

# FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR

(An Introduction to Metafunctional Components of Language)

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## Abstract:

*Functional Grammar describes grammar in functional terms in which a language is interpreted as a system of meanings. The language system consists of three macro-functions known as meta-functional components: the interpersonal function, the ideational function, and the textual function, all of which make a contribution to the structure of a text. The concepts discussed in Functional Grammar aims at giving contribution to the understanding of a text and evaluation of a text, which can be applied for text analysis. Using the concepts in Functional Grammar, English teachers may help the students learn how various grammatical features and grammatical systems are used in written texts so that they can read and write better.*

## Key Words:

*Functional Grammar, meta-functional components*

## INTRODUCTION

The linguistic theories maybe divided into two broad schools of thought known as formal versus functional orientations. As it is said by Halliday<sup>1</sup> that the fundamental opposition in grammars of the second half of the twentieth century is between those that are primarily syntagmatic in orientation, the formal grammars, rooted in logic and philosophy and those that are primarily paradigmatic, the functional ones rooted in rhetoric and ethnography. The former sees a language as a list of structures,

from which regular relationships may be established. They tend to take grammar as the foundation of language. The latter see language as a network of relations, using structures as the realization of these relationships. They emphasize variables among different languages, to take semantic as the foundation, and so to be organized around the text, or discourse.

Within each orientation there are a number of competing theories. One of the famous structuralists was Ferdinand de Saussure. One of the most interest is his distinction between *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* is the system of language in social context in which

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<sup>1</sup>Halliday, M.A.K. 1994. An Introduction to Functional Grammar. New York: Oxford University Press

language is sign which is arbitrary. And parole or speech is the individual manifestation, a part of social system. But he was not prepared to take context of language use into account in the elaboration of his theory.<sup>2</sup> The other dominant formal theory is transformational generative grammar proposed by Chomsky. His main concern is a speaker's knowledge of grammar (linguistic competence), that the abstract outlines of the rules systems are part of a human being's genetic endowment.<sup>3</sup> For Chomsky, human beings have the ability to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences, none of which had ever been uttered before.

Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theory and Chomsky's are considered to have influenced a lot in the theory of language teaching and learning, e.g. in the grammar-translation method and also audio-lingual method, producing a structural syllabus, giving top priority to the teaching of grammar or structure of the language.

The formal orientation seems to neglect the context in which language is used. The rules proposed by the structuralists were considered abstract, formal, explicit, and quite logical, but they concerned with the forms of

language and not with the deeper functional levels of meaning constructed from social interaction. In functional orientation, functions are essentially the purposes that we accomplish with language, e.g., stating, requesting, responding, greeting, parting, etc. However, forms of language are needed to accomplish functions. Forms are the outward manifestation of language and functions are the realization of those forms.<sup>4</sup> The theme unifying the functional approach is the belief that language must be studied in relation to its role in human communication.

The British linguist, J.B. Firth,<sup>5</sup> opening the door for the study of language function, suggested that linguistics at all levels of analysis be concerned with meaningful human behavior in society. He derived his theory of 'context of situation' from Malinowski, who believes that meaning comes not from a passive contemplation of the word, but from an analysis of its functions, with reference to the given culture. Malinowski and Firth represent a view of language as context-dependent and sociological in orientation, as opposed to a more internal view in which language is a self-contained system. As we know human beings do not communicate with each other in a vacuum, but rather in a socio-culturally defined activities and situation in which

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<sup>2</sup>Yalden, Janice. 1987. *The Communicative Syllabus: Evolution, Design, and Implementation*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall International.

<sup>3</sup>Foley, William A. & van Valin, Robert D. 1984. *Functional Syntax and Universal Grammar*. Cambridge University Press.

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<sup>4</sup>Brown, H. Douglas. 2000. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Inc.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid

the participants take on socially defined roles and statuses.

Malinowski and Firth had a strong influence on the work of Michael Halliday, who in turn has had a great impact on applied linguistics. According to Halliday<sup>6</sup> functional theory is concerned with language as a form of interaction, and also with the context in which such interaction takes place. A single sentence or conversation might incorporate many different functions simultaneously. On the other hand, one function of language can be expressed using different forms. The idea of functional theory has been adopted into the theory of language teaching and learning which are functional and communicative, from which the notional syllabus, the functional-syllabus, or the notional-functional syllabus are produced.

