

## MEASURING TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IN TEACHERS' REPORT TEXTS

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**Abstract:** This study aims at observing the teachers' professional competence by investigating the report texts written by three English teachers in a junior high school in terms of their schematic structures and linguistic features. To achieve this aim, a qualitative case study design involving text analysis of English teachers' report texts and interviews with these English teachers was employed in this research. The results of this research show that generally the English teachers have demonstrated sufficient ability in applying appropriate schematic structures and linguistic features relevant to the criteria of a report text. However, the results of this research also indicate that some improvements in understanding and writing a report text, especially in terms of schematic structure, linguistic features, and Theme progressions, are needed in order to enhance the teachers' subject matter content knowledge.

**Keywords:** *Professional Competence, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Report Texts*

### Introduction

Teacher competences play an important role in the effectiveness of teaching and learning process for students because the competence of the teacher will contribute to the way the teacher performs in practice (Birman et al., as cited in Liakopoulou, 2011) and will have a certain effect on student learning (Scheerens et al., as cited in Day & Gu, 2010).

In Indonesia, according to Government Rule Number 19, 2005, there are four main competences that should be possessed by the teacher; one of those competences is known as professional competence. Relating to professional competence, Soepriyatna (2012) stated that

the teachers who possess adequate professional competence will explain the material confidently because they understand the concept and help their students when they have difficulties in understanding particular concepts. Thus, it is very necessary for the teachers to have sufficient professional competence.

In relation to this study, English teachers in junior high schools are also required to have adequate professional competence. However, in reality, the pre-test for professional teacher in Central Kalimantan, held by the Education Assurance Quality of Central Kalimantan showed that the ability of English teachers in junior high school, especially to

comprehend the type of texts is still low (Luardini & Asi, 2014, p. 81). Thus, this indicates that there are still many English teachers in junior high school who lack the sufficient ability in understanding the subject matter which is one of the aspects of professional competence. Whereas, according to Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, and Major (2014) if the teachers' knowledge regarding the subject matter falls below a certain level, it will be a significant impediment to their students' learning. Considering this, it is important for the teacher to improve their professional competence.

With regard to the above fact, according to Ur (2010) to improve their professional competence, teachers must constantly upgrade their knowledge and understanding of language and language learning. In relation to that, Richards and Farrell (2005, p. vii) suggested that one way that the teachers can do to upgrade their knowledge of the subject matter is to engage themselves in self-reflection and evaluation.

To follow Richards and Farrell's suggestion, investigating the text, in this case report text included in junior high school curriculum, composed by English teachers in junior high schools is crucial since it can be one of the ways that can facilitate English teachers in junior high

schools to do self-reflection and evaluation as regards their understanding about the subject matter, that will lead them to the improvement of their subject matter knowledge.

In relation to the text analysis of the report texts written by the teachers for this study, Systemic Functional Linguistics proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) is used. Through Systemic Functional Linguistics the text is analyzed to show the functional organization of its structure and to show what meaningful choices have been made, each one seen in the context of what might have been meant, as well as what have been meant but is not (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 24).

Linking to the analysis of the texts, the somewhat similar study has also been conducted by Luardini and Asi (2014). In their study, they analyzed four narrative texts written by four English teachers at four private junior high schools in Palangka Raya by applying Systemic Functional Linguistics. This study revealed that in terms of linguistic structures, schematic structure and thematic structure, the texts written by four English teachers at four private junior high schools in Palangka Raya fulfilled the minimal criteria of a narrative text. Thus, the study implied that when the teacher can only show the

minimum quality, it will also affect the students' achievement.

Reflecting on Luardini and Asi (2014), there is presumably a need for conducting more studies to investigate the texts written by English teachers in junior high school. It is hoped that understanding the report texts written by the English teachers might assist the teacher in improving their subject matter knowledge, which is in this case about report texts.

Thus, this research aims at observing the teachers' professional competence by investigating the report texts written by English teachers in a junior high school in terms of schematic structures and linguistic features.

## **Methodology**

In order to achieve the research aim, a qualitative case study involving document analysis and interviews was employed in this research. Thus, the data obtained was derived from three English teachers in a junior high school in which the teachers were asked to write two report texts. Regarding this, the report texts composed by the three English teachers were analyzed by using three systems in Systemic Functional Linguistic framework, Transitivity, Mood, and Theme systems. The use of these systems helped the researcher to look at how English teachers

composed the information embodied in the report texts through a set of linguistic features and schematic structure which disclosed their ability in writing and understanding report text that may reflect the teachers' professional competence. Furthermore, the data obtained from the interviews were analyzed based on the writing process theory proposed by Badger and White (2000) so as to confirm the teachers' experiences in composing report texts and were triangulated with the result of texts analysis in order to check the originality of the texts that they have written.

