

## **The Development of Exposition Paragraph Writing Ability of Grade 10-12 Students of MAN 2 Model Medan**

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### **Abstract**

This research was aimed at describing the extent to which the grade 10,11, and 12 students acquire the paragraph development of exposition paragraph writing and to describe the process of acquiring the paragraph development. The development of exposition paragraph was analyzed by following the theory of Knapp & Watkins (2009:152) that consists of text structure and lexico-grammar. The text structure is used to see the logical flow of ideas from the beginning until the end of the paragraph, while the lexico-grammar refers to the wordings to form meaning. To achieve the objectives of this study, this research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative design which relied on words to describe the phenomena. The data was analyzed following Miles *et.al'* s model. The research finding showed that first, the students from grade 10,11, and 12 had not acquired the development of exposition paragraph writing since they only put thesis statement, argument, but there was no conclusion. Second, the development of exposition paragraph could not be explained since the subjects did not relate the thesis statement to the argument and they did not provide conclusion. However, the development can be seen through the greater use of lexico-grammar from grade 10, 11 until 12.

Keywords: *exposition, lexico-grammar, text-structure*

### **Introduction**

Writing is defined as the mental process of expressing one's idea and feelings in the written forms. Nunan (1989:27) states that it is an extremely difficult cognitive activity which requires the learners to have controls over various things. A writer needs to generate ideas, translate them, and expressing them in appropriate words so that it meets the goal of the writing. Agustini (2009:1) states that writing activity involves the process of expressing feelings and ideas into a word, word into sentence, sentence into paragraph. It requires someone to think deeply on how to express them coherently.

In relation to the cognitive concern, the development of writing ability varies from one person to another. Other than that, development of writing ability may vary from several factors such as academic background, personal interest, or linguistic (Dar&Khan, 2015). The cognitive development of a child goes hand in hand with his writing ability as writing itself requires cognitive process such as planning, translating, and reviewing as proposed by Hayes and Flower (1981:367).

Schnittke (2014) states that a child's writing keeps developing throughout several stages such as: (1) preparatory stage (3 to 7 years old). At this stage, children reach phonetic awareness and they are able to combine sounds into letters. They start developing the basic motor skills to write; (2) consolidation stage (up to 9 years old). At this stage, the children has mastered the mechanics of writing and are able to write anything they say or hear; (3) differentiation stage (up to 14 years old). They are able to distinguish between spoken and written language; and (4) integration stage (14 years old and over). At this stage, the children are skilled enough to anticipate the reader's interpretation of the text.

In educational context, the study of exposition text had been conducted based on various sides. One of them is from the affective factors that help the students to write the text. Yendrawaty (2018) concluded that Problem Based Learning (PBL) was an appropriate approach to raise the students' motivation in writing exposition text. Despite of this finding, there was a need to explicate the cognitive side that controls the ideas produced by the writer.

Thus, writing development should be a concern for language teachers as it is one of several important skills that need to be mastered. The teachers can ask the students to write a composition with the genre that they have learned. In this study, the researcher intended to seek the development of writing ability which was realized in the paragraph of exposition writing. This genre was chosen because the subjects had studied the genre so it was assumed that they had possessed knowledge about it. Besides, expository writing also stimulates the students to express their own views about certain issue. The development of exposition paragraph writing can be seen through the students' ideas realization in terms of text structure and lexico-grammar. To this point, Knapp and Watkins (2009:27) states that the text structure of exposition text consists of text structure, argument, and conclusion. Meanwhile, the lexico-grammar that constitutes the wordings is featured by the use of mental verbs, modality, connectives, and personal to impersonal voice.

Hence, the research that relates to the students' writing development was conducted in order to describe to what extent do the students acquire the exposition paragraph writing ability and to describe the process of writing expository paragraph among the students.

### **Method**

This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative design which was aimed at getting depth understanding of certain phenomenon. In this research, the researcher described the students' writing ability in terms of their paragraph development in exposition genre. It was described by using words rather than numbers. The subjects of this research were the students of MAN 2 Model Medan from grade 10, 11, and 12. To get the data, the researcher used elicitation technique. Nunan and Bailey (2009) states that elicitation technique is the combination of various methods that a researcher can use in order to stimulate the subjects to produce language whether it is written or spoken one. To get the subjects' paragraph development, the researcher asked the students to write two pre-determined topics such as the importance of handphone and the importance of uniform. The data was analyzed by using three concurrent flows by Miles *et.al* (2014:13) that consisted of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data condensation refers to the process of compressing the data in order to make it clearer. Data display was meant to organize the data in the form of table, matrices, graphs, charts. Conclusion drawing/verification was written based on the data shown in data display.

