

EXPLORING THE LANGUAGE FEATURES IN NARRATIVE TEXT USED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study aims to find out what kinds of language features secondary school students utilized to write narrative texts throughout the 2022–2023 school year is the goal of this research. The seven categories of language features were the main focus. This study employed a descriptive qualitative methodology. The data was taken from narrative data that first-graders at SMAN 1 Purang wrote during the 2022–2023 school year. According to the findings, first-grade social program students employed a wide range of language features in their narrative texts. They were action verbs, linking verbs, speaking verbs, adverbs, noun phrases, and connectives in the simple past tense. Among the seven categories, noun phrases accounted for the most data (138 total). Connectives came in second place with 48 data, followed by adverbs with 28 data, simple past tense with 64 data, action verbs with 21 data, linking verbs with 30 data, and saying verbs with 31 data. The researchers have discovered 360 instances of language features.

Key Words: Writing, *Narrative Text*, *Language Features*

INTRODUCTION

Writing proves to be one of the more intricate and challenging language skills due to the multifaceted requirements it demands. Students are required to possess a firm grasp of grammar, vocabulary, and the ability to articulate their thoughts coherently in written form. This process involves not just having a conceptual understanding in the mind but also transcribing these ideas into written language—a challenging task in itself. As highlighted by (Richards & Renandya, 2002), the complexity of writing poses a significant hurdle for L2 learners. The difficulty lies not only in generating and structuring ideas but also in rendering these ideas into coherent and understandable text. Creating readable text entails producing content that is easily comprehensible for readers, accurately representing the intended concepts. Additionally, as mentioned (Saputra et al., 2021), writing holds pivotal importance in the modern era, serving as an effective and enjoyable mode of communication. This underscores the significance of writing as a means to effectively communicate and share information with others.

Various text types exist, including descriptive, narrative, recount, report, and news item texts. According to (Goldberg, 2020), a narrative text serves as a platform to recount events from the past. It is commonly preferred by individuals aiming to entertain or engage readers and listeners through storytelling. A narrative is a form of text centered on specific participants with the primary social function of recounting stories from past events and aiming to entertain the audience. It serves the purpose of engaging individuals through actual or vicarious experiences, often found in folktales, fairy tales, myths, and legends. (Huisman et al., 2019) supported this notion, regarding narrative text as a genre frequently examined in linguistic studies, focusing on its structural elements.

Describing an event or narrating a story, a narrative text presents chronological events or experiences, as stated by (Friedman, 2000). Based on this definition, the conclusion drawn by researchers is that narrative texts involve recounting both factual and fictional experiences, intending to captivate and amuse the readers or listeners.

In narrative text, there were language features. According to (Sudarwati & Grace, 2007) language features become characteristic of writing narrative text. They are used as noun phrases, the use of connectives, the use of adverbial phrase, the use of simple past tense, the use of action verbs, the use of linking verb and the use of saying verb (Knapp & Watkins, 2005).

The reason for employing narrative text and its associated language features stemmed from the challenges students faced in learning English, particularly in mastering narrative writing, one of the genres studied by first-grade students at SMAN I Purang. Despite the demand for proficient writing skills in classroom activities, both teachers and students encountered difficulties in executing these language features accurately within narrative text. To address this issue, the researcher engaged in interviewing the English teacher of the first-grade social program at SMAN 1 Purang and observed classroom practices. These interviews and observations aimed to assess the students' proficiency in employing language features while writing narrative texts. The result was supported by the outcomes of the Pre-Service Training on March 1st, 2023, involving first-grade students at SMAN I Purang.

Based on the preceding discussion, the researcher identified previous studies to this subject. (Nugraha, 2020) highlights the use of language features on narrative text and the language features appropriateness on narrative text and the problem that made social tenth grader cannot use language features appropriately.

Then, the result of his study showed that most of the social tenth grader were using language features on their narrative text such as Action verb, Time Sequence, Simple past tense, Descriptive language, and Specific Characters. But, none of their using Dialogue, Direct and Indirect speech on making narrative text. Additionally, (Diana, 2021), conducted a research about the use of language features in students' descriptive writing and the findings showed that 91% of students encountered difficulties in applying the simple present pattern, 55% experienced issues in forming the noun phrase, 32% struggled with using auxiliary verbs, and 9% faced challenges in employing linking verbs in nominal sentences. (Susilowati & Harida, 2023) conducted a research about error analysis in language features in recount text. Then the research findings concerning errors in language features within recount texts predominantly involve issues related to tenses (specifically past tenses), pronouns, and punctuation. The reported percentages of these errors are as follows: 39.62% for errors in using past tenses, noun phrases 11.32% for errors in using pronouns, and 49.06% for errors in using punctuation.

