

Developing Paragraph Competence of Children in the Age of 9-11 Years in Writing Indonesian Passage

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Abstract:*The purpose of this study is to describe the development of the paragraph developing competence of children aged 9-11 years in writing Indonesian passage. The objectives of this research are as follows: (1) to describe the development of competence in the use of cohesive devices and (2) to describe the development of competence in developing topics. The design of this research was a quantitative cross-sectional method. The data of this research are in the form of paragraphs in Indonesian language written by children of the third, fourth and fifth grade of SDN Baratajaya, Surabaya. To collect the data, the researcher used test and tapping techniques. The instruments used in this study were test questions and corpus data sheets. The data analysis of this research was carried out in several stages, namely: data identification, data codification, data scoring, determination of qualifications, and determination of competence in paragraph development. In addition, statistics or SPSS was also used to analyze the data. The results showed that the paragraph developing competence of children aged 9-11 years in writing Indonesian passage experienced optimal development. However, this optimal development is only supported by one of the two supporting aspects. The topic development competence develops optimally, while the competence of using cohesive devices develops less than optimal.*

Keywords: *development, competence, paragraph developing competency, 9-11 year old*

INTRODUCTION

Language teaching aims to achieve mastery or language skill capability that includes receptive language skills (listening and reading) and productive language skills (speaking and writing). Language teaching is expected to foster language skills. However, reality does not indicate this. The results of writing teaching shows signs that are less encouraging.

Research by Silitonga et al. (1984: 33) showed that the writing ability of grade 3 junior high school students in North Sumatra was lacking, only 5.2% of students were able to produce adequate writing. The findings regarding the low ability of rhetoric in writing among elementary students were revealed by Budiyo (1992: 163-166) which states that in general elementary students have not been able to write in terms of the application of rhetorical and linguistic aspects in writing expository paragraphs. Komalasari's research (2002) which took the object of junior high school students paragraphs resulted in the finding that junior high school students still had difficulty in applying the elements of unity, cohesiveness, and completeness, so that the paragraphs they had written did not meet the requirements of good paragraphs. Many of the written paragraphs have more than one main idea and the sentences are independent of the main idea, not coherent in the details and the order of the contents of the paragraph, they even do not have sufficient explanatory sentences. Jumanto and Sugiaryo, (2014: 1) stated that the low ability of the grade IV students at SD Negeri Sondakan to write stories was caused by several factors. The main cause is students are less able to have ideas about the main things that they will write. In addition, students are less able to connect the ideas they have.

Based on these results, the low ability to write occurs at all levels of education. Higher education levels generally delegate errors or failures in teaching to write at the level of education below. Eventually mistakes were shed in elementary schools; therefore, the government in this case the Ministry of National Education took steps to increase Indonesian language teaching hours and propose the implementation of further writing teaching, initially starting in class IV and now starting in class III (Sutama, 1997: 3). This is evident from the existence of basic competencies as follows, "Arrange paragraphs based on available material with attention to spelling" for grade III elementary school.

The low ability to write is understandable because among the four language skills, writing skill is often seen by people as the most difficult language skill (Suwandi, 2008: 161). Writing ability is the most extensive and complex ability (Dixon & Nessel, 1983: 83, Heaton, 1988: 135) and the most difficult to teach (Farris, 1993: 180). Writing ability is called the most extensive and complex ability because, in the writing ability, there are several prerequisite abilities, namely the ability to write letters, words, sentences, to arrange words into sentences, to use spelling, to realize ideas in the right sentence forms, to choose words that are able to represent ideas, to regulate consecutive mind so that they are easily understood by others, to regulate the relationship between one idea and another idea, one paragraph with another paragraph so that it appears as a coherent writing, and the ability to identify the reader. The ability to write is also called the most difficult ability to teach because in teaching the ability to write, the instructor must also teach the prerequisite abilities (Suparti, 2003: 2).

In addition, Badudu (1988: 100) states that, in large classes, teachers are usually reluctant to provide writing lessons because they are considered to increase the work load of teachers after school hours. Finally the writing lesson was annulled. Based on the results of his study, Alwasilah (2000: 679-680) concluded as follows. First, writing is the most neglected subject both at school and at University. Second, writing is the most difficult language skill to be mastered by students and the most difficult to be taught by the teacher.

Third, high school and university students have been taught to write by inexperienced teachers or lecturers. Fourth, writing lessons are more about grammar and writing theories with little writing practice. Fifth, in general, student essays are not returned to them. Sixth, the only way to teach writing is through writing exercises.

