

**AN ANALYSIS OF TEXTUAL FUNCTION ON ENGLISH TEXTBOOK AT SMA
WIYATA DHARMA MEDAN**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the realization of textual function in English listening materials using the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework proposed by Halliday. The focus of this study is on the analysis of Theme types, namely Topical, Interpersonal, and Textual Themes, found in clauses 1–85 in Table 4.1. The data were taken from listening texts in an English textbook for Grade XII students. This study employed a qualitative research design using document analysis as the research method.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Each clause was identified and classified based on its Theme type to examine how textual meaning is organized within the text.

Based on the findings, three types of Theme are identified in the data, namely Topical, Interpersonal, and Textual Themes. The results show that Topical Theme is the most dominant type, accounting for (80%) of the total clauses, followed by Interpersonal Theme (10.6%) and Textual Theme (9.4%). Textual Themes are realized through conjunctions, adjuncts, and other linking elements such as *if*, *maybe*, and *every month*, which function to organize and connect ideas within the text. this study demonstrates that textual function plays a significant role in organizing meaning and maintaining coherence in listening texts, particularly through the use of Theme as the point of departure of the message

Keywords: Textual Function, Theme Types, Topical Theme, Interpersonal Theme, Textual Theme, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Listening Materials

1. PENDAHULUAN

Background of the Study

English serves as an international language for communication across diverse countries and is widely utilized in educational, professional, travel, and technological contexts. The language encompasses four fundamental skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Mastery of these skills, supported by a strong foundation in grammar and vocabulary, enables individuals to access global information and engage in effective communication. English is also prevalent in scientific, business, and academic domains, providing students with greater access to worldwide knowledge and resources.

University-level English language education emphasizes the development of advanced communication and academic competencies. The curriculum includes instruction in speaking, listening, reading, and writing for both academic and professional applications, as well as the study of grammar, vocabulary, translation, linguistics, and pedagogical methods. This academic field prepares graduates for roles such as English teachers, translators, writers, researchers, and other professionals who require effective English proficiency in educational and occupational settings. Consequently, English holds a vital position in higher education. The university-level English Language Education curriculum is structured to enhance students' English proficiency and teaching capabilities. It prioritizes

The four core language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—alongside grammar, vocabulary, linguistics, and instructional methodologies. Through a

combination of theoretical study and practical application, the curriculum equips students to communicate proficiently and to implement effective strategies in English-language teaching and professional environments.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as conceptualized by M.A.K. Halliday, presents language as a system of meaning operating within social contexts. The SFL framework examines how language expresses ideas, establishes relationships, and organizes messages through the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. Studying SFL enables the analysis of texts and facilitates an understanding of how contextual and purposive factors influence linguistic choices.

In many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, listening instruction often relies on comprehension questions rather than discourse analysis. This method tends to direct learners' attention to individual words or sentences rather than to the broader organization of ideas. Consequently, learners may overlook the development of meaning across the spoken text. The textual function, however, offers critical insight into the construction of cohesion and coherence within discourse.

By focusing on textual elements, learners can become more aware of transitional signals, discourse markers, and thematic progression in spoken texts. This awareness helps them anticipate information and understand meaning more efficiently.

(Aspriza et al. 2022), analyzed the textual function of listening texts using

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in an English textbook for senior high school students. The study focused on how theme rheme patterns and cohesive devices were used in listening materials from the textbook "*Bahasa Inggris for Senior High School Grade XII*". The findings showed that topical themes were dominant, indicating that the listening texts primarily emphasized information delivery rather than interaction, thereby affecting students' ability to follow spoken discourse coherently.

(Siregar 2021), investigated the realization of textual function in listening materials of the textbook "*English for SMA/MA Grade XII (Curriculum 2013 Revised Edition)*". Using Halliday's SFL framework, the research examined thematic structures and cohesion in recorded listening passages. The results revealed that limited variation in thematic progression caused difficulties for students in predicting meaning and identifying main ideas while listening.

