"Learning functional grammar is fun": A snapshot of functional grammar unit at an English Education Department in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a teaching program for the Functional Grammar (FG) unit at an English Education Study Program of a state university in West Java Indonesia in 2020-2022. Three cohorts of pre-service teachers in semester six were involved in the program (38 students in 2020, 26 in 2021, and 36 in 2022). The teaching program was conducted online due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The report focuses on exploring students' understanding of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) – FG in particular, and their ability to use SFL in text analysis. The study also addresses students' opinions on learning SFL through FG unit. The study used a qualitative case study design and the data were obtained from participant observations, a questionnaire distributed at the end of the teaching program, and analysis of students' essays on text analyses. In the interest of space, the paper will only present and discuss data from the questionnaire and three samples of student essays. The questionnaire data were analysed qualitatively using a thematic analysis of different aspects of the unit and SFL, and students' essays were analysed using SFL, especially theme, transitivity, and mood systems in lexicogrammar stratum. The data from the questionnaire indicate that all the students in all cohorts responded positively to the teaching program. Many students in each cohort said that learning FG is fun, enjoyable, interesting, and useful for both daily and academic life. They displayed a good understanding of SFL, including its basic principles, notions, and values – especially concerning their reading and writing improvement. The data from students' essays also reveal their ability to show how and why the text means what it does and to evaluate why the text is or is not effective for its own purposes. On this basis, it is recommended that SFL be introduced to Indonesian university students to enhance their literacy capacity and to Indonesian teachers to improve their teaching skills and their ways to develop assessment that is linguistically informed.

Keywords: Functional Grammar (FG); Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL); Mood; text analysis; Theme; Transitivity;

INTRODUCTION

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a well-established and widely respected approach to understanding language (Martin et al., 2020a: ii). SFL concerns the dialectical relationship inherent in processes of language learning and has become an important tool for describing and supporting language development across phases of life as well as across education levels (Christie, 2012; Macken-Horarik et al. 2017; Schleppegrell, 2013; Schleppegrell & Mo, 2007).

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In Indonesian education, interest in SFL has grown over the last two decades, especially since the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture released the 2004 English curriculum for junior and senior high schools. This curriculum was underpinned by SFL genre-based approach (SFL-GBA). Since 2004, there have been phases of curriculum change i.e. the 2006 School-Based Curriculum, the 2013 Curriculum, and the *Merdeka* Curriculum (Curriculum of Freedom, developed in 2022); the focus of them all remains on texts, as informed by SFL and its genre-based approach (see The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022).

Since the implementation of SFL GBA in the curriculum of English in Indonesia, there has been increasing number of universities which offer FG in their curriculum. Most research studies on SFL in Indonesia have been concerned with the impact of SFL-based pedagogy on students' English ability and the results have been heartening in that the implementation of SFL-based pedagogy could help students enhance students' language skills and knowledge (e.g. Emilia, 2005, 2010; Emilia & Hamied, 2015, Emilia et al., 2017, 2018; Aunurrahman, 2018; Aunurrahman et al., 2017, 2022; Wijayanti, 2019). However, research on students' opinions about courses in SFL or FG, students' knowledge and understanding of SFL or FG after the course, and their ability to analyse texts using SFL or FG is still rare.

Thus, to fill the gap, the research reported in this paper aimed to identify students' understanding of and opinions on SFL and FG, and learning SFL and FG. Moreover, as "text analysis is certainly central component of doing linguistics in Hallidayan tradition" (Matthiessen et al., 2022, p. 49; Halliday, 1994) the study also aimed to explore students' ability to analyse texts using SFL. This ability, in relation to the participants involved in the study, is significant to help them enhance their ability to teach, to develop teaching materials, and to assess students' language development.

Systemic functional linguistics

Systemic functional linguistics is a theory of language developed by Halliday and his colleagues. Key publications include Halliday (1994), Butt et al., (2000); Halliday and Mathiessen (2014), Martin (1992), Martin and Rose (2008), Christie and Derewianka (2008). More recently key works on SFL have been published, focusing on language description (e.g. Martin et al. 2020a,b, 2021, 2022), advances in SFL theory (e.g. Matthiessen et al, 2022), pedagogical contexts (e.g. Humphrey & Vale, 2020), and multimodal texts in literacy teaching (e.g. Macken-Horarrik et al., 2017; Mills et al., 2023). A survey of a wide range of applications is found in Caldwell et al., (2022).

SFL adheres to several basic principles, which were emphasised in the course discussed in this paper. One key principle is that language is a social semiotic system (Halliday, 1978, 1985). For SFL, semiotics is understood as referring to "the general study of meaning-making (semiosis), including not just meanings we make with language, but meanings we make with every sort of object, event or action in so far as it is endowed with a significance, a symbolic value in our community" (Lemke, 1995, p. 9). The term "social" indicates an orientation to the relationships between language and social structure.

Interpreted from this perspective, the relation between language and context in SFL has been organised in five different strata – phonology/graphology, lexicogrammar, discourse semantics, register and genre (following Martin 1992). The relationship between language (text), register and genre is outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Stratification and metafunctions in the systemic functional linguistic framework (Martin 1992, in Hao, 2020, p. 8)
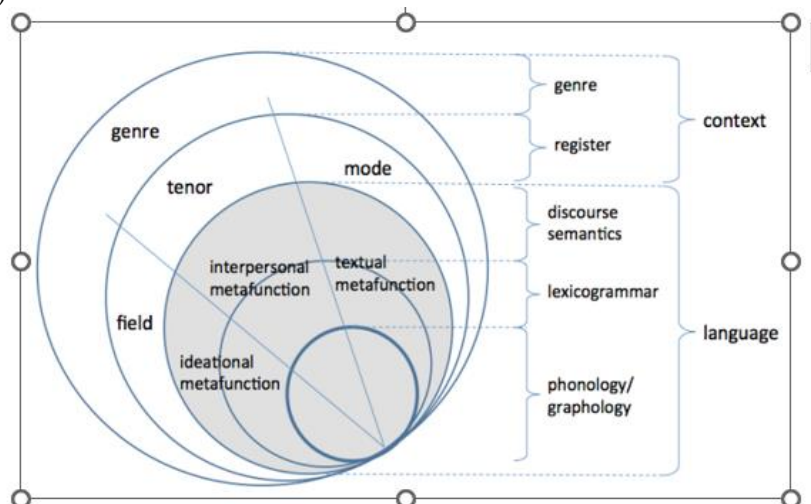
Figure 1 shows that the least abstract resources for meaning-making are phonological or graphological systems. At the stratum of lexicogrammar, the units of phonology and graphology are reconfigured as words and structures (lexicogrammar). At the discourse semantic level meanings are created across phases of text as a whole, rather than just within clauses. The meanings realised in both lexicogrammar and discourse semantics can be considered the content plane of language. Context, modelled as register and genre, stands at the higher levels of abstraction, and is realised through the choices made in language (e.g., Martin, 1992; Dreyfus et al. 2016). Register realizes genre, and is organised metafunctionally as field, tenor and mode. Field is concerned with the nature of social action, viewed as institutional practice; tenor refers to the relationship among participants, their status and affinity; and mode refers to the role language plays in organising ideational and interpersonal meanings according to the texture which different channels of communication afford (Doran & Martin, 2020; Martin et al., 2022).

