

Textual Function on the Vocational High Student's Textbook: A Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the textual function in the Merdeka Belajar English textbook for 11th-grade vocational high school students using the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach developed by M.A.K. Halliday. Employing a descriptive qualitative method and the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), the study examines 37 sentences from exposition and image-based texts in Chapter 1 of the textbook. The analysis focuses on mood types and theme-rheme structures. The findings reveal that declarative mood is the most dominant (78.3%), highlighting the informative and explanatory nature of the texts. Interrogative (18.9%) are used rhetorically to engage readers, while one nominal fragment (2.7%) is also identified. All sentences (100%) contain a complete Theme–Rheme structure. Modal elements and finite verbal operators each appear in 16.2% of the data, indicating interpersonal interaction. Textual markers such as conjunctions (8.1%), conjunctive adjuncts (5.4%), and continuatives (2.7%) further support cohesion. This consistent use of thematic and mood structures supports coherence, facilitates reader comprehension, and enhances the effectiveness of the learning materials. The study provides insights for improving English textbook design tailored to vocational education needs. The analysis reveals that all three textual functions; Topical, Textual, and Interpersonal Themes are realized, with the Topical Theme being the most dominant. This highlights the text's focus on clarity and structured information flow, while the minimal use of Interpersonal and Textual Themes reflects a formal, straightforward expository style.

Keywords: Theme-Rheme, Textual function, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Vocational Textbook.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis fungsi tekstual dalam buku teks Merdeka Belajar Bahasa Inggris untuk siswa sekolah menengah kejuruan kelas 11 dengan menggunakan pendekatan Linguistik Fungsional Sistemik (SFL) yang dikembangkan oleh M.A.K. Halliday. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dan model analisis interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña (2014), penelitian ini meneliti 37 kalimat dari teks eksposisi dan berbasis gambar dalam Bab 1 buku teks tersebut. Analisis difokuskan pada jenis mood dan struktur tema-remata. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa mood deklaratif adalah yang paling dominan (78,3%), menyoroti sifat informatif dan eksplanatif dari teks-teks tersebut. Interogatif (18,9%) digunakan secara retorik untuk melibatkan pembaca, sementara satu fragmen nominal (2,7%) juga diidentifikasi. Semua kalimat (100%) mengandung struktur Tema-Remata yang lengkap. Elemen modal dan operator verbal finit masing-masing muncul dalam 16,2% data, yang menunjukkan interaksi interpersonal. Penanda tekstual seperti konjungsi (8,1%), kata sambung (5,4%), dan kata kontinuatif (2,7%) semakin mendukung kohesi. Penggunaan struktur tematik dan mood yang konsisten ini mendukung koherensi, memfasilitasi pemahaman pembaca, dan meningkatkan efektivitas materi pembelajaran. Studi ini memberikan wawasan untuk meningkatkan desain buku teks bahasa Inggris yang disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan pendidikan kejuruan. Analisis mengungkapkan bahwa ketiga fungsi tekstual; Tema Topikal, Tekstual, dan Interpersonal terwujud, dengan Tema Topikal menjadi yang paling dominan. Hal ini menyoroti fokus teks pada kejelasan dan aliran informasi terstruktur, sementara penggunaan Tema Interpersonal dan Tekstual yang minimal mencerminkan gaya ekspositori formal dan lugas.

Kata Kunci: Tema-Remata, Fungsi Tekstual, Linguistik Fungsional Sistemik, Buku Teks Kejuruan.

1. Introduction

In vocational education contexts, the effective use of textual features plays a crucial role in facilitating successful learning outcomes, particularly for expository and informational materials. Textbooks serve as primary instructional resources; therefore, their linguistic composition must be designed to present information systematically and comprehensibly to learners. Analyzing the linguistic characteristics embedded within these texts, especially structural elements such as Theme and Rheme, is essential for understanding how texts are organized to support student comprehension and retention.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) offers a comprehensive theoretical framework for examining how language functions systematically within social and educational contexts. Through the analysis of Theme and Rheme structures, researchers can uncover how texts organize ideas to enhance logical flow and coherence, thus aiding cognitive processing.

Despite the important role of textual features in instructional texts, there remains a limited body of research focusing explicitly on the microstructural textual elements particularly the thematic configuration in vocational textbooks used within Indonesia. Addressing this gap is vital, as a detailed understanding of these features can inform the development of more effective instructional materials and pedagogical approaches.