With regard to grammar, Halliday divides the language system into three macro-functions the interpersonal function, the ideational function, and the textual function. Each of these components makes a contribution to the structure, so that a grammatical structure is a composite, as it were a polyphonic pattern in which one melodic line derives from each function (Kress in Yalden).<sup>7</sup>

In this paper I will discuss functional grammar, more specifically, the three functions of language, developed by Michael Halliday, who has

important contribution to the development of a detailed functional grammar of modern English and has inspired work on a wide range of languages.

## FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR

Functional grammar is a way of looking at grammar in terms of how grammar is used. It is used for describing languages in functional terms. It focuses on the development of grammatical systems as a means for people to interact with each other. According to Halliday<sup>8</sup> it is called functional grammar because the conceptual framework on which it is based is a functional one rather than a formal one. In a functional grammar, a language is interpreted as a system of meanings, accompanied by forms through which the meaning can be realized. The theory underlying functional grammar is systemic theory, which is a theory of meaning as choice. It is functional in three different but closely related senses: in its interpretation (1) of texts, (2) of the system, and (3) of the elements of linguistics structures.

According to Halliday, every text – that is, everything that is said or written – unfolds in some context of use. As it is stated by Eggins<sup>9</sup> in contemporary life, we are constantly required to react to

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid

<sup>7</sup>Ibid

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid

<sup>9</sup>Eggin, Suzzana. 2004. *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Grammar*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

and produce bits of language that make sense. So a functional grammar is essentially a 'natural' grammar, in the sense that everything in it can be explained by reference to how language is used. The relationship between the meaning and the wording (grammar) is not, however, an arbitrary one: the form of the grammar relates naturally to the meanings that are being encoded.

Furthermore, the fundamental components of meaning in language are functional components, called metafunctional components consisting of ideational or reflective, interpersonal or active, and textual. The first two underlie all uses of language: (1) to understand the environment (ideational), and (2) to act on the others in it (interpersonal), and the textual breathes relevance into the other two. In the third sense, each element in a language is explained by reference to its function in the total linguistic system. A functional grammar combines all the units of a language – its clauses, phrases and soon.

Halliday's main purposes of his functional grammar are a contribution to the understanding of the text: the linguistic analysis enables one to show how, and why, the text means what it does, and a contribution to the evaluation of the text: the linguistic analysis may enable one to say why the text is, or is not, an effective text for its own purposes.

The three metafunctional components proposed by Halliday serve to express three largely independent

sets of semantic choice. (1) Theme structures express the organization of the message: how the clauses relates to the surrounding discourse, and to the context of situation in which it is being produced; (2) Mood structures express interactional meaning: what the clause is doing, as a verbal exchange between speaker-writer and audience; (3) Transitivity structures express representational meaning: what the clause is about, which is typically some process, with associated participants and circumstances. These three sets of options together determine the structural shape of the clause.

#### **THEME: CLAUSE AS MESSAGE**

The system of **Theme** belongs to the textual metafunction of the language. The Theme functions in the structure of the clause as a message. The **Theme** is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message. It is concerned with the organization of information within individual clauses. The following examples show that 'the same' clause-sized piece of information embody alternative **Theme** choices.

Your reporter repeatedly interrupted her replies.

Her replies were repeatedly interrupted by your reporter.

Repeatedly, your reporter interrupted her replies.

(Taken from Martin, Mathiessen, and Painter)<sup>10</sup>

**Theme** can be identified as that element which comes in first position in the clause. The rest of the message where the clause moves after the point of departure is called **Rheme**. The clause as message is organized into Theme + Rheme. The Theme is not necessarily a nominal group, but it can be an adverbial group or prepositional phrase like the following examples:

Once upon there were three bears a time	
With sob he sorted out those of and tears the largest size	
Theme	Rheme

The Theme of a clause can have **ideational**, **interpersonal**, and **textual** stages.

### Ideational (topical) Theme

The ideational stage to the Theme, known as **topical** Theme, can be recognized as the first element in the clause that expresses some kind of 'representational' meaning. It is a function from the transitivity structure of the clause. It can be a 'participant' as in: Charles Dickens was famous for his first novel 'Oliver Twist'.

Or it can be a 'circumstance', giving information about time, place, manner, cause, etc:

In 1876, Shaw joined his mother and sister in London.

