

# Church Liturgy Text Lexical Density: The Meaning Stretches In The English Sunday Service Liturgy Text Of HKBP Siantar Kota

Sanggam Siahaan

*Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar*

Monris Rando Sibarani

*HKBP Siantar Kota*

Mungkap Siahaan

*Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar*

Basar Lolo Siahaan

*Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar*

Siska Anggita Situmeang

*Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar*

---

## Abstract

*Communicative competency helps people get along with the challenges of the globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This research aimed to know how HKBP Siantar Kota helps their congregation develop their communicative competency through the English Sunday Service. A case study was used to investigate the lexical density of the English liturgy of the church. It investigated one random sample text taken from the church archives. It investigated the lexical density found in the sample text. It analyzed the data through three interactive activities: data collection/reduction, data display, and conclusion draw/verification. Its results showed that the lexical density average the church used in the sample text was 41.17% (low lexical density). It emerged from the text parts: 49.28% from Votum-Introitus, 37.55% from Law of God, 43.33% from Confession of Sin and Absolution, 40.48% from Reading Epistle, 54.2% from Confession of Faith and Apostle Creed, and 41.17 % from Closing/Blessing. The church used a low lexical density to help their congregation comprehend the text. It has multifaceted benefits for the church service program to get along with the globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This research suggests future researches with prolong designs, larger and wider subjects, and varies of data analysis techniques.*

**Keywords:** *english sunday service, liturgy, generic structures, functional grammar, lexical density*

---

Date of Submission: 13-12-2025

Date of Acceptance: 23-12-2025

---

## I. Introduction

Church stake holders need to prepare the communicative capacity of the congregation to lead the life challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. HKBP Siantar Kota, a Lutheran church in Indonesia, puts the English Sunday Service as the part of its yearly program since September 2025. The aim of this program is to develop the communicative capacity of that church congregation to get along with the globalization and challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This research investigated how HKBP Siantar Kota used the comprehensible meaning stretch to communicate message in the Sunday Service Liturgy Text to help the congregation understand and reflect the Christian faith in life. The background of this research rooted from some related aspects. First, foreign language learning plays an important role in the global communication, further study, seeking for knowledge, career, good understanding for culture and worldwide vision (Mustafa & Bakri, 2020). Second, international surveys indicated that there was only a few students who could critically evaluate and reflect on texts with various genres and difficulty levels (Kärbla et al., 2019). Third, other researches indicated that a part of university students were not prepared to successfully deal with academic text or they have reading difficulties which may

limit academic training focused on written text (Kranemann, 2023). Fourth, to understand an utterance as a spiritual fact is to understand the linguistic meaning of the utterance as a text, and the primary hermeneutic factor to understand it is by grammatical interpretation in the form of analysis of the linguistic structure of the text (Winkle, 2014 ; Haladewicz-Grzelak & Widel-Ignaszczak, 2025). Fifth, Christian faith is rooted in experiences of faith, as they also arise in the liturgy text (Kranemann, 2023). Last, a text as a linguistic unit is a language choice in the production and interpretation of meaning for the communication of messages in social contexts.

This research specifically investigated how HKBP Siantar Kota stretched meanings to communicate messages in the Liturgy Text for the English Sunday Service in the church. Theoretically, the meaning stretches need to be connected to how the lexical density system empirically distributes lexical meanings across the clauses in a text. This research explores how the grammar of clauses functions as the power house in the creation of meaning in the context of the Sunday Service Liturgy text. Functional Grammar sees a clause as the home of lexical meanings which functions as the source of a text lexical density (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). The results of clause analysis on the expected parts of a text shed lights on how the entire clauses distribute lexical meanings across the text. Those findings uncover the meaning density characteristics of a text and they can function as a system for the prediction of a text comprehension. The lexical density of a text can function as the parameter whether a text is comprehensible or not for a group of audiences.

The focus of this research is the investigation on the lexical density of the English Sunday Service Liturgy text, i.e. the parts for the liturgist to read before and after the sermon in HKBP Siantar Kota. Specifically, this research investigates three problems as in the followings.

1. What is the lexical density of the Sunday Service liturgy text for the liturgist to read before and after the sermon in HKBP Siantar Kota?
2. How does the lexical density vary in each of the liturgy text parts?
3. Why does the lexical density vary in each of the liturgy text parts?

