

RESPONDING AND ANALYSING: STAGES OF TEACHING FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR IN INDONESIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract: This paper offers an alternative to the teaching of a functional grammar course in Indonesian TEFL tertiary level context. An issue raised here is whether the course should directly require students to undertake textual analysis or provide them first with subjective reading experiences. This issue is inspired by Jones and Lock's approach to teaching grammar in context (2011). This paper reports on a study that focused on two related phases of dealing with texts: responding and analyzing. In the first phase, students were encouraged to take a personalised approach in responding to written English texts. They had the freedom to decide whether the texts were meaningful for them in certain ways. McKee (2003) and Lehtonen (2000) posit that as the sole decision maker in meaning negotiation, readers perceive the meaningfulness of texts in very diverse ways. In the second phase of the study, the students undertook an individual analysis of different text types. This study reveals that a successful textual analysis is determined by how students make sense of the texts. The analysis of context of situation, for example, becomes meaningful to students after they demonstrate a proper position as a reader. This, in turn, helps them in gaining insights into the structure and grammar of those texts.

Keywords: systemic functional linguistics, genre-based approach, textual analysis

MERESPONS DAN MENGANALISIS: TAHAPAN DALAM PENGAJARAN TATA BAHASA FUNGSIONAL DI INDONESIA

Abstrak: Makalah ini menawarkan sebuah alternatif dalam pengajaran mata kuliah tata bahasa fungsional dalam konteks pengajaran Bahasa Inggris tingkat universitas di Indonesia. Isu yang dibahas dalam makalah ini apakah mata kuliah tersebut mengharuskan mahasiswa untuk menganalisis teks secara langsung atau memberikan pengalaman membaca subjektif terlebih dahulu. Isu ini terinspirasi oleh pendekatan Jones dan Lock untuk pengajaran tata bahasa dalam konteks (2011). Makalah ini melaporkan sebuah kajian yang fokus pada dua fase terkait ketika menghadapi teks: merespons dan menganalisis. Dalam fase pertama, mahasiswa didorong untuk menggunakan salah satu pendekatan pribadi dalam merespons teks-teks tulisan berbahasa Inggris. Mereka memiliki kebebasan untuk menentukan apakah teks-teks tersebut bermanfaat bagi mereka. McKee (2003) dan Lehtonen (2000) menyebutkan bahwa sebagai pengambil keputusan penuh dalam negosiasi makna, para pembaca melihat kebermanfaatan teks-teks dengan cara yang beragam. Dalam fase kedua, mahasiswa menggunakan sebuah analisis berbeda terhadap jenis teks yang berbeda.

Kajian ini mengungkap bahwa keberhasilan sebuah analisis tekstual ditentukan oleh bagaimana para mahasiswa memahami teks tersebut. Analisis konteks situasi, contohnya, menjadi bermanfaat bagi mahasiswa setelah mereka menentukan posisi yang tepat sebagai seorang pembaca. Pada gilirannya, hal ini dapat membantu mahasiswa dalam memperoleh wawasan dalam struktur dan tata bahasa teks-teks tersebut.

Katakunci: Linguistik fungsional sistemis, pendekatan berbasis genre, analisis tekstual

The teaching of functional grammar gains a relatively huge popularity among universities across Indonesia in the last two decades. It is specifically triggered by the national policy which introduces the so-called Genre-Based Approach (GBA) into the curriculum of English language teaching classrooms in junior and senior high school levels. This is an advantage for Indonesian national curriculum as Genre-Based Approach (GBA), theoretically grounded on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as it is becoming one of the worlds' fastest growing trends in the field of contemporary English language teaching. However, according to Mishra (2010), grammar teachers, particularly EFL teachers, seems to be bewildered by the assumptions and hypothesis underlying systemic linguistics. The theoretical assumptions underpinning systemic functional linguistics is its very nature lied in extralinguistic level, implying that grammar as the foundation of an architecture called language should be addressed in a different way. A new perspective is definitely required. It is a brand-new perspective on how EFL teachers and lecturers as well as students perceive grammar as a meaning-making resource, not merely a set of rules governing our language system.