### Marked and unmarked topical Theme

In a declarative clause, the typical pattern is Theme as Subject. If the first topical element of declarative clause is also the Subject of the clause, then the Theme choice is a neutral or 'unmarked' one, giving the Theme no special prominence like the following examples:

She went to the baker's	
Unmarked Theme/Subject	Rheme

However, when the topical Theme of a declarative clause is not the Subject, it gains a greater textual prominence. Non-Subject Themes are 'marked' Themes such as:

Someday	you	'll understand that
	Subject	
Marked Theme	Rheme	

In imperative clause, the basic message is either 'I want you to do something' or 'I want us (you and me) to do something'. The second type usually begin with *let's*, which is the unmarked choice of Theme. But with the first type,

<sup>10</sup>Martin, J.R., Mathiessen, Christian M.I.M., and Painter, Clare. 1997. Working with Functional Grammar. London: Arnold

although the 'you' can be made explicit as a Theme, e.g. *you keep quiet!* This is clearly a marked choice because the more typical form simply *keep quiet!* with the verb in thematic position. In negative imperatives, the principle is the same as with yes/no interrogatives: the unmarked Theme is *don't* plus the following element, either Subject or Predicator. In the first type, there is a marked form with you, where the Theme is *don't + you*. Some other examples of imperative clause are as follows:

answer	all five questions
don't leave	your wallet on the table
let's	not quarrel about it
Unmarked Theme	Rheme

### Interpersonal Theme

Interpersonal Theme includes one or more of the following:

**The Finite**, typically realized by an auxiliary verb and its presence in thematic position, signals that a response is expected.

In a yes-no question, the element that functions as Theme is the **finite verbal operator**, which expresses positive or negative: *is, isn't; do, don't; does, doesn't; can, can't*; etc. The finite operator is put first before the subject. The Theme includes the finite verb and the Subject like the following examples:

<i>Can</i>	you	lend me your calculator?
<i>Does</i>	she	live around here?
Theme 1 (interpersonal)	Theme 2 (topical)	Rheme

**A Wh- element**, signaling that an 'answer' is required from the addressee:

In a WH-question, the element that functions as Theme is the element that requests this information, namely the WH- element: that is, the group or phrase in which the WH- word occurs. If the WH- word is part of a nominal group, this nominal group may function as Theme. The examples are:

Who	killed the man?
Which house	do they live in?
Theme	Rheme

**A Vocative**, identifying the addressee in the exchange:

<i>Frank,</i>	it	was fantastic.
Theme 1 (interpersonal)	Theme 2 (topical)	Rheme

**An Adjunct**, typically realized by an adverb. It provides the speaker's comment, assessment or attitude toward the message, for example:

Perhaps,	he	won't notice you.
Sadly,	His boss	didn't believe him.
Theme 1 (interpersonal)	Theme 2 (topical)	Rheme

### Textual Theme

The other type of Theme is Textual Themes which almost always constitute the first part of the Theme, coming before any interpersonal Themes. They give thematic prominence to textual elements with a linking function. They are usually structural conjunctions, relatives, conjunctives, or continuatives.

But	don't	you	realize it?
And then	Diana	he	gave me a ring.
textual	interpersonal	topical	
Theme			Rheme

### MOOD: CLAUSE AS EXCHANGE

Another aspect of the meaning of the clause is clause as an exchange, in which the system of **Mood** characterizes. The system of Mood belongs to the interpersonal metafunction of the language and is the grammatical resource for realizing an interactive move in a dialogue, involving

speaker, or writer, and audience. Halliday further explained that in the act of speaking, the most fundamental types of speech role are just two: (1) **giving**, and (2) **demanding**. It means that either the speaker is giving 'something' or 'commodity' (using Halliday's metaphor) to the listener or he is demanding 'something' from him. It is an exchange, in which giving implies receiving and demanding implies giving in response. When they are combined, define the four primary speech functions of offer, command, statement, and question.

Statements and questions, which involve exchanges of information, are called proposition while offers and commands, which involve exchanges of goods and services, which exist independently of language, are called proposals. These semantic categories are realized by grammatical Mood options (declarative, interrogative, imperative).

	Goods and services	information
Giving	Offer, e.g., May I help you?	Statement (declarative), e.g., He will help me.
demanding	Command (imperative), e.g., Help me!	Question (interrogative), e.g., who will help me?
	proposal	proposition

**The Mood element**

In this system, clauses are structured to enable us to exchange information. The mood element makes the clause 'negotiable'. The following is the example given by Halliday on a typical piece of information-exchanging dialogue:

The duke's given away that teapot, hasn't he?

