THE LEXICAL RICHNESS IN NARRATIVE TEXTS
OF XI GRADERS OF MAN 3 MALANG

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ABSTRACT: This article reports on a study to find out the lexical richness in students’ narrative texts and compared the lexical richness of male and female students’ composition. The research design of this study was descriptive-analysis. The data were 300 words composition of 30 students, 12 male and 18 female students. The data were taken from the XI graders of MAN 3 Malang. The compositions were included in the RANGE program to analyze the lexical frequency profile (LFP). The LFP of all students are 54.48%-19.79%-3.77%-21.96%. The LFP of Male students is 65.06%-16.39%-3.80%-14.56%, while the female students’ composition profile is 59.40%-18.57%-2.82%-19.18%. Both of male and female students use the 2,000 most frequent words repetitively. They use a small number of academic words. It proves that both male and female still low productive vocabulary since they mostly use the 2,000 most frequent words.

Key words: lexical richness, narrative texts

In the teaching of English as a Second Language, learners’ mastery of vocabulary knowledge is considered to be quite prominent. As Read (2000: 1) states, “Words are the basic building block of language….”. It means that without the mastery of vocabulary, mastering a language will not be possible. Mastering a great number of vocabulary helps learners to master the four language skill; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Read (2000) argues that to read an unfamiliar text independently, learners should know at least 95% of the running words. Nation (2008:83) estimates that the vocabulary knowledge of at least 3,000 words is necessary for EFL learner to cover their learning needs. Nation (2008:7-8) explains that the 3,000 words consist of 2,000 words of high frequency words and 1,000 words of academic word-list.

Just like the language skills, vocabulary knowledge is also divided into productive and receptive vocabulary. Nation (2008:43-44) states that productive vocabulary is the vocabulary used for speaking and writing, while receptive vocabulary is used for listening and reading. He notes that usually learners’ receptive vocabulary is much larger that their productive vocabulary. It is mentioned that mastering productive vocabulary takes a longer time, since the passive skills tend to be used more often than the productive skills. However, turning receptive vocabulary into productive vocabulary is valuable, especially in writing. He argues that the ability to use vocabulary in writing, especially the academic one, is a way of showing membership of the academic community. In short, he concludes that the ability to use vocabulary of the Academic Word List in writing is a reasonable goal for learners.

Nation and Lafuer (1995) develop two instruments to test students’ productive vocabulary knowledge, the Productive Vocabulary Levels Test (PVLT) and the Lexical Frequency Profile (LFP). The PVLT is a compilation test that measures the controlled productive vocabulary. In this test the test-takers are controlled to produce certain vocabulary whereas, the LFP measures the free productive vocabulary knowledge. It calculates the lexical richness of students’ writing composition, by using a computer program called: ”VocabProfile”. The LFP is based on the idea that learners with higher proficiency will use more lower frequency words in their writing. The “VocabProfile” was redeveloped in 2002 by Nation and
Coxhead and programmed by Alex Heatley, so called “RANGE”. It enables to see the range of each word use in several writings.

Since 2006, the Indonesian curriculum uses a new approach for teaching English, which is the genre-based approach. Teachers are less encouraged to use a deliberate teaching of vocabulary in classroom. The vocabulary teaching is integrated with the teaching of text types. Hence, it will be interesting to compare the lexical richness of students’ writing in certain text type utilizing the LFP. Different text types require students to use different vocabulary. Later, the results will illustrate the variations of productive vocabulary knowledge in texts types.

The research takes the XI graders students who are in their second semester as the subject of the study. It is assumed that they have gain the benefit of English teaching in senior high school level for at least a year. Therefore, the possible text-types to be assessed are narrative, spoof and hortatory exposition texts. Narrative and spoof texts are quite similar in the use of vocabulary. Those text-types tend to use vocabulary that we can find in our daily life; hence the study only focuses on the narrative text. While, hortatory exposition tends to use more academic vocabulary. Consequently, the students should make use different breadth of vocabulary knowledge in expressing their idea. However, Nations believe that the lexical richness of the texts can still be assessed by only using one students’ writing, narrative text. This result of this study, later, indicates the productive vocabulary knowledge of male and female students.

The influence of gender in students’ in language acquisition achievement has long been investigated. As Kane (2008) reviews, it has been going on since 1950’s. It was started by Anatasi’s research in 1958 that revealed the females superiority from infancy through adulthood both verbally and linguistically. It is also known that female’s Broca and Wernicke, brain’s areas related to language, is significantly bigger than males. In terms of vocabulary knowledge, Kane mentions that Reznick and Goldsmith (1989) found that the female students possessed higher vocabulary knowledge than male students. The same result was repeated in Reynell and Gruber’s study in 1990 and 1992.

