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Exploring The Main Character's Life Experience in Albert Camus' The Guest Through Ideational Meaning

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how ideational meaning is realized to represent the main character's life experience in the short story *The Guest*. It applied Halliday's concept of Systemic Functional Linguistics, focusing on the transitivity system in ideational metafunction. Using qualitative methods, this study analyzed the clauses in the short story to identify the process types used in the clauses produced by the narrator and the main character of the short story. The result of the analysis showed that the types of process found were material process, mental process, verbal process, existential process, and behavioral process; while relational process was not found in the data. Among the process types, the existential process is the most dominant. The dominant use of existential clauses implies that the writer highlights the main character's life experience of being lonely. In addition, the absence of relational process indicates that the characteristics of the main character is less described.

Keywords: Ideational Meaning, Main Character, Process Type, Systemic Functional Linguistics, *the Guest*.

BACKGROUND

Language is a means of communication that humans use to communicate thoughts, ideas, and information, so they can understand each other. It entails the use of symbols with specific meanings that are ordered. According to Nugraha & Mahdi (Nugraha & Mahdi, 2020), language is a social semiotic system for making meanings. As well as being a means of communication, language reflects the culture, values and perspectives of a group or society.

There are many different types of language in the world, and each language has its own unique set of characteristics. Throughout history, people have developed thousands of different languages. Language is also used to develop literature, scientific study and many other aspects of social and cultural life. In addition, people can express their abstract thoughts, think critically, and compose stories through the use of language. This makes language one of the most unique and one of the most crucial aspects of human life.

To capture the complete meaning of a language, one can turn to SFL theory, which analyses all possible meanings within a language. SFL, or Systemic Functional Linguistics, explores the connection between language and its social context. According to SFL, language is a comprehensive system of meanings. That is to say that, when people use language, their language acts produce or, more technically, construct meaning (Bloor & Bloor, 2013).

Ideational metafunction is one of the three metafunctions in Systemic Functional Linguistics, alongside interpersonal and textual. It reveals the ideational meaning conveyed by individuals through the clauses. Ideational meaning is distinct from interpersonal meaning, which pertains to social interaction, and textual meaning, which pertains to the structure of the text itself. Ideational meaning is focused on conveying information or concepts through sentences or expressions. As described by Halliday & Matthiessen (Halliday, M. A. K. & Matthiessen, 2014), ideational meaning sequences are construed through logical resources and figures through experiential ones; and rhetorical paragraphs and groups of paragraphs can be interpreted as being formed by logical resources.

The ideational meaning reflects how the speaker perceives and acknowledges the world. It enables individuals to create mental representations of their reality, encompassing both their external environment and internal experiences (Eggins, 2004; Halliday, M. A. K. & Matthiessen, 2014). Revealing the ideational meaning is carried out through transitivity. In transitivity, a clause consists of three elements, i.e., participant, process and circumstance. The central idea in transitivity is the process. A process is realised by the verbal word or verbal group of words used in the clause. There are six types of process; they are material, mental, behavioral, verbal, existential, relational

Studies investigating the realization of ideational meaning through the transitivity framework have been many conducted. Mahmud et al., (Mahmud et al., 2019) studies the realization of ideational meaning in Indonesian folklore texts. The study analysed data from three regions, specifically Malin Kundang, Timun Mas, and Sangkuriang. The study findings indicate that the folktales predominantly employ material process, relational process, and verbal process. Two of the most recognized participants in the folktales are the goal and the actor. The most common circumstances depicted in the main folktales are those of time and place. Next, Anggraeni (Anggraeni, 2017), examined qualitative study, utilizing transitivity

framework to examine students' self-Introduction. The study findings indicated the dominance of the participant aspect. Processes and circumstances that are dominantly realized within a self-introduction video are the senser (participant), relation (process), and circumstances of place and cause. Study conducted by Nugraha & Mahdi (2020) applied transitivity framework to reveal how the author of the short story *the Lottery* shows the world's experienced by the main character, Mr. Summer, through the use of process.