The findings of this research can provide important information for the theoretical construction of the basic principles of lexical density in the English Sunday Service in HKBP Siantar Kota. Those principles can reflect how that church communicates meanings to the congregation in a English Sunday Service. In addition to that, those findings can also practically shed light on the refinement of the lexical density level of the liturgy texts for the sake of the future English Sunday Service at large purposes.

Systemic Functional linguistics is an approach seeing that language is a choice in the production of meanings to communicate messages in text in social contexts (Halliday, 1994). The choice of the lexico-grammatical features of a text, such noun or noun group, adjective or adjective group, verb or verb group, adverb or adverb group, preposition or prepositional group, conjunction, continuative, and clause types in the realization of meanings has close relation to the context of situation, culture, ideology, and purpose goal of the text. The choice of specific lexico-grammatical features cannot be out of contextual aspects. Specific linguistic features realize specific meaning in specific contextual features. For instance by saying "In the Name of God The Almighty Father and of Jesus Christ and of The Holy Spirit" can realize meanings to communicate a message that both the speaker and listeners are Christians. Systemic Functional Linguistics sees that language as a choice in the realization of meanings to communicate messages must not be in isolation from their contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Systemic Functional Linguistics views that a language has three metafunctions in a matrix system, i.e., ideational, textual, and interpersonal. Ideational is the function of language as the representation of human experience. It has three systems, i.e., transitivity, tactic, and logical (Gerrot & Wignel, 1994).

Transitivity is the system of clauses (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Based on this system, one clause represents one human experience. It has three components. Its main component is a process. It is a verb type. It represents a physical or material doing inside or outside human body. It also realizes a behavioral doing or a mental doing or a verbal doing or a relational doing or a meteorological doing, or an existential doing.

The second component of a clause can be one or more than one participant(s). A material doing can involve with an actor as a participant who commonly does a doing inside or outside human body. It can also involve with a goal as another participant experiencing the doing of the actor. It can also deal with a client as a participant receiving the result or effect of the doing of the actor. A behavioral doing commonly deal with a behavior as a participant who experiences a physiological or psychological doing. Mental process is a type of verb dealing with a senser as a participant experiencing or seeing or hearing or smelling or tasting or feeling or thinking or knowing or remembering or understanding or liking or loving or fearing or hating or admiring or wanting or needing or hoping, etc. It also deals with a phenomenon as a participant that is seen or heard or smelled or tasted or felt or thought or known or remembered or understood or liked or loved or feared or hated or admired or wanted or needed or hoped, etc., by the senser. A verbal process is a category of verb dealing

with a sayer experiencing a doing of saying or telling or reporting or asking or commanding or reading, etc., a verbiage as a participant being said or told or reported or asked or commanded or read and can also be with a receiver as a participant to whom the verbiage is said or told or reported or asked or commanded or read. A relational process as a verb type can be an attributive assigning a quality, an attribute, to an entity, a carrier as a participant. It can also be an identifying, a verb type, an identifying token as a participant by value, another participant. An existential process is a type of verb-be or exist or arise representing existence or happening which is signaled by introductory word “there”. This process introduces existent as a single participant. A meteorological process is other type of verb representing doing or happening in external world. It represents the phenomena of nature like raining or snowing or blowing. This verb type does not have any participant.

Tactic system deals with the relationship of clauses in a complex clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Its types are paratactic and hypotactic. A paratactic clause contains two or more simple clauses in a clause complex. Each of them is independent to each other. A hypotactic clause deals with two or more clauses with an inter-dependency relation in a clause complex. A main clause has an independent status. The presence of a subordinating clause depends on the independent clause.

Logical system constitutes expansion and projection (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). There are three types of expansion, they are: elaboration, extension, and projection. An elaboration is the function of a dependent clause in the repetition, exemplification, greater detail, and specification of the part of an independent clause in a clause complex. Extension realizes the function of an independent clause for the meaning addition by the continuation of another independent clause in a clause complex. Enhancement represents the function of a dependent clause in providing information of place, time, manner, tool, companion, cause, reason, and purpose of a doing or an entity mention in an independent clause in a complex clause. A projection is the function of a clause as a quote or meaning projected by an independent clause. Here, a clause which projects another clause is termed as the projecting clause and the other clause is called the projected clause.