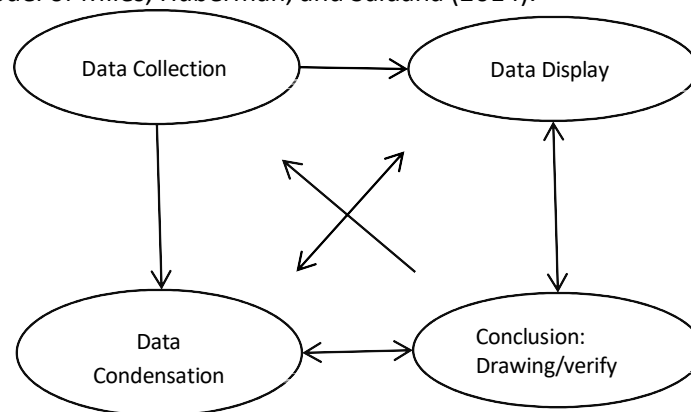
The primary aim of this study is to analyze the realization of textual functions within vocational high school English textbooks, with an emphasis on the deployment and distribution of Theme and Rheme at the clause level. Specifically, this research investigates how these textual elements serve to organize information and facilitate comprehension in expository and image-based texts. It is anticipated that the findings will contribute to the scholarly understanding of linguistic organization in educational materials and provide practical insights for curriculum developers and educators to improve textbook design aligned with principles of systemic functional linguistics.

In the development of education, especially at the vocational level, the effective utilization of textbooks is crucial to support the learning process. The use of systematic language and organized text structures play a key role in helping students understand the material better. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) emphasizes the importance of textual functions, such as theme-rheme and cohesion, in composing informative and cohesive texts. Therefore, it is essential to analyze how these textual functions are applied in vocational education textbooks, particularly in exposition texts and image-based texts. The research questions that focus this study are: (1)How is the realization of textual function on the textbook of vocation?and (2)What is the dominant textual function in the textbook?

2. Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at analyzing textual functions in vocational textbooks based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory developed by M.A.K. Halliday. This approach was chosen because it can provide an in-depth view of how language structures and functions are used within educational texts, as well as understanding the meaning conveyed. The primary data consist of sentences from exposition texts and image-based texts in the first chapter of the English textbook for vocational students. The selection of data was conducted purposively based on relevance and its context within the study. Data collection was carried out through documentation techniques, involving copying and gathering sentences from the texts present in the textbook.

Subsequently, data were analyzed extensively using content analysis techniques supported by the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014).



Scheme 3.6.1 Interactive Data Analysis Chart (Huberman & Saldaña, 2014)

The analysis stages include data collection, data display, and drawing conclusions, which are interconnected, facilitating the identification of dominant textual functions and their application within the texts.

During the analysis, the researcher focused on identifying the theme- rheme structure and categories of textual functions such as topical, interpersonal, and textual themes used in the texts. The analysis also included identifying textual cohesion elements, including the use of conjunctions, commentaries, and other cohesion markers that support the coherence of the texts. The data obtained were then classified based on frequency and their significance within the exposition and image-based texts.

To ensure data validity, the researcher conducted triangulation by comparing analysis results across different parts of the texts and critically reviewing the identified textual functions. Additionally, internal validation was performed by reexamining the categorization of textual functions and consulting with linguistic experts familiar with SFL theory. This was intended to enhance the accuracy and consistency of the analysis results. The frequency of sentence types (declarative, interrogative, nominal) and thematic components is calculated using the formula: $P = (F/n) \times 100\%$, where **P** is the percentage, **F** is the frequency, and **n** is the total number of data.

3. Result and Discussion

The data analysis and results derived from the study of the English language textbook for XI grade students, focusing specifically on Chapter 1, which covers exposition texts. The primary objective of this chapter is to systematically present the gathered data, ensuring that it provides meaningful insights to support the discussion in the following sections. The data for this research were collected using a qualitative method, which focuses on an in-depth analysis of textual content. Specifically, this study employed a discourse analysis approach to examine the structure, meaning, and function of language used in the exposition texts from the textbook. The research was conducted by examining the exposition texts from the Bahasa Inggris *Merdeka Belajar* textbook for the 11th-grade curriculum. The researcher systematically analyzed the texts, focusing on the language features, structure, and the intended purposes behind the textual elements.

