



## STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN ANALYZING THE EXPERIENTIAL FUNCTION OF ENGLISH TEXT

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### ABSTRAK

The study was conducted out to find out the difficulties faced by the students in analyzing the experiential function of English text. The difficulties were analyzed by identifying the errors made by the students in analyzing a text given in a test. The method used in this research was the descriptive quantitative analysis. The subjects of this research were 80 students of the fifth semester of FKIP UNA Kisaran of academic year 2016-2017. The students were comprised of two classes in which each consisted of 40 students. The findings showed that there were some difficulties by the students in analyzing the experiential function of English text. These difficulties were described from the errors they made in the analysis. The errors were in separating the clauses from a text, and labeling. The causes of the errors were commonly overgeneralization that is 46.49%, the other causes were the carelessness or lack motivation to answer the questions 22.81%, the ignorance of the phrase structure rules 17.79%, and incomplete application of the rules 12.91%. The findings also showed that there were only 44 students or 55% regarded as able to draw tree diagram and 36 students or 45% regarded as unable.

**Keyword** : Difficulties, Analyzing, Experiential Function

### BACKGROUND

Functional grammar is a very popular description of a language nowadays. It is now used as the basis of language teaching in Indonesia. Genre-based language teaching is one approach produced from this theory of grammar. The theory is also one of compulsory lectures taught to the students of English department of FKIP UNA. As one of grammar schools, this subject is concerning with the analysis of language as a description and explanation on the relations of the use of language unit (read: a text) from its own point of view as *linguistics is a science which has spoken and written language form as its object that has characterization,*

*condition systematic, rational, and common as a description of the state of the structure, units and rules of the language* (Alwasilah:1983).

The reason why such linguistic theory becomes so important that it is compulsory for the English teacher to be to study is that by having sufficient knowledge in the language description and information on the way the linguistic units work, it will enable them to pick a suitable approach or method in teaching them based on the characteristic of the language features under discussion. This is also the reason that had pushed the writer to investigate how far the ability of the students in using one of linguistic theory as a tool of analysis on a language and to improve their



ability by finding out the difficulties they faced in analyzing the language with the theory, in this case, Functional Grammar analysis.

Functional Grammar, as one of grammar models used in analyzing language, is a very interesting theory since this school of grammar has different approach from other former formal ones. The aspect that made this grammar differ from others was this school of grammar analyzes language mainly on the basis of meaning, not on the basis of form. This new approach of analyzing the sentences of course is in need of process to be comprehended well. The change of paradigm in describing language from the form to meaning, like what formal grammar such as structural and TG did, become from meaning into form description often makes confused. The fact that the students often disorganize the analysis of a text in functional grammar with the way formal grammar did, has made the writer wish to investigate the difficulty faced by the students in the process of analysis.

## **METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

The subjects of the research were the fifth semester students of English department of FKIP UNA Kisaran academic year 2016-2017 consisting of two classes. Each class comprises of 40 students. The writer took the whole students to be the sample so the total number of students involved in this study was 80 students. This place had been chosen because of feasibility for the researcher as one of lecturer there

and the same research had never been conducted there.

The method applied in this study is the descriptive quantitative research observing only an event and described it as it is. The kind of research conducted was descriptive quantitative analysis, in this case the analysis on the students' errors in analyzing experiential meaning of a text.

A text was used as a test to find out how the students analyzed it on the basis of experiential meaning. The text was adopted from the lecturing material on text analysis of the experiential meaning delivered by Prof. Amrin Saragih, MA., PhD. If the students analyzed the text correctly, there would be 20 clauses or items to describe. The criteria of evaluation given to the test were the number of students correct answers divided by the total number of items given.

The data collected were analyzed based on the following steps:

- a. Identifying the students' answers in dividing the text into clauses which were regarded as the total items of the test.
- b. Identifying the students' errors in analyzing the items.
- c. Representing the data obtained by classifying the errors the students made in analyzing the text.
- d. Describing the errors by explaining the classification of errors the students had made in analyzing the experiential meaning of the text.
- e. Calculating the percentage of the errors by using the pattern:

$$EP = (RA/TI) 100\%$$



Where; EP= Error Percentage

RA= Right Answers

TI = Total Number of Items

- f. Explaining and refining the errors by fitting the answers with correct analysis.
- g. Finding out the causes of the errors by observing the main errors or the dominant errors the students made and estimating the aspects that may cause them such as the carelessness, ignorance of the rules, inter-lingual interferences, the ability of identifying a process, and so on

errors in analyzing the experiential meaning of a text as the description of the difficulties faced by the students. The focus of the stage is to determine the errors of the students from the answer sheets.

