

## Lexical Density in The Novel “Mrs. Dalloway” by Virginia Woolf

Salma Nurmala Ayu<sup>1</sup>, Ervina CM Simatupang<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Faculty of Humanities of Widyatama University, Bandung, Indonesia

[salma.nurmala@widyatama.ac.id](mailto:salma.nurmala@widyatama.ac.id)

### Abstract

*Discourse analysis studies how sentences and utterances (speech) combine to form texts and interactions and how those texts and interactions fit into our everyday sphere (Jones, 2012). This study aims to measure the lexical density in The Novel “Mrs. Dalloway” by Virginia Woolf. Descriptive qualitative were used to conduct the study. The data were taken by collecting and identifying the lexical items in that novel and then calculating the lexical density in the novel Mrs. Dalloway. A novel is a literary work that reflects a story about a specific human experience with a certain length, including a complex plot, a variety of settings, and several characters (Soemardjo, 1989). The result of this research from 10 Data was obtained that the lexical density of this research was reaching (51%). The lexical items or content words found in this study were: noun 22 (40%), verb 13 (23,6%), adverb 8 (14,6%), adjective 12 (21,8%), and the highest lexical density was noun standing for (40%).*

### Keywords

lexical density; novel; lexical item; Dalloway; discourse analysis



## I. Introduction

Sometimes people read novels for certain purposes. Some read novels for entertainment, some look for material for assignment references, or just read to fill spare time. Though there are many kinds of genres of novels, it is a lovely activity for a bookworm to kill the time by reading. In addition to the author's fictional tale, novels sometimes contain hidden messages. A novel is a literary work that reflects a story about a specific human experience with a certain length, including a complex plot, a variety of settings, and several characters. (Sumardjo, 1989). A novel allows for a detailed overview of a certain location (space). Because of this, novelists are constantly interested in the place of humans in society. There are several components in the novel, one of which is the plot. Many things can be examined in a novel, one of which is lexical density.

Mrs. Dalloway (first published on May 14, 1925) is a novel by Virginia Woolf about a day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway, a fictional high-society woman in post-WWII England. More than thirty years after it occurred, Clarissa Dalloway still remembers the kiss between herself and Sally Seton as “the most exquisite moment of her whole life” (Woolf, 1935). More recently, however, the kiss between Sally and Clarissa has sparked conversation among queer theorists regarding its relationship temporality. This novel becomes one of Woolf's most well-known works. This article will measure the percentage of the lexical density used in the novel Mrs. Dalloway. There are several components in the novel, one of which can be examined in a novel is lexical density.

Lexical density is a descriptive measure that varies with register and genre and is one of the tools used in discourse analysis. When examining the concept of lexical density, Ure and Ellis correctly argue that lexicality is crucial (Johansson, 2008). The three-word

classes often regarded to have lexical qualities are nouns, verbs, and adjectives. These elements are frequently referred to as content words or open class words (because of the ease with which new members of the class can be added), whereas more grammatical parts of speech are referred to as closed classes (due to the rarity with which new prepositions or pronouns enter the language). The percentage of lexical and grammatical components in the text will almost probably determine the text's difficulty. This study will measure the percentage of the lexical density used in the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf using Ure and Halliday's theories. The topic was chosen by the author since it is still under-researched and has a significant amount of data.

## II. Review of Literature

"The study of language as a system of human communication" (Richard and Schmidt, 2002). They stated that linguistics includes many different approaches to studying languages and many others, for example, phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and even discourse analysis. Language is one of the most important things in the life of every human being. Each of them is of course inseparable from language, the first time a child gets a language that is heard directly from the father or mother when the child is born into this world. Then as time goes by and as the child grows, they will acquire a language other than the language taught by the mother and father, either in the form of a second, third, foreign language or so on which is called language acquisition where it depends on the social environment and cognitive level possessed by these children through the learning process in their environment. (Purba, N. et al. (2020).

### 2.1 Discourse Analysis

The text term is always linked to the discourse term. Sometimes people don't understand how the two terms differ from one another (discourse and text). To help people distinguish between the two ideas, several academics provided definitions for each. Discourse is the elaboration of a communication event in context (Nunan, 1993) Contrarily, text is described as "the verbal record of a communicative act". Richard and Plat claim that discourse is dynamic while text is static (1978). Discourse analysis studies how sentences and utterances (speech) combine to form texts and interactions and how those texts and interactions fit into our everyday sphere (Jones, 2012). It's important to note that discourse analysis isn't only a technique of looking at language but also a way of studying it.

### 2.2 Lexical Density

Lexical density is more closely connected with the former type of words than with the latter. Lexical density is defined as a ratio of the total number of lexical words per clause (Ure, 1971). Passes into much detail about understanding lexical density, lexical density is expressed as the ratio of lexical items divided by the number of word families (Halliday, 1985). He uses lexical items rather than lexical words since they might contain multiple words, for example, look up, take over, call off, and other phrasal verbs, which all act as single lexical items.

