grammatical items are a specific unit such as *auxiliary verbs, determiners, pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions*.

The Measurement of Lexical Density based on Ure's Theory

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

English Interlanguage textbook for the tenth-grade Senior High School was analyzed in this research. The materials developed in this textbook were organized into two learning cycles, namely the spoken cycle and the written cycle. This research focused only on the written cycle which related to the reading and writing activities. In this case, the reading activities help students understand various types of text such as recount, narrative, descriptive, news item text, and others. The textbook chosen is suitable to analyze as the source to figure out the lexical density of the reading materials.

Attempts to analyse textbooks had been previously conducted. First, Yaumil Fadhilah (2018) examined the lexical density of English Reading Texts in Pathway to English Textbook for Senior High School Grade X which aimed to find out the type of genres contained in each reading text. It showed from 15 reading texts, 9 texts have high lexical density and the rest texts are in a medium position.

Second, Leffi Noviyenty (2021) examined lexical density in the English Alive Textbook. It resulted in most of the passages being categorized as easy to be comprehended. At the end of the research, the writer concluded that the English Alive textbook might be used as supplementary material because the genres' orientation distributed in this book was not sufficiently relevant to competencies as expected by the K-13 curriculum.

Last, Dian Sari (2016) examined the lexical density of Reading Materials in the Indonesian Curriculum – 13 English textbook. Based on the result, the levels of texts analyzed in this research did not match the expected indexes of lexical density. This was one aspect that could be improved in the K13 English textbook.

Considering all the previous research, this research investigated the lexical density of reading materials in the English Interlanguage textbook for tenth-grade senior high school which helps teachers and students whether the textbook is appropriate to use or not in the teaching-learning process. This research was necessary to conduct in providing important information to all teachers for choosing the appropriate textbook.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach. Maxwell, as cited in Sholichatun (2011, p. 22), stated that qualitative research was effective due to its inductive methodology, focus on detail, and preference for using words over numbers in describing a particular event or group of individuals. In conducting this research, the researcher decided to use one type of qualitative research, namely content analysis. Krippendorff (2018, p. 244) stated that content analysis was a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context.

This research was categorized as descriptive content analysis that described lexical density in a textbook entitled English Interlanguage for tenth-grade Senior High School. It was written by Joko Priyana, Arnys Rahayu Irjayanti, and Virga Renitasari in the year 2018. It has 217 pages that have 10 Units. In this case, 9 reading materials were chosen for this research and categorized into different kinds of text.

This research was conducted to find out the level of lexical density of reading materials in the English “Interlanguage” textbook for the tenth-grade senior high school. In analyzing the lexical density, the researcher focused on identifying the content words that included nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. For this reason, the scope of the research in classification words

included the four types of content words. Firstly, the noun was divided into *proper nouns*, *common nouns*, *compound nouns*, and *possessive nouns*. Secondly, the verb was divided into *regular verbs*, *irregular verbs*, *transitive verbs*, and *intransitive verbs*. Next, the adjective was divided into *adjectives*, *comparative adjectives*, and *compound adjectives*. Lastly, the adverb that modified a verb or adjective in a sentence.

In collecting the data, this research used a documentation study. According to Bowen (2009, p. 27), document study refers to a methodical process of examining and assessing written and digital documents. It indicated that the use of documentation study was appropriate for this research which investigated the reading materials. This research analyzed the data through text analysis. Text analysis is concerned with the research of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used (Sholichatun, 2011, p. 24). In addition, a classification table is a supporting instrument to help in categorizing the data. The table is functioned to show the total number of content words and function words when the researcher collected the data.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis of the English Interlanguage Textbook textbook for tenth-grade Senior High School, it was found that the lexical density of each reading material in the textbook could be accurately explored. The 8 reading materials surpassed 50% and only 1 reading material was under 50%. Also, it could be concluded that the range of lexical density was 40% – 60%. It indicated that the reading materials from the textbook were quite lexical densities or at a sufficient level.

Table 1. Level of Lexical Density

No	Title of Reading Text	Content Words	Function Words	Lexical Density (%)	Description of Lexical Density
1	<i>Joining the Traditional Dance Competition</i>	142	149	48,45%	<i>Low Lexically Dense</i>
2	<i>My Grandpa's Funeral in Toraja</i>	146	132	52,51%	<i>Sufficient</i>
3	<i>Sweet Ginger Coconut</i>	113	80	58,55%	<i>Sufficient</i>

	<i>Coffee (Bajigur)</i>				
4	<i>Kyai Jegod</i>	146	134	50,71%	<i>Sufficient</i>
5	<i>The Snow Bride</i>	353	283	55,50%	<i>Sufficient</i>
6	<i>The Rising Stars</i>	181	123	59,86%	<i>Sufficient</i>
7	<i>The Animal</i>	81	66	54,42%	<i>Sufficient</i>
8	<i>Lohan's Sentence to Visit Morgue</i>	80	55	59,30%	<i>Sufficient</i>
9	<i>Asian Beach Games to cost Rp300 billion</i>	138	109	55,90%	<i>Sufficient</i>

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In this current situation, there are a lot of reading materials, especially in textbook form. It is still the main tool for teaching-learning activities in a school. Then it comes as the major explanation in this research to determine the right textbook to teach students through reading. In this case, an appropriate textbook can attract students' interest in learning. For this reason, determining the appropriate textbook can be conducted by considering the lexical words of reading materials in a textbook itself. In terms of getting more information, the reading materials or the texts should be measured by knowing the level of the lexical words in the reading materials.

The Lexical Density theory is a concept that measures the level of complexity and level of vocabulary used in a text. It is used to assess the level of difficulty of a text, determine the maturity level of a person's language, and assess the quality of writing. In this case, this research was related to the quality of writing that formed in reading materials for learning. This shows how many words have specific meanings (content words) to the number of more general words (function words). This theory assumes that a high lexical density can increase the effectiveness

of a text because it provides more specific and clear information and meaning. However, a lexical density level that is too high can make the text difficult for readers to read and understand. It was supported by Khamahani (2015, p. 15) that texts with a higher density were hard to understand, but texts with a lower density were more easily understood.

These results build on existing evidence of how lexical density levels in texts can determine how informative the reading materials itself. Based on the findings of this research, the majority of lexical density in the reading materials is at a sufficient level. It showed that 8 reading materials were in *sufficient* position and only 1 reading material in *low lexically dense* position. This result showed that the reading materials in the English Interlanguage Textbook for the tenth-grade Senior High School were suitable for students to improve their reading competency.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was to investigate the level of lexical density of an English Interlanguage Textbook for tenth-grade Senior High School. It was found that in terms of reading materials, this textbook is understandable and suitable for achieving educational goals for students based on the level of lexical density. It provides activities for learning the four language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In this research, the reading materials are developed through different genres in texts. Those are narrative text, recount text, descriptive text, and news item text. The fact that the dominant text in this textbook was recount text. In this case, it was found 3 recounted texts. Furthermore, there were 2 narrative texts, 2 descriptive texts, and 2 news item texts in this textbook.

It concluded that most of the reading materials in this textbook were at a sufficient level. The range of the density level was 40% - 60%. It showed that from 9 reading materials analyzed; 8 reading materials had sufficient lexical density levels, and 1 reading material had a low lexical density level. Also, the reading materials in the English Interlanguage Textbook for Tenth-grade Senior High School met the standard requirement for the teaching-learning process.

Based on the level of lexical density counted, the researcher provided the important information related to the textbook. As a teaching-learning tool, this textbook is beneficial for improving English ability, especially in reading skills.

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