

Research Article

Does the writing exposition text ability correlate to reading habit and discourse markers mastery?

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Abstract

This study aims to determine 1) the relationship between students' reading habits with the ability to write exposition text, 2) the relationship between students' discourse markers mastery with the ability to write exposition text, and (3) the relationship between students' reading habits and discourse markers mastery with the ability to write exposition text. This research was conducted in the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 4 Serang in the odd semester of the 2018/2019 school year. The research method used was a survey method with correlational techniques. The population was the students of grade X. There were 450 students consisting of 180 male and 270 female. The sample was taken using purposive sampling technique. The sample was 88 students. The test was used to obtain data on the students' ability to write exposition texts and students' mastery of discourse markers, while the questionnaire was used to obtain data on students' reading habits. The results showed that: 1) there was a positive and significant relationship between the students' reading habits and the students' ability to write exposition texts; 2) there was a positive and significant relationship between the students' discourse markers mastery and the students' ability to write exposition texts; and 3) there was a positive and significant relationship between the students' reading habits and the students' discourse markers mastery with the students' ability to write exposition texts.



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Introduction

Writing is the most difficult language skills mastered by students (Ong, 2011; Hameed, 2014; Muhyidin e. a., 2018). It is the most difficult ability to master compared to the act of listening, speaking, and reading (Nurgiyantoro B. , 2009). This is because writing requires the mastery of various linguistic elements. Furthermore, the skill of writing exposition text is influenced by students' reading habits with the mastery of discourse markers. This is because the appropriate use of discourse markers enables others to have adequate understanding of what the writings mean.

Exposition text is one of the texts that need to be mastered by grade X High school students as listed in the 2013 Curriculum. Exposition is one form of rhetoric that seeks to explain and describe a point of thought, which can expand the views or knowledge of description reader (Keraf, 1981). The exposition text is an essay that explains or tells something for the reader to understand and comprehend what is written (Atmazaki, 2006). It also aims to provide information to the reader and consists of three main parts, namely: 1) introduction, 2) exposition body, and 3) conclusion. In order to write an exposition text, the author needs to possess adequate knowledge on the subject or topic, with the ability to analyze the problem concretely.

Based on the author's observation, the sample students' ability to write exposition text was far from expectations. They lacked ability to conduct the following: 1) organize ideas with logical and systematic thought, 2) express their ideas in accordance with Indonesian rules, 3) write the results of their writing in accordance with the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI), and 4) choose the discourse markers with the

communication context. Furthermore, their ability to write exposition text is influenced by various factors, one of which is related to their reading habits. In order for students to properly write exposition text, a lot of reading is needed. Through reading, ideas are easily put into writing, therefore, the information conveyed to the reader is clearly understood. Reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their background knowledge to build meaning (Nunan, 2003). Reading habit is an essential and important aspect of creating a comprehension (Palani, 2012). Then, Ogbodo (2010) explains that reading habit refers to the behaviour which expresses the fondness of reading of individual. Similarly, Iftanti (2012) states that reading habits throughout the text are how often, how much, and what students read. Gallo (2007) mentions the indicators of reading habits are: 1) attitude toward reading; 2) reading frequency; 3) the number of books that reader reports having read in the last three months; (4) time spent on academic reading

Some researchers have investigated the students' reading habits. Lestari, Sofendi and Petrus (2018) stated that for students to become writers, they need to read and write frequently. Shen (2016) reported that student reading habits deals with how frequently they read, the number of books read, and what is read. In addition, Aramide (2005) reported that reading habit refers to the behavior, purpose, and the frequency of reading. Therefore, it is concluded that the reading habits are repetitive activities in reading and the pleasure obtained from carrying out the act. This is seen from the number of the reading, the time provided, and the material read.

According to Shiffrin (1992), discourse markers (henceforth DMs) consists of verbal and nonverbal devices which provide contextual coordinates. Shiffrin (1992) stated that it comprises of a sequential amount of dependent elements encompassing the unit of communication. Meanwhile, Fraser (1998) reported that it as a lexical expression, implication, or elaboration. In written texts, DMs are connectors or cohesive devices. Leonard (2010) stated that mastering is the process where the difficult become easy. Good mastery of discourse markers makes it easier for students to produce good writing. In this study, students' mastery of discourse markers is used in written communication to understand the use of conjunctions that are coordinative and subordinate. Cohesion with DMs, in writing assessment, is considered as a main aspect to reflect a well-organized text (Weigle, 2002).

