Exploring Language Variations in Text-Based Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

Sentence variants are discourse incarnations. Language education must be exploring how the social, cultural, and even societal contexts become a formula that is no longer absurd in discourse learning. This article examines students' perceptions of language variety in the main text types: narration, description, and argumentation. The movement from a social function to a scientific function requires an awareness that the needs of each discourse are different. This study collected data from observation and questionnaires. The steps of identifying, classifying, and interpreting the percentage results on these perceptions were carried out. In the second stage, the researchers conducted a literature review to provide recommendations for efforts that could improve the quality of the learning process and students' understanding of the text. Furthermore, this article shows the language features for each discourse that students need to learn. It is expected that students can apply the social function of discourse and the features of the language used so that the pragmatic aspect in constructing discourse context will be built in their knowledge. We conjecture the understanding of the sentence features of each discourse will be applicable to grow text writing skills.

Keywords: Context-building activities, Language variations, Text-based language learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language learning has reached the point of how to teach critical thinking with language as a medium. This condition puts language in a position of function that automatically moves to understanding how to act and use language. The meaning of text-based learning, both in the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum currently being implemented in Indonesian context, is the awareness for students to understand the subject matter to be discussed in written or spoken mode. Students must understand the context of the situation and the cultural context of a genre. Genre is defined as text type, and it can be understood that learning Indonesian is text-based. We can understand genre as a deconstructed social construct, structure, and function (Emilia & Hamied, 2015).

This article discusses the students' understanding of the text. This will be described in the text attitudinal content. The text requires understanding and this understanding will determine the ability to deconstruct. Due to the context of the situation and cultural context, students will be able to develop their writing from the aspect of language variety accuracy. This article will examine students' perceptions of language variety in three text types: narrative, descriptive, and argumentative texts. Each text has a different social function, and thus, it is important for students to have an awareness that each discourse has its own characteristics. Examining students' perceptions of the variety of languages for each type of writing can help teachers explore aspects of context knowledge in language learning. Best-practice can be developed by finding the root of the problem through perceptual analysis, observing solutions, and determining corrective steps. The result of this study is an alternative solution in determining best-practice.

2. METHOD

This study uses a case study (Hartley, 2004) which is carried out by observing and filling out questionnaires. There were 30 student subjects in 9th grade junior high school in Jember Regency who were randomly selected to find out their perceptions of language variety, text function, and content focus of narrative, descriptive, and argumentative texts. In the first stage, the results of the questionnaire are presented to be interpreted or

described. Thus, this study applies the steps of identifying, classifying, and interpreting the percentage results on these perceptions. In the second stage, the researcher conducted a literature review to provide recommendations for efforts that could improve the quality of the learning process and students' understanding of the text. In this stage, the selected recommendations are based on the literature review. After all the data has been collected, the next step is to analyze the data so that a conclusion can be drawn. To discuss this problem, the researcher conducted content analysis, matched with library sources and compiled abstractions. At this stage, the description is explained with points that can be done in best-practice.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the results of observations and filling out the questionnaire, several points can be explained that show students' perceptions of the language variety, text function, and content focus.

3.1. Text Attitudinal Content

Text-based learning is a noble step in cross-disciplinary learning. This is based on the idea of Wells (1994) which says the basic thing is that the discussion is based on the idea that talk in the classroom is not an end in itself but a means for inquiry, exploration, even activity, and expression of concepts; discourse is viewed as a toolkit for achieving the goals. This opinion shows that text-based learning can be applied to any material. In language learning, as a medium for understanding the function and how to use language, text-based learning needs to be formatted in forming an understanding of communicative, social, and scientific functions.

Alm, Roth, and Sproat (2005) stated that in addition to information, text contains attitudinal, and more specifically, emotional content. Text can have an impact on the reader and this needs to be realized by the author. In a universal context, discourse is a representation of the understanding of the context which is manifested in the substance of the writing and the understanding of the technical aspects that determine the understanding of the genre of the text. It creates a situation where text-based language learning or discourse is taught by emphasizing the language characteristics of each text, analysing texts, and writing texts or discussing texts. More than that, in fact, as mentioned by Alm, Roth, & Sproat (2005), a text describes attitudinal, even emotional content. Text has a social impact. Each type of text is structured with a purpose that is deposited in the sentence to be built. Each text has different implications.

In this article there is a description of language variations that can be applied in each type of discourse. In learning, there is a context that can indicate an appropriateness for a discourse. In this study, the types of

Table 1. Instruments for language variety competency data

Genre text	Language Variations			Social Function			Content Focus		
Text 1	F	F/NF	O/Cont	I	E	P	Fig	Obj	Dt
Text 2									
Text 3									

Notes.
F: Formal; NF: Nonformal; Ordinary/contextual
I: Information; E: Explanation P: Prove
Fig: Figure; Obj: Object; Dt: Data

sentences were explored for narrative, descriptive, and argumentative groups. In this article it is shortened to NDA.

For sentence groups, it can be observed from the perception of the type of sentence used. These perceptions were traced by asking 30 students as a sample for the perception of questions about sentence variations and the social impact of discourse. The components of the questionnaire are as in Table 1.