(Putri and Nasution 2023), studied textual function in listening exercises found in the textbook "*Pathway to English for Senior High School Grade XII*". The research focused on textual meaning, including theme choice and discourse markers in spoken texts. The study concluded that insufficient use of textual signals, such as continuatives and conjunctions, reduced listening comprehension, underscoring the importance of well-structured textual functions in listening materials.

2. KAJIAN TEORI

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), proposed by M.A.K. Halliday, with a specific focus on the textual function as realized in the English textbook for Grade XII SMA Wiyata Dharma. The theoretical framework emphasizes that listening comprehension is not only about understanding vocabulary and grammar, but also about recognizing how spoken texts are organized, connected, and structured to convey meaning coherently. Within SFL, the textual function plays a crucial role in organizing ideational and interpersonal meanings into a unified and meaningful discourse. In textual function helps learners follow the flow of information, identify key points, and understand how ideas are linked across clauses and sentences.

Therefore, this study positions textual function as the central analytical lens for examining listening materials in the Grade XII English textbook used at SMA Wiyata Dharma. The research aims to explore how students interpret and understand spoken texts through the organization of information, cohesion, and thematic structure based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework developed by M.A.K. Halliday.

In this study, the object of analysis is the English textbook for Grade Twelve published by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Kemendikbud). This textbook is officially approved and used in Indonesian schools as a learning source. The study will examine the spoken texts and listening sections in this textbook to identify

how textual features, such as theme-rheme structures, cohesive devices, and information flow, are used and how they may influence students' listening comprehension. By analyzing these aspects, the research seeks to demonstrate how a understanding of textual function can enhance students' comprehension of listening material.

2.2 Theory of Systematic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a linguistic theory developed by M.A.K. Halliday in the 1960s. It views language not only as a system of rules but as a resource for making meaning (*a meaning-making system*).

According to Halliday (1985, 1994), language is a social semiotic system — meaning that language is shaped by and used within social contexts to express meanings and relationships. SFL focuses on how language functions in real communication, rather than on abstract grammatical structures. It emphasizes that every linguistic choice made by a speaker or writer serves a specific function in context.

Therefore, SFL is both *systemic* (providing choices) and *functional* (serving communicative purposes).

According to Halliday (1978, 1994), language serves three metafunctions:

1. Ideational Function, which represents experience and logical relationships.
2. Interpersonal Function, which enacts social roles and relationships.

3. Textual Function, which organizes language into coherent and cohesive discourse.

These three metafunctions work simultaneously in every act of communication. The textual function, the main focus of this study, concerns how language organizes information to make a text cohesive and meaningful. It involves choices that speakers or writers make to structure their messages appropriately within a given context.

2.2.1 Definition Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a linguistic theory first developed by M. A. K. Halliday that views language not simply as a system of grammatical rules, but as a resource for making meaning In contexts.

According to Halliday (1994), language simultaneously performs three main metafunctions: the ideational function, which represents human experience and logical relations; the interpersonal function, which enacts social relationships, attitudes, and interaction between speakers and listeners; and the textual function, which organizes language into coherent and meaningful texts. From this perspective, every clause is understood as a meaningful choice shaped by context and purpose.

learning since it serves as the main source of input for learners. When students are unable to comprehend input that matches their level of understanding, the learning process cannot take place effectively. Therefore, listening becomes an essential foundation for developing speaking ability. While Listening comprehension is a fundamental and complex process that involves multiple stages of understanding spoken messages. It requires learners to actively engage in interpreting meaning from the sounds they hear by combining linguistic knowledge, contextual understanding, and cognitive strategies.

According to Anderson (1995), The process of hearing comprehension can be categorized into three stages: perceptual processing, parsing, and usage. During the perceptual stage, listeners recognize sounds, words, and expressions.. In the parsing stage, they organize these linguistic elements into meaningful units by recognizing grammatical structures and sentence patterns. Finally, in the utilization stage, listeners interpret and connect the information they hear to prior knowledge and the situational context to construct meaning.