A number of researchers have investigated the use of discourse markers in written compositions (e.g. Jalilifar, 2008; Yunus & Haris, 2014; Rahayu & Cahyono, 2015; Susanto, Bharati & Sutopo, 2018). Some studies have focused on investigating DMs in building the quality of a text (e.g. Feng, 2010; Leo, 2012; Ghasemi, 2013; Tree, 2014). The findings show that DMs have a role to enhance the quality of a piece of writing if they are used purposively and appropriately (Jalilifar, 2008; Ali & Mahadin, 2016). The use of DMs is connected to building cohesion of a text as well as coherence (Tree, 2014). Cohesion refers to a set of resources that build relations in discourse above grammatical structures (Halliday cited in Martin (2001). It is connected to the writer-based concept because DMs are beneficial to provide explicit clues to determine the interrelated ideas of a text. In connection with such interaction, DMs build a significant role for facilitating both writers and readers with cohesion through explicit clues. Thus, ability to use DMs will affect to student's writing competence.

Research on students' writing skills has been conducted by Situmorang, Samhadi, and Agustina (2013); Fitriani (2015); Satini (2016); Lestari, Sofendi & Petrus (2018), and Andheska, Suparno, Dawud & Suyitno (2020). Situmorang, Samhadi, and Agustina's research correlated writing skills to students' reading habits. The result of the research shows a significant correlation between students' ability to write and their reading habits. Therefore, the higher their reading habits, the higher their writing abilities. Furthermore, Fitriani's research correlated students' ability to write exposition text their mastery of effective sentences and diction. The results showed a significant relationship between the students' ability to write exposition texts with their mastery of effective sentence and diction. Satini examined the factors related to students' ability to write exposition texts which includes learning methods, mastery of discourse markers, vocabulary, and Indonesian spelling mastery. Lestari, Sofendi & Petrus stated that there was no significant relationship between students' writing skill with reading habits and multiple intelligences. Andheska, Suparno, Dawud & Suyitno stated that writing motivation has a significant effect on the ability in writing research proposals.

Problem of Research

Based on this background, this study aims to determine the correlation between the students' reading habits and students' mastery of discourse markers with the students' ability to write exposition texts. The novelty in this research is finding about ability to writing exposition text, discourse markers mastery, and students' reading habits. This study is an important to examine the position and the correlation between the element of the theory used. The formulation of the problem is as follows:

- Is there any positive and significant correlation between reading habits and students' ability to write exposition texts?
- Is there any positive and significant correlation between the students' mastery of discourse markers and the students' ability to write exposition texts?
- Is there any positive and significant correlation between students' reading habits and the students' mastery of discourse markers with students' ability to write exposition texts?

Method

Research Model

This study aims to determine 1) the relationship between students' reading habits with the ability to write exposition text, 2) the relationship between students' discourse markers mastery with the ability to write exposition text, and (3) the relationship between students' reading habits and discourse markers mastery with the ability to write exposition text. This research was conducted in the 10th grade students of SMA Negeri 4 Serang in odd semester year 2018/2019. In accordance with its objectives, this study is categorized as a survey research with correlational analysis which is used to determine the relationship between the three variables. The correlational study was chosen to detect the extent to which variations are related to one or more other factors based on coefficients as well as to test hypotheses. Correlation design is a procedure in quantitative research in which the investigator measures the degree of relationship between two or more variables by using statistical procedures of correlation analysis (Creswell, 2005). The research is shown in Figure 1.

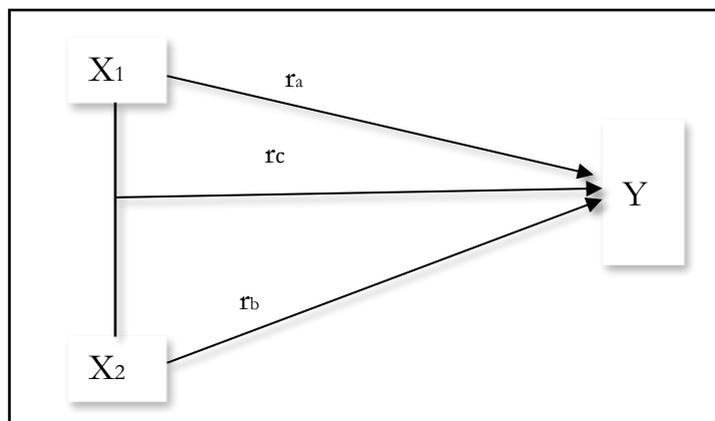


Figure 1.