Textual is the function of a clause as a message (Gerrot & Wignel, 1994). It serves as a place for the home of ideational and interpersonal. Its systems represent a clause as a message which include theme and rheme. Theme is the beginning part of a clause. It is what about a clause is; and it is the point of departure of information in a clause. It is categorized into topical theme, textual theme, and interpersonal. There are two categories of topical themes, they are: unmarked and marked themes. Unmarked themes include nominal group, nominal group complex, and embedded clause. Marked themes are adverbial, prepositional phrase, and complement. Textual themes can be continuative, conjunctive adjunct, and conjunction. Interpersonal themes include modal adjunct and vocative. Rheme is the rest part of a clause. It is the new information about what the theme is about in a clause. The meeting between the theme and rheme in a clause is called as the information prominence of a clause.

Interpersonal is about the function of a clause as an exchange (Gerrot & Wignel, 1994). Here a clause serves as an exchange of good, information, and service. A speaker can use a clause to put a hearer in a position for accepting or providing or declining an exchange by doing a relevant course of action to the exchange. Interpersonal uses the system of finite for the service of an exchange. Here, a clause constitute two components, they are Mood and Residue. The components of Mood are the subject and finite in a clause. The residue is the rest, other than the mood components, in the clause. Finite is a system operating an exchange. By this system, a clause can realize tense, polar, and modality meanings. Tense realizes when an exchange happens, such as in the past or present or future time. Polar realizes whether an exchange is declaration or request, prohibition or exclamation. Modality represents the level of truth or responsibility or obligatory of what a speaker says or a listener hears in an exchange. By the system of modality, a finite can assign a speaker a high or middle or low responsibility quality of the truth of what that speaker represents in an exchange to its hearer; and it also puts an obligatory quality of what a listener can relevantly do to what the speaker says.

Systemic functional linguistics also observes the lexical density of a text based on the view point of how lexical words and function words distribute across the clauses in a text (Halliday, 1994). Lexical words are nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs (Ilma et al., 2025). These words have meanings as mentioned in a dictionary. Function words are words other than the function words. They are grammatical words such as pronouns, determiners, connectors, auxiliaries, etc. These words do not have much meaning as mentioned in a dictionary. Lexical density relates to the frequency of content words in the clauses in a text. Lexical density refers to the number of words in clauses in a sentence which can be a text. It is the ratio of content words to the number of clause in a text (Halliday 1994; Gerrot & Wignel, 1994; Lu, 2013; Bakuuro, 2024). Halliday (1987) says that it is calculated by computing the ratio of the lexical items to the number of clauses in a text (Zora et al., 1994). It is the ratio of the number of content words to the number of clauses in a sentence (Lipková, 2023). Ure says that is the ratio of content words to the number of all running words and multiplied by 100% in a text (Zora et al., 1994). Ure’s lexical density theory can used to determine the comprehension level of a text. It is classified into four levels: 1. 41-50% (low lexical density), 2. 51-50% (moderate lexical density), 3. 61-70%

(high lexical density), and 4. 70% or > 70% (very high lexical density (Ismail et al., 2023).

The concept of lexical density can shed light to how content words and function words spread up in clause types to create the complexity level of a text. Ure's approach implies that a text having fewer content word and more function words has lower lexical density. It means that by distributing fewer content words and more function words affect text the readability level of the text. Halliday's approach implies that fewer content words across more clauses within a sentence decrease the lexical density of a text. It means that using more clauses with fewer content words make a text have a lower lexical density. The approaches discussed by Bakuuro and Lipková imply that the ratio of content words to clauses or number of clauses in a sentence is in the same idea with the concept initiated by Halliday. Those approaches shed light on how all running words distribute proportionately across the clauses within sentences which emerge the complexity level of a text (Nasseri & Thompson, 2021; Amer, 2021; Rabiah, 2023; Fadhil et al., 2023; Nedelcu & Ioan, 2024; Alzahrani, 2025).

There are some research reports providing interesting information on the lexical density of texts. Hasan reported that the lexical density in the formal interviews of native speakers was 47% and the informal interviews in nonnative speakers was 42% (Zora et al., 1994). A research on 50 articles from Arab News (AN) and 50 articles from The New York Time published in 2022-2024 indicated that the lexical density of the 50 articles from Arab News (AN) was 56.54% and the lexical density of 50 articles from The New York Times was 57.86% (Alzahrani, 2025). This research shed light on how lexical density affects readability in Western and Middle-Eastern English Newspapers.