The next thing the students did was to determine the elements construing each clause and label them correctly. This stage was in need of understanding on the RCA in which the clause, in the analysis, might be divided into three elements: a process, participant(s), and circumstance. For example, if the students were asked to analyzed this clause: *as I was walking into another room*. They should divide the clause elements based on the three elements of the experience explained above such as the following analysis:

### THE DATA AND THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

The first step in the process of analysis is to identify the students'

As	I	was walking	Into another room
Circumstance of location/ temporal	Participant: Actor	Process: Material	Circumstance of location/spatial

R  
 elating to the description given, any analysis made by the students outside the rules above was regarded as an

error. For instances, the students analyze the clause *as I was walking into another room* as follows:

As	I	Was	walk	-ing	Into	another room
Adj	Participant	finite	Material process	-	circumstance	Participant

Or;

As	I	Was	walking	Into	another	room
circumstance	Participant	Be	behavioral	Circumstance	det	Participant

were regarded as an error.

Based on the students' answer sheets, there were only 20 students who gave correct answers by drawing the clause *as I was*

*walking into another room* such the example above. After the process of identification, the writer calculated the scores the



After investigating the students' answer sheet, it was found that there were three causes of the errors which are dominant existing in the study. They are:

### 3.1. Ignorance of the rules

The errors made by the subjects in analyzing the experiential meaning of a text were caused by their ignorance of the rules on the elements construing a unit of experience. Ignorance happened when the learners failed to observe the system of analysis in functional grammar as those systems are not present in the former grammar. For instance, RCA was applied by considering the function of the linguistic units in the clause so that two or more linguistic units could be regarded as one unit (like in the example *into another room* above) whereas the students applied ICA-like analysis in analyzing the experiential meaning. To analyze the phrase for instance, they might write it as three different units as follows:

Into                      another                      room  
 Prep                      circumstance                      participant

### The Description of the Students' Errors

Notes:

1. Key to Types of Errors:
  - a. Errors of Selection
  - b. Errors of Ordering
  - c. Errors of Addition
  - d. Errors of Omission

Actually, it should be written as one unit;

into another room

Circumstance: Location/ spatial

### 3.2. Overgeneralization

It covers instance where the learner creates deviant structure on the basis of experiences of other structures in the functional grammar analysis.

### 3.3. Incomplete Application of the Rules

The errors caused by incomplete application of the rules may be caused by faulty comprehension of the unit of experience rules so that the learners could not accomplish the description of the sentence correctly.

### 3.4. Carelessness

This kind of errors was closely related to lack of motivation. The kind of error is such mislabeling the unit and so on

2. Key to Causes of Errors:
  - a. Ignorance of Rules Restriction
  - b. Overgeneralization
  - c. Incomplete Application of Rules
  - d. Carelessness

No	Types of Errors	Errors of Analyzing the Experiential Function	Occurrence	Cause of Errors	Answer
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	A	<u>The room</u> <u>was</u> <u>large</u> Participant existential circ.	6	B	<u>the room</u> <u>was</u> <u>large</u> Carrier Process: Attribute
	B	The room was large & Furniture was placed	4	A	