H.Douglas Brown (2000), asserts that listening comprehension is not a passive endeavor but rather an active and dynamic process. The listener must discern sounds, comprehend vocabulary and

grammar, interpret intonation and stress, remember information, and integrate all these factors within the social and cultural context of the utterance. Comprehending spoken language necessitates both bottomup processing, which emphasizes the decoding of sounds and words, and topdown processing, which depends on past knowledge, expectations, and context for meaning interpretation. Learners must coordinate these two processes to achieve effective comprehension.

In the context of language learning, especially in an *Extensive Listening* course, students are required to process large amounts of spoken input from various authentic materials such as podcasts, movies, and native speech recordings. This situation demands a high level of listening competence, as students must deal with different accents, speech speeds, and discourse patterns. Vandergrift (1999), explains that skilled listeners continuously integrate bottom-up and top-down processes to build a coherent understanding of what they hear. However, for students who still struggle with vocabulary or contextual inference, these processes may break down, leading to difficulties in comprehension.

Field (2008), also emphasizes that listening is not a linear process but a recursive one, where listeners constantly shift between decoding and predicting meaning. This means that

when learners fail to recognize certain words, they often rely on context and prior knowledge to fill in the gaps. For third-semester students, this process can be particularly challenging because their linguistic knowledge and exposure to authentic materials are still developing. As a result, they may experience cognitive overload, especially when dealing with fast speech or unfamiliar topics.

Rost (2011), further highlights that the success of listening comprehension depends on the listener's cognitive and metacognitive abilities, such as attention control, working memory, and selfmonitoring. Students who can focus on key information, evaluate their understanding, and apply listening strategies (e.g., predicting, clarifying, summarizing) tend to achieve better comprehension outcomes. Therefore, understanding the process of listening comprehension helps both teachers and learners identify where communication breaks down and how to address it effectively.

In the case of third-semester students taking an Extensive Listening course, awareness of how listening comprehension works is crucial. It enables them to recognize their own weaknesses, such as insufficient vocabulary, difficulty catching key words, or lack of concentration, and develop strategies to overcome them. Teachers, on the other hand, can design appropriate listening activities that strengthen

both bottom-up and top-down processing, ultimately improving students' ability to comprehend authentic spoken English.

2.3 The Importance of listening in Language Learning

Listening is regarded as one of the most essential abilities in acquiring a foreign or second language. It serves as a crucial basis for the development of other language skills, including speaking, reading, and writing. As H.Douglas Brown (2000), explains listening is the primary channel through which learners receive language input; without sufficient comprehension of what they hear, learners cannot produce language effectively. Listening, therefore, serves as the gateway to language acquisition, allowing students to internalize linguistic forms, vocabulary, and patterns of communication through exposure and understanding.

Furthermore, according to Rost (2011), emphasizes that listening is not a passive process but an active, interpretive act in which the listener constructs meaning by connecting new auditory information to prior knowledge. Through listening, learners acquire authentic language input that reflects real-life communication, which is essential for improving their overall communicative competence. Similarly, Vandergrift (1999), states that "listening provides the basis for the development of all other skills,"

highlighting that successful language learning largely depends on the learner's ability to process and comprehend spoken messages.

In the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, listening becomes even more significant because learners are often exposed to limited opportunities to engage in real-time communication. According to Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016), listening skill helps students develop their pronunciation, intonation, and fluency, as it familiarizes them with the natural rhythm and patterns of spoken English. When students practice listening extensively, they gain more exposure to authentic speech and real communicative situations, which contributes to improving their confidence and comprehension in both academic and social settings.

In addition, Renandya & Farrell (2011), point out that listening contributes substantially to vocabulary growth and linguistic intuition. Through repeated exposure to meaningful input, learners subconsciously acquire new words, structures, and expressions. This process supports This approach aligns with Young, (1988) Input Hypothesis, which posits that language learning happens when students encounter understandable input that's just a bit above their existing skill level ($i+1$). As a result, the greater the exposure learners have to listening and

comprehending genuine resources, the more effortlessly they pick up the language.