The data were evaluated to determine the Textual function, that is theme and rheme, as well as the most used types in Amazon go expository text and the 2.3 million cashiers and text in images. Based on the research data, the themes and rheme identified in the Amazon go text and the 2.3 million cashiers that it can leave represent

from the discourse textbook chapter 1 and the text in the image represents each chapter of the 5 chapters in the class XI book of the vocational school, described as follows:

Table 4.3 The Data Analysis

Data 1 Last week, Amazon opened its first automated grocery store in Seattle.

Last week,	Amazon	opened		its first automated grocery store in Seattle.	
Adjunct: Time	Topical	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Declarative					
Theme		Rheme			

The sentence above is a declarative clause with a clear Theme-Rheme structure. Last week, functioning as a time adjunct, serves as a textual theme, while Amazon, as the main subject, acts as the topical theme. The Rheme begins with opened as the predicator and is followed by its first automated grocery store in Seattle as the complement and adjunct. This pattern reflects a common information sequence in narrative texts, introducing time and actor at the beginning.

Data 4 So, What could this latest change mean for American retail workers?

So,	What	could this latest change mean for American retail workers?		
Continuative	Complement	Finite	Subject	Adjunct
Textual theme	Interrogative	Interpersonal	Topical	
Theme			Rheme	

The sentence above is a WH-interrogative clause, opened by So, which serves as a textual theme (continuative), indicating a transition between sentences. The elements what and could represent the interpersonal theme, with what as the WH-element and could as the finite modal. This latest change functions as the topical theme, while the Rheme consists of mean as the predicator and for American retail workers as the complement. This structure shows how questions are developed from interpersonal and topical thematic elements.

Data 19 How might changes affect the government subsidies many Americans rely on?

How	might	change	affect the government subsidies many Americans rely on?		
Interrogative	Finite	Topical	Predicator	Complement	
Theme				Rheme	

The identification of the textual function in Data 19 reveals that this is a WH-interrogative clause beginning with how as an interpersonal theme (WH- adjunct), followed by might (modal finite) and changes as the topical theme. The Rheme begins with affect as the predicator, followed by the government subsidies many Americans rely on as the complement, which contains an embedded relative clause. This indicates a complex structure conveying cause-effect relationships in the form of a question.

Data 21 Amazon is expected to grow its business considerably throughout the next year.

Amazon	is	expected	to grow its business considerably throughout the next year.
Topical	Finite		Conjunctive adjunct
Declarative	Modal		
Theme		Rheme	

Table Data 21 presents a thematic and grammatical analysis of the sentence "Amazon is expected to grow its business considerably throughout the next year." The sentence is classified as declarative and contains modality, expressed through the passive construction "is expected," which indicates a prediction or expectation. The thematic structure identifies "Amazon" as the Topical Theme, while the rest of the sentence constitutes the Rheme, providing the new information. There is no conjunctive adjunct present, and the finite verb "is" marks both tense and modality.

Data 31 What consumers say about electronic money in Indonesia?

What	Consumers	say	about electronic money in Indonesia?
Complement	Topical	No finite: flawed	
Interogative			
Theme		Rheme	

This sentence is ungrammatical because it lacks a finite, which is necessary in the mood structure of an interrogative clause. What at the beginning acts as an interpersonal theme (W-complement), and consumers functions as the topical theme. However, without a finite such as do, the mood structure is incomplete. A correction is needed for accurate Theme-Rheme analysis.

Data 32 Indonesians are ready to go cashless as long as it is fast

Indonesia	are	ready	to go cashless as long as it is fast	
Topical	Finite		Complement	Conjunctive adjunct
Declarative				
Theme	Rheme			

Data 32 is a complex declarative clause with Indonesians as the topical theme and are as the finite. The Rheme consists of the predicator are, the complement ready to go cashless, and the subordinate clause as long as it is fast as a conjunctive adjunct. This clause illustrates a structure that combines the main information with a condition through logical expansion.

Data 33 E-Wallet is favored due to its promotion, discount, or cashback.