The co-tangential circles in Figure 1, according to Doran and Martin (2020, p. 13), represent the idea that discourse semantic patterns need to be interpreted as patterns of lexicogrammar patterns, and lexicogrammar patterns as patterns of phonological, graphological, or signed ones (a relationship referred to technically as metaredundancy). Their increasing size, for Doran and Martin (2020), reflects the fact that the focal point of analysis tends to get bigger as the analysis moves from phonology (e.g. syllable system and structure) through lexicogrammar (e.g. clause system and structure) to discourse semantics (e.g. text system and structure and on to whole texts realising genres (2020, p. 13).

At the discourse semantic level meanings are created across phases of text as a whole, rather than just within clauses. As organised by metafunctions, the discourse semantic level of meanings is organised as ideational discourse semantics, interpersonal discourse semantics, and textual discourse semantics – as represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Discourse Semantic System, Organised by Metafunctions (after Doran & Martin, 2020, p. 13; see also Martin & Quiroz, 2020; Ngo et al., 2022)
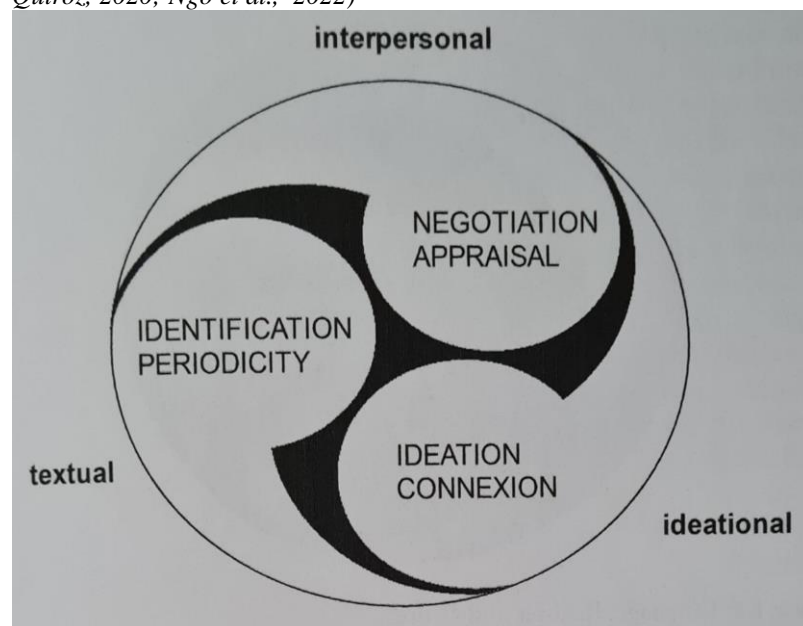
Interpersonal discourse semantics is enacted through NEGOTIATION and APPRAISAL systems; NEGOTIATION comprises resources for organising moves in exchanges; APPRAISAL comprises resources for expressing feelings. Ideational discourse semantics is construed through IDEATION and CONNEXION systems. IDEATION comprises resources for construing experience; CONNEXION comprises resources for connecting figures. Textual discourse semantics is composed through IDENTIFICATION and PERIODICITY systems. IDENTIFICATION comprises resources for introducing and tracking entities;

PERIODICITY comprises resources for phasing discourse as waves of information (Doran & Martin, 2020, p. 12; see also Hao, 2022; Ngo et al., 2022). In the teaching program, as will be alluded to later, in the interest of time, only PERIODICITY was discussed as it is to do with the students' ability to identify the flow of information at the text level. This ability is significant for student teachers to enable them to assess the cohesion and coherence of the text as a whole. This, as will be mentioned later, suggests the needs for one more or unit of SFL specifically focusing on discourse semantics.

Another important principle in SFL is that language is conceived as a resource for making meaning rather than as a system of rules (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Martin, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin, 1992). Under this principle, SFL sees meaning "as choice, which is not a conscious decision made in real time but a set of possible alternatives" (Halliday, 1994, p. xxvi).

Choices are formalised in what is referred to as a system network. An example can be seen in Figure 3, which is a simplified account of some basic grammatical options within the interpersonal metafunction for an English clause. These options constitute the system of MOOD (conventionally written in small capitals to indicate that it is the name of a system).