Changing the perspective of a traditional into a functional grammar seems to be like a very long and challenging continuum for EFL teachers (Bumela 2012). Teachers with long teaching experience, on the one hand, for example, get easily perplexed with the notions of transitivity – participants, process types, and circumstances –, generic structure,

lexicogrammatical features, and metafunctions. Most of them are not even aware of the term of genre itself. On the other hand, novice English teachers seem to forget a fact that teaching text types should never be displaced from the area of traditional grammar. This situation eventually leads EFL teachers to probe a fundamental question on how to teach grammar in the Genre-Based Approach which focuses on how grammatical choices realise the meanings of the texts. Some prefer to teach grammar explicitly, and the rest seems to teach it implicitly. This situation is typically dilemmatic especially in the teaching of English in a foreign language context.

In a dilemmatic situation like this, things can be very frustrating as teachers are faced with a disadvantageous learning result: their students' skill in writing different text types is not well developed and their grammatical competence is still poor. In other words, this means that their teaching practices are less informed and therefore needs to be redefined. An informed decision has to be made in an attempt to construct a balance between the teaching of traditional and functional grammar.

In order to cope with this dilemmatic situation in teaching functional grammar, an proper option should be set up. Mican (2011) sets out that the spirit of text-based teaching especially in English as foreign language context should address the following elements: familiarity with texts, making sense of texts from beginning, use of language for real purposes in lessons, tailoring texts to class communities, make meanings for beginner to advanced classes,

analysis of lexico-grammatical of texts to enhance language awareness, extensive reading and reading clubs, learner autonomy, integrated skills and multimodality. These eight factors imply one thing: familiarity with texts, which is mediated through extensive reading, is a number-one priority in text-based teaching environment. If learners successfully ascend their levels from reader to quality reader, as noted by Lehtonen (2000), they have the capability of negotiating meaning successfully. This also implies that grammar-related teaching should not stop at the discussion of formality – sets of rules – and exposures to English texts.

A truth commonly found in our schooling context, as revealed by Barton (2010), is that language learners (and teachers) received a small amount of formal grammar teaching at schools. This normally leads us to insecure feeling whether the grammar of English should be delivered in an explicit fashion or it should be taught in a way that can help students become better readers, writers, speakers and thinkers. The second option seems to be the preferred one as the teaching of grammar, as believed by many linguists, is not merely focused on the rules (Jones and Lock 2011; Barton 2010; Purpura 2004; Smith 2003). The teaching of rules is not the end, but an initial phase to equip students with a better knowledge about the wider functions that grammar plays in the target language. In the context of Functional Linguistics, the emphasis is given on how grammar realises the meaning of the texts (Jones and Lock 2011; Halliday 2009).

In the context of EFL, however, a conflicting situation is commonly faced by teachers because going into the path of meaning-focused instruction is a difficult task. The teaching of functional grammar could be a big failure because the students' foundation of traditional grammar is still poor (Bumela 2012). To be able to uncover the meaning of the text, students

need to equip themselves with a sophisticated knowledge on grammar and context. The three phases of arriving at the meaning of the text – understanding the nature of texts, digging up the contexts, and finally unlocking the meaning of the texts – is at the core of teaching functional grammar practices (Halliday 2009). Students and teachers alike will never be able to unlock the meaning of the texts without a proper understanding on the traditional grammar.

In order to find out the best possible approach in teaching (traditional) grammar in an EFL context, some problems need to be reidentified and resolved. Some problems commonly found in the teaching of grammar, as revealed by Mishra (2010), are: (1) poor standard of the students; (2) selection of materials; and (3) amount of rules to be taught. Similar problems are also found in a functional grammar course in a university level. Bumela (2012) identifies several problems in the teaching functional grammar course in an EFL context: (1) students' poor mastery on traditional grammar; (2) students' low exposure to text types written in English and in their mother tongue; (3) limited amount of time in teaching traditional and functional grammar; (4) selection of materials; (5) number of English and Indonesian texts to be used in class; (6) form of analysis; and (7) a proper assessment.

