

# Investigating Interpersonal Meaning-Making in Indonesian EFL Learners' Writing: A Systemic Functional Perspective

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## Abstract

This study presents an investigation of interpersonal meaning-making in students' writing analytical exposition text. The objectives of this study are to describe the common mood types and to describe modality realization used in the text. Nine texts from 144 texts were collected to analyze. The theories from Systemic Functional Linguistics are adapted as the framework to analyze the clause of the text. The findings of this study showed that students have used mood types which can be seen in the use of subject and finite as mood elements, and the use of predicator, adjunct, and complement as residue. The arrangement of mood element ad residue shows the mood type they used. Regarding to SFL theories, the common mood type in this study is declarative as its function of analytical exposition text to discuss topic critically and deeply from one point of view. The result showed that students have attempted to provide information in the text. In the terms of modality, the median modality has a higher frequency in this text than that of high modality and low modality. It indicates that the students have an effort to position themselves and build the relationship to the reader in the text. Moreover, the zero frequency of low modality shows that the students did not provide opportunities for readers to doubt their position in the text. In conclusion, problem-solving approach as the pedagogical implication is appropriate for students to improve cognitive aspects in terms of communicative skills, so students have been able to create the effective analytical exposition text which is intended to discuss something critically from one point of view.

**Keywords:** interpersonal meaning, systemic functional linguistics, analytical exposition text.

## INTRODUCTION

In the communication process, people use language to interact. Language plays an important role in human personal life because it is a basic principle to create interaction. Language is the vital tool used to exchanging information or goods and services in the interaction. Halliday (1994) argues that language is a resource for making meaning and that meaning is created in context. As an international language, English is used for international communication. The need of professional English teacher is increase nowadays because the globalization keeps growing up. Language learning and teaching do not only learn about grammar structure but it is also important in how students able to perform language appropriate in context. The English Education Departments try to fulfill the globalization needs to prepare the future professional teacher including prepare their writing skills. Writing is one way for delivering the communication. Not only do people deliver communication by speaking or speech, but also, they deliver it through written text (e.g., newspapers, newsletters, magazines, and academic text). Both in speaking or written text, they have the same function to deliver the message or their thought. Using the correct word choice for language in a certain situation is important for delivering the message. In English Department, the curriculum trains writing skills for the students in order to make them able to deliver the thought or message through the meaningful text. The students have to write a text to convince other people that they deserve to get a meaningful text from the students.

However, to investigate whether the students have already written the meaningful text or not is rarely to discuss. Interpersonal meaning is a tool to investigate the meaningful text and context based on the structure of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) perspective. From SFL perspective, language involves the systemic characteristics in which it emphasizes meaning as a choice in analyzing language, and the functional characteristics since it is designed to interpret how language is used. Halliday (1976) in his SFL theory divided three metafunctions to analyze language. One of the three metafunctions is the interpersonal metafunction that learns about language choice is used to create its meaning in maintaining social relation. Interpersonal metafunction also can analyze how the writer takes place in the text. From an interpersonal meaning perspective language in the text become an important part to analyze.

Most studies on interpersonal meaning analysis so far focused on newspapers e.g. (Ayoola & Olusanya, 2013; Sukma & Utomo, 2017), newsletters e.g. (Yuliana & Imperiani, 2017), media text e.g. (Alraimi & Abdalla, 2019), magazine e.g. (Bankole & Ayoola, 2014), speech e.g. (Feng & Liu, 2010; Taping et al., 2017), and academic text e.g. (Hadiani, 2019). From the previous study, an interpersonal meaning analysis of academic text written by Hadiani (2019) only focus in explanation text. Meanwhile, another genre of academic text was less discussed. So, as a scientific text that discuss deeply and critically about phenomenon surrounding from a point of view, analytical exposition text become the important text to analyze.

So, this study focuses to investigate the realization of the interpersonal meaning made by the students in the English Department in their writing analytical exposition text. They should know how to transform, temper, compromise, constrain or dispute the essence of a statement itself from its particular perspective. Analytical exposition text considers an important part to analyze especially in English Department students as it is the function to persuade people to look at an issue same with their perspective. This kind of text will frequently use for them not only as a text but also in making letter, essay, and newspaper article where their purpose is to convince the reader. It is indicated that the English Department students need to have the ability in constructing a meaningful analytical exposition text. Investigating the interpersonal meaning-making of English Department students' writing analytical exposition text, will show in what way they take a position in the text and how they build connection and relation with the readers.