Figure 3
A simple system: basic options in MOOD (after Painter et al., 2013, p. 8; see also Martin et al. 2021, p. 5)
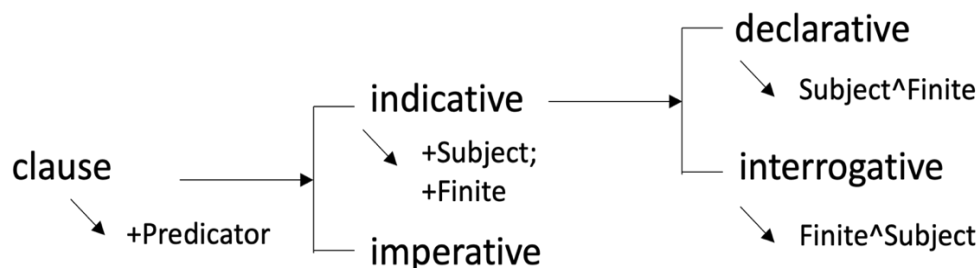

Figure 3 shows that each system is concerned with one kind of opposition and the systems are ordered along a scale of delicacy from left to right – if [indicative] is chosen, then either [declarative] or [interrogative] must be. The square brackets ([) with horizontal arrows (→) pointing into them mean "or". The structural consequences of the choices are expressed as realisation statements, indicated by diagonal arrows (□) – if [indicative], then a Subject function and Finite function are present; if [declarative] then Subject precedes the Finite (signalled by the caret "^"), but if [interrogative] then the Finite precedes the Subject. The [imperative] option has, in contrast to [indicative], no structural requirement for the presence of a Subject or Finite function. System networks such as those in Figure 3 formalise language as a resource for meaning, rather than as a set of rules.

In practice, as Christie (2007) notes, simultaneous choices are drawn on almost whenever language is used. In a clause, for example, one makes choices for TRANSITIVITY, realising experiential meaning, MOOD realising interpersonal meaning, and THEME, realising textual meaning. The structural consequences of multiple simultaneous choices are illustrated below, a clause from the text analysed by the students from 2021 cohort in this study.

Table 1
An example of a clause realising experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings simultaneously

	At school students must read a lot.				
	At school	*students*	*must read*	*a lot (of books)*	
THEME	marked topical Theme	unmarked topical Theme	Rheme		
TRANSITIVITY	Circ: Location: place	Behaver	Process: behavioural	Scope	
MOOD	Adjunct	Subject	Finite Predicator	Complement	
	prepositional phrase	nominal group	verbal group	nominal group	
	P C	Thing	Modal Event	Deictic Thing	
	preposition [nom group]	common noun	modal verb	determiner common noun	

Table 1 shows that the clause *At schools students must read a lot*. realises textual, experiential, interpersonal meanings simultaneously. The view that language is a set of choices rather than a set of rules makes it possible to consider the appropriateness and inappropriateness of language choices in a given context of use (Gibbons, 2003, p. 250).

In SFL, grammar is viewed as being fundamentally organized in functional terms. For analysis, it shares some features with traditional grammars (TG) – in the special sense of being concerned with explicitness (i.e. explicit representations of the structure and explicit representation of systems). The differences between FG and TG have been summarised by Derewianka and Jones (2012). Some of the differences, which are also highlighted in this study, are related to the nature of the language description – since TG describes language in terms of word classes (noun, pronouns, prepositions), which operate at the level of the sentence and below, and focuses on the grammar of

written language. FG on the other hand, describes the relationship between classes of item as well as their functions, operating from the whole text to the word and below; and it takes into account how written language differs from spoken language and the organisation of multimodal texts (see Derewianka & Jones, 2012, p. 15).

Another principle emphasised in the course, which is also relevant to the functionality of language, is that SFL has always been an appliable linguistics (Matthiessen et al., 2022, p. 45; Martin et al., 2022, p.1-10; Moyano, 2022; Quiroz, 2022). An appliable linguistics, according to Halliday (2008, p. 7), is:

> a comprehensive and theoretically powerful model of language which, precisely because it is comprehensive and powerful, would be capable of being applied to the problems, both research problems and practical problems, that are being faced all the time by the many groups of people in our modern society who are in some way or other having to engage with language (2008, p. 7).

Halliday's lifelong commitment to developing a linguistics of this kind is reflected in his acknowledgement of the influence of his sometime collaborator, the British sociologist of education, Bernstein: "From Bernstein, I learnt also, for the second time in my life, that linguistics, cannot be other than an ideologically committed form of social action" (1985, p. 5 in Martin et al. 2022, p. 2). An appliable linguistics, according to Martin et al. (2022, p. 45) has the following characteristics:

- must be a theory of meaning... eschewing a form-content duality in all its guises and embracing the idea that language makes meaning;
- must engage with the fact that meaning is made in texts; smaller units of language must of course be recognized but all have to be interpretable in relation to co-text (i.e. the text and other units in and with which any smaller unit is situated);
- must work with a fully articulated model of context (i.e. the social environment of which a text is an integral part). Ideally this will be a model that treats context as a higher level of meaning realized through language choices;
- must adopt a multimodal perspective on text in context – and model the interaction between language and attendant semiotic systems (e.g. paralanguage, image, music, dance);
- in light of the complexity of models dealing with meaning, text, context and multimodality, an appliable linguistics must be fractal; analytical tools and formalisms have to be designed that work in similar ways across a range of semiotic phenomena. Once linguists and semioticians are apprenticed into a theory (via genre, appraisal, image analysis, language education etc.), they can re-deploy their skills as new tasks come to hand and make contributions to a wholistic model of language and semiotics (Martin et al., 2022, p. 2; see also Martin & Quiroz, 2020).

One of these characteristics, which needs foregrounding in the context of this paper, is the orientation to text analysis – analysis which text as an object in its own right can undertake both a selectively focused or exhaustive analysis as requires (as expounded in Martin 1992, 1999).

METHOD
Overview of the study

The study reported in this paper is a qualitative case study in which the first writer acted as teacher (Stake, 1985, 1995; Malik & Hamied, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2006); it involved 3 cohorts of pre-service teachers (38 students in 2020, 26 in 2021, and 36 in 2022) taking the subject FG in a state university in West Java, Indonesia. The course was conducted online, using the Zoom, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was offered for one semester to each cohort, in semester 6, Year 3 of undergraduate program (for 16 weeks, 16 meetings, with each meeting lasting for 100 minutes). Halliday's SFL informed FG formed the basis of the course; as he comments:

> The aim has been to construct a grammar for purposes of text analysis. ... what is included here is what I have found it possible to teach in one semester in a second year undergraduate program in linguistics (say 30 hours' class time, with associated tutorials), or one year-long seminar in a Master's degree program in applied linguistics (say 54 hours) with ongoing exercises in the analysis of texts. … . (1994, p. xv).