The complexities of teaching functional grammar in an EFL context seem to be caused by several reasons. Firstly, functional grammar is, in its very own nature, text-oriented and meaning-oriented. This implies that the course will fundamentally require students to have a sufficient exposure towards English texts. In reality, however, students' exposure to the texts written in their mother tongue is low. Secondly, the course will require students to analyse different types of texts, which means that they should have a proper understanding on how grammar

realises the meaning of the texts. In reality, however, many of the students are not even able to analyse a simple sentence. From this real-world perspective, a model of teaching functional grammar is therefore required.

This paper, written as a form of a teaching reflection, specifically attempts to explore the possibility of creating a model of textual analysis which is suitable for a functional grammar course for tertiary-level students in Indonesian context. It attempts to help students develop a better understanding of the functional resources of grammar as evidenced in the texts.

Analysing Texts: Discovering a Balance

Text analysis in the course of functional grammar serves as a basis to measure students understanding on several things: (1) their level of mastery on functional grammar bases; (2) how they approach the texts; and (3) their level of interpretation on different types of texts. The focus on these three aspects are triggered by the very reason that a text should be approached in a particular way by using a certain analytical tool so that students – as readers and analysts – can interpret the text in a meaningful way (Lehtonen 2000).

The model of analysis required in EFL context should ideally incorporate some fundamental issues such as (1) number of rules to be taught (as well as the amount of time for instruction); (2) types of texts to be used in class; and (3) efforts needed to make sense of the texts. Traditional grammar-related exercises are, to a large extent, still required in the functional grammar course. However, the lecturer doesn't usually have enough time to make a lengthy review on traditional grammar exercises because he/she believes that his/her students have sufficient grammatical competence. In several universities in Indonesia, functional grammar course is normally delivered in the 5th or 7th semester, which means that it is offered to students after they completed

four semesters in traditional grammar courses. The problem arises when students join the functional grammar course without a clear understanding on the traditional grammar (Bumela 2012).

The selection of materials – texts to be used in class – can also generate a problem. A question commonly probed in the text selection is whether texts written in Indonesian language can be used for some course purposes. As language educators currently are turning their attention to the so-called “local wisdom”, the use of home language-texts is boosted. For the purposes of this study, Indonesian texts – two short stories and two poems – were used in the classroom. This gives a certain advantage as students have a better lexical access to their own home language.

The third problem commonly occurs in the functional grammar course is to measure the level of interpreting the texts. In other words, students need to make sense of the texts in a certain way. Text-related activities – reading, responding, analysing – should provide students with an explorable and meaningful learning experience. However, to achieve this purpose, some essential issues need to be redefined.

First, the term “textual analysis” is not merely about grammatically-based text analysis, but, as McKee says (2003), it is about “making an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretation that might be made of that text”. This means that the analysis should incorporate a level of interpretation which suits students' preferences and background knowledge. *Second*, a particular way of approaching the texts should be introduced to students. Anderson and Anderson (1997) note that text is generally grouped into two types: literary and factual. Those two types of texts are normally produced (written) in a different way. Distinctive characteristics of texts – social purpose, generic structure, and lexicogrammatical features – should be well constructed and developed. In

addition, according to Rosenblatt (1978) with her “Reader Response Theory”, different types of texts must be read in a different way: aesthetic and efferent. The former is used when a reader faces literary texts – poem, short story, novels –, while the second is used when a reader faces texts filled up with facts, daily events, statistical numbers representing a reality, descriptions, arguments, and so so forth and so on. To this very end, it is obvious that a text (as a discourse) should be read, written, and eventually analysed in a specific way. There is always a way to cook something.

Third. Students’ position should be redefined in the teaching learning process. For the purposes of this study, students’ are attributed with two different but related roles: a reader and an analyst. The former role requires students to take a subjective reading approach towards the texts, while the latter requires them to investigate the texts in an objective way. The two roles need to be attributed in an explicit fashion due to the fact that readers, as postulated by Lehtonen (2000), are the main decision makers in the production of meaning. A reader plays a significant role in how meaning is negotiated. To be meaningful a text must be interpreted by a proper reader in a proper context in a particular time. Unlike the proponents of Saussurian structuralist approach which believe that meaning derives from the system of language, the paradigm used in this study derives from Barthes’ notion of “the Death of the Author” which emphasises the role of a reader in the meaning formation. Barthes (1986) wrote:

We know now that a text consists not of a line of words, releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God), but of a multidimensional space in which are married and contested several writings, none of which is original: the text is a

fabric of quotations, resulting from a thousand sources of culture.

