

## A CLOSE INSIGHT INTO SYSTEMIC MARK HALLIDAY'S FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT "A GRANDMOTHER WITH MUSCLES" IN TERMS OF TRANSITIVITY, MOOD AND THEME-RHEME PATTERN

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
<b>Received:</b>	<b>16/3/2021</b>	When people speak or write, they produce texts. To a grammarian, text is a rich, many-faceted phenomenon that means in many different ways. Systemic functional grammar (SFG) is a text grammar, which means this kind of grammar can describe the use of language. In this way, the meaning of the text can be understood clearly. The application of the framework of SFG to analyze a text can avoid evaluating at will. The article shows an analysis of a text "A grandmother with muscles" based on systemic Mark Halliday's functional grammar in terms of transitivity, mood and theme-rheme pattern. The findings show that the text is narrative which can be featured by the following characteristics: material and relational processes, simple past and simple present (transitivity), personal subjects, declaratives, no modal elements (mood) and ideational component, unmarked themes (theme-rheme).
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## PHÂN TÍCH HỆ THỐNG CHUYỂN TÁC, THỨC VÀ CẤU TRÚC ĐỀ - THUYẾT CỦA VĂN BẢN "A GRANDMOTHER WITH MUSCLES" DỰA VÀO LÝ THUYẾT NGỮ PHÁP CHỨC NĂNG HỆ THỐNG CỦA MARK HALLIDAY

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO		TÓM TẮT
<b>Ngày nhận bài:</b>	<b>16/3/2021</b>	Khi mọi người nói hoặc viết, họ tạo ra văn bản. Đối với một nhà ngữ pháp, văn bản là một hiện tượng phong phú, nhiều mặt, có nghĩa theo nhiều cách khác nhau. Ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống (SFG) là một loại ngữ pháp có thể mô tả việc sử dụng ngôn ngữ để hiểu ý nghĩa của văn bản. Việc áp dụng khung phân tích của SFG để phân tích một văn bản có thể tránh được việc đánh giá một cách chủ quan. Bài báo phân tích văn bản "A grandmother with muscles" dựa trên quan điểm ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống của Mark Halliday về chuyển tác (transitivity), thức (mood) và cấu trúc đề - thuyết (theme-rheme). Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy văn bản có những đặc trưng của thể loại trần thuật, mang các đặc điểm sau: tồn tại chủ yếu quá trình vật chất (material process) và quan hệ (relational process), sử dụng quá khứ đơn và hiện tại đơn, đa phần là chủ thể cá nhân và thức chỉ định (declarative), ít động từ tình thái và hầu hết chủ đề thuộc thành tố tư tưởng (ideational component), chủ đề không được đánh dấu (unmarked theme).
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## 1. Introduction

Thompson [1] presented the functions of language. We use language to talk about our experience of the world, to describe events and states and the entities involved in them. We also use language to interact with other people, to establish and maintain relations with them, to influence their behaviour, to express our own viewpoint on things in the world, and to elicit or change theirs. Finally, in using language, we organize our messages in ways that indicate how they act in with the other messages around them and with the wider context in which we are talking or writing.

Systemic functional grammar (SFG) or systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is a model of grammar which was developed by Michael Halliday in the 1960s. The term “systemic” refers to the view of language as “a network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning”; the term “functional” indicates that the approach is concerned with meaning, as opposed to formal grammar, which focuses on word classes such as nouns and verbs, typically without reference beyond the individual clause.

Systemic functional theory views language as a resource people use to accomplish their purposes by expressing meaning in context. Particular aspects of a given context define the meanings likely to be expressed and the language likely to be used to express those meanings. All of them are used to describe the linguistic variation in a given text, more widely known as register [2].

According to Thompson [1], if we now turn, more briefly, to genre, this can be seen in very simple terms as register plus communicative purpose: that is, it includes the more general idea of what the interactants are doing through language, and how they organize the language event, typically in recognizable stages, in order to achieve that purpose. Similarly, a genre deploys the resources of a register (or more than one register) in particular patterns to achieve certain communicative goals.

There have been a number of studies carried out to analyze texts in different areas such as literature, politic texts, law texts, and business texts...and their implications in various fields. They all have revealed insights on distinctive features of particular types of texts. G. Ning [3] had an article describing systemic functional grammar and its pedagogical implications. U. Ammara et al. [4] analysed the experiential meanings encoded in the language of the novel and explored narrative style of fiction written in stream of consciousness through transitivity analysis. H. AlHamdany [5] conducted a comparative study examining the place of systemic functional grammar in the ESL context; described the kind of grammar that is used by teachers to design teaching activities in ESL classes; and discusses the implications for English grammar teaching with regards to the investigator's own experiences. T. M. Nguyen [6], in her study, explored the grammar and meaning of an American short story to show their correlations. T. L. Nguyen [7] analyzed clause expansion in “Two Thanksgiving day gentlemen” based on systemic functional grammar and made suggestions for teaching writing. To contribute more insights into text analysis in SFG, the writers present an analysis of the text “A grandmother with muscles” based on systemic Mark Halliday's functional grammar in terms of transitivity, mood and theme-rheme pattern with the hope that it can be of significance to literary writing.