Many previous studies, as exemplified above using different data, have employed the same theoretical focus, that is ideational meaning as the main theoretical framework. However, the aim of this study is to analyze the realization of ideational meaning in the short story *The Guest* by Albert Camus (Albert Camus, n.d.) using the concept of Transitivity from Systemic Functional Linguistics theory, which was proposed by Halliday & Matthiessen (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

REASEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method to analyse and explain every meaning of the clauses both of the narrator and the characters in the short story *The Guest* by Albert Camus. The use of qualitative method is due to the descriptive nature of this study. According to Creswell (Creswell, 2009), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of study involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the writer making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The data of this study were clauses taken from the short story *The Guest* by Albert Camus (which were produced by the narrator and the characters).

The data were collected through content analysis method. According to Zhang & Wildemuth (2011), qualitative content analysis involves a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation. This process uses inductive reasoning, by which themes and categories emerge from the data through the researcher's careful examination and constant comparison. The process of collecting and analysing data content from document sources such as books or articles that relevant to the study. The data were collected by reading the short story *The Guest* by Albert Camus. The writer used skimming and scanning approaches to get a broad understanding and several details about the ideational meaning in the short story, in terms of the kind of process element in the ideational meaning. The data were then analysed through clause observation by finding out the suitability of each clause to various types of processes in ideational meaning.

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis, there are 470 clauses whose verbs can be categorizes into five types of process; they are mental process, material process, behavioural process, existential process, verbal process. The frequency of the use of each type is presented in table 1.

Table 1 The Frequency of Process

No	Process Type	Frequency
1	Material process	160
2	Mental process	86
3	Relational process	0
4	Verbal process	42
5	Behavioral process	5
6	Existential process	177
	Total	470

From table 1, it can be seen that there are only five types of process found in the short story. Among the five types, existential process is the most dominant type used in the short story with the percentage 38%. In the second rank is material process, which appears as many as 160 times, or 34% of the total process. The frequencies of occurrence of the other three types of process, i.e. mental process, verbal process, and behavioral process, show considerable difference. The gap is more than 50%. Relational process is the only process that is not used in the short story.

Each of the process types found in the clauses produced by the narrator and the characters in the short story is exemplified and discussed as follow:

Existential Process

In this study, the type of process of ideational meaning with the highest percentage, as explained in the finding section above, is the existential process. The example clause chosen to represent the existential process in the short story is "*One was on horseback*". Existential processes are one of six types of ideational processes or actions in language. Referring to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), this process highlights the presence or existence of something. In this context, the verb "to be" (such as "am," "is," "are," "was," "were") or other verbs indicating presence or existence are used to convey information that an entity exists or present.

Table 2 Existential Process

One was on horseback		
One	was	on horseback
	Existential Process	Existent

In the table above, the existential process is represented by the verb "was." This verb shows that something or someone exists or exists. The choice of the word "One" as the subject indicates that there is one entity or individual that is the focus. These are ideational tokens that refer to the entity present. The phrase "on horseback" functions as a location description, indicating where the entity is located. In this case, the entity is on horseback. Thus, in SFL analysis, the sentence "One was on horseback" can be seen as an existential process that highlights the presence or existence of the entity identified as "One," while providing additional information about the location of that entity, namely "on horseback."

Material Process

Process material related to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), is a type of process that refers to physical actions or activities that can be concretely identified. Process materials highlight actions or events that involve changes in matter or energy. In other words, process materials emphasize activities that can be observed or felt in real terms. Examples of material processes include physical actions such as "eating," "running," "writing," and "building." In SFL analysis, process materials are often identified by verbs that describe those physical actions.

The example clause chosen to represent the material process is: "*he went back into the school to get a sweater*".

Table 3 Material Process

he went back into the school to get a sweater		
he	went	back into the school to get a sweater
Actor	Material Process	Goal

From the clause in the table above, the dominant type of material process is "went," which is a material process that indicates physical action or movement. This process highlights activities that involve a change of location or physical movement from one place to another. "went": The main material process in this sentence, indicating the action of going or moving. "he": The agent of the material process, who carries out the action of going back into the school. "back into the school": Indicates the destination of the movement, namely back to school. "to get a sweater": The main goal of the movement, namely to get a sweater. The material process "get" denotes the act of obtaining or taking something.

Mental Process

Mental processes refer to a type of ideational process that involves thought activity or mental states. This process as stated in Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), is related to actions or events that occur in the mind, such as thinking, feeling, or remembering. Mental processes are often expressed through verbs that reflect mental activity, such as "think", "believe", "remember", "understand", and so on. These words refer to activities that occur in a person's mind, which cannot always be physically observed.