On the other hand, if the teacher gives a writing lesson or assigns his students to write, in general the results of their students' writing are never seriously corrected so that the mistakes made by their students are never corrected. If this happens, there will never be a change or development of competence in students until they become university students or employees.

In fact, the ability to write is a basic ability that takes precedence in formal education. Writing skills are important for students at all levels because most learning assignments are given in written form. Writing skills also have an important role in life. By realizing the importance of writing and the ability to write in individual and social life, it is appropriate to develop writing ability to be improved. The improvement effort involves various parties in the community: informal, non-formal and formal education. Formal educational institutions are educational institutions that intensively foster and develop students' writing skills. At school, the mission of fostering and enhancing students' fondness for writing is entrusted to writing lesson which is an integral part of Indonesian language teaching (Sunardji, 1983: 235). The statement is in accordance with O'Hare's opinion (in Budiyo, 2001: 4) which states that in order to gain teaching experience so as to obtain abilities that can be actualized as writing skills that are truly reliable in the community, the community entrusts their teaching to language teachers.

What causes students to lack mastery of aspects of passage is probably due to several factors: (1) the aspect of passage is not yet known or unknown so that it has not been included in the teaching and learning process, (2) the teacher or expert in language teaching has not examined much so that information about civic competence is still very limited, and (3) the lack of theoretical studies and research on the nature of civic competence which causes these aspects are still marginal in the realm of language teaching processes (Pangaribuan, 1992: 9).

Based on the description, it can be concluded that the results of teaching to write, especially those related to aspects of passage, especially the development of paragraphs, are still alarming because writing ability is a complex ability and difficult to teach. Therefore, the research entitled "Development of Paragraph Developing Competence of Children in the Aged of 9-11 in writing Indonesian Passage" is very important to be conducted.

This study chose elementary school-age-children with the consideration that it is like a building; education at the elementary level is the building foundation (Maseleno et al., 2019). If the foundation is strong, it is likely to develop a building that is strong in its optimization (Sumardi, 2000: 1). In addition, this study focused on children aged 9-11 years (classes III, IV, and V Elementary School) with the following reasons. First, this study aims to describe the development of paragraph developing competence so that different research subjects are required at different age levels. Second, ages 9-11 years belong to the critical period hypothesis raised by Lenneberg (in Brown, 2000: 53; Dardjowidjojo, 2008: 218), namely a hypothesis which says that between the ages of 2 to 12 years a child can obtain any language with the ability of a native speaker. In other words, in this period language can be mastered more easily and after this period language is increasingly difficult to master. Third, in the Primary School Curriculum (children age III, IV, and V Elementary School) there are basic competencies that are in accordance with the paragraph developing competence.

This study aims to describe the development of the paragraph developing competence of children aged 9-11 years in writing Indonesian passage. The main objectives are broken down into specific objectives as follows: (1) describing the development of the competence of the children aged 9-11 years in the use of cohesion devices and (2) describing the development of the competence of the children aged 9-11 years in the development of topics.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was designed in the form of developmental research, namely research that studies the characteristics of individuals/groups that include intellectual, emotional, social, and personality aspects and how those characteristics change in their growth (Sudjana, 1991: 96). The characteristic examined in this study is the development of competence in paragraph development in writing Indonesian passage. Ideally, research on the development of competence in the development of this paragraph is carried out longitudinally so that the development of children's language competence can be described more comprehensively. Because of time constraints, the researcher chose the cross-sectional method in this study. The cross-sectional method is used to determine the development of children's competencies by utilizing a large number of subjects and the results can be considered the same as the results of using the longitudinal method because the large number of subjects gives more certainty about the validity of the proposed conclusions so that generality can be more easily maintained (Dardjowidjojo, 2000: 13). Templin (in Dardjowidjojo, 2008: 227) examined 480 children (many subjects) with the aim of obtaining valid and accurate results. In other words, the use of many subjects in this study aims to make the generality, hypothesis, or law found to be more valid.

Because research into the language development of learners tends to be quantitative (Huda, 1990: 93), this study is also a quantitative research. In accordance with the nature of quantitative research in which data is numeric, this research also seeks to realize children's written data in the form of numbers or scores that indicate children's competence. In addition, data analysis uses statistics or SPSS.

The research data is in the form of paragraphs in the 9-11 year old students' written essays. The consideration of the written language used as the data is that the written language is more stable and planned (Ghazali, 1999: 114). In addition, as stated by Bialystok (1991: 129), the use of written language involves high control and analysis so that the written language is more in line with the needs of this study. The data is classified into the type of informant data (Botha, 1981: 67) because it is in the form of concrete use of Indonesian in children's writing (Sudaryanto, 1983: 15).

