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Canna Vionitaretami Fiscarina<sup>1</sup> Endang Fauziati<sup>2</sup> EXPLORING EFL STUDENT'S DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BASED ON SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS: A CASE STUDY AT SMAN 1 KARTASURA

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to identify descriptive texts written by students using the framework systemic functional linguistics. The researchers looked at three aspects, (1) generic structure, (2) linguistic features focusing on type of process within transitivity system, and (3) communicative purposes. The subjects of this study were 50 students at SMAN 1 Kartasura class XI. This study is a descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. The data were students' descriptive text, collected by elicitation techniques namely the results of students' descriptive text. The result of the study showed students are able to apply the appropriate generic structure of the descriptive text namely identification and description. Moreover, in terms of linguistic features, the most dominant process is relational process. Further, the communicative purpose of the descriptive texts written by students such as their favourite electronics and hobbies represents the students' daily favourite things and preference. This study can give benefits for help teachers to find out students' ability to write descriptive text using the SFL perspective based on the generic structure, linguistic features, and communicative purpose. Moreover, helps the students in learning, especially in descriptive text material.

**Keyword:** Descriptive Text, Generic Structure, Linguistic Feature, Communicative Purpose, Systemic Functional Linguistics

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi teks desriptif yang ditulis oleh siswa telah sesuai kaidah dan teori berdasarkan sistemik fungsional linguistik. Peneliti melihat dari tiga aspek, (1) struktur generik, (2) fitur linguistic, dan (3) tujuan komunikatif. Subjek dari penelitian ini adalah 50 siswa di SMAN 1 Kartasura kelas XI. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Datanya adalah teks deskriptif siswa, dikumpulkan dengan teknik elisitasi yaitu hasil teks deskriptif siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan siswa mampu menerapkan struktur generic yang sesuai dari teks deskriptif yaitu identifikasi dan deskripsi. Selain itu, dalam hal fitur linguistik proses yang paling dominan adalah proses relational. Selanjutnya, tujuan komunikatif teks deskriptif yang ditulis oleh siswa seperti elektronik dan hobi favorit mereka mewakili hal-hal dan preferensi benda favorit sehari-hari siswa. Penelitian ini dapat memberikan manfaat untuk membantu guru mengetahui kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif dengan menggunakan perspektif SFL berdasarkan struktur generik, ciri kebahasaan, dan tujuan komunikatif. Selain itu, membantu siswa dalam belajar khususnya pada materi teks deskriptif.

**Kata Kunci :** Descriptive Teks, Struktur Generik, Fitur Linguistik , Tujuan Komunikatif, Sistemik Fungsional Linguistik

# INTRODUCTION

English is a tool for communicating. Through language as the primary communication tool, especially English as a global language, we can develop science, technology, and culture. In education, English has a communication function which allows us to access, store and share

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information. In everyday life, the function of a language is to establish interpersonal relationships, exchange information, and enjoy the beauty of the language. Given the importance of English in today's global era, English education also has to be developed to attract students' interest on the subject, as a result the learning objectives can be achieved. Language teaching at high school focuses on increasing students' competence using the language to achieve communication goals in various contexts, both spoken and written, with a higher complexity using a text-based approach. Therefore, the method of learning English at high school level needs to have various innovations due to the complex material and higher learning objectives.

The 2013 curriculum (K-13) is a new policy from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud). This curriculum is giving an impact in English lessons' position at all school levels, especially at the high school level. The objectives of teaching English subjects in the current K-13 curriculum include: (1) Developing skills to communicate in language, both verbal and writing. Those skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing; (2) Raising awareness of the nature and the importance of English as a foreign language to become the primary learning tool; (3) developing an understanding of the relationship between language and culture as well as broaden cultural horizons.

Writing is one of the language skills for high school students that are required to be known and learned. Therefore, writing skill is necessary considering that one of the objectives of learning English at the Senior High School level is to develop the competence to communicate in English verbally and written to achieve informational literacy. This level's learning scope includes understanding and creating various short functional texts as well as monologues and essays in various text types such as procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative, report, news item, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation discussion, review, and public speaking (Depdiknas, 2006).