In an attempt to interpret Barthes’ notion of “The Death of the Author”, Lehtonen (2000) concurrently regards this as the momentous *birth of the reader*. In other words, the reader gains a new role in the nucleus of the meaning formation. This also means that reading serves as the site where meaning is negotiated. In the chapter of “The World of Readers”, Lehtonen posits that texts and readers are dependent upon each other, which means that they produce one another. From this perspective, it is clear that students need to be provided with a spacious room for their reading activities. It is a room full of exploration and enjoyment in which a reader can discover the right taste of his/her reading endeavour.

In fulfilling the role as a reader, students need to take into account several issues. *First*, reading is a personal business, which implies that students might have different experiences when getting involved even with the same texts. *Second*, students have an authority to state their preferences over the text that they read – whether they like it or not for several explainable reasons –. Likes and dislikes means something in a subjective reading experience as this will lead the readers to decide whether they wish to get fully engaged with the text or leave it without any meaningful experiences (Miall 1990; Miall 1988)

Third, students need to be aware that their background knowledge (and experiences) has a great influence on their current and future reading experiences. As Lehtonen (2000) puts it, “reader’s relationships to texts are defined not only by the text itself, but also by readers’ own position: their entire resources of (textual and non-textual) knowledge and experiences. *Fourth*, it should be emphasised to students that a good reading practices is marked with making responses

to the texts. In the context of this study, written responses are preferred and the students have the freedom to write their responses in their home language (Indonesian).

In fulfilling the role as an analyst, students should take the following assumptions into their consideration. *First*, as McKee (2003) puts it, “there is no single correct interpretation of any part of the world and, in the same way, there is no single correct interpretation of any text”. In other words, students need to be aware that in doing textual analysis different people will come up with different interpretation. The key is to attempt to search for the most likely interpretation, not to determine the right and the wrong one. In addition to this, McKee (2003) puts an emphasis that there is a sea difference between the interpretation produced by an author as the creator of text and the one produced by a reader as a consumer. However, this doesn’t mean that students can just come up with any interpretation of a text as they wish. They need to provide some evidences which are reasonable and acceptable.

Second. From an outset, students should be aware that analysis is an activity which is focused on the discourse process: how the texts are created in a possible circumstance (Van Leeweun 2008; Macin and Van Leeweun 2007; O’Keeffe 2006). A sharp look at how grammar realises the texts is required. Halliday (1994) believes that a proper analysis should always include grammatical tools. *Third*, analysis should be triggered with a question. Students need to pose a relevant question which can lead them to further explore the texts. Some examples of questions can be adopted: (1) how is Islam represented in a particular newspaper article? (2) How are prominent persons represented in the history books? (3) How are the terms “love and loyalty” portrayed in a particular poem or short story? (4) Does some political

news describe some biases? and so on and so forth. The list of questions is endless.

Fourth, McKee (2003) suggests students not to say “I will analyse this text”. Instead, they have to say “I will analyse this text in order to see how Islam is represented in the Western media”. This suggestion requires students to set the goal of the analysis at the very first place. Without a clear goal, an investigation of text will be meaningless. It has always been stated that the purpose of analysis is to answer specific questions. *Fifth*, students should bear in mind that analysis is a matter of unlocking the meaning(s) of the texts. It is about searching for the meaning potentials of the texts. Lehtonen (2000) lists some words which contain the term “analysis” such as releasing, dissolving or disbanding, dissecting a problem, and returning and departing. He further says that analysis can be regarded as an attempt to look into the symbolic construction of text.

From the explanation above, it is evident that searching for the format of analysis suitable for EFL context is a big challenge. Some challenges commonly faced in the classroom range from students-related aspects – level of mastery and previous textual experiences – to content-related aspects – number and types of text to be taught and approaches to textual analysis –, and also finding the right man in the right place (the right teacher) is another issue at hand.. In the context of this study, discovering a suitable approach and format of analysis is a matter of seeking the balance. Students need to have a strong foundation both on the traditional grammar of English and functional grammar; and sufficient knowledge and experience in dealing with texts both in Indonesian and English.