Upon gathering insights into the challenges experienced by the students, the researcher opted to investigate language features to assess the students' capabilities, particularly in composing narrative texts. Given the aforementioned circumstances, the researcher aims to undertake a study titled "exploring the language features in narrative text used by secondary school students".

METHOD

The research aimed to identify the various language features present in narrative texts composed by the secondary school students at SMAN 1 Purang. To achieve this, a descriptive qualitative research design was employed to both depict and examine the students' writing. The researcher utilized a checklist to

organize the collected data, encompassing narrative texts written by these students.

Data for this study were sourced from narrative texts composed by the first-graders of social class in SMAN 1 Purang during the academic year 2022/2023. The subjects were about 20 students from one social class only. In addition, the types of data gathered are capturing words, phrases, and sentences indicative of the language features found in narrative text. The researcher undertook several steps to gather the data. Firstly, by reading through the students' written work to comprehend and identify the various language features incorporated into the narrative text. Secondly, the researcher identified specific data points within the narrative texts that aligned with distinct language features for analysis. Following this, the data were classified according to their respective language features to facilitate analysis. Finally, the researcher systematically analyzed the student's writing, assigning a unique code number to each language feature observed within the narrative texts.

RESULT

The research was split into two parts. The initial part illustrates the varieties of language features applied, while the subsequent part reveals the predominant usage of language features found in narrative texts composed by first-grade students at SMAN 1 Purang. Addressing the study's issue, the research was conducted to scrutinize the students' composition of narrative texts. The language features encompass noun phrases (NP), connectives (C), adverb phrases (Advp), simple past tense (SPT), action verbs (AC), linking verbs (LV), and saying verbs (SV).

Table 1 The Respondents' Responses

No	Students' code number	Types of language features						
		NP	C	AdV	SPT	Ac	LV	SV
1.	RSA	√	√		√	√		√
2	HTP	√	√		√			
3.	KKP	√	√		√			
4.	TNP	√	√		√			√
5.	MVK	√	√				√	
6	ADP	√	√		√			
7	PNF	√			√			√
8	EAK	√	√		√			
9	GHP	√			√		√	
10	BTA	√		√	√		√	
11	EH	√	√				√	
12	TZH	√	√	√			√	
13	BFS			√			√	
14	SAP	√			√		√	
15	KCC	√		√			√	√
16	YEJ	√		√			√	√
17	ABR	√	√	√	√			√
18	FEG	√	√		√	√		√
19	NFP	√		√	√	√	√	√
20	DH	√	√	√	√			√

Note: NP (noun phrase) C (connectives) ADV (adverb phrase) SPT (simple past tense) AV (Action verb) LV (linking verb)

As shown in Table 1, after analyzing the narrative texts composed by 20 students, it was observed that six distinct language features were present in their writing. These features included noun phrases (138 instances), connectives (48 instances), adverb phrases (28 instances), simple past tense (64 instances), action verbs (21 instances), linking verbs (30 instances), and saying verbs (31 instances).

DISCUSSION

The researcher identified various language features present in the narrative texts written by students at SMAN I PURANG, including noun phrase (NP), adverb phrase (VP), connectives (C), simple past tense (SPT), action verb (AV), linking verb (LV), and saying verb (Sy). These findings can be further examined as follows:

Noun Phrase

According Todd (1987:61) said that noun phrase is a group of words with a noun as its head word. There were the data of noun phrases construction used in the narrative text written by 20 students at SMAN I Purang. They were:

Datum 1(No 1): *a grasshopper*. Datum 2 (No. 1): *a monkey*. Datum 1 (no 3) *an ant*. Datum 1 (No 8) *the ant*. Datum 1 (No. 14) *the summer*. Datum 1 (No 16) *the winter*. Datum 1 (No 18) *the grasshopper*. Datum 1 (No 22) *the stores*. Datum 2 (No 3) *a river*. Datum 2 (No 5) *a crocodiles*. Datum 2 (No 9) *the monkey*. Datum 2 (No 30) *a tree*. Datum 3 (No 1) *a mother*. Datum 3 (No 6) *the egg*. Datum 3 (No 9). *The mother*. Datum 4 (No 1) *a mouse*. Datum 4 (No 14) *the water*. Datum 5 (No 4) *a group*. Datum 5 (No 7) *an elephant*. Datum 5 (No 12) *the elephant*. Datum 5 (No 14) *The hole*.