According to Indonesian Curricula (2004) there are various types of texts, namely descriptive text, recount text, narrative text, report text, clarification text, analytical exposition text, and hortatory exposition text. In this analysis, the writer focuses on descriptive text because it is related to everyday life. It is also a text to describe something such as person, things and animals. Based on the 2013 Curriculum, descriptive text is one of the forms of text which has to be learned by senior high school students in Indonesia. Emilia and Christie (2013) argue that descriptive learning genres are necessary for students in order to make them able to explain vivid and accurate details. Similar with Christie (2013), Gerot and Wignell (1994: 208) states that descriptive text is a text that describes a particular person, place, or thing. Descriptive text contains some elements, such as social function, generic structure, and lexicon grammatical features. All the elements have be included in a descriptive text. Effendi (2008) said thet there are two elements of generic structure in descriptive text, the first is identification. Identification is the part where writers of descriptive text identify phenomenon to be describe. The second is description which describes parts, qualities, and characteristics. According to Gerot (1995), descriptive text has communicative purpose to describe a particular person, place or thing. Through descriptive text, students can describe someone they are familiar with as well as their favourite place or thing...

This study used the theory of Systematic Functional Linguistics. Gerot & Wignell (1995) stated that functional grammar in SFL is different with raditional grammar and formal grammar. Traditional grammar and formal grammar are concerned on structure of sentences. Meanwhile, functional grammar focuses on texts and their contexts. Moreover, functional grammar is related to how structures create meaning. As language is socially constructed, SFL attempts to clarify how people use languages and how language is organized for various purposes (Halliday, 2004). According to O'Donnel (2011), systematic functional linguistics does not add how language is interpreted or expressed in the brain, but rather looks at the text generated (whether spoken or written) and its context. Regarding the use of language, SFL puts more focus on the language feature (what it is used for) than language structure (how it is composed). SFL begins with the social context, looking at how language works and limited by it. Systemic functional linguists make four key theoretical statements about language: (a) that language usage is functional; (b) that its role is to make sense; (c) that meaning is affected by

social and cultural contexts; and (d) that the use of language is a semiotic mechanism in which people make sense by making linguistic choices (Eggins, 2004). This research also used linguistic features based on the transitivity process. According to Halliday (1994: 107), there are three components of Transitivity Process consist of the process itself, participants in the process, and circumstances associated with the process. The concept of transitivity in Halliday's theory is a powerful tool in the grammatical system to analyse the meanings expressed in clauses.

Several researchers have discussed generic structure, linguistic features, and communicative purposes of descriptive text. They are Yuniarti, Rahayu, & Eripuddin (2015), Wijayatiningsih & Wardhani (2015), Ulfa (2017), Wulandari (2017). However, previous researchers focused the students' ability to write a descriptive text. They only identified the generic structures and language features used in writing descriptive texts which were not based on SFL theory.

Another previous research is Sipayung (2016), Astuti (2016), Anggun (2016), Noprianto (2017), Rohmat, Nurhaeni, & Anggraeni (2018), Potradinata (2018), Pramesti (2019), and the last is Appendi & Mulyani (2020). The previous researches focused identified three metafunctions' as a language features where relational, material and mental are dominant in their use. Another thing was that the previous research only discussed about the communicative purpose of the text. They explained it in detail following the content of the text, but they did not discuss upon what kind of topics are often used by the students. Moreover, the two previous studies discussed problem-faced when students wrote the descriptive text.

Meanwhile, the previous study examined the generic structure, linguistics feature and communicative purpose in different countries, school and class. The previous was conducted in Semarang, Rambah Hilir, Jakarta, Bandung, Medan, and Cirebon. And the previous took data with students in Junior High school and tenth grade students in Senior High School. However, none of the previous studies examined descriptive texts from texts based on the SFL perspective from Central Java, especially in class XI SMA 1 Kartasura.