### **Result**

#### **The Acquisition of Text-Structure in Exposition Paragraph Writing Ability by grade 10, 11, and 12.**

Theoretically, the acquisition of exposition paragraph can be seen from the text structure and lexico-grammar. Knapp (2005:152) mentions that the text structure of exposition paragraph is constituted by the thesis statement, argument, and conclusion; while the lexico-grammar includes mental verbs, connectives, personal to impersonal voice, modality, and nominalization.

Practically, the acquisition of exposition paragraph writing was different for grade 10, 11, and 12, as it could be seen below.

### The Acquisition of Thesis Statement by Grade 10,11, and 12

Thesis statement is defined as major proposition followed by supporting sentence or without supporting sentence (Knapp, 2005:192). The thesis statement made by the students of grade 10, 11, and 12 could be seen in this following table.

**Table 3.1. The Acquisition of Thesis Statement by Senior High School Students**

Thesis Statement		
Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Data 1. Uniform is very important part of our body.	Data2. <i>School uniform is a precious thing which is owned by a student.</i>	Data 3. <i>Why can uniform be the most important symbol in school? The answer is because people around us can know our identity.</i>

Based on the table above, Data 1 which represented the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students' writing was considered as thesis statement because it contained one proposition that was *uniform is important*. In data 2, the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students could write thesis statement well because it consisted of main proposition, that was *school uniform is precious* and it was the point that would be argued in the following paragraphs for his writing. In data 3, the 12<sup>th</sup> grade student was also labeled as thesis statement because it emphasized on the importance of school uniform. But, the difference among them was that the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students could provide reason on their thesis statement that was *because people around us can know our identity*.

### The Acquisition of Argument by Grade 10,11, and 12

Argument is defined as the logicalness of ordering ideas (Knapp & Watkins, 2005:192). The argument written by grade 10, 11, and 12 can be seen in this following table.

**Table 3.2. The Acquisition of Argument by Senior High School Students**

Argument		
Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Data 4 In Indonesia elementary school students wearing white and red uniforms.	Data 5 Because, school uniform is a precious thing which is important by a student.	Data 6 In general, school has regulation of what the student use, even nowadays some school permit the students to wear the casual clothes.

Based on the table above, the argument written by the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students did not indicate any logicalness because it was merely about a description about the uniform in Indonesia. The similar thing also happened to data 5 from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and data 6 represented the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The students' argument did not consist of points to be argued or elaboration which could have shown logic or connectedness. It was just a description.

**The Acquisition of Conclusion by Grade 10,11, and 12**

Conclusion is defined as the reiteration of thesis statement (Knapp & Watkins, 2005:192). The conclusion of expository writing by the students of grade 10, 11, and 12 can be seen in this following table.

**Table 3.3. The Acquisition of Conclusion by Senior High School Students**

Conclusion		
Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
-	-	Data 7 <i>So, from the text we can conclude that by using handphone we can do many thing with easy and simply ways. And that why handphone is very important for us.</i>

Based on the table above, it could be concluded that conclusion paragraph was only found in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students' expository writing. Data 7 that represented the 12<sup>th</sup>

grade students' writing belonged to conclusion because it reiterated the thesis statement, that was to say that handphone was an important tool for all people.

### **The Acquisition of Lexico-grammar in Exposition Paragraph Writing Ability by grade 10, 11, and 12**

Theoretically, the lexico-grammar in exposition paragraph is characterized by the use of mental verbs, connectives, personal/impersonal voice, modality, and nominalization (Knapp & Watkins, 2005:188).

### **The acquisition of Lexico-grammar in Exposition Paragraph Writing Ability by grade 10 students**

Practically, the lexico-grammar acquisition done by the grade 10 was variously used and displayed in this following table.

**Table 3.4. The Acquisition of Lexico-grammar by grade 10 students**

No	Clauses	f	Identification of Lexico-grammar
1.	we <u>can</u> get a lot for information from this communication tool.	4	Modality
2.	<u>and</u> <i>many other interest that we can get from handphone</i>	8	Additional connectives
3.	I <u>think</u> wear the handphone we can communicated	3	Mental verbs
4.	<u>But</u> <i>the more sophisticated the era the more there are bad things</i>	4	Adversative connectives
5.	<u>Because</u> <i>in my opinion we are all part of that 70%.</i>	1	Causal connectives
6.	Handphone <u>is</u> very important in the present era.	1	Impersonal voice
Total		21	

Based on the table above, it could be seen that the acquisition of lexico-grammar by the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students was varied in terms of modality, connectives, mental verbs, and impersonal voice. Additional connectives were dominantly used by the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. However, nominalization was not found in their writing.

