

Students' Writing Competence of the Fourth Semester Students of English Department of Tidar University in Academic Year 2014/2015

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Abstract

Meaning plays an important role for communication. This research is aimed at describing interpersonal, ideational and textual meanings found in the students' hortatory exposition texts. The method of this research is a discourse analysis which analyzed meanings. The interpersonal meaning is to analyze the Mood and Modality; the ideational meaning is Transitivity; and the Textual meaning is Thematic Structure. The result of the research showed three points of conclusion. First, in terms of interpersonal meaning, it shows that the students used Declarative Mood types in their texts to give information. Most of the students used simple present tense to give related information based on the topic. Most of the students used high nominalization as the subjects of their clauses. This implies that the texts are in the form of written texts. Second, transitivity system is about people activities in particular place and time. It can be seen from the occurrence of the dominant use of of material process, relational process, and circumstance of location. Third, thematic structure showed that the clauses mostly used ideational theme. The researcher found that the most dominant theme was the unmarked theme. It implies that the students used high nominalization because they frequently used subjects and circumstances as the nominalization in the beginning of the clauses. Thus, it is expected that metafunctions can improve students' writing competence in the form of meaningful texts.

Keywords: *ideational meaning; interpersonal meaning, students' hortatory text; textual meaning*

Background

Writing is a very complex activity. The complexity of writing is indicated by the difficulty of writing a good composition. It is a skill that must be practiced and learned through experience. The goal of teaching writing is how to obtain competencies as well as the components of good composition. It can be shown by the quality of word choices (diction), the

correct implementation of grammar and structure of rule in sentence, the usage of appropriate utterances, and the correct usage of mechanics.

In order to convey the ideas successfully to the reader, the students need to expose their writing in a systematic way to a variety of written genres, or types of written discourse that students can apply and adapt to their own writing purposes. They need to analyze the discourse of using genres in their writing activities in order to learn how to structure their discourse for different communicative purposes.

The meaning of the language will be clearer by using grammar as can be considered from the definition of grammar itself. Derewianka (2001:1) notes that, "Grammar is a way of describing how a language works to make meaning." Grammar can be divided into traditional grammar, formal grammar, and functional grammar. The traditional grammar and formal grammar are different in the term of definition. They concern with the form of language (syntax), whereas functional grammar concerns in the function of the language. Gerot and Wignell (1994:5) adds that, "traditional grammar is Standard English by comparing it with Latin, it focus on rules producing correct sentences." On the other hand, the functional grammar focuses to describe the structure of individual sentences. By analyzing the functional grammar, we can analyze the meaning of the text either spoken or written text.

Literature Review

People use language in communicating with other people. Halliday (1985:4) contends, "language is understood in its relationship to social structure. When we consider what realities these are lie above and beyond language, which language serves to express, there are many directions in which we can move outside language in order to explain what language means." People use language to communicate with other people in order to convey and explain what meanings they want to say.

A text is sometimes used by people to convey meanings. Halliday (1985:10) also points out, "the text as meaning that the important thing about nature of a text is that, although when we write it down it looks as though it is made of words and sentences, it is really made of meanings."

Text is a grammatical unit that can be in the spoken or written form to convey the meaning of language. The text always has context, because in a text always occurs two contexts, context of culture (genre) and context of situation (register). As mentioned by Halliday (1985:5), "the term, context, and text, put together like this, serve as a reminder that these are aspect of the same process. There is text and there is other text that accompanies it; text that is 'with', namely "the con-text."

Butt (1995:11) adds, "within the context of culture, speakers and writers use language in many more specific contexts of situations," whereas Halliday and Hassan (1985:6) defines context of situation as the environment of the text. In order to understand the meaning of language, context of situation in a text plays an important position. The combination between the context of culture and context of situation in a text can make different interpretation about the meaning of the language.

As defined by Halliday (1985:45), there are three components of context of situations as follows:

- a) Field of discourse: the ‘play’ – the kind of activity, as recognized in the culture, within which the language is playing some part (predicts experiential meaning);
- b) Tenor of discourse: the ‘players’ – the actors, or rather the interacting roles, that are involved in the creation of the text (predicts interpersonal meaning);
- c) Mode of discourse: the ‘parts’ – the particular functions that are assigned to language in this situation, and the rhetorical channel is therefore allotted to it (predicts textual meanings).

People utter language in communicating with others in their interactions. All languages have grammar. Gerot and Wignell (1994:2) define “grammar is a theory of language, of how language is put together and how it works.” Grammar is a set of rules of language in describing how language works to make meanings or it is important to be learnt.