In the short story *The Guest* by Albert Camus, mental processes have a percentage of 86%, of the total, so it is in third place in the short story clauses occurs. The example clause chosen to represent the mental process is: "*he knew, during these bad days*".

Table 4 Mental Process

he knew, during these bad days		
he	knew	during these bad days
Senser	Mental Process	Phenomenon

The mental process type in SFL is related to mind activities, such as thinking, knowing, or feeling. In table above, the main focus is on the mental type of "knew"

process. The verb "knew" indicates that the subject (he) has knowledge or awareness about something. It describes the subject's state of mind or knowledge at a particular time, namely "during these bad days".

By applying SFL analysis, we can highlight that this type of mental process helps form ideational meanings that emphasize the cognitive or knowledge aspects of the subject. The context "during these bad days" provides the situational or temporal background in which the knowledge is held, indicating that the knowledge is related to a difficult or unpleasant period of time.

Verbal Process

Verbal processes are one type of process or activity found at the ideational level or ideational meaning. Verbal processes as citated in Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), relate to the act of speaking or using words to convey meaning. This process shows how language is used to communicate actions or activities. *Process*: This refers to the action or activity carried out by the perpetrator. In verbal processes, the action is related to the use of words, such as speaking, stating, or conveying. *Sayer*: The actor in a verbal process is the individual or entity that performs the verbal action. For example, in the sentence "She speaks," "She" is the actor who performs the action of speaking. *Verbiage*: The object or goal in the verbal process is the thing or entity that is the target of the verbal action.

Verbal process in short stories have a percentage of 42 data appeared. The example clause chosen to represent the verbal process based on the short story is: *"Hello," said Daru when they got up onto the terrace"*.

Table 5 Verbal Process

"Hello," said Daru when they got up onto the terrace.".

Hello,	said	Daru	when they got up onto the terrace.".
Ver-	Verbal Process	Sayer	-biage

Verbal process types provide insight into how actions or events are represented in language. In the table above, the dominant type of verbal process is mental process verbal. The statement "said Daru" shows a mental process, where Daru conveys a greeting or says "Hello." This mental process shows how a person's thoughts or feelings are articulated through language.

Behaviour Process

Behaviour Process is one of the three types of processes in the material process type. The material process type includes actions or physical activities that can be concretely observed. Behavioural process refers to activities or actions carried out by living creatures or objects that can produce changes in their own state or the surrounding environment (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Behaviour process is quite similar with material process because connected to physical activities but in behaviour process the activities are carried out repeatedly.

In the short story the behaviour process gets 5 data in the overall percentage of the total clauses in the short story. The example clause chosen to represent the material process based on the short story is: "*Balducci withdrew his mustache from the tea"*.

Table 6 Behaviour Process

Balducci withdrew his mustache from the tea		
Balducci	withdrew	his mustache from the tea
Behaver	Behaviour Process	Phenomenon

In the clause in the table above, the main process is "withdraw," which can be categorized as a behavioural process. This process reflects the actions or movements carried out by the subject, namely Balducci. Behaver: Balducci is the main actor in this process, indicating that he is the one carrying out the actions. Behaviour Process: "Withdrew" indicates a physical action or movement performed by Balducci. Phenomenon: "His mustache" and "from the tea" function as objects in this process. "His mustache" is the part that underwent change, and "from the tea" indicates the source or location of the change. This clause presents a scene in which Balducci performs a physical action to pull his mustache out of tea. This process creates a visual image.

CONCLUSION

Each type of process makes its unique contribution to the understanding of how language creates meaning in various contexts. This conclusion summarizes the role of each type of process in SFL analysis and how they help unlock deeper understanding regarding the representation of ideational meaning in language especially in short story *The Guest* by Albert Camus.

The total five of the six process type data that occurred, existential process became the most dominant used process type with a total of 177 data appeared, it can be concluded if the writer wants to highlight more in the existent of something that in this short story is the circumstances or the environment around the characters. By using existential process as the dominant process type, Camus as the writer of the short story showed the main character's experience of loneliness in his life. Then behaviour process is the lowest with a total of 5 data appeared, that means the writer does not highlight behaviour attitude in the story.

Overall, the ideational aspect in SFL proves that language is not only a means of communication, but also a window into the way we perceive and respond to the world. Ideational analysis opens the door to understanding the construction of meaning in various situations and contexts, enriching our interpretation of everyday.

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