# **METHOD**

This research belongs to descriptive qualitative research. Cresswell (1994) stated, "qualitative study is defined as a process of investigation to understand a social or human problem, based on the construction of a complex and holistic picture, formed with words, reporting the informants' views in detail, and carried out in a natural setting". In this research used case study approach. This research includes the type of case study using descriptive qualitative method. The data in this research is descriptive text which contains generic structure, linguistics feature, and communicative purpose. For linguistic features, the clause contains ideational metafunction. For communicative purposes, the data taken are only the text that contains the theme "favourite things". The source of data in this study is the result of descriptive text written by students of grade XI SMAN 1 Kartasura. It consisted of 50 students from class XI A-1 to XI-A5.

To collect data, the researcher used elicitation method for data collection. Nunan (1992) & Fauziati,

(2002) claimed that 'elicitation techniques differ enormously in reach, intent and purpose. In this research, the researcher provoked the students to write a descriptive text. In analyzed the data, the researcher used Miles, Huberman's & Saldana (2014 theory in analysing the data. Huberman & Saldana (2014) analysis consists of three current flows of activity which are data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. From this research, data reduction the researcher looked for the anticipatory data. The generic structures presented in this text were identification and description. The researcher also identified the linguistic features only use sentences that contain transitivity processes. Last, the researcher identified the communicative purpose of the descriptive text written by the students with theme "Favourite things". Next is data display the researcher would conduct a more detailed analysis and provided a pattern on how the generic structures, linguistic features, and communicative purpose in descriptive written by the students. Conclusions or verification in this study were to

discover generic structure, linguistic features and communicative purpose of descriptive text based on the theory of systemic functional linguistics. The researcher also identified the linguistic features only use sentences that contain transitivity processes, within the framework of SFL, focusing on the process type. Because, a clause is not seen from its constituent function but from the process this acts and relates each other. It defines the range types of process that it is possible to express through the language.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Generic Structure of Descriptive Text In this part, the researcher found three patterns by the students, there are Identification & description, Identification and Description.

(1) Description

Description aims at describing the specific participant in text. It contains descriptive details or information. The student had not been able to write descriptive text according to the generic structure. It could also mean that this student was still confused in placing the structure because this student was still placing it upside down. It can be seen from the example below:

Structure Text

Description

When Iam around. I feel claustrophobic, walking, watching, even blinking is uncomfortable without her. He's not human and can't speak but I believe he can help me in the temporary word.

Yes he is Al-Qur'an. Not living ,not making sound. But Allah will answer all of it .A savior to all who believe in him, help his live ,and reconcile his heart .No one dare to change nor to search, pure and unchangeable is he. (Student's text

Based on the text above, this paragraph only referred to the description on descriptive text. This student's writing had a good word or sentence, but it was not in accordance with the generic structure. The first paragraph, "when Iam around. I feel claustrophobic, walking, watching, even blinking is uncomfortable without her. He's not human and can't speak but I believe he can help me in the temporary word" did not introduce the topic and object that would be described and only provided an explanation of the feelings. The second paragraph "Yes he is Al-Qur'an" was identification which should be written in the first paragraph, yet it was wrongly placed in the second paragraph. In the second paragraph, the student described the object, namely the Al-Quran. From the results of his writing, the student did not describe the characteristics of the Al-Quran. The student only described the feelings he felt.

(2) Identification

Identification described the topic or phenomenon. Identification identified the phenomenon described and it was written in one short paragraph. It also could be assumed that the students were still confused about the placement of generic structure. Some examples would be shown below;

Structure Text

Identification:

This Jacket was a gift from my mom. She gave it to me two year ago. My favourite jacket is hoodie with a zipper in the center of it. It is made of cotton. The colour of the sleeves is black (Student's text 24)

Based on the text above, this paragraph only referred to identification in descriptive text. The identification became the opening of the text. It began with "This Jacket was a gift from my mom. She gave it to me two year ago. My favourite jacket is hoodie with a zipper in the center of it. It is made of cotton. . .". The first sentence was identification because it introduced the topic to be discussed. The next sentence "It is made of cotton, the colour of the sleeves is black" was a description that was placed in the identification. Students did not write a second paragraph to explain the second generic structure, namely the description.