E-Wallet	Is	favored	due to its promotion, discount, or cashback.
Topical	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
Declarative			
Theme	Rheme		

The identification of data 33 shows a simple declarative sentence. E- Wallet as the subject acts as the topical theme, and is serves as the finite preceding favored as the predicator. In the Rheme, the causal adjunct due to its promotion, discount, or cashback adds a reason for the preceding state. This structure is common in explanatory texts that describe causal relationships.

Data 35 Consumers still have concerns about security personal data loss and phone theft.

Consumers	still	have concerns about security personal data loss and phone theft.	
Topical	Continuative	Finite	Complement
Declarative	Textual		
Theme		Rheme	

This sentence begins with Consumers as the topical theme, while still is a textual theme of the continuative type, indicating discourse continuity. Have functions as both

the finite and the predicator, followed by the complement concerns about security, personal data loss, and phone theft in the Rheme. The sentence integrates ideational and textual elements to express ongoing concerns.

Data 37 The schoolgirl who went on strike to save the planet

The schoolgirl	who went on strike to save the planet
Topical	Adjective clause
Nominal	

The phrase “The schoolgirl who went on strike to save the planet” is not a complete sentence but a noun phrase consisting of the core noun “The schoolgirl” and an attributive clause “who went on strike to save the planet”. Since it does not contain a main predicate, this structure cannot be fully analyzed using the Theme– Rheme pattern as applied to complete sentences in systemic-functional discourse analysis.

Table 4.4 Data Result

Aspects	Sentences	Frequencies	Persentase (%)
Declarative	1–3, 5–16, 21–23, 24–28, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36	29	78,3%
Interrogative	4, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, 31 (flawed)	7	18,9%
Nominal/Fragment	37	1	2,7%
Tema	1-37	37	100%
Topical theme			
Interpersonal Theme			
Modalitas (Modal)	4, 17-20, 27	6	16,2%
Vocative		0	0%
Finite Verbal	4, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29	6	16,2%
Textual Theme			
Conjunction	4, 32	2	5,4%
Conjunctive Adjunct	3, 21	2	5.4%
Continuative	4	1	2,7%
Rheme	1-37	37	100%

$$P = F/n \times 100\%$$

The table shows that the majority of sentences use the declarative mood, accounting for about 78.3%. This indicates that the texts predominantly employ sentences that aim to present information directly and clearly, which is characteristic of expository texts intended to explain, provide facts, or present data. The dominant use of declarative mood helps readers understand the content more easily and systematically.

Additionally, most sentences utilize a theme-rheme structure centered on the use of the Topical Theme, which appears in 100% of the sentences. This means each sentence begins with the main topic, making it easier for readers to follow the flow of information and grasp the primary focus. The presence of this theme-rheme structure supports clarity and cohesion within the text, enhancing effective communication.

The use of interpersonal and textual elements appears in moderate proportions, with each around 16.2% and 5.4%, respectively. These elements function to connect

sentences cohesively and add elements of interaction, such as expressing possibility, obligation, or logical relationships between parts of the text. Their presence further supports the cohesiveness and clarity of the text, helping facilitate understanding. Overall, the distribution of these aspects indicates that the expository texts in the textbook are systematically designed to be easily understood and logically organized. The frequent use of declarative sentences, consistent theme-rheme structures, and cohesive markers contribute to clear information delivery and help students recognize typical patterns of information presentation, thereby improving their comprehension of the material.

4. Conclusion

After analyzing the Textual Function in the vocational high student's textbook, the researcher concludes:

1. Realization of Textual Functions: All three types of textual functions within the systemic functional framework Topical Theme, Textual Theme, and Interpersonal Theme are realized in the analyzed text. The Topical Theme appears in all clauses, the Textual Theme is present in the form of simple conjunctions such as *so*, *if*, and *and*, while the Interpersonal Theme is reflected in the use of modality and finite verbal operators.
2. Dominance of Textual Functions: The Topical Theme is the most dominant textual function, appearing in 100% of the clauses. This dominance indicates that the organization of information in vocational texts prioritizes clarity and the placement of main ideas at the beginning of clauses, reinforcing the expository and objective nature of the text. In contrast, the use of Interpersonal and Textual Themes is very limited. The presence of the Interpersonal Theme, although minimal and formal, still suggests the existence of interpersonal elements within the discourse. Meanwhile, the limited realization of the Textual Theme indicates that logical connections between clauses are constructed in a straightforward manner, without extensive use of more complex cohesive functions.

5. Acknowledgment

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