The phrase *a grasshopper, an ant, the ant, the summer, the winter, the stores, a monkey, a river, a crocodiles, the monkey, the river, the top, a tree, a mother, the egg, the mother, the pond, a mouse, the tiger, a greater, the hole*. The phrase above is used as noun phrase construction, because the heads of the phrase are; *grasshopper, ant, summer, winter, stores, monkey, crocodiles, river, top, tree, mother, egg, pond, mouse, tiger and hole*. The phrase above consist of modifiers *indefinite article a, an, and definite article the*. Meanwhile the head are: *grasshopper, ant, summer, winter, stores, monkey, crocodiles, river, top, tree, mother, egg,*

pond, mouse, tiger and hole. Based on the data above it can be said that the structure of noun phrase above consists of Modifier + Head.

Datum 6 (No 5) *a good shot*. Datum 6 (No 14) *the poor rabbit*. Datum 7 (No 1) *a smart mouse*. Datum 7 (No 9) *stupid crocodiles*. Datum 8 (No 7) *a small pool*. Datum 9 (No 1) *A hot day*. Datum 8 (No 3) *a long time*. Datum 10 (No 8) *strong men*. Datum 10 (No 9) *a big dream*. Datum 10 (No 14) *a rich man*. Datum 11 (No 1) *a single father*. Datum 12 (No 12) *the most beautiful lady*. Datum 12 (No 15) *a long time*. Datum 12 (No 16) *young man*.

The phrase *a good shot, the poor rabbit, a smart mouse, stupid crocodiles, a small pool, a hot day, a long time, strong man, a big dream, a rich man, a single father, the most beautiful lady, long time, young man* above used as noun phrase construction, because the heads of the phrase are; *shot, rabbit, mouse, crocodiles, pool, day, time, man, dream, father, lady*. The phrase above consist of modifiers indefinite article *a, an*, and definite article *the*. Meanwhile the head are: *shot, rabbit, mouse, crocodiles, pool, day, time, man, dream, father, lady* and followed by an adjective; *good, poor, smart stupid, small, rich, single, long, big and young*. Based on the data above it can be said that the structure of noun phrase above consists of Modifier + Head.

Connectives

Connectives is a word or phrase that links clauses or sentences. Connectives can be conjunctions such as; *however, than, therefore, act*. In this part there were the data of connectives phrase construction found in the narrative text written by the first grade students at SMAN I Langke Rembong, as follows:

Datum 1 (No 2) *chirping and singing*. Datum 1 (No 9) *with great toil*. Datum 1 (No 10) *corn and grain*. Datum 2 (No 6) *so he asked*. Datum 2 (No 8) *agree and told*. Datum 2 (No 21) *agree and turned*. Datum 4 (No

2) *so he wanted*. Datum 4 (No 10) *because the tiger*. Datum 6 (No 12) *even taste*. Datum 6 (No 18) *outside with him*. Datum 6 (No 21) *when he got close*. Datum 9 (No 11) *if there*. Datum 10 (No 13) *then he would*. Datum 18 (No 6) *that she mary*.

The phrases above are used as connectives phrase, because the heads of the phrases; *and, with, so, because, even, if, than, that*. The phrase above consist of modifier (noun) *corn, grain, tiger* and followed by the verb phrase are; *chirping, singing, asked, told, tuned, wanted, got*. While the pronouns are; *he and she*.

Adverb Phrase

Adverb phrase is a phrase headed by an adverb. Adverbial phrase consists of an adverb and an optimal specifier. Moreover, there are some types of adverb phrase, they are: adverb of time, adverb of place, adverb of degree, adverb of place, and adverb of frequency. *First*, (adverb of time).

Datum 2 (No 6) *very hungry*. Datum 3 (No 11). *Very ugly*. Datum 6 (No 12) *Very kind*. Datum 9 (No 5) *Very exhausted*. Datum 12 (No 14) *Very afraid*. Datum 13 (No 3) *very strong*. Datum 17 (No 3) *Very much*.