		in the middle			relational
	A	<u>The room</u> was <u>large</u> Token relational value	3	B	
2	C	<u>Furniture</u> was <u>placed</u> in the middle carrier relational material attribute	6	B	<b><u>and furniture was placed in the middle</u></b> Goal
	B	The room was large & Furniture was placed in the middle	4	A	Process: Circumstance:
	D	<u>Furniture</u> was <u>placed</u> Actor material process	8	A	Material Location:  Spatial
	D,B	<u>Furniture</u> was <u>Taken/</u> carrier relational	3	A	
	D,B	placed in the middle	2	A	
	-	-	2	D	
3	A	<u>I</u> was <u>walking into</u> another room actor material circ. Goal	10	B	As <u>I</u> was <u>walking into</u> another room Actor Process: Circumstance: Material Location: Spatial
	B,D	in the middle as I was walking	5	A	
	D	<u>I</u> was <u>walking</u> actor material	5	C	
	-	-	5	D	
4	A	<u>She</u> was <u>lying</u> Behaver behavioral	20	B	where <u>she</u> was <u>lying</u> Actor Process:
	B	Into another room where she was lying	10	A	
	-	-	11	D	Material
5	A	<u>I</u> saw a host of <u>flowers</u> by the <u>window</u> behavioral phenomenon circumst.	25	B	<b><u>I</u> saw a host of <u>flowers</u> by the <u>window</u></b> Senser Process: Phenomenon circumstance: Mental Location:  Spatial
	D	<u>I</u> saw a host of <u>flowers</u> Senser mental phenomenon	8	C	



	-	-	20	D	
6	B	<u>The flowers</u> <u>reminded</u> <u>me</u> Senser mental pr. Phenomenon	30	B,C	<u>the flowers</u> <u>reminded</u> <u>me</u> <u>of</u> <u>the park</u> Sayer Process: Benef Circ. Verbal Receiver Matter
	D	<u>The flowers</u> <u>reminded</u> <u>me</u> Phenomenon mental senser	15	A,B,C	
	B	<u>The flowers</u> <u>reminded</u> <u>me</u> <u>of the park</u> Senser mental phenol. Circ.	12	B	
	-	-	15	D	
7	B	Of the park where we usually sat	4	A	where <u>we</u> <u>usually</u> <u>sat</u> Actor Circ: Process: Manner Material
	B	<u>We</u> <u>usually</u> <u>sat</u> Actor goal material	7	B	
	C	<u>Where</u> <u>we</u> <u>usually</u> <u>sat</u> Circum. Behave circ. Behavioral	1	B	
	-	-	2	D	
8	B	<u>Once</u> <u>we</u> <u>went</u> <u>there</u> Circ. Actor material goal	10	B	<u>once</u> <u>we</u> <u>went</u> <u>there</u> Circ: Actor Process: Circ: Extent: Material Location Temporal Spatial
	D	<u>We</u> <u>went</u> <u>there</u> Actor material goal	5	C	
	D	<u>We</u> <u>went</u> <u>there</u> Actor material circumstance	4	C	
9	B	<u>She</u> <u>kissed</u> <u>me</u> and <u>said</u> Actor material goal sayer	6	A	<u>she</u> <u>kissed</u> <u>me</u> Actor Process: Goal Material
	B	<u>She</u> <u>kissed</u> <u>me</u> Senser mental phenomenon	5	B	
	B	<u>She</u> <u>kissed</u> <u>me</u>	4	B	



		Sayer verbal goal			
10	B	<u>She</u> <u>kissed</u> <u>me</u> and <u>said</u> Actor material goal sayer	6	A	and <u>said</u> Process: Verbal
	-	-	33	D	
11	C	<u>Darling</u> , <u>are</u> <u>you</u> <u>worried</u> ? Token relational value attribute	45	B	" <u>Darling</u> , <u>are</u> <u>you</u> <u>worried</u> ?" Process: Carrier Attribute Relational
	B	<u>Are</u> <u>you</u> <u>worried</u> ? Senser mental	23	B	
	-	-	4	D	
12	B	<u>After a pause of</u> <u>hesitation</u> <u>continued</u> Circumstance material	2	B	and <u>after a pause</u> <u>of hesitation</u> Circumstance: Extent: Temporal
	B	after a pause of hesitation continued there's nothing to worry	25	A	<u>continued</u> Process: Verbal
	-	-	50	D	
13	C	<u>There</u> <u>is</u> <u>nothing</u> <u>to</u> <u>worry</u> Existential extent mental	25	B	" <u>There</u> <u>is</u> <u>nothing</u> <u>[[to</u> <u>worry]]</u> ." Process: Existential Existent
	B	after a pause of hesitation continued there's nothing to worry	27	A	
	-	-	6	D	
14	B	<u>She</u> <u>smiled</u> Sayer verbal	15	B	<u>she</u> <u>smiled</u> Behaver Process:
	B	<u>She</u> <u>smiled</u> Actor material	13	B	Behavioural
	B	<u>She</u> <u>smiled</u> and <u>I</u> <u>said</u> Behaver behavioral sayer verbal	6	A	
15	B	And <u>I</u> <u>said</u> Behaver behavioral	10	B	and <u>I</u> <u>said</u> Sayer Process:
	B	<u>I</u> <u>said</u>	8	B	