- Oh, has he?
- Yes, he has.
- No, he hasn't.
- He hasn't; but he will.
- Will he?
- He might.

What we can see from the example is that one particular component of the clause is being, as it were, tossed back and forth to keep the argument going, while the remainder (given away that teapot) is simply left out.

The component that gets bandied back and forth is called **Mood**, which functions to carry the argument, and it consists of two parts: (1) the Subject, which is a nominal group, and (2) the Finite operator, which is part of a verbal group expressing tense or modality.

He	wasn't	a psycholog ist	was	he?
Subject	Finite		Finite	Subje ct
Mood		Residue	Moodtag	

I	learnt	the English language	from this
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			guy.
Subject	Finite		
Mood		Residue	

The man	could	sing that song.
Subject	Finite: modal	
Mood		Residue

**Other Elements of Mood Structure  
Residue**

The other component is called **Residue**, which can be left out or ellipsed. It consists of three kinds of functional elements: Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct like the following example:

I	did n't	tell	that	to my fathe r
Subj ect	Fini te	Predic ator	Comple ment	Adju nct
Mood		Residue		

**Predicator**

Predicator is realized by a verbal group minus the temporal or modal operator. It fills the role of specifying the actual event, action or process being discussed, for example, the second verbal element, *reading* in *I'm reading 'Pride and Prejudice'* tells us what process was actually going on.



**Complement**

A second component of the residue is the complement. A complement is defined as non-essential participant in the clause. It can be identified as an element within the residue that has a potential of being Subject. It can be subject through the process of making the clause passive.

Charles Dickens	wrote		'Oliver Twist'.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue	

'Oliver Twist'	was	written	By Charles Dickens
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
Mood		Residue	

The complement is typically a nominal group. It can also be a whole clause. There is a particular sub-class of complements which are called attributive complements, where the complement is realized by an adjectival element to describe the Subject. Attributive complements cannot become subject.

He	isn't	Honest
Subject	Finite:	Complement:

	neg.	attributive
Mood		Residue

**Adjunct**

A third component of the Residue is the Adjunct. It is a clause element which contributes some additional information to the clause. Adjuncts can be identified as elements which do not have the potential to become Subject. They are not nominal elements, but adverbial, or prepositional like the following examples:

The old man died yesterday.  
I learnt the dance from my aunt.

**WH- interrogative, Exclamative, and Imperative Clauses**

WH-element is always linked to one or another of the three functions Subject, Complement, Adjunct. If it is linked to the Subject, it is part of the Mood element, and if it linked to a Complement or Adjunct it becomes part of the Residue.

who	killed		John Lennon
Subject/ WH-	(past) Finite	kill Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue	

Whose little boy	are	you	
Complement/WH-		Finite	Subject
Residue		Mood	
where	have	you	gone
Adjunct/WH-	Finite	Subject	Predicator

Residue	Mood	Residue
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Exclamative clauses have the WH-element *what* or *how*, in nominal or adverbial group. *What* conflates with a Complement, as in *what a beautiful voice you have*. *How* conflates with Adjunct, as in *how fast we are going*; or with an attributive Complement, as in *how foolish he is*.

The imperative has a different system of PERSON from the indicative. Since the imperative is the mood for exchanging goods & services, its Subject is 'you' or 'me' or 'you and me'.

The unmarked positive has no Mood element, e.g. *listen carefully!* the verb form is Predicator only. The other forms have a Mood element; this consists of Subject only, Finite only, or Finite followed by Subject.

Meanwhile, the imperative for *let's* is considered as Subject 'you and I'. The form of the response is *Yes, let's!* or *No, let's not!*, which has Subject and no Finite.<sup>11</sup>

### Outside the Mood-Residue structure

The other circumstances in which a clause does not display a Mood + Residue structure is if it is showing a minor speech function. These minor speech functions are exclamation, calls, greetings, and alarms: (1) Exclamations are verbal gestures of the speaker

addressed to no one in particular, for examples *Wow!*, *Aha!*, *Ouch!*, *Heavens!*; (2) Calls are the speaker calling to attention another person, or other entity treated as capable of being addressed, for examples *Diana!*, *You there!*, *Darling!*; (3) Greetings include salutations, e.g. *Good Morning!*, *Hi!*, and partings, such as *Good bye!*, *See you!* We can also include well-wishings, like *Cheers!* *Congratulation!*; (4) Alarms have some resemblance to exclamatives, but they are addressed to another party. They are intermediate between major and minor clauses. Alarms can be in the forms of warnings, such as *Look out!*, *Keep off!*, *Quick!*, or appeals, like *Help!*, *Fire!*. Many of these are clearly imperative and can be analyzed as Residue only, consisting Predicator (*help*), Predicator plus Adjunct (*keep off*), optional Predicator plus Complement (*[be] careful*). Others are nominal groups, functioning either as Subject or Complement, like *Fire!* Can be from *there is a fire!* or *fire's broken out!*