This study is undertaken in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 3 Malang as one of the favorite schools in Malang. It has been established as Pre-International Standard Islamic School since 2009. MAN 3 Malang builds the partnership with Aquinas College in Australia through BRIDGE (Bridging the Cultural and Education Divide) program. The students of MAN 3 Malang come from various provinces in Indonesia. Rather than solely depend on students’ National Examination scores, an admission test is also employed to select students. Just like other pioneers of international school, MAN 3 Malang has a bilingual class and the students are selected through English proficiency test and interview. The English teacher also states that the students with highest English proficiency are mostly gathered in that class. The school joins AISCE and BRIDGE program to facilitate the students with native speakers. The XI graders are selected because they have been involved in the programs for more than one year and gain the benefit of the programs. Therefore this research tries to (1) assess the lexical richness of the students’ narrative texts in general, (2) calculate the lexical richness of male and female students, and (3) compare the lexical richness between male and female students.

METHOD

The study was a descriptive study in nature since it tried to reveal the current status of the subject of the study. Egel (1979) stated that descriptive research involves the description,
recording, analysis and interpretation of the current condition. Hopkins (2000) states that quantitative research can be a descriptive research if there is attempt made to change the real behavior or conditions. In this study, the lexical richness of the XI graders’ narrative texts in relation to their vocabulary size is described by the quantitative analysis. The quantitative data is gained from the Lexical Frequency Profile computer program, then it will be analyzed using Laufer and Nation (1995) interpretation.

The subjects of this study are the XI grader’s students in MAN 3 Malang. To enter the bilingual class, students have to pass interview and paper based test, therefore it is assumed that they have high English proficiency. There are 30 students in that class, 12 male students and 18 female students. The data were obtained through the test prompt containing several instructions. For writing narrative texts, the word number is limited only 300-350 words. The test prompt was distributed by the teacher, to make it like a real test. The students are intended to make the draft at school first, and then finish it at home. The students have to collect their writing on the following day. The data collection was conducted after the teaching of narrative text ended, on 24 February 2012. It was a take home test so that the students have more time to elaborate their ideas. The test was submitted on 25 February 2012. The students’ compositions are included in the RANGE computer program to seek it’s lexical frequency profile. The compositions were also divided into male and female groups and included separately.

FINDINGS

The findings of the lexical richness based on the calculation of the RANGE computer program are shown covering three issues: The lexical richness in students’ narrative texts, the lexical richness of male and female students’ narrative texts, and the comparison of male and female students’ narrative texts.

The Lexical Richness in Students’ Narrative Text

The first 300 words of the thirty students’ narrative texts were included in the RANGE computer program which is summarized in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD LIST</th>
<th>TOKENS</th>
<th>TYPES</th>
<th>FAMILIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>7548</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in the list</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the distribution/proportion of the 9,000 word tokens which are found in the thirty students’ narrative texts. First line indicates that from 9,000 word tokens, 7548 word tokens are found in word list one and it covers 83.87% of the total running word. From the type, we can see that 7548 word tokens belong to 882 word types, which occupied 58.03% of the total word types. The 882 word types are converted into 578 word families.

Second line indicates the distribution of the words found in word list two. There are 474 word tokens (5.27%) found which belong to 252 different word types (16.58%) The 252 word types belong to 210 word families. Third line shows that 73 word tokens (0.81%) are converted into 43 word types (2.83%). The word types belong to 40 word families. Fourth line indicates that the RANGE program could not compute 905 word tokens into the three lists. The 934 word
tokens (10.06%) can be converted into 343 word types (22.57%). The 343 is manually converted into 233 word families.

The LFP is taken from the percentage distribution of the word families used in the narrative texts. The total word types found in the narrative texts are 1061 words, 578 words (54.48%) in base list 1, 210 words (19.79%) in base list 2, 40 words (3.77%) in base list 3, and 233 words (21.96%) are not in the list. Therefore, the lexical frequency profile is 54.48%-19.79%-3.77%-21.96%.

The Lexical Richness in of Male and Female Students in Narrative Text

To calculate the male and female students’ lexical richness, the students writing are process differently. First, the 12 male compositions are grouped and included in the RANGE program which results in data are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 : Output of the RANGE Analysis of the Male Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD LIST</th>
<th>TOKENS f(%)</th>
<th>TYPES f(%)</th>
<th>FAMILIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>3026 (84.06%)</td>
<td>551 (67.11%)</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>179 (4.97%)</td>
<td>106 (12.91%)</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>34 (0.94%)</td>
<td>25 (3.05%)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in the list</td>
<td>361 (10.03%)</td>
<td>139 (16.93%)</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3600</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first line of Table 2 indicates that in base list one 3026 tokens (84.06%) can be converted into 551 types (67.11%). The word types in base list one are grouped into 393 word families. Second line shows that 179 tokens (4.97%) occur in the males students’ compositions are found in base list 2 2179 tokens are equal 106 word types (12.91%). The word types found can be classified into 99 word families.