The key lexical words, which fall into four grammatical categories: nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and main verbs, are lexical items for Lyons (1986), Robins (1964), and Palmer (1976). Auxiliary verbs, Modals, Pronouns, Prepositions, Determiners, and Conjunctions are examples of grammatical items (or function words) that convey

relationships between lexical words. A text with a large number of lexical items or content words has more information than one with a large number of function words (prepositions, interjections, pronouns, conjunctions, and count words).

### **2.3 Lexical Items**

The four basic lexical word classes are noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. Lexical items or content words are those that contain the main semantic information in a text (Jeffries, 2006). Content words, are nouns, adjectives, lexical verbs, and some adverbs that carry a lot of information (Thornbury and Slade 2006).

### **2.4 Nouns (N)**

A noun is a term that refers to things or people (Verspoor and Sauter, 2000). Women, men, boy, book, desk, chair, and so on are among the items on the list. A noun is a member of the part of speech that can be the main word in a clause's subject, the object of a verb, or the object of a preposition.

### **2.5 Verb (V)**

The verb is also known as the "doing" word. A verb is a lexical category that often represents a state, act, occurrence, or feeling, For instance, walk, study, wait, cut, and so on (Gelderen, 2002).

### **2.6 Adjective (Adj)**

Adjective, is a term that provides additional details about a noun or pronoun. (Harmer,1998). An adjective is a term that modifies a noun (beautiful, good, inexpensive) and expresses characteristics (proud, happy, excited). Furthermore, adjectives serve as a post for the head noun in a noun phrase (a brilliant artist). (Jeffries, 2006)

### **2.7 Adverb (Adv)**

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs, such as proudly (Gelderen, 2002). Adverbs that are considered as lexical objects (Johansson, 2008). Almost all adverbs that are derived from adjectives. For instance, rapidly, brilliantly, slowly, passionately, and so forth.

### **2.8 Grammatical Items**

Grammatical categories are essentially components or connectors that do not contribute to the meaning of a sentence (Gelderen, 2002). Grammatical items, are those that function in a closed system because new terms are difficult to add. Auxiliary verbs, determiners, pronouns, most prepositions, conjunctions, and several adverb classes are all grammatical components in the English language. (Halliday, 1985).

### **2.9 Auxiliary Verb (Aux verb)**

Auxiliary verbs are verbs that cannot stand alone but assist (combine with) another verb. 'Be' (is, am, are, were, were), 'do' (does, did), and 'have or has', as well as the modal auxiliary verbs (shall, should, will, would, could, might, must, and ought to) are examples.

### **2.10 Pronoun (Pro)**

A pronoun is a word that is used to substitute a noun or noun phrase, according to Harmer (1998). To make the language more efficient and reduce repetition, pronouns are used to replace more complex nouns and noun phrases. For instance, I, you, we, myself, he, and they

### 2.11 Preposition (Prep)

Preposition, according to Harmer (1998), is a word that is used to demonstrate how other words are related. According to Jeffries (2006), prepositions are comparable to subordinators in that they link and reveal a semantic relationship. A preposition is a word that indicates location (both geographically and chronologically), direction, and relationship (Gelderen, 2002). For instance, beneath, on, in, at, in front of, beside, between, and so on.

### 2.12 Determiner (Det)

A determiner, according to Harmer (1998), is a word that represents a group of words. The determiner is frequently used before a noun or at the start of a noun phrase. Then, according to Gelderen (2002), a determiner is a word that indicates or specifies. It comes before the phrase's noun head and any adjectives that may appear in the noun phrase. For instance, a, an, the, and so on.

### 2.13 Conjunction (C)

A word that combines two or more words or sentences is referred to as conjunction (Gelderen, 2002). Coordinating and subordinating conjunctions are two types of conjunction. According to Jeffries (2006:99), coordinating conjunction is to join, or coordinate two or more clauses such as 'and, or, and, but' while subordinating conjunction is used to make clear that one unit or structure is less important grammatically than another (if, so, that, although)

### 2.14 Research Question(s)

1. What are the each of percentage of the lexical items found in the novel Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf?
2. What is the percentage of lexical density in that novel?

## III. Research Method

Descriptive qualitative research was employed to conduct the study. According to Patton and Cochran (2012), qualitative research is defined by its goals and methodologies, which provide words rather than numbers as data for analysis. The data from this investigation were described or explained in descriptive research. Document or content analysis was one of the types of qualitative research used in this study. Using Halliday's theory, the researcher used some of the samples found in this study, the researcher analyzes the lexical density in that novel by identifying t lexical words in that novel and then classifying the lexical words, afterward calculating the number of lexical densities.

$$\text{Lexical Density} = \frac{\text{The number of lexical items}}{\text{Total number of total words}} \times 100\%$$

## IV. Result and Discussion

After analyzing the data, there were some finding of this study. There found several numbers of lexical item in source of the data presented below.