Seeking a balance in a functional course in Indonesian context seems to be an urgent case at the moment. Indonesian English teachers are in a dire need to further learn functional grammar as it

introduces a new and refreshing perspective on grammar and texts. As long as GBA is used in English classrooms in Indonesia, functional grammar course is certainly a must-have course in the curriculum. Teachers need to know more about the nature of GBA in the light of functional grammar. At the same time, however, there are now more people who are questioning the effectiveness of Genre-Based Approach for the purpose of developing students' language skills. Even some pessimistic department heads prefer to shut down the functional grammar course due to the complexities it bears on the students. The complexity of the course is narrowly seen, for example, from students' low achievement after completing the course. Even some see it as a course which is suitable only for postgraduate level. Based on this reason, a functional grammar course needs to be repackaged and redesigned so that it can be used as medium to empower students' existing perspectives on grammar, and eventually help them become a better reader.

METHOD

This study was intended as trial project in the Functional Grammar course held in the Department of English Education of IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. It attempts to introduce the phases of approaching the texts: responding and analysing. In responding phase, students were instructed to perform subjective (personalised) reading activities and to write down their personal responses on their learning log. Students had the freedom to interpret the texts based on their background knowledge and experiences. Some questions that need to be addressed on this phase are: (1) Do you like the story? and why? (2) What is the text about and who are involved in it? (3) Do you have the same experience as evidenced in the text(s)? (4) What do you think about the characters in the text (s)? (5) What will you do if you were one of the characters in the text(s)? (6) What do you

think about the conflict as found in the text(s)? (7) Did you find a solution for the conflict raised in the text(s), and (8) Do you think that this story might happen to you in the real life? And why?

The type of questions raised in the first phase is aimed at to investigate the relationship between reader and text. As has been explained above, reader plays a significant role in the production of meaning. They serve as the decision maker in the meaning negotiation. A brilliant work is meaningless without the presence of a reader. In the first phase of this study students have an authority to decide whether the texts that they read make sense to them. This sense-making practice is, as Lehtonen (2000) puts it, "a fundamental part of our survival as human".

In the second phase of approaching the text – analysis – students are instructed to undertake systemic-based analysis. This is a basic analysis which addresses the context of situation: field, tenor, and mode and the three metafunctions – ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Types of questions addressed to uncover the context of situation include: (1) What is the text about? (2) How is the topic delivered? (3) Who are involved in the text and how do they react with each other? (4) What is the mode of communication (spoken-written or monomodal or multimodal)? And what are the features? An understanding on field, tenor, and mode is a fundamental requirement for interpreting the texts. Students have to reveal the context in which particular text is constructed. The triadic element in sense-making practices that need to be well taken care of is text, context, and reader. The presence of a text that we read is constructed in a particular context and in a specific time. It is reader's task to decide in what context a text lives in and how does it affect the world.

The types of questions that have to be addressed in uncovering the metafunctions include: (1) How are the people and events portrayed in the texts; (2) how is the

pattern of interaction constructed in the texts? (3) How is the information delivered in the texts? These three questions will lead students to address the core question: How does grammar realise the meanings of the texts? In this challenging part students have to reveal how grammatical choices affect the meanings of the text.

For the purposes of this study several technical issues needs to be addressed. *First*, since students have two positions both as a reader and analyst, their responses and analysis are written in two separate forms: form A for the responses and form B for the analysis. *Second*, students have a privilege to write in Bahasa Indonesia, not in English. This is intended to stimulate them in presenting their ideas. Writing in other language is absolutely not an easy thing. Most of Indonesian EFL learners, even in college level, are not skillful in writing down their opinion in their mother tongue. Writing in Bahasa Indonesia seems to be the best possible way-out for providing student opportunity to write.

The texts that were used during the course are one English poem (*What does a Bee Do?* by Christina Rossetti) and one Indonesian Poems (*Cuma Satu* by Sitok Srengenge; and two newspaper articles written in English taken from republika.co.id (*Ouch... Sexual behavior of Indonesian adolescence worrying* and *The protests are 'natural'*). The last two texts were especially selected by students, while the remaining texts were determined by the teacher.