## **Data Presentation and Discussion**

In this section, the findings and discussions will be divided into two parts. The first part of this section will present the findings and discussions of the report texts analysis in terms of their schematic structures and linguistic features. The second part will elaborate the findings and discussions of the interview data.

### **1. The Results of Report Texts Analysis**

As there are three English teachers involved in this research, the discussions and findings of the report texts analysis will be elaborated in order, starting from Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3.

### 1.1 The Results of the Report Texts Analyses Written by Teacher 1 (Text 1 and Text 2)

To begin, in terms of schematic structure, it is found that Texts 1 and 2 composed by Teacher 1 have followed the schematic structure criteria of a report text as proposed by Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks, and Yallop (2006), Emilia (2011), and Gerot and Wignell (1994), in which both texts have general classification and description elements of a report text. The existences of these two elements in both texts composed by Teacher 1 allow both texts (Text 1 and Text 2) to achieve the purpose of the texts.

Subsequently, in terms of linguistic features, generally both texts written by Teacher 1 have applied the appropriate linguistic features of a report text as suggested by Derewianka (as cited in Emilia, 2011) and Gerot and Wignell (1994), in which these two texts focus on generic participants (Text 1: Coconut and Text 2: School), use simple present tense, as in "*Coconut tree grows in hot area*" (Text 1) and "*Even the interaction happens not only between the student*" (Text 2), use formal and objective language, as in "*The most coconut tree can be found in Asia and Pacific countries*" (Text 1) and "*It is better for the school to have a language*

*laboratory*" (Text 2), and contain technical terms, as expressed in "*palmae family*" (Text 1) and "*curriculum*" (Text 2). In details, the linguistic features analyses using Transitivity, Mood, and Theme systems also indicate that both texts, to some extent, have revealed Teacher 1's sufficient ability in applying appropriate process types and type of Mood relevant to the genre of the text. In terms of process types, one of the processes employed in the text that is appropriate with a report text is relational processes, for instances, as expressed in "*It is one of monocotil seed*" (Text 1) and "*School is a place where the teaching learning activities happen*" (Text 2). These relational processes, as stated by Derewianka (as cited in Emilia, 2014, p. 165) help describe features and characteristics, introduce technical terms, provide definitions and relate cause and effect. Moreover, in terms of type of Mood, both texts composed by Teacher 1 employ declarative Mood. By expressing the ideas of the text through declarative Mood, as Halliday (as cited in Emilia, 2014) pointed out, the type of role in exchange used in this text is giving and the commodity exchanged is in a form of information. However, from the results of Theme system analysis of both texts, especially Text 2, it is revealed that in terms of Theme progression, Text 2 does not employ the

Theme reiteration pattern, the pattern that provides text with a clear focus (Egins, 2004). Thus, the absence of this pattern may indicate that this text does not have a clear focus. Moreover, although Text 2 has applied the zig-zag pattern, this pattern only occurs once. Thus, it seems that Teacher 1 still needs improvements in constructing her ideas in a written text in order to create a cohesive text.

## **1.2 The Results of the Report Texts Analyses Written by Teacher 2 (Text 3 and Text 4)**

The analyses of Texts 3 and 4 in terms of schematic structure and linguistic features have indicated that Teacher 2 seems to have unstable control in understanding and in writing material about report text. In terms of schematic structure and linguistic features, Text 3 composed by Teacher 2 has achieved the criteria of a report text respectively as proposed by Butt et al. (2006), Emilia (2011), Gerot and Wignell (1994) and as suggested by Derewianka (as cited in Emilia, 2011) and Gerot and Wignell (1994). Moreover, since Teacher 2 has applied some textual Themes, as expressed in “*Besides, this (these) leaves...*”, “*and the leaves extract can decrease...*” in order to relate the clause to its contexts (Egins, 2004, p. 305) and applied the Theme reiteration patterns

in order to support Text 3 with a clear focus (Egins, 2004, p. 324), Teacher 2 seems to make an effort to make this text to be a cohesive and coherent text. However, based on the result of analysis of Text 4 (the second text composed by Teacher 2), it seems that Teacher 2 has mistaken the other type of text for the report text that she composed. Thus, in terms of its schematic structure and some of its linguistic features, Text 4 does not quite follow the criteria of a report text.

Reflecting from the results of analysis of both texts above, it seems that Teacher 2 needs some improvement in understanding a report text, so that the report text that she composes will not overlap with the other genres or text types. Moreover, the improvement is also needed, so that Teacher 2 can upgrade her subject matter content knowledge, which is in this case about report text.

## **1.3 The Results of the Report Texts Analyses Written by Teacher 3 (Text 5 and Text 6)**

Firstly, seen from schematic structure aspect, the analyses of both texts (Text 5 and Text 6) written by Teacher 3 show that Teacher 3 has a good control in understanding the schematic structure of a report text since the two texts that she composed have the general classification

and description elements, the two elements which construct a report text (Butt et al., 2006; Emilia, 2011; Gerot & Wignell, 1994).