### TRANSITIVITY: CLAUSE AS REPRESENTATION

The third aspect of the meaning of the clause is its meaning as representation, which concern with the clause in its experiential function, its guise as a way of representing patterns of experience. These are represented as a configuration of a process, participants

<sup>11</sup>The examples can be seen from the following table 4.

involved in it, and attendant circumstances. Experience consists of 'going-on, - happening, doing, sensing, meaning, and being and becoming. All of these going-on are realized in the grammar of the clause. The grammatical system by which this is achieved is TRANSITIVITY. The transitivity system construes the world of experience into a manageable set of PROCESS TYPES.

The process consists of three components, which provide the frame of reference for interpreting our experience of what goes on: (1) **the process** itself, typically in the form of verbal group; (2) **participant** in the process, in the form of nominal group; (3) **circumstances** associated with the process, in the form of adverbial group or prepositional phrase. The concept of process, participant and circumstance are semantic categories which show how phenomena of the real world are represented as linguistic structures.<sup>12</sup>

There are three main types of process in the English transitivity system: **material**, **mental**, and **relational**. In addition, there are other process types, the **behavioural**, **verbal**, and **existential**.

#### **Material processes: processes of doing**

<sup>12</sup>The examples can be seen from the following table 3.

Material processes are process of 'doing', which express that some entity 'does' something to some other entity. The one inherent participant is the **Actor** – the one doing the material deed. The other participant is the **Goal** – a participant impacted by a doing (the one done to/with), and sometimes a **Beneficiary** – a participant benefiting from the doing (the one given to or done for), or else (in a clauses without a Goal) a **Range** – a participant specifying the scope of happening.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Mental processes: processes of sensing**

Mental processes which construe a person involved in conscious processing, including processes of perception, cognition, and affection. The one inherent participant is the **Senser** – the conscious being that is feeling, thinking, or seeing. This participant is endowed with consciousness; nominal groups serving as Senser which denote non-conscious entities have to be construed metaphorically as 'personified'. Here are some examples, in which the Senser is underlined:

The man knew too much.

Her tasks interested her.

My car doesn't like hills.

Beside the Senser, the mental clauses may involve one further type of participant, the **Phenomenon** being

<sup>13</sup>The examples can be seen from the following table 2.

sensed – felt, thought, or seen. This can be any kind of entity entertained or created by consciousness – a conscious being, an object, a substance, an institution, or an abstraction, but not only such things but also acts. Grammatically, a wide range of units can serve as Phenomenon. In the following examples the Phenomenon is underlined:

The man knew too much.

Her tasks interested her.

I like swimming early in the morning.

### **Relational processes: processes of being**

In discussing this kind of process Halliday apply the category of relational clauses of the traditional notion of ‘copula’ construction. The English system operates with three main types: (1) intensive; (2) circumstantial; (3) possessive. Each type occurs in two distinct modes, attributive and identifying. The attributive mode is an entity having some quality ascribed or attributed to it, while the identifying mode is some thing having an identity assigned to it. Each has different sets of participant roles: (1) attributive clauses with **Carrier + Attribute**, which are of the same order of abstraction but differ in generality as member to class, and (2) identifying clauses with **Token + Value**, which are of different orders of

abstraction; they are related symbolically and reversible.<sup>14</sup>

Attributive and identifying modes have each own characteristics. There are four characteristics of attributive clauses which distinguish them from identifying ones: (1) the nominal group functioning as Attribute is typically indefinite: either an adjective or a common noun. It cannot be a proper noun or a pronoun; (2) the verb realizing the Process is one of the ‘ascriptive’ classes, for examples *become, get, remain, stay, seem, appear, look, sound, be, feel*; (3) the probe for such clauses is *what?, how?, what...like?*; (4) these clauses are not reversible: there are no passive forms.