Third. Students have to make two personal responses, which mean that they have to read the text more than once. The basic assumption underlying this is that reading the same texts for the second or third time generates a new perspective and experience. In this step, students are expected to take a closer look at the texts. There must be something new that can be found in the second or third reading activities. *Fourth*. The data used in this

study are taken from the best five portfolio produced by students within one semester. At the end of the semester, a list of the best 20 students was released. Due to the limitation of time and other circumstances, there are only five works which are regarded as the best ones. The criteria of the works include the originality of the works and the sharpness of the perspective both in the text responses and the analysis.

A question might be raised about the scientificity of the analysis. This study, however, merely offers an alternative to approaching the texts suitable for EFL context. There certainly are other approaches and methodologies in the field of textual analysis with a more scientific framework, but a decision has to be made as we teach in a different world with different circumstances. The following section will present several findings generated in this study.

Discussion 1: Students' Personal Responses

This section reveals how the five-selected respondents responded to the four different texts – an English poem, an Indonesian poem, and two news reports written in English. In the context of this study responses produced by students are required to stimulate a further investigation of the texts. Personal responses normally consists of preferences as evidenced in the statements “I love this story or I hate this story”; level of understanding as evidenced in “This poem is confusing or I think this text is about romance”; and a dimension of background knowledge as evidenced in a statement like “this story reminded of an even in the past”. Personal responses are something natural, something inherent in the students' internal sphere. The same texts tend to be responded differently as students have different background knowledge and dimension of experience. In this study the differences are appreciated as students, as readers, have an authority to

decide whether particular texts are meaningful for them in a certain way.

Some responses found in this section vary in terms of its preferences, topics, and solution. In the case of text one, for example, students responded in a variety of ways. S1, in her first response, sees the structure of the poem “What Does a Bee Do?” merely as a dialog within a text. In her second response, however, she holds the opinions that the structure of the poem basically attempts to invite readers to have a conversation with the author. She said that the poem intrinsically asks the reader to think about a social phenomenon portrayed in the poem. S1 does not mention whether she likes the poem, but directly states her opinion of the structure of the poem and what it serves for. The four respondents seem to have different stance in responding to the first poem written by Christina Rosetti. Table 1 below contains the keywords used in the students’ responses.

As can be seen from Table 1, the rest of students, S2-S5, use their own preferences in responding to the first text. The keywords found in their responses include: easy to understand, unique,

interesting, and not interesting. S4 is the only person who thinks that the poem is uninteresting because of its simple structure and the way the author delivers her idea. The remaining respondents, on the contrary, say that the poem is unique as it is written the form of dialog and the words used in the poem are easy to understand. S2, in his second response, sees the poem to function as a satire. In his point of view, the poem criticises what actually happens in the family. In the poem, the father, analogous to the hardworking bee, is the one who makes bread for the family. He has to work very hard from dawn to dusk, while her wife stays at home and spends the money extravagantly. His son is the one who enjoys the wealth and spends it all for his own enjoyment. The response provided by S2 seems very critical and enlightening. In a postmodern time, things described in the poem are very relevant with Indonesian context, which is worrying. From the first set of data, it is clearly evidenced that readers’ different opinions and perspective are meaningful and should be taken as a gateway to a further analysis.

Table 1: Students’ Personal Responses on the Four Selected Texts

T	STUDENTS’ RESPONSES									
	S1		S2		S3		S4		S5	
	R1	R2	R1	R2	R1	R2	R1	R2	R1	R2
T 1	A dialog	Inviting reader to talk	Easy to understand	A satire	Confused	Bread-winning role	Unique and interesting	Fulfilling the needs	Not interesting	Obligation
T 2	Love for the family	Hopes in life	Confused	Longing for the family	Confused	Life spirit	Unique and energizing	Life and Love	Complained	Survival
T 3	Surprising the reader	Something should be added	The data is surprising	Family is the key	Not surprised	Religion is the key	Surprising	Parents’ role	Not surprising	Sex education is a must
T 4	The protest are	Govt’s false	Protests are OK	Decreasing Govt.	Agree	Univ. students embarrass	Students are provocative	Supporting govt is	Protest is normal	Don’t blame the