Research Design

Notes:

X₁ : students' reading habit

X₂ : discourse markers mastery

Y : ability to write exposition text

r_a : the correlation between students' reading habit and ability to write exposition text

r_b : the correlation between discourse markers mastery and ability to write exposition text

r_c : the correlation between students' reading habit, discourse markers mastery and ability to write exposition text

Population and Sample

This research consists of 450 students at 10th grade of SMA Negeri 4 Serang City in the odd semester of the 2018/2019 school year, comprising of 180 men and 270 women. From this sample, the purposive technique was used to obtain data from a total of 88 students spread from class X-1 to X-11.

Techniques of Data Collection

The test method was used to obtain data on students' writing exposition text and discourse markers mastery, while questionnaires with Likert scale was used to obtain data on their reading habit. Each student was required to write an exposition text according to a determined theme. Furthermore, the assessment of test results referred to the components in the grid which include the following: 1) content writing, 2) organization, 3) writing style, 4) use of spelling, and 5) writing techniques (Nurgiyantoro, 2009). Students' writing exposition ability was ascertained by conducting an exposition based on a given topic for 90 minutes. Meanwhile, the discourse markers mastery data were collected using a standard multiple-choice test which referred to the following: 1) the use of coordination

conjunction, and 2) the use of subordinated conjunction. The questionnaire was adopted from [Janthong and Sripethpun \(2010\)](#). Questionnaires of reading habit were collected according to the following indicators: 1) attitude toward reading, 2) frequency; 3) books read, and 4) reading access.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The data collected were descriptively and inferentially analyzed. Descriptive analysis consists of presenting data with histogram, while inferential utilized the simple regression and correlation analysis for first and second hypothesis and multiple regression/correlation analysis for the third. Prior to the hypothesis testing, the first test of data analysis requirements were: 1) normality test by using Lilliefors technique, and the interpretation criterion assuming the Kolmogorov-Smirnov coefficient had a significant (P) value greater than 0.05. Conversely, a significance value of less than 0.05, means that the data is not normally distributed, 2) linearity test using F-test, and 3) correlation test used product moment correlation from Pearson. The data that has been collected was analyzed through several stages. The hypothesis was tested using bivariate and regression analysis to determine the influence between free and dependent variables. This analysis uses product moment formula using SPSS version 26.00.

Results

Before data analysis was carried out, the following tests were performed namely: 1) normality, 2) linearity, and 3) multicollinearity. The results of the normality tests on students reading habits, mastery of discourse markers, and their ability to write student exposition texts showed that the data are normally distributed. This is due to the significance value (Sig.) is greater than 0.050, as shown in table 1.

Table 1.

The Result of Normality Test

Variable	Asymp.Sig. (p-value)	Condition	Notes
Reading Habit	0.059	P>0.050	Normal
DMs Mastery	0.070	P>0.050	Normal
AWET	0.083	P>0.050	Normal

The results of the linearity test on the reading habits variable with the ability to write exposition text were smaller than F_{table} ($1,092 < 1,740$). The linearity of the discourse markers mastery variable with the ability to write exposition text was more than F_{table} ($1,165 < 1,880$). It shows that all free and bound patterns of relationships are linear. (see table 2)

Table 2.

The Result of Linearity Test

Model	df	F value		Sig.	Notes
		Calculation	Table(0.05)		
X ₁ - Y	17:69	1.092	1.740	0.000	Linear
X ₂ - Y	12:74	1.165	1.880	0.000	Linear

The results of the multicollinearity test between variables showed that the intercorrelation between variables was 0.124. From these results, it is concluded that the intercorrelation between independent variables do not exceed the tolerance limit of 0.800. Therefore, there is no multicollinearity, and the multiple correlation analysis is utilized.