However, as the data will reveal, one semester is not enough to allow students to master SFL comprehensively, especially as far as discourse semantics is concerned. The course reported here covered only one aspect of textual discourse semantic system, that is PERIODICITY, due to time constraints. That being said, the course did ensure that student teachers had a comprehensive understanding of the whole SFL model of language and its broad theoretical framework and at the same time opened up possibilities for classroom application by students in their own teaching contexts (as promoted by Dare & Polias 2022, p. 185).

As stated in the expected learning outcomes, the course aimed to provide students with SFL theory and mentor the practice of analysing and assessing texts using FG:

> At the completion of the course, students are expected to demonstrate strong and sound understanding of SFL and specifically FG, including basic principles and notions of SFL, the three systems of grammar relevant to each metafunction of language upheld in SFL, that is the TRANSITIVITY, the MOOD, and the THEME systems. Moreover the students are expected to be able to analyse texts using SFL or FG (Emilia & Damayanti, 2022).

Each of the text analyses undertaken aimed for possible levels of achievement in discourse analysis, as described by Halliday:

1. The lower level: Understanding of the text, … showing how, and why, the text means what it does.

2. The higher level: Ability to evaluate the text: … to say why the text is, or is not, an effective text for its own purposes in what respects it is of context, that is context of situation and context of culture. Context of situation consists of three elements which are: field, mode, and tenor (1994, p. xv).

The course program for each academic year can be seen in Appendix 1. The teaching process in each cohort drew to some extent on the SLATE program (Dreyfus et al., 2016); this involved genre pedagogy being implemented online and the lecturer guiding the students going through each stage of the pedagogy synchronously. The students were encouraged to read, to build knowledge about each aspect of SFL and FG and how to use it in text analyses in the stage of Building Knowledge of the Field. Then, the students, guided by the lecturer, discussed a model of text analyses in the Modelling stage, and were invited to jointly analyse a text with the lecturer in the Joint Construction of Text. This involved analysing a text, in terms of its genre and register – starting with parsing the sentences into clauses, next identifying the function of each element of a clause and its linguistic features, and then commenting on the text at the clause and the text levels. Finally, the students were directed to analyse texts independently in the stage of Independent Construction of Text. The students' practice of text analysis was expected to allow them to be able to enhance their ability to do a text-based language teaching, to guide their students to produce a good text in line with its purpose, to develop text-based teaching materials, and assessment of their students language development.

The students' work on text analysis was collected from each cohort, and then analysed to explore their ability to identify the text type, the genre and its stages and phases, and its linguistic features using three systems of clause grammar: TRANSITIVITY, MOOD, and THEME systems. Students' work presented in this paper was selected from the 2021 cohort, who analysed the same text, entitled "The benefits of much reading" (see Appendix 3); the other cohorts analysed different texts for each system of grammar. In retrospect, all the students should have been assigned the same text to show how the choices made realise all three metafunctions of language (see Christie, 2007).

At the end of the teaching program in each cohort, a questionnaire was distributed to the students. It consisted of 10 questions (see Appendix 2), asking for students' opinions about learning SFL and FG and their understanding of SFL and FG. The data were analysed using a thematic analysis, and then classified in line with the central themes and presented in a condensed body of information (Kvale, 1996) regarding:

1. students' opinion about the course (functional grammar) and what they would say to other people about functional grammar;
2. students' understanding of SFL and FG;
3. the benefits of learning grammar in the previous subjects;
4. the benefits of learning FG;
5. the impact of SFL, especially functional grammar on the teaching of English, including assessment;
6. the benefits of practices of text analysis using SFL or FG;
7. the need for school students to learn the structure of organisation and linguistic features of texts;
8. the challenges of learning FG and suggestions for the betterment of the course in the future.

The data from the questionnaire and students' works were selected based on their "richness" (Kumar, 2011, p. 192) for the information needed. Questionnaire data were selected from each cohort. In addition, 3 essays from the 2021 cohort, representing low, mid, and high achievements, were selected to be presented in this paper. As in other qualitative studies, no randomisation was undertaken, and the researchers purposefully selected 'information-rich' respondents who would provide the information needed, as suggested by Kumar (2011, p. 192; see also Malik & Hamied, 2016).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section focuses on two parts: (i) presenting and discussing results in relation to students' opinion and

understanding of SFL and FG; and (ii) showcasing students' ability in doing text analysis using relevant FG systems.

Students' opinions on and understanding of SFL (FG)

Data from the questionnaire generally show students' consciousness of the value of the program in helping them as learners. As outlined above, the questionnaire data were classified into eight themes. First, the course was perceived by all the students to have achieved most of its goals, although many students said that they had to work hard to achieve this. Many students (18/38 in 2020 cohort, 12/26 in 2021 cohort, and 18/36 in 2022 cohort) explicitly stated that learning functional grammar was fun or enjoyable. Giatri[1], for example, from 2020 cohort said:

> *Actually, FG is fun to learn… . You will know how it is so much fun to understand the whole text, from its genre, first paragraph to its ending, … (Giatri).*

Likewise, Sandra and Conia, respectively from 2021 and 2022 cohorts said:

> *… it (FG) is fun to learn… . Obviously, this can help your life – you can be more critical of what you read and write as well as listen, and understand the patterns of the text. … (Sandra).*

> *I think … you can enjoy learning FG when you analyse texts by using this grammar (Conia)*

The concept of text was mentioned by all the students as a significant characteristic of learning FG and reflects SFL's tradition of engaging with text by taking text as an object in its own right (Martin et al., 2022; Matthiessen et al., 2022). Sandra' comment about SFL having value for life in general goes with the concept of SFL as an appliable linguistics (see also Hood, 2022; Mathiessen et al., 2022). Giatri's enjoyment of her understanding the text's genre, its stages and phases confirm the value of teaching the structure of organisation, the stages and phases of a text or PERIODICITY of the text as suggested by Humphrey and Vale (2020); Martin and Rose (2003, 2007) Rose (2020a,b); Williams (1993). And Sandra's statement that FG can make the students more critical goes along with Gibbons' view that the concept of language as a set of choices rather than a set of rules makes it possible to consider the appropriateness and inappropriateness of language choices in a given context of use (2003, p. 253; see also Gibbons, 2002). In the English as a foreign language (EFL) context in Indonesia, this supports previous research (see Aunurrahman, 2018; Emilia, 2005; Wijayanti, 2019) confirming that knowledge about SFL can enhance students' critical thinking.

