

# Metafunction Realization on Students' Descriptive Paragraphs

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## Abstract

The objectives of this paper is to describe and explain the experiential, interpersonal, textual meaning and schematic structure of students' descriptive writing. This research used descriptive qualitative approach with content and Interview analysis as a technique. Descriptive texts which is written by students are the source data in this research. Source data are analyzed through Systemic Functional Linguistics Theory. It is found that students conveyed the experiential meaning by using four process (relational 66,02%, Material 17,22%, Mental 9,09% and Existential 7,65%). The students expressed the interpersonal meaning of descriptive text through declarative, imperative, modality and personal pronoun. It was showed that descriptive mostly dominated with declarative form (98,51). The students expressed the textual meaning for their descriptive text through developing themes and rhemes. Half (57,54%) students had planned the rhetorical development of the text. Seventeen descriptive writing were built with two main stages (identification and description). There are 64,7% text was constructed in not proper stages (schematic structures).

**Keywords:** Discourse-Semantic, Descriptive, Metafunction

## 1. Introduction

The great influence of teaching language has developed by Michael Halliday (1985) with Systemic functional linguistic theory in which spoken or written can be analyzed from functional point of view. Metafunction are found congruently in each sentence in larger written and spoken text in the systemic functional approach to language study. Halliday's theory (SFL) has a great contribution in teaching writing skill in which the theory can help the writer to write and analyze through editing the text and context use. In formulating the written text, students as a teacher candidate need to represent the topic that they will write (ideational/experiential meaning), writer and reader (interpersonal meaning ) have social relationship, the organization of the structure create logical and coherent text/paragraphs (textual meaning).

In writing, students can express their idea into written form by using various kinds of process (e.g. material, mental, verbal etc), participant (e.g. goal, actor, carrier etc), circumstances (e.g. location, manner etc). The writer and the reader indirectly build the social relationship. Power, status and level of personal involvement revealed through grammatical structure. Coherent, unity or logical paragraphs by using textual theme and topical theme have to create by the students.

Based on the writer's observation, most of students (who sit at the fifth semester) are less comprehensive on writing descriptive. The writer asked them to write text in order to measure their ability in the beginning semester. They were free to choose the genre to write. This command is commanded because they have learnt about it in the fourth semester. Most of students choose descriptive text. Unfortunately, several of them wrote incorrectly stages (generic structure) and lexicogrammatical feature. It is important to analyze the students' writing. Based on the curriculum of writing II, students are provided with the competencies on generic structure/schemata of the written English texts. The competencies cover the social function, the generic structure and the significant lexicogrammatical features used in text, in which the subject include spoof/recount, recount, report, analytical exposition, news item, anecdote, narratives, procedure, description, hortatory exposition, explanation, discussion, reviews and commentary, Binur (2014).

In this case, analyzing students' writing through the approach of systemic functional linguistic can assist the lecturer examine how students at the fifth semester at English department at the academic year 2015/2016 make contextual meaning in their writing through structure and organization. Based on the fact, the writers have a desire to conduct a research on students' texts to discover the Experiential, Interpersonal, Textual meaning and reveal the schematic structure are expressed in students descriptive writing. The first novelty of this paper through the finding, lecturer can invite and innovate other method, technique and approach in teaching writing to achieve the aim on writing II. Second, students' as a teacher candidate will comprehend on writing generally and specifically on descriptive. Finally, as a teacher candidate, they are able to avoid wrong treatment in teaching writing especially on descriptive to the students at junior and senior high school.

## 2. Theoretical Review

### 2.1 Discourse-Semantic Analysis

Discourse semantic describes language through discourse and semantic perspective, Eggins (1994). Discourse, cohesion and coherence are the main focus at the text level which include reference, lexical relations, conjunctive relations, and conversational structures. Discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used, McCarthy (1991). It means that context or situation affects the cohesion in formulating a text. While, from semantic point of view, there are three layers of meaning namely ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning and textual meaning. They are examined at the clause level. The meaning are figured out through the lexico-grammatical organization of the clauses building a text, Eggins (1994).

Discourses usually consist of sequences of sentences that express sequences of propositions in order to know how the meaning of sentences are related, so to form the meaning of sequences. With the other words, how are the prepositions of discourse link up in a sequence. In general, then, the proposition sequence underlying an acceptable discourse must satisfy various conditions of what is called coherence. Similarly, the surface structure expressions, that is, the morphological, syntactic, and lexical structures of the respective sentences, must appropriately signal this coherence, by, for instance, word order, sentence order, the use of connectives, sentential adverbs, verb tenses, or pronouns; these devices are often subsumed under the concept of (surface structure) cohesion based on Van Dijk (1983). Coherence is provided not only by the ordering of sentences, but also by their meaning and reference.