Students did not explain the complete characteristics of the jacket because of the limited content to be discussed

(3) Identification & description

They maintained two basic descriptive text structures and the first was identification and description. It could be concluded that they almost knew how to wrote a generic structure in descriptive text. The students wrote more specific description and identification which could be seen from the example below;

Structure Text

Identification: I have a favourite hijab. My mother gave it to me last month. I was very

happy. I wear hijab everyday .I feel this hijab so simple and suitable for

me. I like the colour and the aterial, it is very comfortable to put on

Description: The colour of my favourite hijab is black. The material is katun. The texture is

silky. It is very soft and light. The material very coolness, so I can wear it without worrying about sweating. The size is not too big. There are also some ribbon around it. I feel my appearance is prettier with this hijab. So I

really love my hijab. (Student's text 38)

In the text above, the first sentence referred to Identification in descriptive text. Identification became the opening of the text. Identification means identifying the phenomenon to be described. The word "I have a favourite hijab" was information about the introduction of the favourite object to be explained, namely hijab. The student told that she had a favourite hijab from her mom and she really loved the colour as well as the material. By that explanation, the text identification completed. The next was the description stage which occurred in the second paragraph. The second paragraph referred to description on descriptive text because it described parts, qualities, and characteristics of something or someone in detail. In paragraph 2 explained and described clearly and detailed upon the characteristics of the hijab, from colour, material and size. By that explanation, the text description completed.

From the analysis of the data above the patterns of generic structure of descriptive text can be described in the following table:

Table.1 Generic structure students of Descriptive text						
No	Pattern	Number of case	Percentage			
1.	Identification and Description	43 students	86 %			
2.	Identification	6 students	12 %			
3.	Description	1 students	2 %			
Total		50 students	100%			

Table.1 Generic structure students of Descriptive text

# b. Linguistic Feature Based Transitivity of Descriptive Text

In this part, the researcher showed linguistic feature of descriptive text based on transitivity or ideational process. The researcher found six processes which were verbal process, behavioural process, existential process, mental process, material process and relational process.

- (1) Verbal Processes
- (2) Behavioural process
- (3) Existential process.
- (4) Mental Process
- (5) Material Processes
- (6) Relational Process

Based on the text above there were 3 relational processes. The first sentence was "My favourite thing is my phone". The word "is" was a relational process that provided identity (identifying) and attribute. "My" was the participant of the sentence which was called token, while my phone was the value of the sentence. One characteristic in relational identifying process was it could be reversed without changing the meaning of the clause. The next

sentence was "My phone type is Samsung A11. The colours of my phone is white on the back and black on the edges of screen". The word "is" was a relational process because it gave the quality on something.

The summary of linguistic feature based written descriptive text by 50 students, there are six transitivity or ideational processes are presented in the table below

Table 2 Language feature based 1	ransitivity process
Example	Number of case

No	Types	Types Example		Percentage
1.	Relational	My favourite thing is my phone	410	51,71 %
2.	Material	My mom brought this phone for me on November 8th,2020		24,72 %
3.	Mental	I like my bag	123	15,51%
4.	Existential There is a red mark on each page.		35	4,41 %
5. Behavioural I can watch my favourite sinetron, find out about the lastest news, and get entertainment.		17	2,14 %	
6.	Verbal	You could say half of the usual size.	12	1,25 %
Total			793	100%

# c. Communicative Purpose of Descriptive Text

In this part, the researcher found eight topic of communicative purpose from descriptive text written by students. Those are to describe electronic things, to describe school things, to describe accessories, to describe clothing, to describe room things, to describe a vehicle to describe hobby, and the last is to describe daily life things.

# (1) To Describe Accessories

Accessories are objects that are worn by someone to add beauty to the one who wear that. Student described their favourite accessories such as key chains, bracelets, or necklaces. From the data, the student who has a communicative purpose to describe objects with the theme "accessories things". The text below is an example of the third pattern in descriptive text written by students.