From these data will be illustrated in the following details.

Text 1: O/cont. + E+Fig (narrative)
Text 2: F/NF + I+Obj (description)
Text 3: F+P+Data (arguments)

From the text presented, there are types of combinations that are concluded by students, there are descriptions of text genres that are not appropriate both from the aspect of variety, function, and content focus or substance. The type of answer is relatively inaccurate, as shown in the Table 2.

What can be observed from the description is that in general, students do not understand the variety of languages that are suitable for the three types of texts.

Table 2. The result of observing the types of perception

Genre	Types of perceptions	(%)	Conclusions
Text 1	F+E+Obj	64	Lack of understanding of sentence variants and less focus on text content
	F/NF+E+Obj	36	
	F+E+Fig	20	
Text 2	F+I+Data	60	Lack of understanding of sentence variants and less focus on text content
	F/NF+E+Obj	20	Lack of understanding of social functions and lack of content focus
	O/Cont+P+Obj	20	Lack of understanding of sentence variations and functions
Text 3	F+P+Obj	20	Lack of understanding of content focus
	F+I+Data	20	Lack of understanding of social functions
	F+I+Obj	60	Lack of understanding of content focus

The lucid explanation of this problem is (1) in general, students do not understand language variations in the type of writing, (2) most do not understand the focus of the content, and (3) there are cases where students do not understand the social function of the text.

The three facts above show that language variation should be the main concern of teachers in teaching texts. Yang (2010) conveys his observation that language variation is an important achievement related to the evolution of language that seeks connections between language and other cognitive systems. This opinion leads to the opinion that variation is a change that indicates the existence of a language process because of the process of thinking and adapting. Each text has different implications. What is written and discussed are distinctive ways of thinking, feeling, valuing, believing (Wu, 2010). Text is a representation of different language variations. The character of the sentence in a text is the most important aspect in the text. In this case, what needs to be done is to invite students to explore sentences. The skill in understanding sentence variations is a matter of creativity.

3.2. Improvements by Understanding Language Variations for Each Text

Each text taught represents three major types, namely, narrative, description, and argumentation. The differences in the language of the three can be a guide for the variety of language chosen and the social function of the text.

Alternative solutions that need to be done in discourse-based learning are:

1. Redefining text-based learning
2. Integrating various languages and contexts in text-based learning
3. Build the meaning of context, social, social, and social context
4. Connecting the meaning of the language characteristics of a text, the social function of language

3.2.1. Redefining the Meaning of Text

Gordon (2007) makes a good statement in his book, "Working with Written Discourse is a mixture of 'theory' and 'practice'. We are dealing with language learning that makes readers want to know about on the one hand and methods about applying it on the other. Writing relates to the media. The definition of discourse can no longer be limited to being structured on sentences or clauses with clear beginnings and endings. The meaning of the text, in some classes, needs to be clearly defined and not necessary in other classes because they unconsciously acquire what is texts about.

In some observations, through questions posed to students, the text in their minds is a paragraph construction, written, and clearly the genre. Not a restricted context conversation. Text is a building, not a plant that grows due to natural events or adaptation. This description determines that what text is a problem in text-based learning. I feel, it is very important to carry out constructivism to learners that text is a phenomenon of language use. It is not limited to what is written and what is presented in an event by the speaker.

Schiffrin (1994) describes discourse very clearly in three areas. First, discourse as language above the sentence or above the clause. That is the structural definition. Second, the definition of discourse according to functionalists is the study of any aspect of language use. This definition implies that the description of linguistic forms must involve the purpose or function of the forms that are designed to exist in human life. Third, discourse is defined as utterance. This definition implies that discourse is "above" or greater than other language units. Speech-not always a sentence, in the definition of a structure-scale is a smaller unit that is in discourse, so discourse appears not as a collection of units without context from the structure of language, but rather as a collection of units of language use that are full of context. It seems that the second and third definitions can be conceptual figures about the text. Aspects of language and context are two things that need to be understood in building context in text-based learning.

3.2.2. Integrating Variety of Languages and Contexts in Learning style Palette

Not all texts are taught in Indonesian language education in schools. In general, NDA has been taught through one of its subtypes. The following is a grouping of discourses or NDA texts (Table 3).

Standing on the paradigm of language as a formal structure and social fact is part of sociolinguistics. In language education, the role of sociolinguistics is very accurate. The relationship between sociolinguistics and language learning is a language variation (Regan, 1998). Volkova, Wilson, and Yarwsky (2013) mention that language variations in sociolinguistics lead to demographic problems, such as gender, age, location of the region, and various other factors. In text-based learning, before it becomes a topic and even the core of a curriculum, it is good if Indonesian language education

Table 3. NDA text types

Narrative	Description	Arguments
Narrative, recount, anecdote, spoof, news item	Descriptive, report, procedure, explanative	Analytic exposition, hortatory, discussion, argumentative (debate, etc)

thinks about how variations in the text affect the production of texts. Language variations due to the problem of textual demands are part of the material that needs to be delivered in class. As we are aware of the context we are facing, in producing a text we must also understand the function of language as a perspective and scalpel of a text. In this case, language variation is an important aspect of building sentences.