### 2.2 Systemic functional linguistic (SFL)

SFL view language as semiotic system, this system include phonological, lexicogrammatical, discourse semantic, situation, culture and ideology, Halliday (1994). Realization of meaning deals with language metafunction based on SFL point of view. Metafunction mean that language is functional. Metafunction work in the clause, sentence and phrase; metafunction simultaneously encode three strands meaning such as Experiential, Interpersonal and Textual (Gerot, Linda and Wignell, Peter, 1994). Metafunction as three types of meaning within grammatical structure of clause namely ideational or experiential, Interpersonal and textual (Halliday, 1994).

Ideational meaning are meanings about how we represent experience in language, Eggins (1994). With other words, participants always talking about something or someone doing something. For example to this sentence "*I suggest we attack the red*" this sentence makes meaning about bottle of wine and what we should do with them. It makes meaning that focus on the action we, as human agents, should carry out and the entities our action will affect (the red) Had the speaker said instead *I suggest the reds are very good* a very different reality would have been represented through language: a reality where one entity (*reds*) is ascribed with some quality (*good*) through a process merely of 'being' (Eggins, 1994). The field of a text can be associated with the realization of ideational meanings; these ideational meanings are realized through the Transitivity and Clause Complex patterns of the grammar

(Eggins, 1994). Blackwell state that ideational meaning is related to the construal of the institutional activity (naturalized reality) – field. Field is concerned with system of activity, including descriptions of the participants, process and circumstances these activities involve (Martin, 1992).

Interpersonal meaning remains the same: each clause realizes the same Mood Of 'declarative', thus all are interactively structured to give information (Eggins, 1994). It also deals with acting upon and with others and in realized with wording through mood or tenor. In *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday defines interpersonal meaning as a strand of meaning running throughout the text that expresses the writer's role relationship with the readers or the relationship between speakers, and the writer's attitude towards the subject matters (Halliday, M.A.K. and C. Matthiessen, 2004). It means that interpersonal meaning is concerned with social relationship as realized in text, interaction between speaker and interlocutor. In semantic point of view, interpersonal meaning will be realized at lexicogrammatical level. Interpersonal meanings are embodied (a) in the person system, both as pronouns (person as Thing, e.g. *she, you*) and as possessive determiners (person as Deictic, e.g. *her, your*); (b) in the attitudinal type of Epithet, e.g. *splendid* in our earlier example; (c) in connotative meanings of lexical items functioning in the group, and (d) in prosodic features such as swear-words and voice quality (Halliday, M.A.K. and C. Matthiessen, 2004).

Textual meaning is about the message, this involves looking at different types of cohesion. Textual is the final strand of meaning made in clause (Eggin, S. and D. Slade, 1997). Textual meaning of the clause is expressed by what is put first (the Theme); by what is phonologically prominent (and tends to be put last — the New, signalled by information focus); and by conjunctions and relatives which if present must occur in initial position (Halliday, M.A.K. and C. Matthiessen, 2004). Further Halliday add that, Textual meaning is embodied throughout the entire structure, since it determines the order in which the elements are arranged, as well as patterns of information structure just as in the clause (note for example that the unmarked focus of information in a nominal group is on the word that comes last, not the word that functions as Thing: on *pantographs*, not on *trains*) (Halliday, M.A.K. and C. Matthiessen, 2004).

### 2.3 Descriptive

Descriptive is a written English text in which the writer describes an object. In this text, the object can be concrete or abstract object (Siahaan, 2011). Description is a text containing two components i.e., identification and description. The identification is to identify the object to describe while description is to describe parts, qualities and characteristics of the parts of the object. The social function of descriptive to describe a particular person, place or thing, (Gerot, Linda and Wignell, Peter, 1994)

### 3. Method

This research utilized qualitative research design. The method's aim to discover and describe semantic function (problem arose) of the lexico-grammatical feature of student's descriptive text. This research used descriptive qualitative approach through content analysis. The

population of this research is students at the fifth semester which consist of two groups, namely group A and B and the total number both of groups are 65 students. The writer took 38,2% from the population become a sample in this study. The writer used random sampling technique to have the data from both of groups. Data were analyzed through content and document analysis. Data were analyzed qualitatively by modifying text, analyzing field, tenor, mood, thematic structure and schematic/stage of text.