The third line implies that 34 word tokens (0.94%) belong to the academic word list. 34 tokens are grouped into 25 word types (3.05%). The 25 word types are classified into 24 word families. The fourth signifies that 361 word tokens (10.03%) are cannot be categorized into any if the three base lists. The 361 word tokens still can be classified into 139 word types (16.93%). However, the word types still can be classified manually into 88 word families.

The lexical richness of the males students composition is presented by the lexical frequency profile. The total word families found is 604 words, 393 words (65.06%) from base list one, 99 words (16.39%) from base list two, 23 words (3.80%) from base list three and 88 words (14.56%) from the manual classification of the not-in-the-list words. Therefore, the lexical frequency profile is 65.06%-16.39%-3.80%-14.56%.

After that, the 18 female compositions are grouped and included in the RANGE program which results in data shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Output of the RANGE Analysis of the Female Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD LIST</th>
<th>TOKENS f(%)</th>
<th>TYPES f(%)</th>
<th>FAMILIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Table 3.3 indicates the distribution of words used in females students’ narrative texts. Line one shows that 4522 word tokens (83.74%) in the texts belong to base list one. The 4552 tokens are classified into 697 word types (67.12%) and belong to 483 word families. Line two implies that 295 word tokens (5.46%) are in base list two. The tokens found can be grouped into 179 word types (15.95%) and can be classified into 151 word families. In line three, 39 word tokens (0.72%) are found which belong to 24 word types (2.14%) and 23 word families. Line four indicates that 544 word tokens (10.07%) do not belong to any of the three lists. However the tokens still can be classified into 222 word types (19.79), and manually grouped into 156 word families.

The total word families found is 813 words, 483 words (59.40%) from base list one, 151 words (18.57%) from base list two, 23 words (2.82%) from base list three and 156 words (19.18%) from the manual classification of the not-in-the-list words. Therefore, the lexical frequency profile is 59.40%-18.57%-2.82%-19.18%.

The Comparison of Male and Female Students’ Composition

The comparison is made on the basis of the LFP gained from RANGE program which results in data shown in Table 4.

Table 4: The Lexical Richness in Male and Female Narrative texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>The Lexical Frequency Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65.06%-16.39%-3.80%-14.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59.40%-18.57%-2.82%-19.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 implies the distribution of word families, the lexical frequency profile, in male and female students’ narrative texts. It both male (65.06%) and female (59.40%) students mostly used the 1st 1,000 most frequent words, base list one, in their narrative texts. The least used base list is academic word list. Only 3.80% of the male students’ texts contain academic words, while female student’s narrative texts used 2.82%. The male students’ texts are covered with 16.39% words from 2nd 1,000 most frequent words, base list two. While 18.57% of female students’ texts belong to base list two. The not-in-the-list (NiL) covers 14.56% of the male students’ texts and 19.18% of the female students’ texts.
The difference percentage distributions of males and females’ narrative texts are relatively small and it is shown in Figure 1. The biggest gap is in the use of the word families in base list one. The male students use 5.66% more word families than the female student. The second gap is shown in the use of not-in-the list where male students use less 4.56% word families compare to female students. While in the use of base list two and three the different is not quite large. In base list two the male students use 2.18% less words and in base list three, compare to female students, the male use 0.98% more words. Although the male students’ narrative texts are 3600 words and females students’ narrative texts are 5400 words, there is a not big difference in the percentage distributions of the word families. In a nutshell, the male and female students are still low since their narrative texts are mostly used the 2,000 most frequent words.

DISCUSSION

The lexical frequency profile is designed as a free productive vocabulary test. The program is based on the assumption that high proficient learners will use less frequency words more often in their narrative texts. Nation (2008) explains that the number of word families used will determine the students’ vocabulary knowledge. He also underlined that a profile of a composition is higher when it contains more beyond 2,000 most frequent words. In other words, the composition will be rich of academic and not-in-the-list words (NiL).

The data shows that from the total of 9,000 word tokens, only 1,061 words families found in the students narrative texts, 11.78% of the total tokens. Students’ narrative texts are mostly occupied by the 1st most frequent words, 578 words. The most frequent words used by the students are as well gathered in base list one, the word “the” occur up to 412 times. The students only used 210 words from the 2nd 1,000 most frequent words. The highest frequency word in base list two is “baby” with nine occurrences. It is found that only 40 words are used from academic base list. The word “accompany” occurred nine times also. From 233 words not found in the list, the most frequent word is “farewell” which only occurs four times. The data implies that the students’ compositions used a lot of repetitive word and mostly occupied by the low vocabulary lever, 2,000 most frequent words.