3. METODOLOGI PENELITIAN

Research Design

This study will use a Descriptive Qualitative Research Design. The qualitative method will be employed because this research aims to analyze and describe in depth how Textual Functions are realized in texts contained in English textbooks. A descriptive approach will be applied to present the analysis results in the form of systemic-functional linguistic descriptions, focusing on textual components such as Theme–Rheme organization, cohesive devices (conjunctions, reference, substitution, ellipsis), and information structure (Given–New). The analysis will not involve statistical hypothesis testing; instead, it will describe how these textual elements contribute to the coherence and cohesion of listening materials.

The data will consist of selected passages from English textbooks, which will be examined to identify the dominant patterns of Theme selection (Topical, Interpersonal, and Textual Theme), types of cohesive ties used to link ideas within the texts, and the flow of information that supports learners' comprehension. The descriptive method will allow the researcher to

present detailed linguistic findings that show how textual function is constructed and how it aids the overall organization and clarity of listening texts.

4. HASIL DAN PRMBAHASAN

Discussion

This study aims to analyze the use of Theme in the text based on the theory proposed by M.A.K. Halliday within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The analysis focuses on three types of Theme: Topical Theme, Textual Theme, and Interpersonal Theme. Based on the data presented in Table 4.2, all three types of Theme are found in the text with different frequencies and percentages.

The findings show that Topical Theme is the most dominant type, with a percentage of 100% of the total data. This result is consistent with Halliday's theory, which states that every clause must contain a Topical Theme as the point of departure of the message. The high percentage of Topical Theme indicates that the text mainly focuses on presenting the main ideas clearly and directly. Each clause begins with a clear topic, allowing readers to easily understand what the sentence is about.

The dominance of Topical Theme also reflects the nature of the text as an informative text. Since the

main purpose is to deliver information, the writer prioritizes clarity and directness. Therefore, this finding strongly answers the research problem regarding how Theme is used to organize meaning in the text. The high percentage confirms that Topical Theme plays a central role in structuring the message.

In contrast, Textual Theme appears in a much smaller proportion, with only 9,4% of the total data. This relatively low percentage becomes an important finding in this study. Textual Theme typically functions to connect clauses and organize the flow of information through the use of conjunctions and linking words such as *and*, *but*, *because*, and *then*.

However, the low percentage of Textual Theme indicates that the text does not rely heavily on explicit connectors to achieve coherence. Instead, the text tends to use simple and direct sentence structures. Even though connectors are limited, the text remains understandable because the ideas are clearly presented in each clause.

This suggests that coherence in the text is mainly achieved through the consistency of Topical Theme rather than through the use of Textual Theme. In other words, the continuity of the topic helps maintain the flow of the text. This finding is important because it shows that a text can still be coherent even with minimal use of

connectors, as long as the main ideas are clearly structured.

Furthermore, this result supports Halliday's theory, which states that Textual Theme helps organize the text but does not necessarily need to be dominant. In this case, the text prioritizes clarity of information over structural complexity. The low percentage of Textual Theme (9,4%) indicates that the text is straightforward and easy to follow, which is a typical characteristic of educational texts.

Meanwhile, Interpersonal Theme is found at 10,6 %, which is higher than Textual Theme but still lower than Topical Theme. Interpersonal Theme functions to express the speaker's attitude, opinion, or interaction with the reader. It may appear in the form of modal verbs, questions, or evaluative expressions.

The moderate percentage of Interpersonal Theme shows that although the text mainly focuses on delivering information, it still includes some elements of interaction. This makes the text more engaging and not purely objective. However, since the percentage is not dominant, it can be concluded that interaction is not the main focus of the text.

Overall, the distribution of Theme types Topical Theme (80%), Textual Theme (9,4%), and

Interpersonal Theme (10,6%) shows that the text is well-structured, clear, and communicative. The dominance of Topical Theme ensures that the main ideas are always clear, while the limited use of Textual Theme indicates a simple and direct structure. Interpersonal Theme, although less frequent, adds a small degree of interaction and evaluation.

In conclusion, the findings of this study confirm that Theme plays a crucial role in organizing meaning in a text. The dominance of Topical Theme and the low percentage of Textual Theme indicate that the text prioritizes clarity and simplicity over complexity. This is in line with the purpose of the text as a learning material, which aims to make information easy to understand.