## II. Method

This research applied a case study in qualitative method to explore and understand a phenomenon in its entirety (Lim, 2025 Bhangu et al., 2023; Lim, 2025; Bhangu et al., 2023) without deploying action to change the linguistic characteristics of the data. The characteristics of the research data and subjects under observation are bound-time (Mezmir, 2020). The object of this research is focused on the meaning stretch based on the system of lexical density and its subject as the data source was one English Liturgy text used for the Sunday Service which was randomly taken from the church archives of HKBP Siantar Kota. It applied three interactive activities as the technique of data analysis in a qualitative research including data collection/reduction, data display, and conclusion draw/verification (Mezmir, 2020).

## III. Result And Discussion

Table-1 shows that the lexical density of the liturgy text used in the English Sunday Service at HKBP Siantar Kota was a medium comprehension level at 2.88 or 41.17% (low lexical density) as in Tabel-1 below.

Tabel-1 Sunday Service Lexical Density

Liturgy Text	Sentence	SC	PC	HC	RW	CW	FW	HLD	ULD
Votum-Introitus- Prayer	7	3	0	11	138	68	70	4.5	49.28%
Law of God (Ten Commandments)	18	9	9	13	227	104	173	3.35	37.55%
Confession of Sin and Absolution	10	4	7	14	150	65	85	2.6	43.33%
Reading Epistle	7	0	8	18	168	68	100	2.61	40.48%
Confession of Faith and Apostle Creed	7	4	3	10	131	71	60	4.18	54.2%
Closing/Blessing	10	2	14	14	200	94	106	3.13	47.00%
Grand-Total	59	22	41	80	1064	470	594	2.88	41.17%

Table-1 above shows that the text is represented by 59 sentences. Its clauses are categorized into 22 simple sentences, 41 paratactic clauses, and 80 hypotactic clauses. It has 1064 running words. They are 470 content words and 594 function words.

The lexical density of the Votum-Introitus-Introitus is 4.5 or 49.28% (low lexical density). It evolves from 7 sentences. Its clauses are 3 simple clauses and 11 hypotactic clauses. It has 138 running words. They are 68 content word, and 70 function words.

The lexical density of the Law of God (Ten Commandments) is 3.25 or 37.55% (below low lexical density). It comes from 18 sentences. It has 9 simple clauses, 9 paratactic clauses, and 13 hypotactic clauses. It has 227 running words, 104 content words, and 113 function words.

The lexical density of the Confession of Sin and Absolution is 2.6 or 43.33% (low lexical density). It emerges from 10 sentences. It contains 4 simple clauses, 7 paratactic clauses, and 14 hypotactic clause. It has 150 has words, 65 content words, and 85 function words.

The lexical density of the Reading Epistle is 2.61 or 40.48% (low lexical density). Its sources are from 7 sentences. It has 8 paratactic clauses and 18 hypotactic clauses. It has 168 running words, 68 content words, and 100 function words.

The lexical density of the Confession of Faith of Apostle Creed is 4.18 or 54.2 % (moderate lexical

density). It comes from 7 sentences. It has 4 simple clauses, 3 paratactic clauses, and 13 hypotactic clauses. It has 131 words, 71 content words, and 60 function words.

The lexical density of the Closing and Blessing is 3.13 or 47% (low lexical density). It emerges from 10 sentences across 2 simple clauses, 14 paratactic clauses, and 14 hypotactic clauses. There are 200 running words, 94 content words, and 106 function words across the clauses. The lexical density variation across the six parts of the liturgy text refers to the ratio disparities of the content words to the running words of every part of the text.

Tabel-2 below shows how the ratio of all content words to all simple clauses and the ratio of all content words to all running words in the creation of the lexical density of every part of the liturgy text as in the following.

Table-2 The Lexical Density of the Simple clause

Liturgy Text	Simple Clause	Running Words	Content Words	Function words	Halliday Lexical Density	Ure Lexical Density
Votum-Introitus- Prayer	3	50	25	25	8.33	50.00%
Law of God (Ten Commandments)	9	62	26	36	6.89	41.94
Confession of Sin and Absolution	4	37	17	20	4.25	45.94%
Reading Epistle	0	0	0	0	0	0
Confession of Faith and Apostle Creed	4	55	29	26	7.25	52.69%
Closing/Blessing	2	26	15	11	7.5	57.69%
Grand-Total	22	230	112	118	5.09	48.70