## METHOD

The research method in this study is qualitative and it used descriptive content analysis as the design of this study. The researchers used qualitative research design with the purpose to analyze the interpersonal meaning of the text. Qualitative study is a study that aims in describing and analyzing phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, thoughts of people individually or in groups. Moreover, descriptive content analysis is intended to describe a message or a particular text in detail. It is not intended to

test a particular hypothesis or the relationship between variables. This kind of content analysis is only for describing the aspects and characteristics of a message.

In this study, the source of data is gained by analyzing analytical exposition text written by English-major students of Universitas Sultan AgengTirtayasa at the 5th-semester academic year 2019/2020. The data was taken by document analysis from 146 participants in the three classes. The procedure used to analyze the data is document analysis. Document analysis is a method of a qualitative study in which the researchers identify the documents to offer voice and sense to the subject of the evaluation (Bowen, 2009). In selecting the data, the writer used random sampling technique to choose three samples from each class, meaning that there are nine texts to be investigated in this study. All types of clauses and sentences were two elements in the text that had been analyzed.

The data were analyzed by adapting Miles and Huberman's interactive model of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Starting from data reduction, the researchers describe the process of evaluating data by selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming the data. The source of the document is large and complicated. As a result, data reduction is required to make data clear and easy to use. Then data display, refers to an organized, compressed collection of information that allows for conclusion drawing. Data visualization allows us to understand what is going on and take action. The last conclusion drawing/verification, writer begins to decide what things mean as a temporary conclusion, and holds these conclusions lightly; the data triangulation of this research gained from the expert to further discuss the investigating interpersonal meaning-making in the text.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Mood Types

The analysis data showed that the dominant mood types in the students' writing analytical exposition text is declarative. The declarative mood has a higher significant percentage than other mood types. The percentage of declarative mood is 95.24%. Declarative mood is used to realize the speech function of statement. It means that the students prefer to provide much information and it shows the students' effort to give the detailed information. This study also contains a common declarative mood type to show the students' effort to give detailed information especially in stating why smoking is dangerous, and in giving the facts about smoking. The use of declarative mood type is to show their competence in stating the information. This is also their effort to convince the readers that smoking is dangerous. Another aim in using this kind of declarative mood is to show their competence in delivering and explaining information to the readers. So, the readers will see the issue in the same perspective with the writers. The tables below show the declarative findings in the text.

IM/S1.06

Actually	when	cigarette	is	smoked,	nicotine	will	Flow	into the human lungs and brain which can trigger the dopamine hormone
					8 Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
		1 Subject	Finite	Predicator	MOOD		RESIDUE	
Adj: mood	Complement	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement			
RESIDUE		MOOD			RESIDUE			

### IM.S3/07

Smoking	can	be	Dangerous	for smoker	but	more dangerous for people who smoke the cigarette smoke
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adj: Circumstantial	Adj: Conjunctive	Complement
MOOD		RESIDUE			-	RESIDUE

The second dominant of mood types is interrogative mood with 3.40% used, or only 5 of them found in the data analysis. Interrogative mood type is used to realize the speech function of question. Interrogative mood is use to remind people on how to act, rather to elicit an answer from listener (Lin, 2011). It means that the students use interrogative mood type only for rhetorical question. According to Lin (2011), the use of the interrogative mood is relatively low. However, interrogative mood type in this study is used in the beginning of paragraph to catch readers' attention. This finding aligns with those of Lin that the function of interrogative mood is not always to seek audiences' answer. The table below shows the interrogative findings from the text.

### IM.S3/01

Have	You	ever	felt	your clothes	Smell	of cigarettes	because	People around you	Smoke	In public places more precisely like in public vehicles like bus, ankot, etc?		
				Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adj: Circumstantial	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adj: Circumstantial
				MOOD		RESIDUE		-	MOOD		RESIDUE	
Finite	Subject	Adj: Mood	Predicator	Complement								
MOOD			RESIDUE									

### IM.S8/01

Are	You	still wanting to smoking
Finite	Subject	Complement
MOOD		RESIDUE

#### IM.S1/05

So	Why	does	people	still	smoking	even through	It	is	for their mental health
							Subject	Finite	Adj: Circumstantial
							MOOD		RESIDUE
Adj: Conjunctive	Complement	Finite	Subject	Adj: Mood	Predicator	Complement			
-	RESIDUE	MOOD		RESIDUE					

Last, imperative mood has only 1.36% used, or only 2 of them occurred in the text. Imperative mood used to realize the speech function of command. The low frequency of interrogative mood use shows the students' commitment in writing analytical exposition text corresponds with its function to give information in detailed. The imperative mood type can be analyzed when there is a predicator in the beginning of a sentence or clause. Based on Gerot & Wignell (1994) imperative mood type may have no mood element, but predicator is always present in the mood type. Moreover, they also state that imperative issued by the author to ask audience to do something. The tables below show the imperative findings from the text.