Second, in relation to basic principles and notions of SFL, all the students' responses show their understanding. Susan, from the 2020 cohort, for example, said:

> *SFL is a social theory of language which has been developed from previous linguistic theories developed by previous linguists, such as Saussure, Firth, the Prague school. … several basic principles of SFL:*
> *• Language is a social semiotic system, SFL sees language as a resource for making meaning rather than as a system of rules;*
> *• SFL concerns texts, rather than sentences, as the basic unit through which meanings is negotiated …*
> *… each language has three metafunctions, which are interpersonal metafunction, ideational metafunction, and textual metafunction, and each metafunction has its own system of grammar … . The basic notions in SFL are text and context and metafunctions. (Susan).*

Susan's response (along with those from other students') matches Halliday's and his colleagues' descriptions of SFL introduced above. Technical terms from SFL, e.g., *a social semiotic system* and *metafunctions* and the names of experts present in the response reflect her background knowledge about SFL.

Third, regarding a connection to courses in TG, students – Rita (2020 cohort) and Dini (2022 cohort) commented as follows:

> *The benefits from learning TG for learning FG is we have the basic knowledge that can be used in learning FG. … . (Rita).*
> *TG … is the spare part. FG is the machine. … It makes so much sense that this is the final stage of the grammar courses series. This is the fruition of the 3 previous classes (Dini).*

Rita's and Dini's responses echo the point made by Derewianka and Jones (2012) that there are certain things we can take from TG that are useful in learning FG. Dini's statement about the series of grammar courses makes a good point as far as curriculum development and structure of English education are concerned.

One student, Lani (2022 cohort) supported Dini and Rita's views, showing her awareness of the differences between TG and FG. Lani said:

> *Generally, there are three main differences between the previous grammar subjects and FG. First, the largest level of analysis in the previous grammar subjects is the sentence while in FG is the text. Second, TG is only interested in written language, but FG is interested in spoken, written and multimodal texts. Last, TG is not very interested in the context of the text, but FG is interested in how the context has impacted on and is revealed in the language choices (Lani).*

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[1] All students name displayed in the paper are pseudonym.

Fourth, regarding benefits of learning FG, Dinda, from 2022 cohort, for example, said:

... From the MOOD system, the benefit ... is how to efficiently express my thoughts and ideas through the use of modality, including probability, certainty, usuality, and obligation. ... I learned to combine the three levels of modality including high, medium, and low modality in order to achieve the purposes. Second, the TRASITIVITY system ... through ... identifying process types and participants, I can respond critically and identify what is going on in a text. Third, the clause complex system enables me to emphasise the relationship between events and happenings. The last one ... knowing the THEME system, ... I can draw attention when I read a text, to each layer of Theme development one by one so that the reading process becomes effective. As a writer or speaker, it helps me to organize ideas more effectively, it helps students to read and to construct longer texts (Dinda).

Dinda's statement shows her awareness of the value of knowledge of all systems of grammar taught in the course (e.g.Christie, 2007, 2012; Hao, 2020a,b, 2022; Martin, 1992, 1999; Williams, 1993). Dinda's statement also supports the data from students' essays analysis which will be presented in the section on students' ability to analyse texts.

Fifth, as for the impact of SFL on EFL teaching in Indonesia, the students commented as follows.

... The teaching of English used to be heavily focused on ... the rules of a language, ... Now, ... different types of texts are utilized, and teachers teach grammar explicitly through text (Rahma, 2020 cohort).

The impact of SFL can be seen from the Genre Based Approach to teaching English as a foreign language... . (Fauzia, 2020 cohort).
... Teachers can conduct assessments using FG to assess and analyse texts made by students, whether written, spoken, visual, or in the form of multimodal text. ... a text is assessed utilizing functional grammar, not based on the length of the text (Dini, 2022 cohort).

The comments above reflect students' consciousness of the shift in the teaching of English in Indonesia. Rahma's statement touches on the shift from learning materials focusing on rules to focusing on different text types where language is viewed as meaning making resources. Fauzia's is concerned with the implementation of SFL genre pedagogy. And Dini's is related to a contemporary issue which is prominent for Indonesian teachers – namely the assessment of students' texts. Dini's statement shows her awareness that teachers' problems in assessing students' language development can actually be resolved using FG. Dini's statement also suggests her concern with assessment at school, which is often based simply on the length of the text (see Emilia, 2010). Dini's statement about different modes of text

and multimodal text is also relevant to the current understandings of literacy in what Kress refers to as the 'new media age' (Kress, 2003) – with reference to texts involving digital and nondigital texts that combine a range of modes of expression (van Leuwen in Mills et al., 2023, p. xiii; see also Macken-Horarik et al., 2017; Knox, 2022).

Sixth, turning to the benefits of text analysis using SFL, students' responses can be represented by Tiara, from 2020 cohort, who said:

a. Analysis using transitivity system encourages us to understand what is being discussed (field), who is involved (participants), and in what context it is being discussed (circumstance).
b. Analysis using mood and modality system encourages us to understand how the author expresses his confidence in the topic he is discussing based on the use of modalization and modulation. So that the writing can be accepted by the audience.
c. Analysis using theme system encourages us to understand how to organize ideas more effectively in writing and speaking and helps us develop reading skills.
d. Analysis using clause complex system encourages us to understand the meaning of sentence building clauses (Tiara).

Tiara' s comments show her consciousness of the values of text analysis using SFL, again, as discussed by SF linguists mentioned above. This also supports the data from analysis of students' essays that will be presented later.

Seventh, regarding the teaching of structure of organization and linguistic features of a text, all the students agreed this was useful. Tanti, for example, said:

... students should learn about the structure of organization and language features of text types as each text type or genre holds a different social purpose. ... Students should know genres and text types thus they could create a text that reaches its social and cultural purposes and could analyze texts properly (Butt et al., 2000) (Tanti, 2021 cohort).