#### 4. Finding

##### 4.1 Experiential Meaning

In accordance to the text transitivity structure in this research, it was found that the students expressed the Experiential meaning by using four process, relational 66,02%, Material 17,22%, Mental 9,09% and Existential 7,65%. The result can be tabulated as follows:

Table 4.1. Experiential Meaning

Students' text	Process Types					
	Material	Mental	Verbial	Behavioral	Existential	Relational
1	4	0	0	0	5	9
2	1	0	0	0	0	15
3	1	1	0	0	1	6
4	0	3	0	0	0	10
5	1	0	0	0	1	7
6	4	0	0	0	0	4
7	8	2	0	0	0	14
8	5	2	0	0	1	14
9	1	1	0	0	0	9
10	2	0	0	0	0	6
11	2	1	0	0	0	8
12	0	1	0	0	0	6
13	0	0	0	0	0	4
14	1	1	0	0	2	5
15	2	4	0	0	3	12
16	1	3	0	0	3	4
17	3	0	0	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>17,22%</b>	<b>9,09%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7,65%</b>	<b>66,02%</b>
<b>Total Proses : 209</b>						

As it is shown in the table above, it was noted that relational (attributive) process was dominant in the students' descriptive writings. Then, it is followed by material process and mental. It was revealed that the fewest process is existential process. Process of descriptive is attributive and identification (rellational), (Gerot, Linda and Wignell, Peter, 1994). It means

that most of students incorrect to use process in writing descriptive text.

#### 4.2 Interpersonal Meaning

To realized the interpersonal meanings of the research, the analysis of mood, modality and pronoun was accomplished. From the data analysis, it was revealed out that the students expressed the interpersonal meaning of descriptive text through the use of declarative, imperative, modality and personal pronoun. The result of the mood structure can be synthesized in the following table.

Table 4.2.a Mood Structure

Students' text	Modality				
	Ability (can)	Future/Inclination (will)	Obligation (must/have to)	Permission (may)	Possibility (may)
1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	1	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0	1
8	5	0	0	0	0
9	2	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0	0
12	1	0	0	0	0
13	0	0	0	0	0
14	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	0	0	0	0
16	1	1	1	0	0
17	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>69,23</b>	<b>15,38</b>	<b>7,69</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,69</b>
<b>Total Modality : 13</b>					

The use of modal “can” expressed the meaning of ability of participant to cause something happen. It communicates the meaning less intensity of tension to give an option to perform what she or he wants to do. Modal ‘will’ conveys the meaning of futurity or inclination. It indicates some actions will happen in the forth coming time.

Table 4.2.b Interpersonal Meaning

Students' text	Typical Clause Mood			Personal Pronoun	
	Declarative	Imperative	Interrogative	"We/us"	Others (i.e they, she/he)
1	18	0	0	0	0
2	16	0	0	0	13
3	9	0	0	0	0
4	13	0	0	0	10
5	9	0	0	0	0
6	8	0	0	0	1
7	27	0	2	2	17
8	20	1	0	4	0
9	11	0	0	0	6
10	8	0	0	1	4
11	11	0	0	1	4
12	7	0	0	1	0
13	4	0	0	0	0
14	9	0	0	0	0
15	9	0	0	0	0
16	12	0	0	3	1
17	8	0	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>98,51%</b>	<b>0,49%</b>	<b>0,99%</b>	<b>16,21%</b>	<b>83,78%</b>
<b>Total Mood and Pronoun</b>	<b>202</b>			<b>74</b>	

From the result of analysis, it can be concluded that in writing a descriptive text, students predominantly used declarative in this research. It means that 98,51% students use declarative to signify the writer's proficiency in explaining about the issue being discussed. The use of "We" represents the equal status between the writers and and the readers. The word "We" invited the readers in the same position to the phenomenon being discussed.

#### 4.3 Textual Meaning

Descriptive writing which written by students are wholly written language. To prove the text are definetly in written language, Some characteristic of language were examined. In this stage, there are six features of language's characteristic to uncover that descriptive are certainty in written language. Those characteristics are lexical density, grammatical intricacy, organization, context, structure and spontaneity.