		Actor material			Verbal
	B	<u>She</u> <u>smiled</u> and <u>I</u> <u>said</u> Behaver behavioral sayer verbal	6	A	
16	C	<u>Let</u> <u>me</u> <u>pick</u> a red rose <u>for you</u> Behavioral actor material goal client	10	B	<b>'Let me pick a red rose for you'</b> Process: Actor Material Goal Benef Client
	B	Let me	5	A	
	B	<u>Me</u> <u>pick</u> a red <u>rose</u> <u>for you</u> Actor material goal client	10	A,C	
	-	-	19	D	
17	C	<u>There is no more</u> <u>smile on the stiff lip</u> Existential extent circ.	15	C	<b>now there is no more smile on the stiff lip</b> Circ: Process: Existent Circum: Loc: Existential Loc.: Temporal Spatial
	D	<u>There is no</u> <u>more smile</u> - existential extent	10	C	
	-	-	25	D	
18	B	<u>The flower is gone</u> Actor material pro.	30	B	And <u>the flower is gone</u> Carrier Proc: Attri. Relational
	B	<u>The flower is gone</u> Actor existential	17	B	
	B	<u>The flower is gone</u> Goal material pro.	12	B	
	B	<u>The flower is</u> <u>gone</u> Carrier relational material pro.	8	B	
19	A	<u>It is just a</u> <u>memory</u> token relation value	4	C	<u>It is just a memory</u> Carrier Procs: Circ: Attribute Relational Manner
	D	<u>It is just a</u> <u>memory</u> carrier relational attribute	2	C	
	A	<u>It is just a</u>	3	B	





		<u>memory</u> token relation circ value			
20	A	I <u>will never see her again</u> actor material goal circ.	1	B	<u>and I will never see her again.</u> Senser Process: phenom Circ: mental Location Temporal
	C	I <u>will never see her again</u> senser circ. mental phen. circ.	1	A	

From the table above, we can see the percentage of the causes of

errors which can be seen as following table:

No	Causes of Errors	Occurrences	Percentages
1	Ignorance of Rule Restriction	142	17.79
2	Overgeneralization	371	46.49
3	Incomplete application of Rules	103	12.91
4	Carelessness	182	22.81
<b>Total</b>		798	100

\*The total number of causes of error didn't equal to the total number of errors because there are some errors predicted to have more than one cause.

\*\*The questions which were not answered by the students during the test would be regarded as error caused by carelessness.

### CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study, the writer concluded that:

1. Analyzing the experiential meaning of a text is the description of processes involved in the text. Thus, the way of

analyzing the text should be based on the process-centered analysis so that the clauses could be separated from the text correctly.

2. The findings showed that there are some errors made by the students in determining a clause and separating it from the text, and uniting the elements of a clause (process, participants, and circumstance).
3. The findings also showed that the student were confused to determine the process types shown with mislabeling the element of a clause.
4. There were only 44 students or



55% regarded as able to analyze the experiential meaning of the text and 36 students or 45% regarded as unable.

5. The causes of the errors were commonly overgeneralization that is 46.49%, the other causes were the carelessness or lack motivation to answer the questions 22.81%, the ignorance of the phrase structure rules 17.79%, and incomplete application of the rules 12.91%

### SUGGESTIONS

After conducting the research, the writer suggested the following:

1. The students should learn more how to define a clause in functional grammar, especially, to separate it from a text.
2. The students should learn how to define and categorize the process types.
3. There must be a move to increase the students' motivation in understanding the experiential meaning of a text since this function help the students more understand characteristics of the text field and type.
4. The lecturers should explain more clearly about the definition a clause to avoid misunderstanding because of their former understanding of what a clause is in formal grammar.
5. Other similar researches are in need of implementation to explain any other aspects in functional grammar since the study focused only on the experiential function of a text.

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