OK	Emplo yees' salary	ssing	ators	a must	govt
<p>Notes:</p> <p>T = Texts</p> <p>TI = Poem 1 (<i>What Does a Bee Do?</i>)</p> <p>T2 = Poem 2 (<i>Musim Bunga Esok Yang Kunanti</i> by Lala Bumela)</p> <p>T3 = Newspaper Article 1 (Indonesian Teenagers' Sexual Behaviour)</p> <p>T4 = Newspaper Article 2 (The Protests are Natural)</p> <p>S1 – S5 = Student 1 Student 5</p> <p>R1 – R2 = Response 1 and Response 2</p> <p>In the case of text two, S2, S3, and S5 prefer to state their level of understanding as evidenced in the keywords such as <i>confused, confusing, and complicated</i>. Their confusion seems to be triggered by the length of the poem (five pages) and the diction used. They said that the poem was full of metaphors which were not easily understood. The title itself, <i>Musim Bunga Esok yang Kunanti (The Season of Flower, Tomorrow that I Long for)</i> is written in the form of metaphor. It represents something beyond the lexical elements of the title.</p> <p>The poem also presents, in their acknowledgment, some unfamiliar phrases and expressions which are typically found in the poem such as <i>Orkestrasi Hujan (the rain orchestra), meneguk keringat yang mengalir (drinking the flowing sweat), harapan-harapan yang berdegup (the beating hopes)</i>, and so on and so forth. The respondents seem to get puzzled in their first responses. However, they found something new in the second responses as evidenced in the following keywords: <i>hopes in life, longing for the family, life spirit, life and love, and survival</i>. In the second responses, students demonstrate a form of understanding by focusing their response on the main topic portrayed in the poem. S1 is the only one who doesn't make differences in her first and second responses by focusing on the two keywords: <i>love for the family and hopes in</i></p>		<p><i>life</i>. From this example, it is evident that students chose their own preferences in responding to text. Their opinion becomes sound when they can explain the reason why they think that particular poems are interesting or dull. Different responses are found in the response on text three.</p> <p>In the case of text three, the five selected students agree on one particular thing regarding the third text, a news on Indonesian teenagers' sexual behaviour: "It is not surprising anymore". It seems that the data shown in the news is no longer new to them as, based on their experience, the teenagers' sexual behaviour is even worst in the reality rather than in the news reports. The three respondents even confessed that one of their friends in high school got pregnant outside of marriage. They truly revealed the truth that their pregnant friends' sexual behaviour is now the wrong model for their juniors. The same case seems to frequently occur in Indonesian schooling context. In several areas of the country, the pregnant school children are banned from taking the National Examination. This type of response is fruitful in that it counterbalances the text that was read by the five students.</p> <p>Another difference is also found in the second response produced by the students: a solution to the problem portrayed in the text. A solution offered by the students is included in the keywords such as: <i>family and religion, sex education, and something should be done</i>. By providing such solution it is evident that the five respondents are concerned with the problem. They seem to be emotionally involved when discussing the problem with each other in the class. This means that the text have a higher level of relevance with the current issues discussed in the society. This is an advantage that can be gained from gathering the students' responses.</p>			

The relatively similar responses in text four are also found in which the five respondents chose to use their personal comments over the issue raised in the news – fuel price hike –. Their comments are evidenced in the following keywords: “protests OK; protest fine; normal; agree; and embarrassing. In the opinion of S4 the protest, which is anarchistic, is embarrassing as most of the protesters were university students. In general the five respondents agree with the title of the text, but they provide some solutions to the issue raised but they also blame the governments for such protests to occur. The sense of relevance with the text is obvious in this part. The issue of fuel price hike has a huge influence on every citizen in the country. It is now a burning issue in Indonesia for the last one year, therefore, it seems to have a huge relevance with the students.

From this explanation, students’ personal responses give important insights on their preference, perspective, comments, degree of understanding, and degree of relevance with the texts. These insights are vital in the meaning negotiation in which reader constructs his/her own standpoint after activating their background

knowledge resources. When readers are able to utilise his/her background knowledge the negotiation of meaning will then begin. The following section presents how the context of situation – field, tenor and mode – is negotiated by the five selected respondents.