Table 4.3.a Lexical Density

Students' Text	Lexical Item	Grammatical Item	Total Words	Lexical Density (%)
1	50	76	126	39,68
2	26	35	61	42,62
3	31	26	57	54,39
4	28	34	62	45,16
5	34	34	68	50,00
6	36	37	73	49,32
7	83	95	178	46,63
8	56	115	171	32,75
9	26	30	56	46,43
10	23	20	43	53,49
11	47	40	87	54,02
12	34	26	60	56,67
13	31	9	40	77,50
14	45	33	78	57,69
15	37	26	63	58,73
16	40	45	85	47,06
17	19	31	50	38,00
<b>Total</b>	646	712	1358	
<b>The Mean of Lexical Density</b>				<b>50,01</b>

Sholichatun (2011) states that a high lexical density measures of around 60-70%, quite lexical density measures of around 50-60%, and a lower lexical density measures of around 40-50%. However, the percentage of lexical density is different from one student to another student. The average of lexical density of the text is 50,01. From this fact, writers conclude that students' writing have a quite lexical density because the result of calculation around 50 - 60%. The next field to ensure that the text is in written language are the organization, context, structure and spontaneity phenomena. It is obvious from all text in this research was organized in monologic way.

From the result of analysis, it can be concluded that students expressed the textual meaning for their descriptive text through developing themes and rhemes. Therefore, thematic progression was analyzed to know the textual meaning in this research. It was found that descriptive was developed coherently and cohesively. The coherence was viewed from interrelated theme and rheme of the clause from clause to clause, sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph. The cohesiveness of the text has been realized from the use of cohesive devices such as repetition, reference, synonym and conjunction.

The last thing, it is needed to show the concept of markedness. Marked themes are seldom applied in causal conversation, Eggins,(1994). Marked themes largely occur at schematic

structures in monologue piece. Marked theme appears to be one realization of a written language. To improve the coherence of the text, the proficient writers or speakers need to choose marked themes in their writing Eggins,(1994). In this research found that most of students employed several (57,54%) marked theme in their writing. It means that the students had planned the rhetorical development of the text. There are two texts which do not show marked theme in their writing such as text 2 and 4.

Table 4.3.b Marked and Unmarked

Text	Marked	Unmarked	Total	Percentage	
				Marked	Unmarked
1	14	4	18	77,78%	22,22%
2	0	16	16	0%	100%
3	8	1	9	88,89%	11,11%
4	0	13	13	0%	100%
5	7	2	9	77,78%	22,22%
6	7	1	8	87,50%	12,50%
7	5	24	29	17,24%	82,76%
8	14	7	21	66,67%	33,33%
9	2	9	11	18,18%	81,82%
10	4	4	8	50%	50%
11	5	6	11	45,45%	54,55%
12	7	0	7	100%	0%
13	4	0	4	100%	0%
14	8	1	9	88,89%	11,11%
15	8	1	9	88,89%	11,11%
16	7	5	12	58,33%	41,67%
17	1	7	8	12,50%	87,50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>202</b>		
<b>The Average</b>				<b>57,54%</b>	<b>42,46%</b>

#### 4.4 Schematic Structure

In this research data identified seventeen descriptive writing were build with two main stages. The schematic structure of descriptive is identification and description. The result shows that there are 64,7% or ten text was constructed in wrong stages (generic structures). 35,29 % or six students wrote descriptive in correct stages.

Table 4.4. Schematic Structure

Students' text	Relational Process		Other process
	Identification	Attributive	
1	√	-	-
2	-	√	-

3	√	-	-
4	√	-	-
5	-	√	-
6	-	√	-
7	-	√	-
8	-	-	√
9	√		-
10	-	√	-
11	-	√	-
12	√	-	-
13	√	-	-
14	-	√	-
15	-	√	-
16	-	-	√
17	-	√	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>35,29%</b>	<b>52,94%</b>	<b>11,76%</b>

## 5. Conclusion

Accordance to data analysis of this research, the writers revealed that, the students expressed the Experiential meaning by using four process, relational 66,02%, Material 17,22%, Mental 9,09% and Existential 7,65%. Interpersonal meaning of descriptive text through the use of declarative, imperative, modality and personal pronoun. It was showed that descriptive mostly dominated with declarative form (98,51). Writers conclude that students' writing have a quite lexical density (50% - 60%). Meanwhile, the textual meaning of the text through developing themes and rhemes it can be seen that 57,54% students had planned the rhetorical development of the text. From the schematic point of view, there are 64,7% text was constructed in wrong stages (generic structures).

The advantages of this study revealed the students' weaknesses descriptive writing before teaching training or to be a real teacher in the future time. Writing lecturers have to choose another method, technique and approach as an alternative teaching to developed students' writing skill. Indirectly students at junior and senior level will have a clear understanding how to write descriptive. This study was limited on descriptive written text with SFL theory. This research application is enabled to another kind of written and spoken analysis.

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