Functional grammars view language as a resource for making meaning. This view attempts to describe language in actual use and so focus on texts and their contexts. Halliday states that the three main functions of language are called metafunctions. The three metafunction meanings have different roles in language.

As suggested by Gerot and Wignell (1994:12-14), “there are three types of meanings to reconstruct the context of situation in the relationship between context and text.” They are Interpersonal meanings, Ideational meanings, and Textual meanings.

Interpersonal meanings are meanings which express a speaker’s attitudes and judgements. Interpersonal meaning is realized through the analysis of MOOD systems and modality

Ideational meanings are meanings about phenomena, about living things (living and non-living, abstract and concrete), about going on (what the things are or do), and the circumstances surrounding these happenings and doings. These meanings are realized in wording through Participant, Process, and Circumstances. The ideational meanings are realized through the Transitivity system.

Textual meanings express the relation of language to its environment, including both the verbal environment – what has been said or written before (co-text) and the non-verbal, situational environment (context). These meanings are realized through patterns of Theme and cohesion. Textual meanings are most centrally influenced by mode of discourse.

Agustien (2006:2) argues that discourse can be defined as something abstract that comes into being through text, either spoken or written. It is supported by linguistic competence, actional, socio-cultural, and strategic competence. It also concerns the selection sequencing and arrangement of words, structures, sentences, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written text. (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell, 1995:13) stated that, “Discourse competence concerns the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, sentences and utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written texts. This is where the bottom-up lexicogrammatical microlevel intersects with the top-down signals of the macrolevel of communicative intent and sociocultural context to express attitudes and messages, and to create texts.”

Discourse analysis can be concluded as the piece of communication in the for context of either spoken or written text. Discourse analysis can be seen as a process which produces spoken or written text to convey a certain meaning.

Martin (1985:15) clarifies that exposition is an argument why a thesis has been proposed. Martin refers to the judgement in exposition as thesis, and to the reasons supporting it as arguments. In exposition, more than one argument can be presented to support a judgement. He categorized two different exposition types: (1) analytical exposition; (2) hortatory exposition. The function of the analytical exposition is to persuade the reader that the thesis is well formulated, whereas the function of the hortatory exposition is to persuade the reader to do what the thesis recommends. Given the function of exposition is to interpret and explain, the fundamental part of this genre is reasoning.

Methodology

The research investigated what metafunctions are realized in the students' Hortatory Exposition texts. The research elaborated the realization of the data analysis to find out the meanings realized on the texts. Thus, the research was a qualitative research. The object of the study were the students texts which include in discourse analysis. A discourse research interprets and exemplifies social phenomena in analyzing what happen beyond the texts. The result of investigation is presented descriptively to draw a conclusion.

The population of this research was the fourth semester students of English Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Tidar University who took Writing 3 course in the academic year 2014/2015. This study involved 24 students from Class 3 and Class 4. However there are only six students' texts' were analyzed in detail.

The object of the research was the students' Hortatory writing analyzed through Systemic Functional Linguistics. The data in this research were descriptive qualitative data in the form of clauses from the Hortatory Exposition texts analyzed through clauses analysis. The data obtained through documentation, scoring and identifying. The steps of analysing the data are scoring, dividing the texts into clause, analyzing interpersonal meaning, ideational meaning, and textual meaning.

In modifying texts, the three metafunctions (interpersonal, ideational, and textual meanings) conveyed in the students' texts will be examined. In analyzing the interpersonal meaning, the realization of MOOD and modality will be analyzed. In analyzing the ideational meaning, the Transitivity structure of the texts will be analyzed. To know the textual meaning of the texts, Theme-Rheme of the students' texts will be analyzed.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Interpersonal Meaning

The interpersonal meaning of the students' texts is realized through the analysis of MOOD systems. The analysis of MOOD systems is divided into MOOD analysis which analyzed MOOD type, Subject and Finite, and Modality analysis. The findings of this result

showed that the dominant MOOD type in the students' texts is Declarative types. The total frequency of the declarative MOOD types found in the students' texts are 255 clauses. The percentage of the declarative MOOD types is 100%. The total of subjects that can be found in the students' text are 255. The most dominant one is subject 'Others'. There are 107 or 41.96%. The total of finite that can be found in the students' text are 255. The most dominant one is finite simple present. There are 171 or 67.06%. There are 89 modals found in the students' texts. The most dominant one is Modal verbs. There are 75 or 84.27%.