**The acquisition of Lexico-grammar in Exposition Paragraph Writing Ability by grade 11 students**

Practically, the lexico-grammar acquisition done by the grade 11 was variously used and displayed in this following table

**Table 3.5. The Acquisition of Lexico-grammar by grade 11 students**

No.	Clauses	f	Identification of Lexico-grammar
1.	<b>And</b> <i>most importantly, with the school uniform</i>	11	Additional connectives
2.	<b>Because</b> , <i>school uniform is a precious thing</i>	2	Causal connectives
3.	<b>Firstly</b> , <i>uniform make all of student looking neat and discipline</i>	8	Temporal connectives
4.	<b>I</b> <i>think we should wear clothes.</i>	1	Personal voice (subjective opinion <b>I</b> )
5.	Uniform <b>is</b> one of the important think of students to learn in school	1	Impersonal voice (objective opinion/absolute statement <b>is</b> )
<b>Total</b>		23	

Based on the table above, it could be concluded that the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students dominantly used additional connectives in their exposition writing. The next one is followed by the use of temporal connectives. It was a form of lexico-grammar that did not exist previously in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students' writing.

**The acquisition Lexico-grammar in Exposition Paragraph Writing Ability by grade 12 students**

**Table 3.6. The Acquisition of Lexico-grammar by grade 12 students**

No	Clauses	f	Identification of Lexico-grammar
1 .	<b>First</b> , <i>with using handphone we can talk with our parents,</i>	14	Temporal connectives
2.	<b>and</b> <i>even in other country around the world.</i>	13	Additional connectives
3.	we <b>can</b> do that with handphone	3	Modality
4.	<b>because</b> <i>handphone is an electronic technology that very important for our life</i>	5	Causal connectives
<b>Total</b>		35	

Based on the table above, it could be seen that the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students dominantly used temporal connectives to relate their ideas. Then, it was followed by the additional conjunction to expand their ideas, and causal connectives to elaborate them.

### **The Development of Exposition Paragraph Writing Ability by grade 10,11, and 12**

Theoretically, the development of exposition paragraph can be seen from the development of text structure and lexico-grammar. Text structure consists of three main paragraphs, such as: the thesis statement, argument, and conclusion paragraphs. They constitute ideas as an expository text. Meanwhile, lexico-grammar refers to words features which are used in exposition text, they are: modality, personal to impersonal voice, mental verbs, connectives, and nominalization.

### **The Development of Text-Structure of Exposition Paragraph Writing by grade 10,11, and 12**

Practically, the development of exposition paragraph written by grade 10, 11, and 12 students in terms of text structure could be seen in this following table.

**Table 3.7. The Development of Expository Paragraph in Terms of the Text-Structure**

No.	Grade	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	Text Structure			
1.	Thesis Statement	✓	✓	✓
2.	Argument	-	-	-
3.	Conclusion	-	-	-

Based on the table, it was concluded that the paragraph did not develop in terms of text structure as there was no continuity from the thesis statement to the argument and conclusion paragraph. Thus, the development of text structure could not be explained since the argument did not develop logically from thesis statement, and so did happen to the conclusion paragraph.

### **The Development of Lexico-grammar Acquisition**

Practically, the development of lexico-grammar in students' exposition paragraphs can be identified as it can be seen in this following paragraph.



**Table 3.8. The Development of Expository Paragraph in Terms of Lexico-grammar**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>	<b>f</b>
1.	Modality	4	Additional Connectives	11	Modality	3
2.	Additional Connectives	8	Causal Connectives	2	Additional Connectives	13
3.	Temporal Connectives	1	Temporal Connectives	8	Temporal connectives	14
4.	Adversative Connectives	4	Personal voice	1	Causal Connectives	5
5.	Mental verbs	3	Impersonal voice	1		
6.	Impersonal Voice	1				
<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>35</b>

Based on the table above, it could be concluded that the use of lexico-grammar increased in numbers even though the varieties of lexico-grammar decreased from grade 10 until grade 12. However, it could be concluded that the higher the grade the more developed the lexico-grammar used in their expository writing.

### **Discussion**

The first finding of this research was that the grade 10, 11, and 12 students had not acquired the text structure of exposition text as it could be seen that they did not write argument and conclusion paragraph clearly in their writing. The argument was not elaborated to support the thesis statement, while the conclusion paragraph which was supposed to cover the overall ideas was even missed.

The second finding of this research in relation to the development of text structure could not be identified since the argument and conclusion did not signal any logical relationship with the thesis statement. Meanwhile, the development of lexico-grammar written from grade 10, 11, and 12 could be seen as there was the use of temporal connectives existed in grade 11 and 12 students' writing.

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