The population in this study were 9-11 years old children attending elementary, third and fourth grade elementary schools, each with 181 children, 163 children and 165 children so that the population was 509 children. This research was conducted at SDN Baratajaya which is located at Jalan Baratajaya VIII / 43, Gubeng, Surabaya. The use of one school in this study is based on the opinion of Samarin (1988: 97) that a field linguist does not need a lot of information, just a little is sufficient as long as it is the right information. In other words, if the linguistic body meets the diversity of structures expressed, the information needed is considered sufficient.

Not all the children's essay data in class III, IV, and V are analyzed in this study, but the research sample needs to be determined namely the writing of a child who meets the age and readability requirements of his essay. From a population of 181 children (class III), 163 children (class IV), and 165 children (class V) are selected based on the age and

the legibility readings. These produce a population that meets the requirements of each 125 children, 107 children, and 101 children so the entire population of the selection amounted to 333 children. Of this population the sample of the study was randomly determined by lottery by 25% of the population so that the resulting study sample each with 31 children aged 9 years, 27 children aged 10 years, and 25 children aged 11 years.

It has been mentioned that the data of this study are written Indonesian essays of the class III, IV, and V SDN Baratajaya, Surabaya. To collect the data, several test and tapping techniques are used to obtain data by tapping the use of children's language that is the subject of research (Mahsun, 2005: 90). The instruments used in this research are test and data corpus sheet. The data analysis activities of this research were carried out in several stages: data identification, data codification, data scoring, determination of qualifications, and determination of the development of the paragraph developing competence.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Development of Paragraph Developing Competence

To determine the development of paragraph developing competence, the data analysis activities have been carried out as follows: (1) determining the score of cohesion device usage, (2) determining the topic development score, and (3) calculating the average score of cohesion device use and topic development score. The results of analyzing the data can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Competence Scores of 9-11 Years Old Children in Developing Paragraph

Age	PK Score	PT Score	PRG Score	Qualification
9	79	46	62	Average
10	82	61	72	Enough
11	86	74	80	Good
Average	82	60	71	Enough

Notes

PK score = score for using cohesion devices

PT score = topic development score

PRG score = paragraph development score

In Table 1, it can be seen that the average score of all classes in the paragraph development is 71 (enough). The table also shows that the competence of 9-11 year old children in developing paragraphs is developing. This conclusion is raised based on the average score at each age level that changes for the better: the average score of 9-year-old children is 62 (medium), the average score of 10-year-old children is 72 (enough), and the average score of 11-year-old children is 80 (good). This development can be seen from the changes that have improved both in terms of scores and qualifications.

Development of Competence in the Use of Cohesion Devices

The development of competence in using the cohesion device is analyzed through (1) identification of clauses in each paragraph, (2) identification of cohesion

devices in each clause, and (3) determination of cohesion device use scores in class and all data. The results of the data analysis activity series are included in the following table.

Table 2 Competence Scores of Using Cohesion Devices Based on Data 1 and Data 2

Class	PK score 1	PK score 2	PK score	Qualification
III	73	85	79	good
IV	78	87	82	good
V	84	88	86	very good
Average	78	87	82	good
Qualification	good	very good	good	

Notes

PK score 1 = score for the use of cohesion devices from data 1

PK score 2 = score for the use of cohesion devices from data 2

PK score = the mean score for using cohesion devices from data 1 and 2

In Table 2, it can be seen that the average score of all classes in the use of cohesion devices is 82 (good). The table also shows that the competence of 9-11 year old children in the use of cohesion devices is developing. This conclusion is formulated based on the average score at each age level that changes for the better: the average score of 9-year-old children is 79 (good), the average score of 10-year-old children is 82 (good), and the average score of 11-year-old children is 86 (good once). However, when viewed in terms of qualifications, the development only occurs from the age of 10 years to the age of 11 years (from good qualifications to very good qualifications), whereas from the age of 9 years to 10 years there is no development because at both of these age levels the competence of children in using cohesion devices is the same qualification (good).

It can also be seen from the table that the development of the competence of the children aged 9-11 years in the use of cohesion devices is not only marked by the difference in mean scores from data scores 1 and data scores 2, but also is indicated by differences in the scores of each of these data. From the data 1 the mean score of children 9 years, 10 years, and 11 years respectively 73 (enough), 78 (good), and 84 (good). The score shows a better change. This change does not only occur in changes in scores, but also in changes in qualification at each age level. Thus, it can be concluded that both in terms of score differences and in terms of qualifications there is a development of children's competence in the use of cohesion devices at all age levels. Likewise, the mean scores of children 9 years, 10 years, and 11 years from data 2, the average scores for each age level are 85 (good), 87 (excellent), and 88 (excellent). The score also shows a change for the better even though in terms of qualification the change only occurs from the age of 9 years to the age of 10 years (from good qualifications to excellent qualifications), whereas from 10 years to 11 years there is no development because the two levels in this qualification are the same (very good).

