The Journal of Process Types in Transitivity System

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ABSTRACT

This study concentrates on the analysis of process types in transitivity system, which is a very important branch of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. The writer turns to this theory because of its belief that language can be considered as human representation of the world or reality. From the analysis, the writer hopes that the ones who are interested in this study can learn how language represents the world inside the human beings as well as the world around them, so that the analysis can also serve as an effective way in any kinds of text analysis.

Key words: Process type; Transsitivity system

INTRODUCTION

Metafunction

Communication is an interactive process to negotiate the meaning by using the language. That is to say that, when people use language, their language acts are the expression of meaning. The language whether it occurs in spoken or written way is labeled as text. A text in Halliday's terminology is a chunk of language that is actually spoken or written for the purpose of communication by real people in actual circumstances (Bloor and Bloor, 1995:4).

Language use (text) is structured in response to the needs of people as social beings. The use of language in order to fulfill three functions in their lives is known as metafunctions, namely to represent (ideational function), to exchange (interpersonal function), and to organize experience (textual function) (Saragih, 2010:1). Analyzing

metafunctions in a text may help people understand the information contain a text, especially how the information develops.

1. Ideational Function

Ideational function is a function where language serves for the expression of "content": that is, of the speaker's experience of the real world, including the inner world of his own consciousness (Webster, 2002:174-175). The ideational function of language is concerned with the communication and interlinking of ideas and may itself be broken down into the experiential and logical functions (Morley, 2000:11). Logical function is used to relate experiences, and experiential function is used to describe experience.

The experiential function is the one whereby a speaker expresses the propositional content elements of his/her utterance, in other words communicates his/her ideas (Morley, 2000:11). At the simplest level, language reflects people's view of the world as consisting of 'goings-on' (verbs) involving things (noun) which may have attributes (adjectives) and which go on against background details of place, time, manner, etc. (adverbials). The experiential function is realized by the transitivity system.

2. Transitivity System

Thompson (1996:78) stated that transitivity refers to a system for describing the whole clause, rather than just the verb and its object. It describes how meaning is carried across from subject to predicate through the verb (Hancock, 2005:91). It may also help to think about verb phrases as determining kinds of representational processes. In this processes, different kinds of participants are involved. In a rough way, to describe a world in which things are happening can be seen in a clause.

A clause is a group of words including a subject and a verb forming part of a sentence (Hicks, 2007: 20). Halliday stated that a clause construes the world as goings on consisting of a nuclear process and participant, additional participants, and circumstances (Martin, 1992:10). The concepts of process, participant and circumstance are semantic categories which explain in the most general way how phenomena of the real world are represented as linguistic structure (Halliday, 1994:109). Processes are expressed by verbal groups, participants by nominal groups, and circumstances by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases.

a. Process

Processes are central to transitivity. The process centers on that part of the clause that is realized by the verbal group, but it can also be regarded as what 'goings-on' are represented in the whole clause (Bloor and Bloor, 1995:110). There are indeed six different process types identified by Halliday: material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational, and existential.

Material Process

Semantically, material processes indicate activities or events, which happen in the outside world of human beings (Saragih, 2010:7). This process refers to physical experience of human beings. Halliday (1994:110) states that material processes are processes of 'doing'. They express the notion that some entity 'does' something – which may be done 'to' some other entity. So, clauses with a material process obligatorily have a doing (process), a doer (participant I) and an entity to which the process is extended or directed (participant II).

Syntactically, the unmarked tense associated to material process is the present continuous tense.

Mental Process

Mental processes refer to verbs indicating perception, cognition, affection, and desire (Saragih, 2010:7). It enables language users to express opinion, thoughts and tastes that help to identify their definitions of reality. This process type tends to be realized through the use of verbs like *think, know, feel, smell, hear, see, want, like, hate, please, repel, admire, enjoy, fear.*

Mental processes differ from Material ones in as much as the latter are physical, moving, overt doings. Semantically, a mental process involves sense, which is inside the human or conscious being. Mental process is related to psychological matters. The participant that is related to the sense must be a conscious or human being. The person in whose mind the mental process occurs is not really 'acting'.

Relational Process

Relational process construes being and relation among entities through identification, attribution, and possession (Saragih, 2010:8). The process occurs outside and inside human

being. Relational processes are typically realized by the verb 'be' or some verbs of the same class (known as copular verbs); for examples, seem, become, appear, etc, or sometime by verbs such as have, own, possess.

Halliday (1994:119) states that relational process is divided into two modes: identifying relational process and attributive relational process.

Identifying Relational Process

In the identifying mode, something has an identity assigned to it. It means that one entity is being used to identify another: '*x* is identified by *a*', or '*a* serves to define the identity of *x*' (Halliday, 1994: 122). Structurally, the *x*-element is labeled as identified, which is to be identified, and the *a*-element is labeled as identifier, which serves an identity. This mode is realized by the verbs: 'be' (is, am, are, was, were…), become, etc.

- **Attributive Relational Process**

Attributive relational processes are the processes which assign a quality. '*a* is an attribute of *x*'. Other words, in this mode an entity has some quality ascribed or attributed to it (Halliday, 1994:120). This type is realized by the verbs: sound, look, play, cost, have, get, seem, etc.

Behavioural Process

Behavioural Processes are processes of physiological and psychological behaviour, like breathing, dreaming, snoring, smiling, hiccupping, looking, watching, listening, and pondering (Gerot and Wignel, 1994:60). They are the least distinct of all the six process types because they have no clearly defined characteristics of their own; rather, they are partly like the material and partly like the mental. Other words this type is the grey area between material and mental processes. Typically, behavioural processes have only one participant who is 'behaving': that is the human who is typically conscious being.

Verbal Process

Speaking is certainly a kind of action, and to some extent it would not be unreasonable to treat it as material process. On the other hand, it has some features of mental process, especially if we believe that verbalization of thoughts is a kind of inner speech. A

case can be made for postulating a new category of process: verbal processes – verbs of 'saying'.

Saragih (2010:8) states that verbal processes show activities related to information. Specifically, the process includes that of saying, commanding, asking, and offering.

Existential Process

Existential processes are processes of existence. These represent that something exists or happens. According to Hancock (2005:240), existential process is a clause that presents an entity as existing without predicating anything additional about it. Moreover, Saragih (2010:9) states that existential processes share features of relational process in the sense that the common verb is *BE* (*is, am, are, was, were, has, have been, etc.*) and other verbs such as *go, come, toil, exist, remain, arise, occur, happen, take place*.

The existential processes are normally recognizable because it is signaled by 'there'. The word 'there' is needed as subject, but it has no experiential meaning in a sense, its function is to avoid the need for, or the possibility of, a second participant in the clause, because there is only one participant inside.

CONCLUSION

In Halliday's Functional Grammar System, language has three basic functions: ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function. Each of them can be realized by one or more sets of grammatical system of language. The ideational function, Halliday mentions, concerns how human beings build a mental picture of reality with language, how they make sense of what goes on around them and inside them. Those goings-on consist of happening, doing, meaning, being and becoming. In the process of representing, clause plays a central role, because it embodies a general principle of modeling experience, namely, the principle that reality is made up of Processes. Transitivity system, according to Halliday, is a set of grammatical system which construes the world of experience into a manageable set of Process Types (Halliday, 1994:106). There are six principle processes types in transitivity system: Material, Mental, Relational, Behavioural, Verbal, and Existential. Process types in transitivity system helps human beings recognize and encode their experiences or phenomena of the real world.

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