Table-2 above shows that the ratio of more content words to fewer simple clauses or the ratio of more content words to fewer running words make the higher lexical density of each part of the text. The lexical density of the Closing and Blessing with 2 simple clauses, 26 all running words, 15 content words, 11 function words is 7.5 or 57.69%. The Lexical density of the Confession of Faith of Apostle Creed is 7.25 or 52.73%. It is with simple clauses, 55 all running words, 29 content words, and 26 function words. The lexical density of the Votum-Introitus-Prayer is 8.33 or 50.00%. It is with 3 simple clauses, 57 all running words, 25 content words, and 25 function words. The lexical density of the Confession of Sin and Absolution is 4.25. or 45.94%. It is with 4 simple clause, 37 all running words, 17 content words, and 20 function words. The lexical density of the Law of God (10 Commandments) is 6.89 or 41.94% with 9 simple clauses, 62 all running words, 26 content words, and 36 function words. There is the declining tendency of lexical density along with the declining ratio of content words to the increasing number of simple clauses or all running words in every part of the text.

Tabel-3 below shows how the ratio of all content words to all paratactic clauses or the ratio of all content words to all running words in the creation of the lexical density of every part of the Liturgy text as in the following.

Table-3 The Lexical Density of the Paratactic Clause

Liturgy Text	Paratactic Clause	Running Words	Content Words	Function words	Halliday Lexical Density	Ure Lexical Density
Votum-Introitus- Prayer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Law of God (Ten Commandments)	9	70	25	45	2.78	35.71%
Confession of Sin and Absolution	7	42	20	22	2.86	47.62%
Reading Epistle	8	55	21	34	2.62	38.18%
Confession of Faith and Apostle Creed	3	25	11	14	3.67	44%
Closing/Blessing	14	75	34	41	2.5	45.33%
Grand-Total	41	267	111	156	2.71	41.57

Table-3 above shows a tendency that the fewer content words in more paratactic clause or the more all running words in more paratactic clauses, the lower the lexical density is in the part of the text. Here, the Confession of Sin and Absolution has the highest lexical density. It is 2.86 or 47.62% with 20 content words and 23 function words spreading up across 7 paratactic clauses. The lexical density of the Closing and Blessing is 2.5 or 45.33% with 34 content words and 41 function words within 14 paratactic clauses. The lexical density of the Confession of Faith of Apostle Creed 3.67 or 44% in the structure of 3 hypotactic clauses with 11 content words and 14 function words. The lexical density of the Reading Epistle is 2.62 or 38.18% with 21 content words and 34 function words distributing across 8 paratactic clauses. The Law of God (Ten Commandments) has the lowest lexical density. It is 2.78 or 35.71% with 25 content words and 45 function words spreading across 9 paratactic clauses.

Tabel-4 below indicates how the ratio of fewer content words to more hypotactic clauses or the ration of all running words distribute across the hypotactic clauses in the creation of the lexical density of every part of the Sunday Service Liturgy text as in the following.

Table-4 The Lexical Density of the Hypotactic Clause

Liturgy Text	Hypotactic Clause	Running Words	Content Words	Function words	Halliday Lexical Density	Ure Lexical Density
Votum-Introitus-Prayer	11	88	43	45	3.91	48.86%
Law of God (Ten Commandments)	13	110	39	71	3	35.45%
Confession of Sin and Absolution	14	71	28	43	2	39.44%
Reading Epistle	18	113	47	86	2.61	41.59%
Confession of Faith and Apostle Creed	8	36	23	13	2.88	63.88%
Closing/Blessing	14	99	45	54	3.21	45.45%
Grand-Total	78	517	225	312	2.888	43.52%

Table-4 above shows a declining tendency of the lexical density of the Sunday Service Liturgy text part provided it has more all running words containing fewer content words and more function words and hypotactic clauses. The Confession of Faith and Apostle Creed has the highest lexical density. It is 2.88 or 63.88% with 36 all running including 23 content words and 13 function words spreading up in 8 hypotactic clauses. The lexical density in the Votum-Introitus-Prayer is 3.91 or 48.86% with 88 all running words containing 43 content words and 45 function words spreading up in 11 hypotactic clauses. The lexical density in the Closing and Blessing is 3.21 or 45.45% with 99 all running words having 45 content words and 54 function words distributing in 14 hypotactic clauses. The lexical density in the Reading Epistle is 2.61 or 41.59% with 36 running words existing 47 content words and 86 function words structuring in 18 hypotactic clauses. The lexical density in the Confession of Sin and Absolution is 2 or 39.44% with 71 all running words containing 28 content words and 43 function words functioning in 14 hypotactic clauses. The Law of God (Ten Commandments) has the lowest lexical density among all of the parts of the Sunday Service Liturgy text. It is only 3 or 35.45% with 110 all running words having 39 content words and 71 function words spreading up across 13 clauses.