Turning to the results of linguistic features analyses, it is found that both texts, to some degree, have employed the appropriate linguistic features as identified by Derewianka (as cited in Emilia, 2011) and Gerot and Wignell (1994), in which both texts focus on general participants (Text 5: Cat and Text 6: Hypothermia), mainly use simple present tenses, as in “*they have poor colors vision*” (Text 5) and “*It classically occurs from...*” (Text 6), contain technical terms, as in “*Felidae family*” (Text 5) and “*hypothermia*” (Text 6), use descriptive language, as expressed in “*cat has strong, flexible body, quick reflexes, sharp claws*” (Text 5), and employed some relational processes.

In details, the results of linguistic features analysis using Transitivity system show that both texts, to some extent, have employed the process types, such as relational and material processes, that allow these texts to achieve the purpose of a report text. Moreover, the results of Mood system analysis show that both texts have employed declarative Mood. The use of this type of Mood in both texts indicates that all the clauses in both texts are in the forms of statement, the form that is commonly used

to give information (Butt et al., 2006, p. 94), which to some extents it is also in accordance with the purpose of a report text which is to give information to the readers.

Nevertheless, from the results of Theme system analysis of Text 6, it seems that Teacher 3 still needs some improvements in constructing her ideas in a written text in order to create a cohesive report text.

## **2. The Results of Interview Data**

Similar to the previous part, the discussions and findings of the interview data will be presented in order, starting from Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3.

### **2.1 The Results of Interview Data of Teacher 1**

In order to confirm the teachers' experiences in composing report texts and to check the originality of the texts that they have written, the discussions of interview data of Teacher 1 will be focused on the view points of the teacher toward the process of writing

To begin, referring to the Teacher 1's experience in writing the report texts, as it is indicated below:

In writing the report text, firstly we have to know what report text is, what differentiates it from descriptive text, how it grammatical features are, and

what the generic structures that construct the report text are. (Teacher 1)

It seemed that the first thing that Teacher 1 considered when she composed the texts was the understanding of the text in terms of its forms, including definition, grammatical features, and generic structure. Subsequently, the following step that Teacher 1 experienced in writing the report texts was understanding the report texts that she was going to write in terms of its content (including the knowledge about the entity going to be discussed), as can be seen from the excerpt of the interview below:

...and the more important thing is its content, in report text the content should be factual and should be based on the science knowledge, just like the text that I have made that is about coconut. I have never found a report text about coconut. That was why I read a book about coconut when making this text. (Teacher 1)

From the findings above, it can be inferred that in writing the report texts, Teacher 1 implicitly experienced the process of building knowledge of the field and modeling stages, the two processes involved in the process-genre approach in writing (Badger & White, 2000), when she composed Text 1 and Text 2. Regarding this, Teacher 1 experienced building knowledge of the field stage when she read

the book related to the topic (coconut) that she was going to write. By engaging herself in this stage, Teacher 1 gained the background knowledge about the topic that she was going to write (Feez, as cited in Emilia, 2011, p. 33). Moreover, the result of this stage is also reflected through the texts composed by Teacher 1, in which based on the texts analysis it is revealed that Teacher 1 was able to give information about the topic involved in her texts, through the general classification and description elements of the texts.

Furthermore, seen from the findings, it is implied that Teacher 1 also experienced the modeling stage, in which the teacher recalled the definition, generic structure, and the rhetorical features of the report text when she composed the texts. Relevant to the previous statement, according to Hyland (as cited in Pujianto, 2014), this modeling stage enabled the writer to obtain more detailed information regarding “the stages of the genre and its key grammatical and rhetorical features” (p. 101), thus, it is reasonable that the analyses of texts composed by Teacher 1 in terms of schematic structures and linguistic features also show that both texts created by Teacher 1 have fulfilled the criteria of a report text both in generic structure and linguistic features.

Additionally, when the teacher constructed the texts independently, she made the outline first by classifying the idea for each element of report text and in the end the teacher did the revision of the report texts that she made, especially in terms of structure, word choice and content. Therefore, it means that Teacher 1 experienced the process of planning or drafting and revising the texts before she published or finished her writing which to some extent, this process realized the process approach in independent construction stage of process genre approach (White & Badger, 2000).