Ideational Meaning

The ideational meaning of the students' texts is realized through the analysis of Transitivity. The analysis of Transitivity is divided into analysis of processes, participants and circumstances. There are six processes in Transitivity, material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential processes. The three main types of processes are material, mental, and relational process. Other processes are located at the boundaries of the three main processes. Those are behavioral, verbal, and existential processes. The students used these processes to express the experiential meanings of their texts, but the processes were used differently in number.

The findings of this result showed that the total frequency of the processes found in the students' texts are 255. The dominant process type in the students' texts is Material process. There are 108 or 42.35%. The analysis of participants showed that there are 466 participants found in the students' text. The most dominant one is the participants of the material process. There are 214 or 45.93%. The participants can be divided into Actor which are 108 or 23.18%, Goal which are 98 or 21.03%., and Client which are 4 or 0.86% and Recipient which are 4 or 0.86%.

In doing Transitivity analysis, the researcher also analyzed the circumstance that occur in the students' hortatory exposition texts. The analysis of participants showed that there are 149 circumstances found in the students' texts. The most dominant one is the Circumstance of Location. There are 56 or 37.58%. The circumstances of Location can be divided into Time which are 13 or 8.72% and Place which are 43 or 28.86%.

Textual Meaning

The textual meaning of the students' texts is achieved by doing Theme and Rheme Analysis. There were 4 types of themes found in the textual meaning, they are ideational (topical) theme, interpersonal theme, textual theme, and multiple theme. The total frequencies of themes found in the students' texts are 255. The most dominant themes are Ideational themes. There are 139 or 54.51%. The Ideational themes can be divided into Marked Topical which are 25 or 9.80% and Unmarked Topical which are 114 or 44.71%.

Schematic Structure of the Texts

The analysis showed that in general the students have the ability in composing a good Hortatory Exposition texts. Five texts were composed in three main stages, while one text is composed in two stages. All of the texts provided a Thesis, but the Arguments were used differently in number.

Discussion

MOOD Analysis Realizing Interpersonal Meaning

The results of the analysis showed that in composing the exposition texts, the students realized the interpersonal meanings through the use of Declarative MOOD, Subject-Finite, and Modality. The dominant use of the Declarative MOOD which is indicated by subject-finite order proves the students' ability in composing and explaining information about the issue or topic being discussed. The use of Declarative MOOD that shows Direct Illocutinary Act indicates that the students are able to employ the social function of the Hortatory Exposition texts : to give information to the readers.

In the grammatical term, most students are able to apply the correct grammatical pattern of Hortatory Exposition texts although there were some errors in deciding the correct finites of the subjects, and also confusion in relating the determiners with the nouns.. Most of them made mistakes in subject-verb agreement and also the singular-plural form of noun.

The dominant use of subject 'Others' signifies the students' ability in explaining the existence of several participants, events, or things which are used as the subjects of their clauses. The use of the dominant participants 'Others' which refer to the generic and non-generic participants is in line with the the linguistic features of Hortatory Exposition as stated by Gerot and Wignell (1994:210) :

The dominant use of the Modal verbs such as can, may indicate the ability of the students to convey the meanings of ability or capacity to cause something to happen. It also communicates the meanings of less intensity of tension in which he or she gives an option to perform what he or she wants to do. That is in line with the social function of Hortatory Exposition text as stated by Gerot and Wignell (1994:210) : to persuade the readers or listeners that something should or should not be the case.

Transitivity Analysis realizing the Ideational Meanings

The analysis of Transitivity is divided into analysis of processes, analysis of participant functions, and analysis of circumstantial elements.

The results of the analysis showed that in composing the exposition texts, the students realized the ideational meanings through the use of processes, participants, and circumstances. Based on the analysis, it was found that the students realized the experiential meanings by using six process types with its participants. But, not all students applied the six process types to realize the experiential meanings of the exposition texts. On average, each student applied between four until six processes. The dominant use of Material process occur as the students want to describe the actions or activities performed by the participants of the clauses. The focus of the Material process is the use of verb. Most students can use appropriate verbs in explaining the activities in their texts. In line with the dominant use of Material process, the most dominant participants is the Actor.

In the circumstances analysis, the most dominant is the circumstance of Location: Place which means that the students want to explain where the actions or activities performed by the participants of the clauses happen.