The Sunday Service Liturgy text investigated in this research is a type of written text. It is a written text type for its lexical density is 2.88 or 41.17%. It is 1.17% over 40% of an ideal written text. According to Ure (1971) in Zora et al., (1994) that the lexical density of a written text tends to have over 40% and a spoken text tends to have fewer than 40%. Speakers are general less able to recall the material with a high lexical density and they are more able to recall material with a lower lexical density (Ilma et al., 2025). It can imply that congregations who read a Liturgy text with a high lexical density have a low ability to recall the material with a high lexical density.

Table-1 above shows that the lexical density of the Liturgy text of the Sunday Service in September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 for the congregation of HKBP Siantar Kota emerges from 143 clauses with 1064 all running words which include 470 content words and 594 function words. The average of the content words per clause in that liturgy text is 2.88 words and the average of the function words per clause is 4.15 words. Halliday, (1994) in Zora et al., (1994) says that the lexical density of a text is the ratio of the content words to the total running clause in the text. It implies that the deployment of content word is fewer than the deployment of function words in that Liturgy text. Further, Ure (1971) in Zora et al., (1994) says that the lexical density of a text is the ratio of all of the content words to all running words in a text and a written text tends to have over 40% and a spoken texts tends to have fewer than 40%. It means that to have a decline tendency of lexical density is to administer fewer content words with more function words in more clauses in the Liturgy text for the incoming Sunday Service to help the congregation of the church recall material existing in the Liturgy text.

For the sake of declining the lexical density of a church liturgy in a country where English is a Foreign Language, it can be compared to the lexical density of article published in a main stream social media in a country where English is an Official Language. For instance, a research reported that the lexical density average of 50 articles published in the New York Times during 2022-2024 is 57.86% (Alzahrani, 2025). It is just 16.69% above the lexical density of the Liturgy text investigated in this current research. The ratio of the percentage range between the lexical density of the Sunday Service Liturgy text investigated in this research and the lexical density of the articles in the New York Times mentioned above is to 100%. It sounds relatively low. It means that the two lexical densities are relatively equal written text category. It can imply that the congregations who read the Liturgy text investigated in this research are difficult to comprehend its messages and they have a low ability for recalling them.

This research suggests a strategy for declining the lexical density of an English Sunday Service Liturgy text to help the congregation comprehend and recall the message communicated in a Sunday Service Liturgy text. Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics theorizes that language is a choice in the production and interpretation of meaning in social context (Gerrot & Wignel, 1994). Decreasing the lexical density of a text can ease its readers comprehends its messages and recall them easily (Abbasian & Afrazi, 2018). It means that decreasing the lexical density of the Liturgy text can help the church congregation comprehend the messages communicated in a Sunday Service.

The design of the lexical density of a Sunday Service liturgy text can be connected to the selection of content words, function words, and clause type in every part of the text based on the contextual aspects, i.e.,



situation, culture, ideology, and purpose Halliday, (1994). It means that the selection of words in a context of situation includes why, how, who, to whom, where, when, and what words must be in a context of situation. It implies that the choice of words cannot be isolated from their context. Otherwise, they cannot have function for the communication of message.

Table-5 below shows why each of the Sunday Service Liturgy text parts has the highest and lowest lexical density in connection to the selection of words across its clauses.

Table-5 The highest and Lowest Lexical Density of the Clause Types in the Text Part

Liturgy Text Parts	Simple clauses	Running words	Content words	Function words	Content words/simple clause	Content words/simple clause	Halliday lexical density	Ure lexical density
Closing/Blessing	2	26	15	11	7.5	5.5	7.5	57.69%
Law of God (Ten Commandment)	9	62	26	36	2.89	4	6.89	41.94%
Liturgy Text Parts	Paratactic clause	Running words	Content words	Function words	Content words/simple clause	Content words/simple clause	Halliday lexical density	Ure lexical density
Confession of Sin and Absolution	7	42	20	22	2.86	4.14	2.86	47.62%
Law of God (Ten Commandment)	9	70	25	45	2.78	5	2.78	35.71%
Liturgy Text Parts	Hypotactic clause	Running words	Content words	Function words	Content words/simple clause	Content words/simple clause	Halliday lexical density	Ure lexical density
Confession of Faith and Apostle Creed	8	36	23	12	2.88	4.33	2.88	63.88%
Law of God (Ten Commandment)	13	110	39	71	3	5.45	3	35.86%