## **2.2 The Results of Interview Data of Teacher 2**

Similar to the previous point, this point will also present the discussion of the interview data based on Teacher 2's perspective toward the process of writing. Firstly, as it is indicated by Teacher 2 below:

First, I should choose the topic or the theme that interest me. Then, I searched the factual resources of the topic because a report text should be written based on factual information, research, or the other resource books. After I felt that the topic is appropriate, I began to read texts related to the topic from the newspaper and internet. (Teacher 2)

It can be assumed that in composing the report texts Teacher 2 engaged herself in the process of reading some sources related to the topics going to be discussed in her texts from newspaper and internet before she started writing the texts. This process implied that Teacher 2 experienced the building knowledge of the field stage that enabled her to obtain the background knowledge about the topic that she was going to write (Feez, as cited in Emilia, 2011, p. 33) and knew exactly the specific languages used in the text types (Emilia, as cited in Pujianto, 2014, p. 101). Regarding this, the results of analysis of Text 3 and Text 4 also indicate that Teacher 2 has sufficient knowledge in writing the information related to the topics being discussed in both of the texts composed by her.

Moreover, when being asked about whether or not she re-read the concept of a report text in terms of its form (schematic structures and linguistic features), Teacher 2 said:

Yes, of course. In writing texts there are rules, either from its lexicogrammatical aspect or from its generic structure. Thus, the texts should be made based on those rules. (Teacher 2)

Thus, it is indicated that Teacher 2 seemed to take into account the forms of the genre when she was engaged in the

process of writing, which to some degree, it also implies that Teacher 2 experienced the modeling stage, the process that enabled the writer to get in-depth information regarding “the stages of the genre and its key grammatical and rhetorical features” (Hyland, as cited in Pujianto, 2014, p. 101), when she composed her report texts. Relating these findings with the analysis results of Text 3, it can be said that this process has helped Teacher 2 in creating a text that fulfilled the criteria of a report text, either in terms of its schematic structure or in terms of its linguistic features. Nevertheless, in contrary with the result of analysis of Text 3, the results of analysis of Text 4 show that this text cannot be considered as an instance of a report text. Therefore, it may indicate that Teacher 2 needs to spend more time in comprehending about report text.

In addition, during the process of constructing the texts independently, Teacher 2 started it by making an outline and in the end the teacher revised the report texts in terms of structure, content and pattern of sentence, meaning that Teacher 2 employed the process approach in the independent construction stage of genre-based approach, which according to Badger and White (as cited in Pujianto, 2014, p. 101), it refers to process-genre approach.

### **2.3 The Results of Interview Data of Teacher 3**

This point will present the discussion of the interview data based on Teacher 3’s perspective toward the process of writing. To begin, related to Teacher 3’s perspective toward the process of writing that she engaged in when writing the report texts, there were three main steps that she experienced. These steps can be implied from the following excerpt of interview:

First, it should be related to its rhetorical steps. The second step was looking for the data which supports the supporting ideas to complete the information relating to the topic. The following step was suiting the tenses which would be used to write report text, which was present tense. Besides, I read some examples of report texts, which were used to be the model texts. (Teacher 3)

Considering the result of the interview above, it seems that Teacher 3 implicitly went through the modeling and building knowledge of the field stages when composing the report texts. Since the modeling stage helped Teacher 3 to get in-depth information regarding the report text in terms of its schematic structure and its linguistic features (Hyland, as cited in Pujianto, 2014, p. 101) and building knowledge of the field stage has facilitated

Teacher 3 in obtaining the background knowledge about the topic that she was going to write (Feez, as cited in Emilia, 2011, p. 33), the results of text analysis of Text 5 and Text 6 reveal that to some extent both texts have followed the schematic structure and linguistic features criteria of a report text.

Furthermore, as Teacher 3 composed the texts independently, she made the outline first by classifying the main and supporting ideas for each rhetorical steps of report text and in the end the teacher did the revision of the report texts that she made, especially in terms of its structure and spelling. Therefore, it means that Teacher 3 was aware that writing is a long and recursive process that cannot be finished in one time (Gibbons, as cited in Emilia, 2011, p. 45). Moreover, it also indicates that Teacher 1 experienced the process of planning or drafting and revising the texts before she published or finished her writing which to some degree, this process realized the process approach in independent construction stage of process genre approach (White & Badger, 2000, p. 159).

### **Conclusions**

In summary, reflecting from the results of the findings and discussions, it can be concluded that to some extent the three English teachers have demonstrated

sufficient ability in applying appropriate schematic structures and linguistic features relevant to the criteria of a report text, meaning that generally the teachers have sufficient professional competence in understanding the subject matter about report text. However, some improvements in understanding, writing, and developing material about report text, especially in terms of schematic structure, linguistic features, and Theme progressions, are needed in order to enhance the teachers' subject matter content knowledge about report text.

Additionally, considering the findings and discussions of this research, it is suggested that the English teachers involved in this research can use the results of this research as the reference to facilitate them to engage themselves in self-reflection and evaluation that will lead them to an opportunity that enables them to update their knowledge and understanding about the subject matter, in this case about report text.

Moreover, for further research, adding the modality system is also recommended to get more information about the texts being analyzed.

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