Development of Topic Developing Competence

To find out the competence development of the children of 9-11 years old in developing topics, a series of data analysis activities have been carried out which include the following steps: (1) identifying clauses in each paragraph, (2) counting the number of relevant clauses in each paragraph, and (3) determining the topic development score of

each paragraph at each age level and all data. The results of the data analysis activity series are included in the following table.

Table 3. Developing Topic Competence Score Based on Data 1 and Data 2

Class	Score PT 1	Score PT 2	Score PT	Qualification
III	41	51	46	almost medium
IV	55	66	61	medium
V	63	84	74	enough
Average	53	67	60	medium
Qualification	almost medium	enough	medium	

Notes

PT I score = topic development score from data 1
 PT II score = topic development score from data 2
 PT score = topic development score from data 1 and 2

In Table 3, it can be seen that the average score of all grade levels in developing the topic is 60 (medium). The table also shows that the child's competence in developing topics is developing. This conclusion was raised because the mean score at each age level changed for the better: the average score of 9-year-old children was 46 (almost medium), the average score of 10 years of age was 61 (medium), and the average score of 11-year-old was 74 (enough). This development can be seen in terms of changing scores that are getting better, and it is the same in terms of qualifications.

The table also shows that the development of children's competence in the development of topics is not only marked by the difference in the mean scores from the data score 1 and the data score 2, but it is also indicated by the difference in the scores of each of these data. From the data 1, the mean score of children 9 years, 10 years, and 11 years respectively 41 (less), 55 (almost medium), and 63 (medium). The score shows a change for the better. This change does not only occur in changes in scores, but also in the changes in qualifications at each age level. It is the same as the mean scores of children 9 years, 10 years, and 11 years from data 2. The average scores for each level are 51 (almost medium), 66 (medium), and 84 (good). The score also shows a change for the better. In other words, from data 2, it also shows the development of competency in developing topics both in terms of score changes and in terms of qualifications.

DISCUSSION

Developing Paragraph Competence: Qualified Enough, but the Development is Optimal

The findings of this study state that the competence of children aged 9-11 years in developing paragraphs is quite adequate with an average score of 72. In addition, this study produced findings stating that the competence of children aged 9-11 years in developing paragraphs experienced optimal development. This development can be seen from the changes for the better in each age level in terms of average scores. This finding was also corroborated by the results of SPSS calculations. The results of the SPSS ANOVA calculation show that there are significant differences between the competencies of children aged 9 years, 10 years, and 11 years in paragraph development. Based on these

two bases, it can be concluded that an optimal development of developing paragraph competence occurs.

Competence of Cohesion Device Use: Good Qualifications, but Development is Less Optimal

The research findings show that the passage of 9-11 years old children use all kinds of cohesion devices even though it is in different amounts. This finding indicates that, for 9-11 years old children, connecting one clause or sentence with another clause or sentence, the easiest way is to use conjunctions and repetitions, or to repeat the words in the previous clause or sentence. This finding is in line with the findings of research conducted by Utama (1997) which states that the most widely used cohesion devices in elementary students' writing are conjunctions and lexicons. It is the same as the results of the research conducted by Wendra (2003). The findings of the study stated that the use of conjunction cohesion devices and lexical cohesion devices, in each article of *AnekaWidya* journal, reached a high percentage of 33% and 39%. It is the same as the research findings of Gaspar (2009) which states that to maintain the integrity of the text, Henry James uses the most simple repetition, reaching 83.3% and 89.7% in two different novels.

This research resulted in the finding that the competence of children aged 9-11 years in the use of cohesion devices is classified as good with an average score of 83. The research findings also indicate that there is a development of competency of children aged 9-11 years in the use of cohesion devices based on the changing of the score towards a better direction for all grade level. The results of calculations with SPSS anova test also showed a significant difference in the competence of children between children aged 10 years and 11 years of age, whereas between the ages of 9 years and 10 years, there were no significant differences. Thus, it can be concluded that the development of competence in the use of cohesion devices only occurs from the age of 10 years to the age of 11 years. This means that there is a development in the competence of children in the use of cohesion devices, but the development is less than optimal. This finding is in line with the research findings of Utama (1997: 166) which states that, overall, there is a development of coherence in the writing of students from class III s. grade VI elementary school, but the development is not so fast.