## 2. Methods and Materials

The text is analysed in the aspects as below.

### 2.1. Metafunctions

Systemic Functional Grammar divides the social purpose of language into three semantic prongs which the grammar interweaves. Language is seen as a representation of reality

(*ideational metafunction*), transmitted for a specific purpose (*interpersonal metafunction*), and structured as a message (*textual metafunction*).

### 2.1.1. Ideational Metafunction

According to Halliday [2], the ideational metafunction is concerned with how we present reality in language. It is divided into two: experiential and logical metafunctions. The experiential metafunction organizes our experience and understanding of the world. It is the potential of the language to construe figures with elements and its potential to differentiate these elements into processes, the participants in these processes, and the circumstances in which the processes occur. The logical metafunction works above the experiential. It specializes our reasoning on the basis of our experience.

The experiential aspect of meaning is expressed through the system of TRANSITIVITY. The TRANSITIVITY system is the principal system for the ideational metafunction in the clause network. For Halliday [2], this system construes the world of experience into a manageable set of processes. In the transitivity system of English, there are 6 process types. They are *material*, *mental*, *verbal*, *behavioral*, *relational*, and *existential process*.

#### 2.1.1.1. Material process

According to Geoff Thompson [1], one of the most salient types of processes is the one involving physical actions: playing, cooking, and planting, and so on. It is called *material process*. Graham Lock [8] calls this process *Action process* or *Material process* - the process of 'doing'. The 'doer' of this type of action is called the *Actor*. In many cases, the action may be represented as affecting or 'being done to' a second participant; this participant is called the *Goal*, since the action is, in a sense, directed at this participant. In some material processes there exists a third participant. This participant is called the *Beneficiary*. The *Beneficiary* is either *Recipient* or *Client*. The *Recipient* is one that goods are given *to*; the *Client* is one that services are done *for*. The following examples illustrate the existence of the three participants in the clauses:

<b>She</b>	<b>sent</b>	<b>John</b>	<b>her best wishes.</b>
Actor	Process: material	Beneficiary: Recipient	Goal

#### 2.1.1.2. Mental process

"This is the process of sensing such as *thinking*, *loving*, *wanting*, *hoping*. It consists of four main subtypes: cognitive (*thinking*, *knowing*, *realizing*), perceptive (*hearing*, *sensing*, *feeling*), affective (*loving*, *hating*, *adoring*) and desiderative (*wanting*, *desiring*, *wishing*)" [9]. In a mental process, there are usually two participants referred to as *Senser* and *Phenomenon*. The *Senser* is the conscious being that is feeling, thinking or seeing. The *Phenomenon* is that which is 'sensed' – felt, thought or seen). The following sentences are the instances.

<b>The boy</b>	<b>loved</b>	<b>the girl.</b>
<b>We</b>	<b>could hear</b>	<b>it coming.</b>
Actor	Process: mental (affection)	Phenomenon

#### 2.1.1.3. Relational process

This is the process of being, having and being at. It comes under three main types: *intensive* (*x is a*), *circumstantial* (*x is at a*) and *possessive* (*x has a*). Each of these comes in two distinct modes: *attributive* (*a is an attributive of x*) and *identifying* (*a is the identity of x*). When a relational process is in the attributive mode, it has one participant referred to as *Carrier* and the quality or the thing showing that the *Carrier* belongs to a class of things, which is usually realized by an adjective or an indefinite nominal group.

<b>E.g. Sarah</b>	<b>is</b>	<b>wise.</b>
Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute

In contrast, when a relational clause is in the identifying mode, it has two equating participants, one identifying the other. They are referred to as *Identified/ Identifier* and *Token/ Value*.

<b>E.g.</b>	<b>Tom</b>	<b>is</b>	<b>the leader.</b>
	Identified/ Token	Process: relational	Identifier/ Value

#### 2.1.1.4. Behavioural process

This is the process of (typically human) physiological and psychological behaviour like breathing, coughing, laughing, dreaming and staring. The participant who is 'behaving', labeled *Behaver*, is typically a conscious being, not a lifeless thing.