The phrase *very hungry, very ugly, very kind, very exhausted, very afraid, very strong, very much* above used as adverb of degree construction, because the heads of the phrase is *very*. The phrases above consist of specifier adjective *hungry, ugly, kind, afraid, strong, exhausted*. Based on the explanation above it can be said the structure of the adverb phrase above is specifier + head.

Datum 6 (No 4) *always clumsy*. Datum 6 (No 13) *always gave him*. Datum 12 (No 5). Datum 18 (No 5) *she always*. Datum 19 (No 8) *he always*.

The phrases above are used as adverb of frequency phrase construction, because the head of the phrase is a connectives *always*. While the pronouns consists of *she*, *he* and possessive pronouns consist of *him* and follow by the verb *gave*.

Datum 10 (no1) *in Sumatra*. Datum 13 (No 1) *east Java*. Datum 13 (No 9) *the jungle*. Datum 16(No 3) *driving home*. Datum 20 (No 2) *from laos*.

The phrases above are used as adverbs of place construction, because the head of the phrase are: *sumatra*, *java*, *jungle*, *home*. While the preposition consist of *in* and denefine article consist of *the*.

Datum 11 (No 11) *Early morning*. Datum 12 (No 15) *at the day*. Datum 15 (No 2) *a few months letter*. Datum 16 (No 1) *one night*. Datum 20 (No 3) *every morning*.

The phrases above are used as adverb of time construction, because the head of the phrases are: *Moring*, *day*, *months*. While the specifier (adjective) consists of *early*, *every* and the preposition consist of *at*.

Simple Past Tense

According to Hornby (1975: 85) said that simple past tense is to indicate the activities or states in the past, without indicating any connection the present. Means that it is often used with an adverbial phrase that specifies a time in the past, such as; yesterday, an hour ago, last year, act.

Datum 1 (No 5) *an ant passed*. Datum 1 (No 9) *it saw*. Datum 2 (No 2) *he wanted*. Datum 2 (No 5) *he saw*. Datum 2 (No 7) *he stopped*. Datum 2 (No 11) *he told*. Datum 2 (No 17) *they redhead*. Datum 3 (No 2) *she felt*. Datum 3 (No 4) *she got*. Datum 3 (No 10) *they hissed*. Datum 3 (No 13) *I looked*. Datum 4 (No 5) *he got*. Datum 4 (No 10) *he declared*. Datum 5 (No 6) *an elephant came*. Datum 6 (No 1) *there lived*. Datum 6 (No 5) *the bear called*. Datum 7 (No 2) *they lived*. Datum 7 (No 30) *they wanted*. Datum 8 (No 2) *which made*. Datum 8 (No 10) *the frog kept*. Datum 19 (No 6) *he worked*, Datum 19 (No 7) *he regained*.

The phrases above are used as simple past tense construction, because the head of the phrase is a *passed, saw, wanted, stopped, told, redhead, felt, got, hissed, looked, got, came, lived, called, kept, worked, regained*. While the pronouns consist of *he, she, they, I*. While, indefinite article consist of *an, a*, and definite article consist of *the*.

Datum 12 (No 13) *took its heart*. Datum 12 (No 20) *Snow White agreed*. Datum 13 (No 5) *lived in the jungle*. Datum 13 (No 8) *passed the jungle*. Datum 15 (No 11) *the girl felt*.

The phrases above are used as simple past tense construction, because the head of the phrase is a *took, agreed, lived, passed, felt*. While the modifier (noun) consist of *heart, snow white, jungle*.

Action Verbs

Action verb is a verb that express physical or mental action. In this part the action verb tell us what the subject in clause or sentence doing or has done. Take for example: *do, walked, thought, ride, read, call, act*.

Datum 1 (No 4) *he was taking*. Datum 1 (No 17) *the grasshopper came when the winter*. Datum 2 (No 20) *I left it under the tree*. Datum 3 (No

16) *he was swimming*. Datum 4 (No 13) *the tiger jump into the water*. Datum 6 (No 13) *he dry it up*. Datum 9 (No 16) *she started picking up*. Datum 10 (No 18) *I want to help you*. Datum 10 (No 19) *let me go to get money*. Datum 10 (No 20) *I promise I will be there*. Datum 11 (No 17) *she looked more beautiful*. Datum 13 (No 17) *arok looked around*. Datum 14 (No 18) *talked her about it*. Datum 15 (no 8) *I love you*. Datum 15 (No 9) *I need you*. Datum 16 (No 9) *she told him*. Datum 19 (No 5) *his girl told him*.