#### IM.S3/08

Therefore	let's	avoid	smoking	in public places	And	It	is	better to avoid smoking
Adj: Conjunctive	Predicator	Predicator	Complement	Adj: Circumstantial	Adj: Cnjunctive	Subject	Finite	Complement
-	RESIDUE				-	MOOD		RESIDUE

#### IM.S5/21

Just	let	Them	life in freedom
Adj: Mood	Predicator	Complement	Complement
RESIDUE			

### Modality Realization

Based on the data analysis, the dominant modality used in the text is median modality. It is found that 96.08% or 49 of them occurred in the text. It means that the students lead the readers to agree with the writer point of view because the writer has

been showed the possibility of the topic discussed. This study has the same result as Dian & Ernie(2017), Houfei Yang (2017), Alrami (2019), and Ayoola (2013). The previous studies above concluded that in any media they have been analyzing, the dominant modality is the median modality. Based on Yang (2017), there have been many reasons why a writer uses median modality; (1) to lead the readers to agree with him/her,(2) to show his/her commitment to do something,(3) to get listener empathy and support, (4) to give intentions and plans, and (5) the last is to show his/her strong mind and keen desire. From nine samples in this study, the median modalities found in the text are **will** and **can**. The findings revealed that students used median modality **will** just to state some possibilities of what will happen if the reader smokes. In addition, students used median modality **can** to support their argument. The following tables show how students use medium modality **will** and **can** modality in their texts.

#### IM.S5/18

Banning the smoking in public	<b>Will</b>	Keep	non-smoker safer
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
MOOD		RESIDUE	

#### IM.S6/17

Based on current smoking patterns	5 25 million Americans alive today	<b>will</b>	<b>die</b>	Prematurely from smoking-related illness
Complement	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
RESIDUE	MOOD		RESIDUE	

#### IM.S2/01

Smoking	can	Lead	you	to death
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adj: Circumstantial

#### IM.S7/05

Smoking	can	cause	various disease
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement

The second dominant modality occurred in the text was high modality<sup>7</sup> with 3.92%, or only 2 of them found in the text. Houfei Yang (2017) in his study about *interpersonal metafunction analysis of Barack Obama's Inaugural address* stated that there are three reasons why the writer and speaker use high modality; (1) to show the speaker's strong determination to archive his/her statement, (2) to emphasize their qualities, and (3) to emphasize their readiness and their strong trust about something. Based on the data of IM.S3/03, student preferred to show a strong commitment to suggest that smoking areas in public places such as buses and children area must be closed.

#### IM.S3/03

In Indonesia	it	is	Strictly	forbidden to smoke	in public places	Such on air conditioned buses which must have	Also in places that are usually visited by
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						been provided smoking areas	children must have been prohibited from smoking in that pace
Adj: Circumstantial	Subject	Finite	Adj: Mood	Complement	Adj: Circumstantial	Complement	Complement

Meanwhile, it is interesting to know that there is no one low modality realization in all samples. Low modality realization shows the weak impression and uncertainly about topic that discussed in the text. Using low modality also demonstrates that the students do not give space for the reader to doubt their position in the text. In analytical exposition text, it is important not to let the listener have doubt in what the writer saying.

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown how interpersonal meaning is realized in students' writing analytical exposition text at the 5th semester student of English Department University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. As shown in the findings and discussion, declarative mood type is the most dominant mood type use in every sample with 95.4% used or 140 occurrences. The mood type can be analyzed by identifying the structure of mood element in subject and finite in the sentence. The result of this study show how interpersonal meaning realizes in the text. This finding suggests that the writer providing much information from the text as it is function from analytical exposition text to convince the reader to have a same point of view with the writer.

Concerning in modality analysis, median modality dominated the text with 96.08% used or 49 occurrences. It indicates that the students as the writer try to give the factual information by giving equal relationship with the reader. In conclusion, students have been able to create the effective analytical exposition text which is intended to discuss something critically from one point of view. Therefore, teacher still need emphasize teaching and learning process to make students pay more attention in making the better written. Problem-solving approach hoped can improve students' communicative skill as the writing strategy. However, further research needs to be conducted to get real description of the success of the approach.



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