<b>E.g.</b>	<b>She</b>	<b>breathed</b>	<b>deeply.</b>
	Actor	Process: behavioural	Circumstance

#### 2.1.1.5. Verbal process

Verbal process is the process of saying and is expressed by verbs such as *say, tell, ask, speak, talk*. Unlike behavioural and mental process, a verbal process does not require a conscious participant and it can contain one participant referred to as *Sayer*, two participants referred to respectively, depending on particular subtype of verbal process, as *Sayer* and *Target*, and *Sayer* and *Verbiage*, and even three participants referred to respectively as *Sayer*, *Target*, and *Recipient*. *Sayer* is one that puts out a signal, *Target* is one that the verbalization is directed to, *Recipient* if one that benefits from the verbal process, and *Verbiage* is the name of the verbalization itself.

<b>E.g. 1)</b>	<b>He</b>	<b>said</b>	<b>loudly.</b>	
	Sayer	Process: verbal	Circumstance	
2)	<b>They</b>	<b>told</b>	<b>me</b>	<b>so.</b>
	Sayer	Process: verbal	Target	Circumstance

#### 2.1.1.6. Existential process

This is the process of existing, indicating that something or some natural force exists. In this type of process, there is generally a participant, the *Existent* and one or two circumstantial elements.

<b>E.g.</b>	<b>On the wall</b>	<b>there</b>	<b>hangs</b>	<b>a picture.</b>
	Circumstance		Process: existential	Existent

#### 2.1.2. Interpersonal Metafunction

One of the main purposes of communication is to interact with other people: to establish and maintain appropriate social links with them. Speakers and writers of language have to structure clauses in order to interact with one another. This is the *interpersonal metafunction* of language. It is concerned with *Clause as Exchange*. Halliday [2] quotes a table by Thompson [1] to characterize the primary speech roles which can be represented in table 1.

**Table 1.** The primary speech roles [1]

Commodity exchange	(a) goods-&-services	(b) information
Role in exchange		
(i) <b>giving</b>	<b>'offer'</b> Would you like this teapot?	<b>'statement'</b> He's giving her the teapot
(ii) <b>demanding</b>	<b>'command'</b> Give me that teapot!	<b>'question'</b> What is he giving her?

As an exchange or interactive event, a clause consists of two components: the *Mood* and the *Residue*. *Mood* plays a vital role in carrying out the interpersonal function of the clause as exchange in English. In English, the *Mood* consists of two elements: *Subject* and *Finite*.

- The *Subject* is the nominal component of the *Mood*.

• The *Finite* is the verbal element in the *Mood* which has the function of making the proposition finite. *Subject* and *Mood* are closely linked together.

The remainder of the clause is the *Residue*. It consists of functional elements of three kinds:

• *Predicator*: present in all major clauses; realized by a verbal group and temporal or modal operator.

• *Complement*: potential of being *Subject*; realized by a nominal group.

• *Adjunct*: not potential of being subject; realized by an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase.

The interpersonal metafunction relates to a text's aspects of *tenor* or interactivity. The following clauses are analyzed in terms of interpersonal meaning.

<b>Sister Susie</b>	<b>'s</b>	<b>sewing</b>	<b>shirts</b>	<b>for soldiers.</b>
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Mood			Residue	

### 2.1.3. Textual Metafunction

The textual metafunction relates to *mode*; the internal organization and communicative nature of a text. It is concerned with creating relevance between parts of what is being said and between the text and the context. Lexicogrammatically, it is expressed through the systems of theme and information focus. Relevant to the realization of the system of theme are two elements: *Theme* and *Rheme*.

According to Halliday [2], the *Theme* is the element which 'serves as the point of departure of the message'. The *Theme* may be realized by a nominal group, a prepositional phrase, an adverbial group or even a clause in the case of predicated theme. The *Theme* may be single or multiple, marked or unmarked. For Halliday [2], "Any group complex or phrase complex constitutes a single element within the clause,..., and therefore constitutes a simple theme". Whereas, multiple theme has a further internal structure of its own. When, in a declarative clause, a theme is "something that other than the Subject" [2], it is referred to as *marked theme*. The most usual form of *marked theme* is an adverbial group functioning as *Adjunct*. *Unmarked theme* is referred to as "the mapping of *Theme* on to Subject of a declarative clause" Halliday [1].

In this part, some fundamental and theoretical concepts have been briefly presented which includes systemic functional grammar, and the three metafunctions of clauses. These fundamentals of background knowledge will be of great help to analyze the geographical text "*A grandmother with muscles*" based on systemic functional grammar in the following part.

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1. The text "*A grandmother with muscles*"

In Brooklyn, New York, a little girl was playing with some boys. They were riding bicycles and playing ball.

"Diana!" the girl's father called. "Play with the girls! You're a girl, not a boy!"

Diana's father sounded a little angry. But Diana knew that her father was proud of her. He was proud that Diana was strong. He was proud that she was good at sports.

Diana grew up. She stopped playing ball and riding bicycles with the boys. She got married, moved to California, and had two sons. The years went by.