Table 3.

The Result of Multicollinearity Test

		Correlations	
		X ₁	X ₂
X1	Pearson Correlation	1	.124
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.250
	N	88	88
X2	Pearson Correlation	.124	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.250	
	N	88	88

Results of Writing Exposition Text Test

The composition test was employed to determine students' exposition ability. The data showed that the highest and lowest scores were 88 and 58, respectively. In addition, the mean score was 69.67, while the standard deviation was 6.71. The tendency of the Y variable value is divided into four namely, excellent, good, enough, and poor. The distribution of students' writing exposition text skills showed that 7(8%), 74 (84%), 7(8%) and 0 students were in the excellent, good, enough, and poor categories.

Table 4.
Distribution of Students' Ability to Writing Exposition Text

Score Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage
81 – 100	Excellent	7	8 %
61 – 80	Good	74	84 %
41 – 60	Enough	7	8 %
21 – 40	Poor	0	0 %

Table 5.
The Mean Score of Ability to Writing Exposition Text

AWET Aspect	Mean	STD
The content of writing	24.6818	3.4560
Writing organization	17.8068	2.4719
The style of writing	13.1818	2.3381
The use of spelling	10.2840	1.3051
Writing techniques	3.7159	0.4509

Result of Students' Reading Habit Questionnaire

The highest and lowest scores of students' reading habits (X₁) obtained through questionnaire and processed using SPSS 26.00 were 85 and 67, respectively. The mean value was 75.68 and the standard deviation was 4.47. The tendency of their reading habit values was divided into three namely, high, medium, and low. A total of 57(65%), 31(35%) and 0 students were in the high, medium, and low categories.

Table 6.
The Distribution Score of Students' Reading Habits

Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage
74 - 100	High	57	65%
47 - 73	Medium	31	35%
20 - 46	Low	0	0%

Table 7.
The Mean Score of Subvariable Reading Habit Questionnaire

Subvariable	Mean	STD
Attitude toward reading	40.7386	2.8344
Reading frequency	14.5227	1.5592
Books Read	10.0340	1.3935
Reading Access	10.3863	1.2561

Result of Discourse Markers Mastery Test

Student discourse mastery data (X₂) was obtained of the highest and lowest scores of 85 and 50, respectively from multiple choice tests using SPSS 26.00. In addition, the mean value and standard deviation were 64.63 and 7.72. The tendency of the value of students' discourse mastery variable is divided into four namely, excellent, good, enough, and poor. According to the distribution 9 (10%), 78 (89%), 1 (1%) and 0 students were in the excellent, good, enough, and poor categories.

Table 8.

Distribution of Students' Discourse Markers Mastery

Score Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage
76 - 100	Excellent	9	10 %
51 - 75	Good	78	89 %
26 - 50	Enough	1	1 %
1 - 26	Poor	0	0 %

Table 9.

The Mean Score of Discourse Markers Mastery

DMs Mastery Aspect	Mean	STD
Coordinative Conjunction	14.8181	1.8741
Sub-ordinative Conjunction	11.1250	2.5127

The Correlation between Students' Reading Habit and Ability to Writing Exposition Text

The correlation (r_{x_1y}) of reading habits and the ability to write exposition text was 0.423 greater than the r_{table} at 0.207 or ($0.423 > 0.207$). From the calculations results using SPSS 26, a significant value of 0,000 < 0.05 was obtained, therefore, H_0 was rejected and H_a accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between students' ability to write exposition texts and their reading habits.

Table 10.

The Relationship between Students' Reading Habit and Writing Exposition Text

Correlations		X ₁	Y
X ₁	Pearson Correlation	1	.423**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	88	88
Y	Pearson Correlation	.423**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	88	88

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation between Discourse Markers Mastery and Ability to Writing Exposition Text

Students' discourse markers mastery (r_{x_2y}) and their ability to write exposition text was 0.464, greater than r_{table} at 0.207 or ($0.464 > 0.207$). From the results of calculations with SPSS 26 generated 0,000 < 0.05 , therefore, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between their DMs mastery and ability to write exposition texts.

Table 11.