Eighth, turning to challenges in learning SFL, some students mentioned the concepts were difficult, and some others mentioned THEME, MOOD, and TRANSITIVITY systems in particular. Some students also mentioned text analysis, especially commenting on patterns, as the most challenging part. In addition, one student mentioned the problem of internet connectivity and the incompatibility of online learning and his learning style. One student also mentioned the shortage of resources about SFL, which were expensive to buy. These concerns warrant further consideration.

Regarding suggestions for the improvement of the course, the following students' responses are representative.

I believed that every lesson in Functional Grammar has been explained well by the lectures. And for me, there's no suggestion for this subject because the

overall is doing well and great. (Sinta, 2020 cohort).
Overall, I had a great time learning new knowledge and improving my language skills thanks to this class. I finally learned that grammar can be fun ... (Toni, 2021 cohort).

The data above suggest that at this stage, the teaching program was perceived to have achieved most of its goals by the students. This is supported by the data from texts analysis presented below.

Students' ability in doing text analysis
As noted above, the data on text analyses presented in this paper were collected from the 2021 student cohort. The text they analysed was entitled "The benefits of much reading" (see Appendix 3), written by Muhammad an eleventh grader in a public school in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The text was written to be read aloud for a speech presented in a speaking contest in 2009 on the benefits of 'much reading'. The text was chosen because it was written by a student, and in many ways exhibits the characteristics of a successful Hortatory Exposition. It was thus considered appropriate for student teachers to practice assessments of student language development, as they would have to do later on at school when they become teachers.

Students' essays (see Appendix 4, Essays 1,2,3, respectively written by Rubi, Feny and Enis, representing high, mid, and low achievers) will be discussed in terms of the writer's ability to identify the text's genre, its stages and phases, the linguistic features employed in the text, and the ability to evaluate whether or not the text is effective. All the essays, have characteristics of a review text, as they

consist of plot summary, evaluation of the text (Humphrey & Vale, 2020) and consideration of its structure and linguistic features and conclusion.

To begin, students' ability to identify the text types and its purpose can be seen in the excerpt below.
The text above is an instance of an Expository genre. The purpose of this genre is actually to adopt a critical point of view. ... to persuade readers to a particular line of action or belief (Derewianka & Jones, 2016, p. 234) (Essay 1).

The students' ability to identify the stages of a Hortatory Exposition can be seen in all essays, as in the excerpt below.
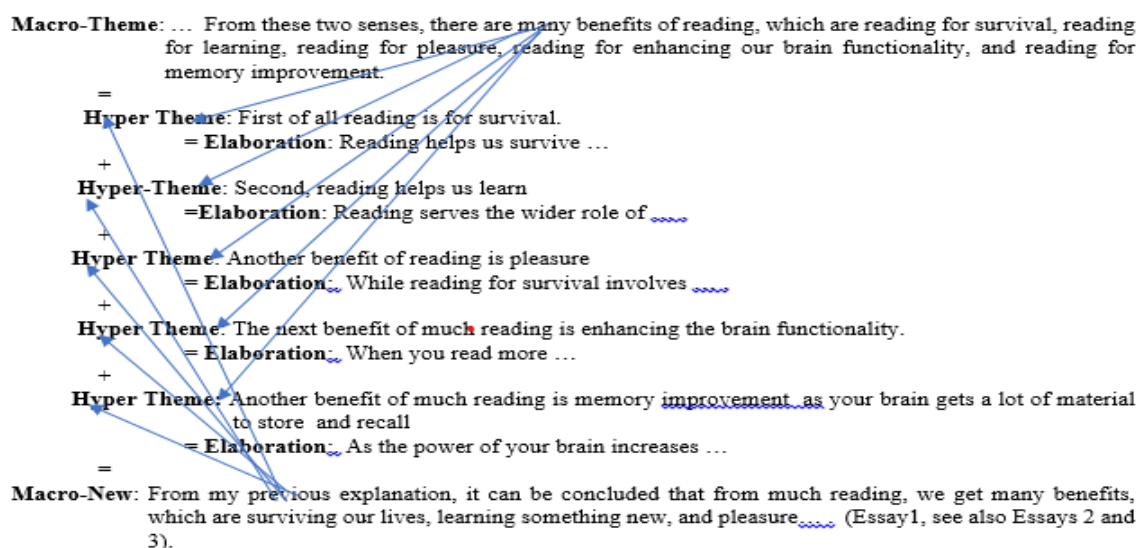*The text has elements of a Hortatory Exposition genre. According to Derewianka & Jones (2016) and Kurniawati, Ihrom, and Yusuf (2017), the essential elements of a hortatory exposition text are statement of position (thesis statement), arguments, and reiteration of appeal (Essay 3).*

The two excerpts above show how the writers cite authorities, to enhance the validity of the analysis. Essay 3 has more such citations than Essay 1.

All the students also analysed the text based on its stages to see how each stage of the text contributes to the success of the text as a whole to achieve its purpose. This accords with what have been exemplified by Christie & Derwianka (2008); Hao (2022); Martin (1992, 1999); Ravelli (2004). Of particular significance is the students' ability to show the thematic organisation of "The benefits of much reading" as a whole. This is outlined for Essay 1 below.

Figure 4
Essay 1

Macro-Theme: ... From these two senses, there are many benefits of reading, which are reading for survival, reading for learning, reading for pleasure, reading for enhancing our brain functionality, and reading for memory improvement.
  =
  Hyper Theme: First of all reading is for survival.
      = Elaboration: Reading helps us survive ...
  +
  Hyper-Theme: Second, reading helps us learn
      =Elaboration: Reading serves the wider role of ...
  +
  Hyper Theme: Another benefit of reading is pleasure
      = Elaboration: While reading for survival involves ...
  +
  Hyper Theme: The next benefit of much reading is enhancing the brain functionality.
      = Elaboration: When you read more ...
  +
  Hyper Theme: Another benefit of much reading is memory improvement, as your brain gets a lot of material to store and recall
      = Elaboration: As the power of your brain increases ...
  =
Macro-New: From my previous explanation, it can be concluded that from much reading, we get many benefits, which are surviving our lives, learning something new, and pleasure. (Essay1, see also Essays 2 and 3).