The phrases above are used as action verb construction because, the head of the phrase are; *taking, came, left, swimming, jump, dry, started, let, looked, talked, love, need, told*. While the modifier (noun) consists of *grasshopper, winter, tree, water, money* and followed by pronouns *he, she*.

Linking Verb

Linking verb is a verb a verb that connects to the complement. In this part linking verb to connect the subject with a word that gives information. Moreover, there are some types of linking verb, they are: First, forms of "to be". Take for example; *am, is, are, are being, was, was being, were, has, has been, have, been, will have been, had been, are being, might have been*. Second, Forms of "to become". Such as: *become, becomes, became, has become, have become, had become, will became, will have become, has been*. Third, forms of "to seem" such as: *seemed, seeming, seems, has seemed, have seemed, had seemed, is seeming, are seeming, was seeming, were seeming, will seem*.

Datum 1 (No 13) *had been collected*. Datum 1 (No 20) *have got plenty of food*. Datum 1 (No 15) *I am helping*. Datum 2 (No 14) *he has to eat*. Datum 3 (No 7) *he was so big*. Datum 6 (No 15) *would have*. Datum 14 (No 21) *this lake is toba lake*.

The phrases above are used as linking verb form of "to be" construction, because the head of phrase *are had been, have, has, was, is, would have*, While the modifier consists of food, heart, pond, home, toba lake and followed by verb *collected, got, helping, swimming*.

Datum 10(No 7) he become. Datum 11(No 19) become true. Datum 12(No 8) after become. Datum 14 (No 20) become a lake.

The phrases above are used as linking verb form of become construction, because the head of phrase is a become. While the modifier (noun) consists of lake, true and personal pronoun consist of he.

Saying verb

Saying verb is a word used to indicate when someone speak. It is often used when a writer wants to use an alternative for the word "said". Take foe example: "Get out!" she screamed, "Make me" he fumed. "No" he shouted. "No" he cried.

Datum 1 (No 7) "*I am helping*" said the ant", Datum 2 (No 18) "*where is your heart?*" asked the crocodile. Datum 2 (No 18) "*said the monkey now I am a free*". Datum 3 (No 13) "*you are very ugly*" they quacked. Datum 4 (No 6) said to the tiger "*listen!*". Datum 5 (No 10) he said "*come down here*". Datum 5 (No 11) *get out*. Datum 7 (No 5) he said "*outloudy*". Datum 7 (No 14) said laudy" crocodiles come up". Datum 9 (No 20) "*it's working*" she said. Datum 10 (No 21) "*I get a lot of money*" mother said.

The phrases above are used as saying verb construction, because the head of phrase are said, asked, quacked. While the modifier (noun) consists of crocodiles, ant, mother, money. And the specifier (adjective) consists of ugly, stupid.

The research findings reveal the presence of seven distinct language features within the narrative texts authored by students at SMAN 1 Purang. These features encompass 138 instances of noun phrases, 48 instances of connectives, 28 instances of adverb phrases, 64 instances of simple past tense, 21 instances of action verbs, 30 instances of linking verbs, and 31 instances of saying verbs. Among these features, the more prevalent or dominantly used elements observed within the narrative texts were noun phrases and simple past tense. Notably, the most prominently used language feature detected within the narrative texts is the noun phrase. The findings aligned with previous research, highlighting the prevalence of noun phrases as the most commonly used language feature in the narrative texts. Additionally, this study supported the earlier investigation by researcher (Susilowati & Harida, 2023), confirming that the primary language features prominent in students' recount texts were noun phrases and past tense.

CONCLUSION

In essence, language features play a crucial role in narrative writing, encompassing various types such as noun phrases, connectives, adverbial phrases, simple past tense, action verbs, saying and linking verbs. Mastering these features is essential for effective communication and comprehension within written texts. Analyzing the narrative texts created by 20 first-grade students at SMAN I Purang, the research deduced the prevalence of six types of language feature constructions. Among these, the dominant feature observed was the noun phrase, followed by simple past tense, connectives, saying verbs, linking verbs, adverbs, and action verbs, in that order.

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