Correlation between DMs Mastery and Ability to Writing Exposition Text

Correlations		X ₂	Y
X ₂	Pearson Correlation	1	.464**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	88	88
Y	Pearson Correlation	.464**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	88	88

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation between Reading Habit and DMs Mastery with Ability to Writing Exposition Text

The correlation between students' reading habits and DMs mastery were determined by using the linear regression analysis. The results showed that the significance value was 0,000 lower than 0.05. The F-test showed that the value of F-count was 23.00 while the F-table was 3.95 or $23.00 > 3.95$. It is concluded that the reading habits (X_1) and discourse markers mastery (X_2) gave a positive and significant relationship toward the ability to write exposition text. The calculation is seen in table 12.

Table 12.
Correlation between Reading Habit and DMs Mastery with Ability to Write Exposition Text

Model Summary									
		Change Statistics							
						F			
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change e	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.593 ^a	.351	.336	5.50740	.351	23.000	2	85	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), X₂, X₁)

Discussion and Conclusion

The result showed that the average score of students' reading habit was 75.68. This means that students of SMAN 4 Kota Serang already had good reading habits and were generally motivated to complete school work. In addition, they went to the school library to acquire knowledge. This corroborates the research conducted by [Iftanti \(2012\)](#) on the reading habits of students in five state universities in East Java which is influenced by several factors, such as personal characteristics, age, environment, social class, and parents' work ([Adetunji & Oladeji, 2007](#)). It is also due to the availability of reading material, and internet networks. [Noor \(2011\)](#) stated that students generally read to acquire knowledge, with majority obtaining these materials from the internet.

The results showed the average score of students' DMs was 64.63 in the good category with difficulty in using the subordinative conjunctions due to the multilevel compound sentences. The use of cohesion markers is indispensable in order to connect clauses with other clauses, both in equivalent and multilevel compound sentences. DMs is very closely related to writing because discourse it functions to unify the text and also ignore ideas to be written. [Shiffrin \(1987\)](#) stated that mastering discourse markers tends to improve writing skills. Meanwhile, [Kalajahi et al. \(2012\)](#) reported that discourse markers help students to develop their writing skills, especially in connecting sentences. According to [Al-khazraji \(2019\)](#) discourse markers are important aspects in academic writing due to its ability to build cohesion and coherence in writing for readers to easily understand. [Rahimi's \(2011\)](#) research results show that the use of elaborative DMs was dominant both in expository and argumentative essays. Her findings showed that the lack of the ability of Iranian undergraduate students resulted in the case of using inappropriate DMs. Despite the problems of using DMs, Rahimi's findings reported that expository writing showed a high frequency of DMs. Thus, the assumption is that DMs are significantly needed to build cohesion and coherence of expository essays.

The results of the students' ability to write exposition text writing skills was 69.97 and in the good category. The students of SMAN 4 Kota Serang have often been assigned to write exposition texts as the material is included in the 2013 curriculum at the 10th grade in odd semester. [Ratminingsih, Marhaeni, and Vigayanti \(2018\)](#) reported that students' writing abilities are improved through self-assessment and develop through metacognitive skills. Generally their ability to write is influenced by grammatical and discourse competences. [Hadiani and Permata \(2019\)](#) stated that students feel the importance of using correct grammar and discourse markers in each of their writings.

The results showed a correlation between students' reading habits and their ability to write exposition texts. This means that an increase in their reading habit score, leads to a rise in their ability to write exposition text. Therefore, educators need to motivate students to be diligent in reading various academic materials. This confirms the research conducted by several researcher (e.g. [Maula, 2015](#); [Amna & Zakaria, 2018](#); [Khalisa, 2018](#); [Risman, Jufrizal & Rozimela, 2018](#)), which stated that there is a significant correlation between reading habits and the ability to write exposition texts. [Tahar \(2008\)](#), also stated that it is impossible for someone to be able to write properly without extensive experience of reading because an author's ammunition in writing is the background of that extensive information obtained from reading. Reading habits is one of the numerous factors that contribute to students' ability to write exposition texts. [Florence et al. \(2017\)](#) stated that teachers need to encourage students to read, especially in the first year of learning, and the school should provide reading materials such as literary works in the form of novels, poems, and short stories. This is because with frequent reading, students' ability to write also increases.