The word families from the three word lists are mostly occurred in one composition. From 828 words, only 5 words found in all students compositions and 360 words are found in
single composition. In NiL, only 4 words are used by all of the students. It signifies that words used by one student may not be acknowledged by other students. Since the students repetitively use the 1st 1,000 most frequent words and a number of the 2nd 1,000 most, the productive vocabulary knowledge of students is considered low. It can be seen also from the lack of use of academic word list and small number of NiL. Laufer and Nation (1995) states that the rich use academic word shows the high proficiency level of the learner. Nevertheless, since the students only use several academic words, it is considered that the students’ level is still low.

The result is similar to the Dewi’s (2010) research in SMA N 10 Malang. The students used mostly the 1st 1,000 most frequent words and a small number of 2nd 1,000 most frequent words. The coverage of academic words is (5.2%) and small number of NiL.

Pujilestari (2006) conducted research measuring the students’ mastery vocabulary knowledge of XI graders in SMA 5 using the Passive vocabulary test developed by Lafuer and Nation. The result shows that 188 students (70.4%) master the 2,000 most frequent words. It can be underlined that the students’ passive vocabulary is higher than their active vocabulary. Nevertheless, there is no student who masters the university word level which shows the minimum vocabulary knowledge on academic words. It implies that the students gain higher score in paper based vocabulary knowledge rather than in free productive vocabulary knowledge. Therefore it can be assumes that actually the senior high school students already master various vocabulary but still cannot transform the knowledge into the productive one. It in lines with Nation (2000) that students’ passive vocabulary is higher than their productive vocabulary.

In addition, the low use of academic word list also signifies that the quality of the students’ compositions is still low. Since writing is the most common task given at school, Nation and Laufer (1995) believe the low quality of the students’ writing will hamper the students to continue their study at higher education level or even overseas. Although the 233 (21.96%) word families are not found in the lists, the range use of the word is very low. It happens that one NiL word only appear in one students’ composition. Therefore the use of NiL words in the texts cannot be classified as the average students’ productive vocabulary knowledge.

The lexical richness of the male and female students’ are presented by the lexical frequency profile. The male LFP is 65.06%-16.39%-3.80%-14.56% and the female’ LFP is 59.40%-18.57%-2.82%-19.18%. Although the LFP does not have the same percentage, it shares the similar characteristic. Both narrative texts are focused mostly on the 2,000 most frequent words and small use of academic words and NiL. Both narrative texts also have narrow ranges. Therefore, the lexical richness of male and female students are similar and their vocabulary are at the same level.

These finding does not go with Reznick and Goldsmith’s study (1989, cited in Kane, 2008) that the female students possessed higher vocabulary knowledge than male students. It may happen because both male and female students are treated the same in the teaching and learning process. The male and female students are equally exposed to the various vocabulary. They also have passed the same administration test which indicates that more or less they are in the same proficiency level. Additionally, the most frequent words used by male and female students are alike (see Appendics 7 and 10). Most of the frequent words belong to the functions words rather than the content words. In short, the productive vocabulary knowledge of XI graders of MAN 3 Malang is still quite low. Therefore, some improvements are needed to transfer students’ receptive vocabulary knowledge into a productive one.
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The result of the study shows that the student’s productive vocabulary is still low. It indicates by the frequent use of the 1st and 2nd 1,000 most frequent words and the low use of academic word and NiL. The students used 1061 word families, 578 words (54.48%) in base list 1, 210 (19.79%) words in base list 2, 40 words (3.77%) in base list 3, and 233 words (21.96%) are not in the list.

For the second and third research problem, it was found that there male and female students have similar lexical richness. The lexical frequency profile of in the male students’ compositions is 65.06%-16.39%-3.80%-14.56%, while the lexical frequency profile of the female students’ compositions is 59.40%-18.57%-2.82%-19.18%. The similar lexical frequency profile implies that they have the same mastery of vocabulary. Hence, there should be an improvement made so that the students will be able to transfer their passive vocabulary knowledge into productive vocabulary knowledge. Increasing productive vocabulary knowledge is very important so that they will be able to productively take part in the globalization era rather than merely become the passive consumers.

As a descriptive research, this research has shown not only the productive vocabulary knowledge in general, but also the productive vocabulary knowledge of male and female students. The weakness of this research relates to the limitation of RANGE computer program, since there is no exact scale to measure the students’ proficiency based on their lexical richness. It was only stated that the more proficient a student is, the less frequent words s/he will use.

The result of this research revealed that some improvement and modifications are needed for the pre-international standard school. The students have to be more productive in their writing so that they can be accepted internationally. Therefore, they need to improve their productive vocabulary knowledge. The same research can be done to see the diversity of vocabulary knowledge of various text types written by students of EFL in Indonesia.

REFERENCES