Table-5 above shows why all clause types with their content words and function words structures their highest and lowest lexical densities in the parts of the Sunday Service Liturgy text. The highest lexical density across the simple clauses in the liturgy text is in the Closing and Blessing. It is 7.5 or 57.67% with 2 simple clauses, 15 content words and 11 function words. The lowest lexical density in it is the Law of God (Ten Commandments). It is 6.8 or 41.94% with 9 simple clauses, 26 content words, and 36 function words. The highest lexical density across the paratactic clauses in the Liturgy text is Confession of Sin and Absolution. It is 2.86 or 47.62% with 7 paratactic clauses, 20 content words, and 22 function words. The lowest lexical density in it is the Low of God (Ten Commandments. It is 2.78 or 35.71%. The highest lexical density across the hypotactic clauses of the Liturgy text is in the Confession of Faith and Apostle Creed. It is 2.88 or 63.88%. The lowest lexical density across the hypotactic clauses of the text is in the Law of God (Ten Commandments). It is 3 or 35.85% with 13 hypotactic clauses, 39 content words and 71 function words.

There is a close relation between the choice of language and the context where it is used. Here in this research, the choice of the highest lexical density across fewer simple clauses with more content words and fewer function words refers to the context of Closing and Blessing part of the Liturgy text, while the choice of the lowest lexical density across more simple clauses with fewer content words and more function words refers to the context of the Law of God (Ten Commandments). In addition to that, the choice of the highest lexical density within fewer paratactic clauses with fewer content words and more function words relates to the context of the Confession of Sin and absolution and the choice of the lowest lexical density along more paratactic clauses with more content words and more function words has a link to the context of the Law of God (Ten Commandments). Further, choice of the highest lexical density within fewer hypotactic clauses with fewer content words and fewer function words relates to the context of the Confession of Sin and Absolution and the choice of the lowest lexical density across more hypotactic clauses with more content words and more function words refers to the context of the Law of God (Ten Commandments). The choice of lexical density has relation to the context of language where it is used as means of communicating message.

#### IV. Conclusion

HKBP Siantar Kota used a low lexical density to stretch meanings and message in the liturgy text used in the English Sunday Service in the church. That lexical density has indispensable roles to shed light on the development of the communicate competency of the congregation of the church in the context of the newly execution of the service program which was started in the middle of September 2025. Such a low lexical density was purposely designed to engage the congregations from different socio-cultural background contexts to have positive personality on the use of English liturgy text for the Sunday service in the church. The low lexical density used in the liturgy text delved from well-designed low lexical density of almost all parts of the liturgy text. Only one part of the text had lexical density at moderate level. To help the congregation develop their communicative competency in the English liturgy text in the very beginning service program of a church is designing it with a low lexical density for it help them comprehend the meanings and messages communicated in the text.