The texts were mostly written by using simple present tense. There were some problems found in the students' texts. It was found that some students encountered difficulties in subject-verb agreement, singular-plural form, diction and vocabularies. It was expected that the lecturer ensures that the students understand the use of finite in clauses or sentences

Based on the analysis, the researcher found that there are some features that match the linguistic features of Hortatory Exposition as mentioned by Gerot and Wignell (1994:210) : The use of the dominant participants 'Others' which refer to the generic and non-generic participants; the most frequently use of the material and relational processes to perform information about something, to describe the condition or situation of the topic being discussed and to reveal the cause-effect relationship of the clauses in the students' texts; and the use of simple present tense.

Theme-Rheme Analysis realizing the Textual Meanings

The textual meaning is realized through the patterns of Theme and cohesion. The textual meaning analysis showed that in composing the exposition texts, the students applied various types of Theme to create a coherent text. The use of textual themes help the students to make coherent texts. The textual themes were used to connect the clause from the previous clause, the sencece from another sentence. The use of textual themes help the students to control the flow of the information and also to organize the information by showing relationship between the clauses. The use of cohesive devices such as repetitions, references, synonyms, and conjunctions help the students make cohesive texts. The students used those devices to ensure that the meanings of the texts are still on the track.

Schematic Structure Analysis

In the analysis of the schematic structure of the texts, the findings showed that the texts fulfill the schematic structure criteria of Hortatory Exposition text. The built their texts in three stages cover introducton (thesis), main body (arguments), and conclusion (recommendation). The students have something to do with the way of delivering information through the organization of the stages. The low achiever texts provided a major point which is supported by a relevant thesis but less relevant arguments and recommendations. The middle achiever texts provided a major point which is supported by a relevant thesis, relevant arguments and recommendations although the arguments are not very specific to the topic. The last is high achiever texts which provided a major point which is supported by a relevant thesis, relevant and specific arguments and recommendations.

Conclusion

This research has analyzed the meanings found in the students' Hortatory Exposition texts of the fourth semester students of English Department of Tidar University in the academic year 2014/2015. Based on the data analysis, the conclusions can be drawn as follows.

In the term of interpersonal meaning which analyzed MOOD and modality, the findings showed that the students' Hortatory Exposition texts represent a one-way communication which

function is to give information about their opinions, arguments and evidences related to the topic of the discussions.

The finding of the analysis answered the research question on what Interpersonal meanings realized in the students' exposition texts of the fourth semester students of English Department of Tidar University. In general, the students were able to write the order of Subject-Finite to compose a Declarative MOOD. They used various linguistic features such as MOOD types, Finites, Modal and nominalization.

In the term of ideational meaning which analyzed the Transitivity, the findings showed that the students used various linguistic resources such as processes, participants and circumstances which show their ability to create a more written-like. Further analysis of grammatical features revealed that students have to extent successfully used some of the main convention of written language and argumentative discourse such as the order of Subject-Finite, simple present tense, and adverbial phrase.

In the term of textual meaning which analyzed the Thematic structures, the findings showed that the students effectively employed linguistic devices such as repetition, synonym, conjunction, and nominalization of Theme to make coherent paragraphs in their texts. The students used such devices which features more written-like to make a strong coherence and cohesion of their texts.

The finding of schematic structure showed that the students have the ability in composing the Hortatory Exposition texts because they possessed similar understanding of the generic structure of Hortatory Exposition text in order to achieve the purpose and the function of the text : is to persuade the readers to perform an action.

Based on the discussions above, it is known that the metafunctions analysis can help students in developing their writing although some improvements to do with mastery of good grammar and vocabularies. So it is recommended that metafunction analysis should be recommended in teaching writing in order to ensure the students to be able to compose good and meaningful texts.

Suggestions

Firstly, it is addressed to the lecturers. The lecturers should be more concern to the grammar and word choices used by the students. The lectures should teach the students to understand the text types together with the social function, schematic structure, and language features in order to make the students able in composing a meaningful and grammatical texts. The lecturers should be ensured that students have good grammar, good vocabularies and also the knowledge about the topic. They also need to motivate their students to be active in class and keep practicing in writing in order to improve students' proficiency in writing.

Secondly, it is addressed for the students. The students need to improve their writing skills to reach good levels in writing. They have to develop their skill in grammar, vocabulary, and fluency because those are important elements in writing texts. In addition they should enrich their knowledge about the topic given in order to construct good and meaningful explanation about the topic.

Thirdly, it is addressed to other researchers who are interested in doing similar research. In doing the discourse analysis, the researchers should have the knowledge of good grammar. Therefore, hopefully this research can be a guidance for other researchers to enrich their research.

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