Furthermore, the results of the research show that there is a correlation between the mastery of DMs and the ability to write exposition texts. This means that an increase in the discourse marker mastery, leads to a rise in the

ability to write student exposition texts. The results reinforce the research conducted by others researcher (Andayani, 2014; Nisa, 2019) which concluded that the mastery of cohesion tools has a positive relationship with exposition writing skills. Therefore, its mastery is used as a determining factor for the high and low level of students' exposition writing skill. The research conducted by Modhish (2012) found a positive relationship between the use of good discourse markers and the quality of student writing. When students used the correct discourse markers, they tend to produce relatively better writing. Students did not use a large variety of connectives in their essays (Karahana, 2015). Different from Modhish, Ghasemi (2013) in expository writing, the finding showed no significant relationship between the frequency of DMs and the quality of students' writing because some students underused or overused DMs.

The results showed a positive and significant relationship between reading habits (X_1) and discourse marker mastery (X_2) with the ability to write exposition text (Y). The results study based on R Square showed a positive relationship between reading habits and mastery of discourse markers with the ability to write exposition text by 0.351 or 35.1%. This shows that the reading habits and mastery of discourse markers influenced the students' ability to write exposition texts. However, the ability to write exposition text required students to possess adequate knowledge on the topic through daily reading habits. The mastery of discourse markers is needed by every language user, as a channel for communicating ideas, while its mastery tends to facilitate the information needed through oral and written communication. Mastery of discourse markers greatly helps students to write exposition texts. In written form, a precise discourse marker is needed for other people understand the meaning of a text and determine when it is incorrect.

Some student have problems in understanding using DMs in written text who have different interpretation and comprehension of using various DMs (Aidinlou, 2012; Patriana, 2012). Teachers need to educate students on the use of discourse markers intensively because good mastery improves their writing abilities (Aidinlou, 2012). Daif-Allah and Albeshir (2013) said that the students' abilities in using discourse markers need to be continuously fostered and developed to improve their writing skills. Adeyemi (2018) reported that inadequate mastery of student discourse tends to affect their writing outcomes. Therefore, the teacher needs to encourage students to be more active in learning the use of discourse markers in various contexts, especially in the form of written text.

The positive and significant relationship between students' reading habits, mastery of discourse markers and their ability to write exposition texts led to some of the following research implications. First, the conceptual-theoretical model that is reflected through hypothetical relationships between research variables has empirically tested the truth. The theoretical implication is students' ability to write exposition texts is determined by their reading habits and mastery of discourse markers. Secondly, the theoretical implications with reading habits, helps to enhance student's ability to write exposition texts.

The research and outlined implications, led to the following suggestions: Firstly, Indonesian language teachers in schools need to motivate students to possess high reading habits because it contributes a lot to their ability to write exposition texts. Secondly, the mastery of discourse markers also contributes significantly to their ability to write exposition texts. For this reason, Indonesian language teachers need to provide intensive discourse mastery training. Thirdly, they need to be aware that students' reading habits, discourse markers, and their ability to write exposition text need to be improved. Therefore, it is necessary to plan adequately on ways to improve these three variables.

Recomendations

Some suggestions have been made for teachers and researchers in relation to the pedagogical settings. For teachers, four important points need to be evaluated which are: (1) the frequency of students' reading habits; (2) the effective uses of DMs; (3) the students' awareness of using a higher number of variants of DMs; and (4) the students' understanding of how to use DMs in relation to the purpose of texts. Other researchers who have an interest in the use of DMs in writing may conduct research on (1) the correlation between the uses of DMs and the non academic writing scores, (2) the correlation between reading habit and the non academic writing scores; (3) the use of DMs in relation to the rhetorical patterns; and (4) the students' perception of using DMs to build cohesion and coherence in expository essays.

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Biodata of the Author



Dr. Asep Muhyidin, M.Pd. was born in Sumedang, West Java, Indonesia, and lives in Serang, Banten. He graduated from the Department of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Faculty of Language and Art Education, Indonesia University of Education in 1999. In 2006, he obtained his master's degree from the Language Education of State University of Jakarta, and in 2016, he obtained his doctorate from the same university and department. Dr. Asep, is currently a lecturer and head of Language Center at Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University. His research focuses on Indonesian language education, language learning, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, critical thinking, and literacy. He has published many articles as well as books and has presented his research in several international conferences.

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