## References

- [1]. Abbasian, G. R., & Afrazi, S. (2018). Lexical Density And Readability Of The Prospect Series: An Across-Textbooks Investigation. First National Conference On New Trends In English Language Teaching And Applied Linguistics-, 1–26.
- [2]. Alzahrani, H. (2025). Lexical Density In English Newspapers – A Cross-Analysis Of The New York Times And Arab News . Saudi Journal Of Language Studies, 5(2), 65–75. <https://doi.org/10.1108/Sjls-12-2024-0070>
- [3]. Amer, M. A. B. (2021). Lexical Density And Readability Of Secondary Stage English Textbooks In Jordan. International Journal For Management And Modern Education, 2(2), 11–20. <http://www.ijmme.com>
- [4]. Bakuuro, J. (2024). In The Belly Of Text Complexity: Unravelling The Nexus Between Lexical Density And Readability. Athens Journal Of Philology, 11(3), 255–274. <https://doi.org/10.30958/Ajp.11-3-4>
- [5]. Bhangu, S., Provost, F., & Caduff, C. (2023). Introduction To Qualitative Research Methods - Part I. Perspectives In Clinical Research, 14(1), 39–42. [https://doi.org/10.4103/Picr.Picr\\_253\\_22](https://doi.org/10.4103/Picr.Picr_253_22)
- [6]. Fadhil, A., Gunawan, W., & Wirza, Y. (2023). LEXICAL DENSITY IN EFL INDONESIAN TEXTBOOKS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS Ahmad. JALL (Journal Of Applied Linguistics And Literacy), 7(1), 121–136. <https://jurnal.unigal.ac.id/index.php/jall/index>
- [7]. Gerot, L., & Wignell, P. (1994). Making Sense Of Functional Grammar (J. BURTON (Ed.); 1st Ed.). Centre For Applied Linguistics University Of South Australia November 1994.
- [8]. Gerrot, & Wignel. (1994). Genre And Grammar. In B. Nurul (Ed.), The Jerusalem Talmud, First Order: Zeraim, Tractate Berakhot (1st Ed., Pp. 39–155). Limites Community Of STKIP Panca Sakti BEKASI. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110800487.39>
- [9]. Haladewicz-Grzelak, M., & Widel-Ignaszczak, M. (2025). Hermeneutical Narratives In Christian Religious Experience. In International Perspectives (1st Ed.). [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=Hlubeqaaqbaj&oi=fnd&pg=PA127&dq=Church+Liturgy+Text+Comprehension+Problem&ots=Ekmeidrza&sig=Lzcrrvuon4v3nlqx3tdaihZ\\_X10&redir\\_esc=Y#v=onepage&q=Church+Liturgy+Text+Comprehension+Problem&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=Hlubeqaaqbaj&oi=fnd&pg=PA127&dq=Church+Liturgy+Text+Comprehension+Problem&ots=Ekmeidrza&sig=Lzcrrvuon4v3nlqx3tdaihZ_X10&redir_esc=Y#v=onepage&q=Church+Liturgy+Text+Comprehension+Problem&f=false)
- [10]. Halliday. (1994). An Introduction To Functional Grammar. <https://archive.org/details/introductiontofu0000hall/page/N5/Mode/2up>
- [11]. Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). Introduction To Functional Grammar Fourth Edition (4th Ed.). Companion Website.
- [12]. Ilma, D., Egia, F., Br Sembiring, D. R., Elchaira, N., & Maharani, P. (2025). From Words To Understanding: Analyzing Analyzing Lexical Density And Readability In Student Writing. Journal Of Linguistics And Literary Research, 6(1), 63–73. <http://doi.org/10.26594/register.v6i1.idartiel>
- [13]. Ismail, N., Marissa, & Siti. (2023). LLT Journal: A COMPARING LEXICAL DENSITY IN TEACHER TALKS: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL \*Nyakjournal On Language And Language Teaching. LLT Journal: A Journal On Language And Language Teaching, 22(1), 46–57.
- [14]. Kärbla, T., Männamaa, M., & Uibu, K. (2019). Vocabulary And Text Comprehension Levels : What Should Be Considered In Assessments ? Journal Of Experimental Educational Psychology ISSN:, 3410. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2019.1703172>
- [15]. Kranemann, B. (2023). St Andrews Encyclopaedia Of Theology Liturgy Liturgy. In St Andrews Encyclopaedia Of Theology Liturgy (Issue June 2023). <https://www.saet.ac.uk/christianity/liturgy> Accessed:
- [16]. Lim, W. M. (2025). What Is Qualitative Research? An Overview And Guidelines. Australasian Marketing Journal, 33(2), 199–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264619>
- [17]. Lu, A. (2013). A Functional Grammar Approach To Analysing Asian Students' Writing Dr Angelia Lu. Science And Education Publishing, 1(2).
- [18]. Mezmir, E. A. (2020). Qualitative Data Analysis: An Overview Of Data Reduction, Data Display And Interpretation. Research On Humanities And Social Sciences, 10(21), 15–27. <https://doi.org/10.7176/Rhss/10-21-02>
- [19]. Mustafa, M., & Bakri, N. (2020). ANALYZING THE LEVEL OF THE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN COMPREHENDING THE NARRATIVE TEXT. Journal Of Teaching & Education Website:, 2(2), 152–162. <http://journals.umkt.ac.id/index.php/acitya>
- [20]. Nedelcu, D., & Ioan, A. (2024). Lexical Density As A Readability Indicator In Translations Of Children ' S Literature. RATE, 32(2).
- [21]. Winkle, C. (2014). Understanding Conflict & Tension. Mythcreants. <https://mythcreants.com/blog/understanding-conflict-tension/>
- [22]. Zora, Subhi, Johns, & Catherine. (1994). LEXICAL DENSITY IN INTERVIEW AND CONVERSATION. Subhi. ERIC, 17, 302.