5. KESIMPULAN DAN SARAN

Based on the findings and discussion in Chapter IV, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the use of textual function in the English textbook analyzed in this study, based on the theory proposed by M.A.K. Halliday.

First, this study found that there are three types of Theme used in the text, namely Topical Theme, Interpersonal Theme, and Textual Theme. These findings answer the first research problem, which aims to identify the types of textual function found in the listening material.

Second, among the three types, Topical Theme is the most dominant, with a percentage of 80% (68 data). This indicates that most clauses in the text begin with a clear subject or topic, which functions as the starting point of the message. This finding supports Halliday's theory that Topical Theme is an obligatory element in every clause and plays a central role in organizing meaning.

Third, Interpersonal Theme appears in 10.6% (9 data). This shows that there are some elements of interaction in the text, such as questions, modal expressions, and responses. However, the relatively low percentage indicates that the text is not primarily focused on interaction, but rather on delivering information.

Fourth, Textual Theme is found in 9.4% (8 data), which is the lowest among the three types. This indicates that the text does not heavily rely on conjunctions or linking elements to organize the flow of information. Instead, coherence is mainly achieved through the consistent use of Topical Theme.

Overall, these findings answer the second research problem, which concerns the dominant textual function. The dominance of Topical Theme shows that the text is informative, clear, and straightforward, which is appropriate for educational materials, especially in EFL contexts.

In conclusion, the use of Theme in the analyzed text reflects the characteristics of an effective learning material, where clarity of information is prioritized over complexity. This is in line with the function of textbooks, which aim to help students understand content easily and systematically

5.2 Suggestion

Based on the results of this research, several suggestions are proposed in order to provide meaningful contributions to various parties, particularly in the field of English language teaching and Systemic Functional Linguistics.

First, for English teachers, it is highly recommended to pay greater attention to the aspect of textual function (Theme–Rheme) in the teaching and learning process, especially in listening materials. In many classroom practices, listening activities tend to focus mainly on vocabulary recognition and general comprehension, without considering how information is structured within clauses. In fact, according to M.A.K. Halliday, Theme plays a crucial role in determining the point of departure of a message in a clause. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to guide students in identifying Theme, particularly Topical Theme, so that students can more easily grasp the main idea of the text. In addition, teachers can incorporate simple

Theme–Rheme analysis exercises into classroom activities to enhance students’ critical thinking skills and awareness of language structure.

Second, for students, it is suggested that they do not only focus on understanding vocabulary or translating sentences, but also learn how sentences are constructed. Students need to be trained to recognize the beginning part of a clause (Theme) as a key to understanding the message conveyed. Considering that the findings show the dominance of Topical Theme, students can use this knowledge to identify the main topic of each clause more effectively. Furthermore, understanding Interpersonal Theme and Textual Theme can help students interpret interactional meanings and the logical connection between ideas within a text. As a result, students’ listening skills will improve not only in terms of comprehension but also in terms of structural awareness.

Third, for textbook writers or material developers, it is suggested to consider a more balanced use of different types of Theme in the texts they produce. The findings of this study indicate that the use of Textual Theme is relatively limited, which means that the flow of information is not fully supported by cohesive devices such as conjunctions or discourse markers. Therefore, textbook writers are encouraged to

design texts that are not only clear in delivering information but also well-organized in terms of cohesion and coherence through more varied Theme usage. In addition, learning materials may include simple explanations or examples of Theme–Rheme structure to help students understand how texts are systematically organized.

Finally, for future researchers, it is recommended to expand this study by exploring a broader scope of analysis. This research focuses only on textual function, leaving opportunities to investigate other metafunctions, namely ideational function and interpersonal function, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the text. Future studies may also use more varied data sources, such as authentic spoken discourse, digital media, or real classroom interactions. Furthermore, researchers can examine the relationship between Theme–Rheme understanding and students’ comprehension ability, so that the findings can provide not only theoretical insights but also practical implications for language teaching.

In conclusion, it is expected that these suggestions will not only contribute to the development of linguistic theory but also provide practical benefits in improving the quality of English language teaching, particularly in enhancing students’

understanding of spoken texts and the organization of information within language.

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