The colour of my diamond keychain is clear and when it hits a light will reflect a very beautiful rainbow. My diamond keychain also have a flash that can be turn on turn off. The size of my keychain is about 5cm-6cm. (Student's text 01)

Based on the text above, it showed that communicative purpose of descriptive text We could see from the second paragraph it provided explained "accessories things". information to the reader about the characteristics of a person, object, or place in detail so that the reader felt as if he or she has seen the object being described.

## (2) To Describe a Vehicle

Vehicles include bicycles, motorized vehicles, cars, and others. From these data, showed the student text whose communicative purpose is to describe the vehicle. The following was an example of a communicative text to describe a vehicle.

I have favourite motorbike. I like it very much. The motorbike was bought by my parents when I was going to Junior high School. I really like my bike even though it's not now. My bike is black and has green stripes. The rearview mirror is oval. (Student's text 25)

In this example, communicative purpose of descriptive text was to describe motorbike. It could be seen that the students' communicative purpose was to describe their favourite object, namely the vehicle.

# (3) To Describe Daily Life Things

From the data, the students showed whose communicative purpose is to discuss daily life things. The text below is an example of the topic daily life things in descriptive text written by

Skincare is one of the most important in my life. I like to use skincare everyday. My skincare is oily combination, because my skin type is combination. My skincare consist of cleanser moisturizing sunscreen toner serum mask and the others. (Student text 30)

In the example text below, communicative purpose descriptive text is written text to describe students' daily things such as skincare where students describe the use of these objects in everyday life as seen in the second paragraph. For that, the communicative purpose of this text has been achieved

## (4) To Describe School Things

The communicative purposes written by students were grouped with the topic "school things". From the data, there were student who had a communicative purpose to describe objects with the topic "school things". The text below is an example of the topic in descriptive text written by student.

My favourite things is shoes. I like very much. I always wear my shoes when I'm travelling because I feel comfortable when I wear my shoes. I bought it in an online shop for Rp.200,000. I bought it 9 month ago. (Student's text 41)

Based on the text above, student described their favourite object, namely "Shoes". The communicative purpose of descriptive text was to describe objects in detail. Student described the colour, shape, and use of the shoes to the reader. This made the reader felt as if he or she has seen the object being described. By that explanation, the text above has fulfilled the communicative purpose of the descriptive text.

# (5) To Describe Room Things

The students showed whose communicative purpose was to discuss and describe room things such as bed, doll, and pillow. The text below was an example of describe room things

My bed is quite unique as it is an airbed. The size is very big large than the bed in general, which is 160cm X 210cm. My bed is very comfortable because it is wavy on it so is very comfy to sleep on and makes sleep more sound and quality. (Student's text 05)

Based on the text above, students describe "my lovely bed". Students describe the bed. We can see from the sentence second paragraph .From the paragraph, it can be seen that the students' communicative purpose is to describe their favourite objects in the room.

# (6) To Describe Clothing

The students who describe their favourite clothing and communicative purpose aim to describe in detail their clothing. The text below is an example of the second pattern in descriptive text written by students. The text below is an example of the topic written by student.

I very like all about football especially Jersey. I have a a lot of Jersey but the special one is Arsenal Jersey. The red color making this jersey look cool and the pattern is'nt boring. That's nice the fabric also soft and comfortable. It's make me look like real football player. (Student's text 39)

Based on the example, this text had a communicative purpose to give the reader an impression or impression of the object that the author wanted to convey. The student described his favourite jersey starting from the colour and pattern of the clothes. By that explanation, students have achieved their communicative purpose well.

## (7) To Describe Hobby

The students showed whose communicative purpose was to discuss and describe hobby. The text below is an example of the topic in descriptive text written by student.

My favourite things is football. I started playing football since I was in Kindergarten. I love playing football because my dad played football, too. When I was in the 3rd grade I went to football school, I went to football school for about 2 years, during that 2 years I participated in a lot of football tournaments and until now I have never been a champion. Now I join the football team in my village and my goal later is to become a champion. (Student's text 50)

In this example text, communicative purpose descriptive text is written text to describe a hobby. We can see from the second paragraph that the students' communicative purpose is to describe their favourite hobby where students love football from kindergarten until participating in tournaments. The communicative purpose of this text has been achieved.