One day, when Diana was 48 years old, she went to a gym. She exercised and lifted weights. She really enjoyed it, so she went back a few days later. She started going to the gym three days a week; then she began going every day. She got stronger and stronger, and her muscles got bigger and bigger. Diana became a bodybuilder. Today Diana Vasquez is a champion bodybuilder. She has over 24 awards for bodybuilding.

Diana is proud of her awards, but she doesn't exercise and lift weights only to win awards. Diana's father said, "Good health is very important. If you don't have good health, you have nothing." Diana thinks that her father was right. She says, "Bodybuilding keeps me healthy. I feel better today than I did 20 years ago."

Diana says. "Good food is very important. If you don't have good for health, too. Diet is 50 percent of body building. I don't eat a lot of sweets. I eat a lot of fruit, vegetables, yogurt, and rice. I also get plenty of sleep and fresh air."

Bodybuilding and eating good food keep Diana healthy and young-looking. Look at the picture of Diana. How does she look? Does she look 30...35... maybe 40 years old?

Diana Vasquez is a grandmother. She is 51 years old.

### 3.2. Context of the chosen text

The text is taken from a book called *True Stories in the News (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) – A Beginner Reader* published by Addison Wesley Longman. The title of the book reveals the genre of the text. It is a kind of news.

### 3.3. Transitivity, Mood and Theme-Rheme Pattern

The text has been analyzed in terms of transitivity, mood and theme-rheme pattern. The analysis of some typical sentences are presented as follows.

(1) *In Brooklyn, New York, a little girl was playing with some boys.*

Tran.	<b>In Brooklyn, New York,</b>	<b>a little girl</b>	<b>was playing</b>	<b>with some boys.</b>
	Circumstance (Circ) - location	Actor (Ac)	Process (Pro) - mat (material)	Circ - accompaniment
M.	Adjunct	Subject (S)	Finite (F)	Predication (Pr)
The.	RESIDUE	MOOD		RESIDUE
	Theme (marked)			Rheme

(2) *They were riding bicycles.*

Tran.	<b>They</b>	<b>were riding</b>	<b>bicycles</b>
	Ac	Pro (mat.)	Goal (Go)
M.	S	F	Pr
The.	MOOD		RESIDUE
	Theme (unmarked)		Rheme

...

(40) *She says,*

Tran.	<b>She</b>	<b>says</b>
	Senser	Pro - verbal (ver)
M.	S	F
The.	MOOD	Pr
	Theme (unmarked)	RESIDUE
		Rheme

(41) *Bodybuilding keeps me healthy.*

Tran.	<b>Bodybuilding</b>	<b>keeps</b>	<b>me</b>	<b>healthy</b>
	Actor	Pro (mat)	Goal	Attribute
M.	S	F	Pr	Compl
The.	MOOD			RESIDUE
	Theme (unmarked)			Rheme

This is a narrative about a middle-aged woman who is rather athletic. The "What is going on?" of the text is presented rather vividly. From the point of view of transitivity, of the 45 clauses 19 are material processes and 18 are relational ones which show the processes of description concerning the abstract relations. These processes help readers understand the Diana's situation and what she does to become a woman with muscles.

In terms of finite verb, subject and tense choice, SFL helps us express these speech functions in the text - persuading and motivating, through a set of Mood clause systems. Most of the processes are in the simple past and simple present. They are used in the narrative style to describe what Diana did twenty years ago and what she does now.

The mood patterns of the text show the “**Who is taking part?**”. The analysis shows that all the subjects in the clauses are personal. Nearly all of them are Diana. The finite elements in the clauses are combined with the past simple and present simple. Declaratives are employed in this text, which features narrative by dealing with information exchange. No modal element is used in the text.

The analysis also shows the theme-rheme pattern of the text. Most of the themes in the text belong to the plane of ideational component. Of the 41 clauses and clause complexes that theme exists, 38 have unmarked theme and 3 have marked theme. This reflects a simple style of prose, which is suitable for the beginning level of the reading and the intended audience (children). The text also creates a positive image of an interesting and unique character for the purpose of transferring a good message - inspiring the target young readers to do sports to keep fit.

#### 4. Conclusion

Language is a social phenomenon, and we continuously need to interpret what is in the process of communication. According to U. Ammara et al. [4], in the Ideational function of language, transitivity analysis is quite advantageous to understand the experiential meanings of the text in a coherent way. Transitivity is considered as a useful system to explore the ways in which language construct ideologies, themes and meanings. It is an essential system of construing the human experience of the inner and outer world encoded in language. The analysis of a story in the news focuses on interpreting a written text of literature. In this article, I hope to present a text analysis on transitivity, mood and theme-rheme pattern in the light of systemic functional grammar to show the genre’s distinctive features. Finally, the article suggests more ideas for other writers to examine various genres of literature to investigate the discourse and style with the corpus-based methodologies.

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