Topic Developing Competence: Qualified Medium, but Optimal Development

This research resulted in the finding that the competencies of 9-11 year olds in developing topics were classified as medium. The findings also reveal that the competencies of children aged 9-11 years in developing topics experience optimal development. This finding was raised based on the average score and the results of SPSS calculations at all grade levels which changed for the better and were significantly different.

When viewed from the percentage of the use of the type of development of the topic, the findings of this study differ from the findings of Santihastuti (2012) who examined 12 essays of seventh semester students of English Language Education, University of Jember. The researcher provides three types of development topics for students to choose in paragraph development: parallel progression, sequential progression, and extended parallel progression. The research findings show that the types of topic development that are widely used by students in a row are sequential progression (46%), extended parallel progression (31%), and parallel progression (22%). The findings of this study show that the most widely used topic development types are parallel development

(43%), direct sequential development (21%), unrelated sequential development (15%), indirect sequential development (13%), and widespread parallel development (9%).

Even so, the SPSS anova test results show a different development. Between the two types of development of the topic, it is only the development of a broad parallel topic that shows the development in its use. That, too, is only a suboptimal development because, based on these calculations, there is only a significant difference between the ages of 10 years and 11 years, while between the ages of 9 years and 10 years there is no significant difference. Thus, this development only occurs from the age of 10 years to the age of 11 years. As for the development of the word derivation topic (DK) there was no development in its use. This conclusion was taken because the SPSS calculation results showed no significant differences between all age levels.

Thus, the development of the percentage use of topic development only occurs in the type of development of broader parallel topics, while other types of topic development do not indicate any development. This finding is in line with the findings of Sutama's (1997) research although in his research it was also found that there were developments in the type of development of indirect sequential topics (PSTL).

CONCLUSION

The development of paragraph developing competence of children aged 9-11 years in writing Indonesian passage experiences optimal development. However, this optimal development is only supported by one aspect of the two supporting aspects. The topic developing competence develops optimally, while the competence of using cohesion devices develops less than optimal.

The development of competence in the use of cohesive devices is also characterized by regular percentage changes in three types of cohesion devices: (1) grammatical conjunctions, (2) lexical repetition, and (3) lexical synonymy. Even so, the results of the ANOVA SPSS calculation show that the use of conjunctive grammatical cohesion devices is experiencing optimal development, while the use of repetition and synonymy lexical cohesion devices each develops less than optimal and does not experience development. This development is of course very much determined by the large number of uses of conjunctive grammatical cohesion devices in Indonesian written passage with the highest percentage (29.7%) and lexical repetition (25.8%).

The type of topic development that develops based on percentage of use is only the development of broader parallel topics and word derivations. However, the results of the ANOVA SPSS calculation show that the development of parallel topics extends less than optimal development, while the development of word derivation topics does not develop.

Suggestion

After observing the findings of this study, the researcher gave several suggestions to various parties related to teaching Indonesian in school.

To all Indonesian language teachers in elementary schools, researchers hope that they should carry out Indonesian language teaching especially writing teaching the best they can. This needs to be done by Indonesian language teachers because the findings of this study indicate that writing teaching outcomes are still concerning. Teachers must try to change their students' writing skills better than the original skills. For this reason, the teacher must always develop his/her own abilities, especially those related to writing skills. Teachers must be diligent in reading research findings including the finding of this

research so that they know what learning materials need to be taught more intensively and what strategies need to be done so that the learning objectives of writing can be achieved.

The researcher also expects that the Indonesian language learning book writers take advantage of research findings like the finding of this study. In fact, the findings of this study can be used as a basis for selecting and determining writing learning materials and assignments given to students; so that the materials and assignments are in accordance with the level of student's mental development. Book writers should be able to read students' needs for language competencies that they need to have. One manifestation of that need is the language mistake results. These mistakes require correction from the teachers, whereas in general the teacher carrying out teaching is only guided by their teaching book. Therefore, the writers of teaching books has a role to direct the steps taken by the teacher in implementing writing teaching.

The designers or writers of the Indonesian language curriculum have a central role in teaching Indonesian, including teaching to write. It is from their hands that the goals and materials of Indonesian learning are written. The researcher hopes that they will use research findings like the finding of this study as a consideration in making policies in determining the objectives and learning materials for writing teaching in Indonesian.

To researchers who are interested in writing teaching problems, researchers hope that they take research subjects that are different from this study both in the grade level and scope so that their findings can be used as a comparison material and/or can be generalized to a broader scope.

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