3.2.3. Build Contextual Meaning, Cultural, Social, And Social Context: Math and Equations

Why is text-based language learning so important? Because text is a real representation of language. The problem lies in the teacher's paradigm in defining the text. What supports is the meaning of the context, the cultural, social, and social context. To understand these four things, we need to understand to language learners that text is also a language construction from word units to discourse. To recognize the discourse, it is necessary to have a context or sentence or elements that precede and/or follow another element in the discourse. The context becomes very necessary because in producing the text, students will not lose the relationship between sentences. It builds on the concept of one idea one paragraph. Cultural context is a construction that builds the values and direction of the text from the aspect of belief and meaning. The social context has a relationship with the object of writing, who will be the target, and who is involved. Societal is a context that shows the relationship between the participants in the text. The social context becomes very important to help the writer choose the expression even in choosing the diction. The social context is different from the social context. The social context concerns vertical relationships (Rahardi, 2020). In the development of education, learners need to understand the social context because their role is to express themselves according to their social relationships.

Context determines how to package discourse according to socially acceptable values and show the right culture and use appropriate expressions, as well as the need for social and social context interactions. In further observation, the combination of context and context is a relationship that needs to be made solid by understanding the language characteristics of the text which often only discusses the surface features of language, for example using command sentences, conjunctions x or y, invitation sentences, etc. That's just the surface has not made the learners understand how to make text construction. In learning, the teacher can start with a lucid explanation of when we need a description, for example. Description for whom? is there an agent asking us to describe? Is there a distinctive value involved, for example when describing the shape of a traditional house, there is a functional architectural meaning value that needs to be associated with culture

and leaners in a neutral position and relatively agree with that value. Why? Because the nature of the description is not arguing but explaining or reporting.

3.2.4. Connecting The Meaning of The Language Characteristics of a Text and The Social Function of Language

Each text has unique characteristics that distinguish it from other types of text. The characteristics of this text imply a distinctive social function. Deal with discourse learning materials which generally have the same content, teachers must actively develop materials so that students have enrichment in learning. Materials in language learning, for example interpreting (or similar activities), analyzing linguistic elements, constructing texts (or compiling). Some books use context-building patterns, discuss text modelling, review, and structure texts in teams, and examine and structure texts by individuals. The pattern is a solution to have text comprehension management, on the one hand. On the other hand, there are several consequences that teachers need to be aware of so that students have language skills such as curriculum goals. The purpose of learning Indonesian is to help students develop:

1. noble character by using the Indonesian language politely;
2. an attitude of prioritizing and respecting the Indonesian language as the official language of the Republic of Indonesia;
3. language skills with various multimodal texts (oral, written, visual, audio, audio-visual) for various purposes (genres) and contexts;
4. literacy skills (language, literature, and critical-creative reasoning) in learning and working;
5. self-confidence to express themselves as capable, independent, cooperative, and responsible individuals;
6. concern for local culture and the surrounding environment; and
7. concern to contribute as citizens of Indonesia and a democratic and just world.
   (https://guru.kemdikbud.go.id/kurikulum/)

In this regard, we can understand if the selection of text-based learning is something that should be taken. Critical thinking skills are demands. We can identify it from points 3, 4, and 7. All three are language learning to develop critical and creative thinking skills. Creative and critical language learners are defined in terms of the learners' cognitive abilities to carry out certain tasks effectively (Kabilan, 2000). In his presentation, it was stated that critical thinking can be identified with an attitude of carefully and deliberately determine to accept, reject, or suspend judgment about a claim. Therefore, discourse learning has shown the ability to arrive at that process. Each type of discourse with a different social

function has the potential to develop critical thinking skills in a broad definition. Attitude towards the discourse that is read and using language in accordance with the expected social function are two things that are in line.

The social function of language is an important part that can determine language variation. It is very appropriate to see the following example. Characteristics of argumentative language that requires a scientific variety because argumentation has the social function of convincing, reasoning, and providing scientific information as evidence of truth. In that case, a critical attitude is needed to analyse, and evaluate an argument. In written production, a critical attitude is needed in evaluating the information to be conveyed and presenting the data and making inferences (conclusions) from the data appropriately. Therefore, the social function determines the variety of language and vice versa. Teachers need to convey it with learning innovations, for example showing argumentative text on social media, online news portals, etc.

4. CONCLUSION

The problem in text-based learning is understanding the relationship between language variations and text types. Each text has a social function that can be used as the basis for determining the chosen language variation. In discourse-based learning, building context is an activity that needs attention. Efforts to build context are ways that aim to make students understand the characteristics of the discourse being studied and understand the values of knowledge in it. To find out the context of a well-learned discourse, teachers can make efforts to redefine text-based learning, integrate various languages and contexts in text-based learning, build contextual meaning, social, social, and social contexts, connect the meaning of the language characteristics of a text, social functions language. This becomes very important because based on the initial study there is a fact that in general students do not understand language variations and the focus of content that should be identified from a text. This article shows that language variation as part of sociolinguistic studies and the function of discourse is an important matter that becomes a problem of creativity in text-based learning.

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