Of particular interest is that Essays 1 and 2 also identify the macro-New in the text, an element that looks back, gathering up the meanings which have

accumulated to elaborate a text field (Martin, 1992, p. 456). This element was not found in Essay 3. This suggests that the writer of Essay 3 still needed more

explicit teaching on the thematic progression at the text level, especially to identify the macro-New which usually is employed in an Exposition text. The ability to identify information flow for the text as a whole supports the data from the questionnaire above that the students found it fun to understand the whole text, from its genre, first paragraph to its ending.

All essays also show the writer's ability to evaluate whether or not the text is effective, based on the linguistic features identified, which, according to Halliday (1994), is difficult to achieve. This can be seen, among others, in the comments below.

> From the macro- and hyper-Themes above, it is clear that the writer is able to use enumerations, meaning that the writer is able to structure the text using clauses that signal organisational structure of the text (Emilia, 2014, p. 263). Additionally, the use of nominalizations after the textual themes could indicate the writer's attempt to make the text become more written-like (Gregot and Wignell as cited in Rohayati, 2017). With this macro-Theme, the text develops effectively and coherently by using a multiple-Theme pattern. It indicates that the method of development of this stage is clearly planned (Eggins, 1994, p. 305) (Essay 3).

The excerpts above invite a number of comments. First we would draw attention to the writer's ability to evaluate each element and how it functions successfully to help the text achieve its purpose. The references used by the writer also indicates that her statements are not common sense, but supported by authoritative publications. Second, the identification of nominalisations after textual Themes and their significance, also evidences their consciousness of the function of nominalisations, especially in Exposition to make the text more written-like. Nominalisations, "as the single most powerful resource for grammatical metaphor, emerges as the most significant feature of students' development from more oral language to a more academic register" (Colombi, 2002, p. 77). Nominalisations also enable the writers to generalise about social processes, and to describe, classify and evaluate them (Martin and Rose, 2003, p. 107), and shows a movement from the here-and now toward critical literacy (McCarthy and Carter, 1994), and from commonsense to uncommonsense (Bernstein, 1999, 2000; Martin et al, 2020a). Essay 3 does not identify any grammatical metaphors. This suggests explicit teaching on grammatical metaphor should be done repeatedly to allow every student to grasp its significance in relation to the register variables and genre. The presence of references also enhances the validity of the evaluation.

Finally, all essays reflect the writers' ability to identify most of the linguistic features employed in each element of the text using the three systems: THEME, TRANSITIVITY, and MOOD and their significance for enabling the text to achieve its purpose. In the interest of space, the sample of the analysis for each element of the Hortatory Exposition will be taken from one essay. Each element was analysed starting with the textual metafunction, then the experiential metafunction, and finally the interpersonal metafunction.

Thesis Statement of the Exposition (from Essay 3)

Textually, the text begins with a marked topical Theme realised in a circumstance, *In this opportunity, I would like to ...* as the writer introduces the topic of the text. The writer signals a shift in direction after the opening of topical Themes by using unmarked topical Themes in *I would like to see reading from two senses....*, then he uses sequencing conjunctions as textual Themes in *First from the narrow* sense….; *Second from a wider sense…. .* This is the unmarked way of guiding the topic that will be discussed (Emilia, 2005). Here the writer signals the move into the thesis statement, ... with a marked topical Theme: *From these two senses, there are many benefits of reading, which are….* (Essay 3).

Experientially, ... the most frequently used processes in the element is the relational process (five out of twelve *reading means getting meaning from a written text*, ... It introduces the topic and background of the topic, which is in line with the purpose of the element (Essay3).

Interpersonally, the element uses a minor clause ... "*Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen*" which shows an interaction between the writer and the audience. The writer also uses modality of inclination such as "*would like to*" as a way to express his attitudes about actions (Eggins, 2004, p. 181). Furthermore, the element is dominated by declarative mood and modalisation which give information or an overview of the text or the topic (Essay 3).

The excerpts above confirm the writer's ability to identify most of the linguistic features employed in the Thesis Statement element of a Hortatory Exposition in terms of textual, experiential, and interpersonal and their appreciation of how they help the text achieve its purpose. The writer also uses references which can strengthen the validity of the interpretation. A similar pattern of analysis can also be seen in the analysis of the Arguments element from Essay 2.

Arguments of the Exposition (from Essay 2)

In the second element, textually, the first sentence in the second and third paragraphs use textual Themes in enumeration: *First of all reading is for* survival and *Second, reading helps us learn*, … The use of connective words in this textual and unmarked topical Themes serves as introductory sentences to predict the clause pattern of the rest of the paragraphs (Emilia, 2005). As the function of this element is to present the writer's arguments on the topic (Derewianka & Jones, 2016, p. 234), the writer also uses several textual Themes realised in conjunctions to link clauses together and to bring the discourse

forward which was not a feature of the previous element. The examples are:

Figure 5
The examples of textual Themes

50	When	You	read more
	Text Th	Top Th	Rh
	Or Theme to the next clause		
51	you	have to remember more pieces of information [[from every material [[that you read]]a]]b	
	Top Th	Rh	
52	Then	the workload of your brain	increases
	Text Th	Top Th	Rh
53	so	it	gets the right brain power exercise
	Text Th	Top Th	Rh

The use of these textual Themes creates logical connectedness between the propositions conveyed in the clauses (Emilia, 2005). From this, it can be seen that the writer has tried to build arguments and construct connectedness between points in the discussion. The writer is also able to present reasons and conclusions by using conjunctions which is an important aspect to construct arguments (Derewianka & Jones, 2016, p. 234) (Essay 2)
Experientially, ... the second element of a Hortatory Exposition text is the Arguments which include the point and the elaboration of the writer's statements. Since material processes occupy the highest number in this element, it shows that the writer tries to construct a picture of the issue and to describe or elaborate what his points meant (Emilia, 2014, p. 178), which is in line with the function of the element–to state the point and the elaboration of the issue (Essay 2)

The writer has presented the phases of the points in the same order. It all starts with the relational process involved in attribution… : *first of all reading is for survival*, followed by the material process when the writer elaborated the point as in *reading helps us survive in our daily lives*… (Essay 2).