# (8) To Describe Electronic Things

From the data, the students showed whose communicative purpose was to discuss and describe electronic things. The text below is an example of the topic in descriptive text written by student.

I really like this phone because it has good camera and this phone has a fast charging feature that allow us to charge it in less 2 hours to fully charge. And also the battery capacity is very large, 4000 mAh which can be used for almost 12 hours. (Student's text 02)

The text above showed the communicative purpose in descriptive text. The student described in detail upon his favourite object, which was the phone. The second paragraph gave informations to the reader about the characteristics of the phone so that the reader felt as if he or she has seen the object being described.

From the analysis of the data above the topic of object communicative purpose of descriptive text can be described in the following table:

Table 3 Communicative Purpose of Descriptive Text

No	Topic of Object	Number of Case	Example	Percentage
1.	To describe electronic	11	My phone, My	22 %
	things		Television	
2.	To describe hobby	11	My favourite	22 %
			game, Football	
3.	To describe clothing	9	Arsenal jersey,	18 %
		Cardigans		
4.	To describe room things	9	Favourite doll,	18 %
			Favourite pillow	
5.	To describe school	school 6 Pen, book, bag		12 %
	things.			
6.	To describe daily life	2	Skincare, Money.	4 %
	things.			
7.	To describe a vehicle	1	My lovely	2 %
			motorbike	
8	To describe accesoris.	1	Diamond	2 %
			Keychain	
	Total	50		100

## **Discussion**

## a. Generic Structure of Descriptive Text

In this study, the researcher found three patterns of generic structure of descriptive text, namely: identification & description, identification, and description. The research found the most frequently used and correctly generic structure based on the theory, the researcher found and described it with a percentage of 86%. This research in line with Wijayatiningsih & Wardhani (2015), Ulfa (2017), Anggun (2016), Oktavia (2017), Wulandari (2017), and Potradinata (2018), Rohmat, Nurhaeni, & Anggraeni (2018), the previous found the same topic namely analyzing the genre of descriptive text. This use supports theories of generic structure descriptive text discussed by Gerot and Wignell (1994: 208), and Yusak (2004: 49). However, the finding not corresponds with Yuniarti, Rahayu, & Eripuddin (2015) and Sipayung (2016) only discusses showing that students' ability in writing descriptive texts and shows that there are or ten texts (text structure) wrong or six students write descriptive at the correct stage.

## b. Linguistic Features of Descriptive Text

In this study, the researcher discusses linguistic features-based transitivity processes, most of which are relational processes with 51.71%. This research use support theories Knapp and Watkins (2005:98-99) state that grammatical features of descriptive writing are a relational process. This research in line with Astuti (2016), and Sipayung(2016), this study discusses the linguistic features about the process that is most dominant process is used is the relational process. However, this research does not correspond with Noprianto (2017), Pramesti (2019), and Appendi & Mulyani (2020). Because from the previous research that the dominant process found in the material process and mental process.

Communicative Purpose of Descriptive Text.

The research found that the most communicative purpose students wrote about the topic of an object with theme "favorite things", namely to describe electronic things and to describe hobbies with a percentage of 22%. Students have completed communicative purpose descriptive text. The research finding use support theories Paltridge (2000:111) . This finding in line with Noprianto (2017). However, the research not corresponds with Anggun (2016) because there is a text that does not achieve the communicative purpose.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher found that the students used both generic structure of writing in writing their text which are identification and description. The researcher also found that the most dominant process of linguistic structure is a relational process. This is related to the linguistic features based on transitivity analysis in student's descriptive text. Another thing is the communicative purpose of the student's descriptive text. The researcher found that the topic that was mostly used by the students based on the theme given which was "favorite things" were electronics and hobbies.

In short, it can be concluded that the results of writing descriptive texts for class XI students have used the correct and appropriate generic structure as well as linguistic feature. Another thing is the communicative purpose of the descriptive text written by the students. They described their favorite things according to their world, something that they used to do or see in everyday life. In this case, they described their favorite electronics and hobby.

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