### 4.1 Lexical Item

Lexical density can be applied to texts in order to provide alternate words and clarifying meaning. The categories of lexical item are divided into 4, noun, verb, adjective, and, adverb.

#### a. Noun

##### Data 1

**Clarissa had visited Evelyn Whitbread in a nursing home. (Woolf, 2021, p: 8)**

The mentioned data contains 4 nouns. Those words are “Clarissa”, “Evelyn Whitbread”, “nursing”, and “home”. All the words before are categorized as noun because it is used to identify people, places, or things. Clarissa's name acts as the sentence's subject because she is a person who has performed or will perform an action. Evelyn Whitebread acts as the direct object in this sentence because it functioned as the recipient of the action of the verb which is had visited. The complement of the sentence is consisting adverb of place, which is nursing home, a private institution that provides housing and healthcare, particularly for the older. For more details, please check the table below:

Data 1	Clarissa	had visited	Evelyn Whitbread	in a nursing home
	Subject	Transitive verb	Direct object	Complement (Adverb of place)
	Noun	Verb	Noun Phrase	Prepositional Phrase

#### b. Verb

##### Data 2

**She would not say of any one in the world now that they were this or that (Woolf, 2021, p: 11)**

From the data above, there are several words that are indicated as lexical items. Some of them are categorized as verb. They are would, and say. Because they exhibit an action, a state of being, or an occurrence, they are regarded as verbs. The words would not say be claimed to be a transitive verb because a direct object is required to be the subject of the verb's action. For more details, please check the table below:

Data 2	She	would not Say	Of any one	In the world now	that they were this or that
	Subject	Transitive verb	Direct Object	Adverb of place	Complement
	Noun	Verb	Prepositional phrase	Prepositional Phrase	Adverbial phrase

#### c. Adjective

##### Data 3

**With a skin of crumpled leather and beautiful eyes. (Woolf, 2021, p: 13)**

The above information revealed that, some words are indicated as adjectives. They categorized as adjectives since they provides additional details about a noun or pronoun.

According to the previous information, the words crumpled and beautiful are defined as adjectives. Both provide thorough details on another word, unless it is a noun or pronoun. Pay close attention to the following table:

Data 3	With a skin of	crumpled leather and beautiful eyes
	Subject	Adjective
	Prepositional phrase	Adjectival phrase

#### d. Adverb

##### Data 4

**He had turned on his bed one morning in the middle of the war. (Woolf, 2021, p: 15)**

##### Data 5

**The face itself had been seen only once by three people for a few seconds. (Woolf, 2021, p: 21)**

Based on the two data mentioned above, three words can be classified as adverbs. an adverb is a word those changes, modifies, or adds to a verb, adjective, other adverb, or even an entire phrase. on the data 4 words that fall into the adverb, category are One morning and in the middle of war. while in the data 5 words or phrases that are categorized as adverbs are for a few seconds. Of the three words or phrases, all three are included in the category of adverbs of time, because they describe a certain period of time.

Data 4	He	Had turned on	His bed	One morning	In the middle of the war
	Subject	Transitive Verb	Direct object	Adverb of time	Complement (adverb of time)
	Noun	Verb	Possessive Pronoun	Noun phrase	Prepositional phrase

Data 5	The face itself	Had been seen	Once by three people	For a few seconds
	Subject	Transitive Verb	Direct object	Complement (adverb of time)
	Noun	Verb	Noun Phrase	Prepositional phrase

The description provided above serves as an illustration of the information gathered. According to the overall results of the study, the lexical items and lexical density of the 10 samples from the book are as follows:

Lexical item	Total	Percentage	Percentage of lexical density
Noun	22	40%	51,8%
Verb	13	23.6%	
Adjective	12	21.8%	
Adverb	8	14.6%	

## V. Conclusion

According to the result and findings, based on the Lexical density defined by Halliday (1985). It is found that the lexical density in this study from 10 data samples was (51%). This study also find that the lexical item found was 22 noun (40%), 13 verb (23,6%), 12 adjectives (21,8), and 8 adverbs (14,6%). The findings show that nouns are the most frequent, with a percentage up to (40%)

Besides the researcher found interesting facts about lexical density. it is shown that the use of lexical density is often to measure the difficulty of written or spoken discourse. The higher the lexical density of a text or a speech, the more difficult it would be. Also, a text or a speech with high lexical density will convey more information than one with low lexical density.

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