The identifying clauses have characteristics which contrast with the attributive clauses: (1) the nominal group realizing the function identifier is typically definite: it has a common noun as Head, with the or other specific determiner, or a proper noun or pronoun; (2) the verb realizing the Process is one from the ‘equative’ classes, for example *play, act as, mean, indicate, equal, make, include, represent, illustrate, stand for, mean, be become*; (3) the probe for such clauses is *which?, who?, which/who...as?*; (4) these clauses are reversible. All verbs except the neutral have passive forms.

### **Other process types**

<sup>14</sup>The examples are given in table 1 .

In addition to the three main types, there are three subsidiary process types, accommodates an intermediate type with mixed characteristics. They are **behavioural** sharing characteristics of material and mental, **verbal** sharing the characteristics of mental and relational, **existential** sharing the characteristics of relational and material.

### ***Behavioural processes***

These are processes of physiological and psychological behaviour. They are partly like the material and partly like the mental. The participant who is 'behaving' typically a conscious being, labeled **Behaver**. It is like the Senser, but the Process is grammatically like one of 'doing', which have typical characteristics: (1) the unmarked representation of present in present; (2) they cannot report; (3) behavioural processes including categories reflecting the mental and verbal ones, for examples *look, talk, think*, etc, and behavioural processes including more material-like subtypes which covered by two main types physiological processes, for examples *cry, laugh, breathe*, etc and social processes, *like sing, dance, chat*, etc.

### ***Verbal processes***

Verbal processes represent processes of 'saying'. This category includes not only the different modes of saying (asking, stating, offering) but also

semiotic processes that are not necessarily verbal (indicating, showing). The central participant is labeled the **Sayer** – the participant saying, stating, informing, asking, etc. it can be human or human-like speaker, but it can also be other symbolic source, for example:

She told me a strange story.

They asked me whether I could come to the meeting.

The paper says there'll be another election.

In addition, a verbal clause may also represent the addressee of a speech interaction, **Receiver**, for example they told me to leave at once. The Receiver can be the Subject in a clause with a passive, e.g. *I* in *I wasn't told the news*. Beside the Receiver, the content of saying or the name of the saying may also construed as a participant labeled the **Verbiage**. The other participant function is **Target** which is the entity that is targeted by the process of saying.

They told me a story.

They were speaking French.

She always praised him to his friends.

### ***Existential Processes***

These represent that something exists or happens. They resemble relational processes, but they are different in that there is only one participant. In existential clauses, the *there* signals the process type but does not function as a Location circumstance; nor does it

represents a participant. The existential clauses typically have the verb *be* beside other verbs meaning 'exist' or 'happen': *exist, happen, occur, takes place*. The other group embodies some circumstantial feature: *follow, sit, stand, rise, hang, emerge, grow*.

There was a storm.

On the wall there hangs a picture.

### **APPLICATION OF FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR**

According to Halliday<sup>15</sup> functional grammar can be applied for text analysis: to understand the text and to evaluate the text. Functional Grammar has been used to develop literacy programs for primary and secondary school students, as the basis for automatic text analysis and generation in computational contexts, and as the basis for critical discourse analysis including analysis of culturally significant texts. Recently it has been used for purposes of diagnosis and therapy in speech pathology, for text analysis in forensic settings and for the development of workplace training programs.

The application of functional grammar for text analysis can help learners to learn how various grammatical features and grammatical systems are used in authentic written texts. In addition, learners will be more familiar with different structures of

various genres of written English, for example the descriptive science writing usually requires the present tense verb form, modifying phrases after nouns, relative clauses, and possessive phrases. By recognizing the grammatical features of a certain genre, they are expected to be able to apply the forms in their writing.

Meanwhile Fries<sup>16</sup> mentions that by some knowledge of functional grammar, a teacher can help students become sensitive to what they write – to the signals they give their readers as to what is important, and how they can orient their readers to what is to come. He gives the following examples taken from the first paragraph of his student' paper.

1. Alcoholism has always been a major problem in the US.
2. In the past few years, though, an alarming increase in teenage alcoholic has been found in research studies.
3. Nobody really knows what the reasons actually are, but many believe that young people have a too easy access to liquor.