Meanwhile, the mental processes in this element (seven cognition processes, one affection process, and one perceiving process) indicate the points that the writer wanted the audience to believe or to follow, as the purpose of hortatory text is to put forward a point of view to persuade the audience to a particular line of action or belief (Derewianka & Jones, 2016, p.233). … the use of the senser 'you' and 'we' in this element adds the conversational effect when elaborating an argument (MacIntyre, 2019).
Interpersonally, the Arguments element uses a declarative mood. … Therefore, the purpose of this element is … to give facts (Janssen, 2017). Furthermore, the use of modality is shown when the writer mentioned the points of the benefits of reading such as *reading can enhance our learning*, and *by reading, we can get pleasure*. … the modal finites

used are mostly to express the probability in the median degree.

This means that the writer tried to elaborate his statement while at the same time tried to persuade the reader/listener to follow his statement that reading is beneficial. In this element, the writer used first and second-person point of view pronouns of 'I' and 'we' to address the audience. According to Halliday as cited in Emilia (2014, p. 146), this indicates that the writer states his points on behalf of the audience. It also indicates inclusiveness and is used to shorten the distance between the writer and the audience by showing that they have a common interest (Janssen, 2017).

All the excerpts above display the writer's ability to identify different linguistic features, construing textual, experiential, and interpersonal meanings and comment on their significance for the success of the text. They relate the linguistic features to the function of the Arguments element, (i.e. to present arguments and their elaboration to support the thesis). This also suggests the writer's ability to evaluate whether or not the grammar choices are effective. This is in line with the purpose of the course, that is to make the students able to analyse a text using SFL.

Restatement of the Thesis of the Exposition (from Essay 1)
Textually, this new element opens with a marked-topical theme, *from my previous explanation, ...* to restate the writer's position toward the topic discussed. This sentence functions as a macro-new ... that ...reviews the points presented in the text (Martin, 1992, as cited in Emilia, 2014). ... the rest of the topical themes are unmarked and are usually opened by some textual themes to "direct the discourse forward" as Emilia (2005) states, as in *Thus, we have to*…, and in *in order to get*… These linguistic items ... help build the logical meaning to conclude the element of the text (Essay 1)

Experientially, this stage ... begins with a... verbal process, as in *it can be <u>concluded</u> that...* to indicate the writer's position ... of the whole text. ... the most used processes are material processes (10 out of 12), as ... in *we <u>get</u> many benefits* ... to restate the benefits of much reading ... to persuade readers in order to read more. ... Last but not least, the Circumstances ... , as in *from much reading*, to give more meaning to the text (Essay 1).

Interpersonally, the element uses two modalities, realized in the modalisation: *and <u>can</u> also help us,* to express the possibility of reading that can help readers reach their goal in the readers' life, and in the modulation: *thus, we <u>have to</u> read much*, to persuade readers to read much ... . The use of the first person, *we*, at the end of the paragraph indicates the writer's awareness to address readers in a personalized and familiar way (Schirato & Yell, 1996, as cited in Emilia, 2014) ... . The presence of the modalities and the subject in this stage is in line with the function of this element, which is to reaffirm the writer's position towards the main topic (Essay 1).

The analysis of the Restatement of the Thesis element above reflects the writer's ability to identify different linguistic features, from the THEME, the TRANSITIVITY, and the MOOD systems and the significance of these features to help the element to function effectively to create an effective text.

Of particular interest is that all the essays identify the lack of verbal processes, which are important for a Hortatory Exposition text. Thus Essay 1, for example, concludes:

> ... verbal processes should be involved to promote the credibility of the text (Emilia, 2014). The verbal process would show that the writer had a well-done research on the topic and involved others to support the arguments. ... the writer only wrote the text based on one source without presenting arguments from others. ... .

All the essays state the conclusion statements regarding the text, as in Essay 1.

> From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the text is constructed in the three elements – Statement of Position element, Arguments element, and Reiteration of Appeal element... . Statement of Position element develops the writer's position; the Arguments element provides other's support to the topic discussed, even though the evidence is not clearly stated; and the Reiteration of Appeal element concludes and restates the position argued. ... it can be said that the writer has established some understanding of the structure of the text genre and its social purpose. ... (Essay 1, see also Essays 2 and 3).

The writer of Essay 1 also states some recommendations regarding the use of SFL in teaching English, especially in teaching writing. She said:

> From the discussion above, regarding the use of SFL to teach English, especially in teaching writing, the teacher must teach the concept of textual grammar so that the students can write effectively. ... (Butt et al., 2000).

The recommendation above confirms the writer's awareness of the benefits of learning FG for EFL learners in Indonesia and supports the questionnaire data above.

In sum, all the essays show the writers' ability to identify the genre, the stages and phases of the text and its linguistic features using SFL. That said, most of the analyses were only at the clause level, and not at the discourse semantic level, except for PERIODICITY. In a more comprehensive program discourse semantics needs more emphasis. This, as noted above, also suggests that one course was not sufficient to allow the students to understand SFL comprehensively. SFL or FG should be covered at least in two courses. One could be for FG and the other for discourse semantics.

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the results of a teaching program of the course on Functional Grammar in a tertiary EFL context in Indonesia involving three cohorts of students in 2020, 2021, 2022. The data, as discussed above, indicate that the teaching program was perceived by the students to have achieved most of its goals. Students' responses are generally positive and many of them said that "Learning functional grammar is fun and enjoyable," allowing them to benefit, especially in terms of the development of their own reading and writing. This is supported by the data from students' essays on text analysis, which show their ability to analyse texts based on the three systems of grammar: THEME, TRANSITIVITY, and MOOD. They can also evaluate the text based on its stages, and phases, and its linguistic features which enable the text to achieve its purpose. As noted above the students analyse the text mostly at the clause level (excepting PERIODICITY). This suggests that discourse semantic analyses needs more emphasis, to allow the students to understand the text as a whole, in terms of all the metafunctions. Analysis of multimodal texts should also be usefully included is a fuller program. It is thus recommended that SFL and FG should be offered at least in two semesters, in two courses, one for Functional Grammar and the other for Discourse Semantics.

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