Here sentence (2) shows a problem which often arises. The student has placed information which is not quite important in the N-Rheme (New-Rheme)

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<sup>16</sup>Fries, Peter, H. 1997. Theme and New in Written English in Tom Miller (Ed.) Functional Approaches to Written Text: Classroom Application. Washington: English Language Program United States Information Agency.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid

of the clause. In this context, it is clear that findings are produced in research studies. So the information can be considered redundant, and the sentence can be corrected if the last prepositional phrase were deleted, becoming:

*In the past few years, though, an alarming increase in teenage alcoholics has been found.*

The change is to bring *found* into the N-Rheme showing a much more important idea in the context. Another possible revision would be to move the notion of *teenage alcoholics*, considered as another important meaning in the context, into the N-Rheme position, by changing the sentence to the active voice as in the following sentence:

*In the past few years, though, research studies have found an alarming increase in teenage alcoholics.*

Even though *research studies* is still redundant information, it has not been placed in as prominent a position as it was in the original (it is neither Theme nor N-Rheme).

In Indonesia the application of functional grammar is adopted in the English curriculum named '*Kurikulum 1994*', claiming the use of communicative approach in its teaching. This curriculum was then changed to the 2004 Curriculum known as *KBK* (Competence Based Curriculum) and finally it now becomes *KTSP*, which is actually similar to the former one. The Competence Based Curriculum in

Indonesia adopts literacy approach, which is the use of socially, historically, and culturally-situated practices of creating and interpreting meaning through texts.

The result of the implementation of the curriculum seems to be unsatisfactory. There are still a lot of problems faced by either the teachers or the students concerning its implementation. We know that English is a foreign language taught to the students coming from different cultural background and having different proficiency in English. With limited English proficiency it is difficult to apply the spirit of functional grammar in the English language teaching and learning in Indonesia. But we can still adopt the theory underlying functional grammar, which sees language as a system of meanings in relation to its context of its use, with some consideration. It can be considered wisely what Prof. Badib<sup>17</sup> stated that 'whatever the theories of teaching English of as a Foreign Language, the next curriculum of English should incorporate the concept of the strengthening, cultivating, preserving the local languages and cultures.'

## CONCLUSION

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<sup>17</sup> Badib, Abbas A. 2009. Linguistic Theories in EFL Teaching in a Multilingual Setting. A Paper Presented in a Seminar Held by English Department of UNIROW Tuban & the English Teacher Association of Tuban 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2009.

Based on the discussion of Functional Grammar proposed by Halliday, it can be concluded that language is structured to make three main kinds of meanings simultaneously. These three meta-functions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions are fused together and realized throughout the grammar of language. The three structures serve to express three largely independent sets of semantic choice: Theme expressing clause as message; Mood expressing clause as exchange; and Transitivity expressing clause as representation. These three determine the structural shape of the clause.

Compared with the traditional school grammar and formal grammar, Halliday's Functional Grammar makes use of class labels, like noun, verb, or adjective. He also makes extensive use of function labels like Theme, Rheme, Actor, Process, Goal, etc. The function labels are used to show the grammatical analysis in relation to meaning as what is stated by Halliday<sup>18</sup> that Functional Grammar interprets language as a system of meanings, accompanied by forms through which the meanings can be realized.

Functional Grammar can be used to construct a grammar for the purposes of text analysis. Related to that, according to Fries<sup>19</sup> the application of

Functional Grammar theory can be a way for English teachers to show their students how text is constructed so that students can become better readers and writers. Despite its advantages, in Indonesia context, it is rather difficult to apply if the students' language proficiency is still below standard.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid



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FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR (AN INTRODUCTION TO METAFUNCTIONAL  
COMPONENTS OF LANGUAGE)

*Christina I.T. Panggabean*

Table 1

Mode Type	(i) attribute	(ii) identifying
(1) intensive	Sarah is wise	Tom is the leader: the leader is Tom
(2) circumstantial	The fair is on a Tuesday	Tomorrow is the 10 <sup>th</sup> ; the 10 <sup>th</sup> is tomorrow
(3) possessive	Peter has a piano	The piano is Peter's Peter's is the piano;

Table 2

Type	Actor	Process	Goal	Beneficiary	Range
Action	she	built	the house	for the kids	
	she	moved	the chair		
Event	the chair	moved			
	she	climbed			the mountain

Table 3

The lion	chased	The tourist	lazily	through the bush
participant	process	participant	circumstance	circumstance
Nominal group	Verbal group	Nominal group	Adverbial group	Prepositional phrase

Table 4

let's	go	home	shall	we
Subject	Predicator	Adjunct	Finite	Subject
Mood	Residue		Mood tag	