Discussion 2: A view on Field, Tenor, and Mode

In this study, the five selected students understand the context of situation – field, tenor, and mode – in a modest way. Field is understood as what happens in the text; tenor is understood as the pattern of interaction and judgment of the speaker or writer towards the issue raised in the texts; and mode is about how the information is organised in a spoken or written mode of communication (Talbot 2007; Gerot and Wignell 1994). Field, tenor, and mode (henceforth FTM), as postulated by Halliday (1994; 1985), are inherent elements of a text. A reader’s task is to uncover these elements in order to reveal how meanings – ideational, interpersonal, and textual – are realised in a particular text. Table 2 presents the keywords produced by the students as an attempt to understand the gist of the FTM.

Table 2: FTM in the Students’ Point of View

S	T1			T2			T3			T4		
	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M
S 1	Family Role	Nega tive attitu de	Writ ten dial og	Hop es	Equal power	Writt en- spok en	Govt’s plan	Neg ative attit ude	Writte n	Hat ta’s Po V	Govt - orien ted	Wri tten
S 2	Breadw inning role	Nega tive judg ment	Writ ten aest hetic	Hum an life	Equal power	Writt en mon olog- dilao g	Free sex cases in INA	Ativ e attit ude	Writte n/news item	Fue l Pric e Hik e Pro test	Govt - orien te	Wri tten
S 3	Needs fulfillm ent	Gen der- biase d	writt en Q-A	Fight ing spirit	I and friend	Writt en	INA’tee nagers’ sexual behavio	Neg ative attit ude	Writte n	Pro test on Fue	Govt , peop le,	Wri tten

							or			l	and	
										pric	stud	
										e	ents	
										hik		
										e		
S	Breadw	Nega	Writ	Reac	Symm	Writt	INA's	Neg	Writte	Pro	Pro-	Wri
4	ining	tive	ten-	hing	etric	en	teenager	ative	n	test	Hatt	tten
	role	attitu	aest	the	relatio	Mon	s'	attit		to	a's	
		de	hetic	drea	nship	olog	sexual	ude		gov	com	
				ms		and	behavio			t	ment	
						dialo	ur					
						g						
S	Family	Nega	Writ	Hop	Positi	Writt	Govt's	Govt	Writte	Fue	Govt	Wri
5	membe	tive	ten	es	ve	en	effort in	-	n	l	-	tten
	rs' role	attitu			attitud	Thre	facing	orie		pric	orien	
		de			e	e	teenager	nted		e	ted	
						genr	's			hik		
						es	sexual			e		
							behavio			prot		
							ur			est		

Notes:

T = Texts

TI = Poem 1 (*What Does a Bee Do?* By Christina Rosetti)

T2 = Poem 2 (*Musim Bunga Esok Yang Kunanti* by Lala Bumela)

T3 = Newspaper Article 1 (*Indonesian Teenagers' Sexual Behaviour*)

T4 = Newspaper Article 2 (*The Protests are Natural*)

S1 – S5 = Student 1 – Student 5

F-T-M = Field, Tenor, and Mode

Some students have revealed the field in their first responses. “What happens in the text” is understood simply as the topic presented in the text. In responding to the first poem – *What does A Bee Do?* –the students use the keywords such as *family members' role, breadwinning roles in the family, family needs fulfilment, and a satire about family*. In a plain explanation the field in the poem reveals how a husband, who is metaphorically analogous to a hardworking bee, plays a very significant role in the family. His dawn-to-dusk hard work seems fruitless as he enjoys nothing from his work. His wife and kid are the ones who reap the most benefits from his

hard work. It seems that the husband's position resembles to a bee who works all day long just to satisfy the needs of the queen bee. This is such an unbalanced role in the family.

In the perspective respondents, the tenor in the first poem represents a negative attitude of the author. The poem serves as a criticism towards our society which burdens the working husband with such a huge task on his shoulders: satisfying the needs for the ‘queen’ wife and the ‘prince’ kid. The negative judgment of the author is evident from the analogy portrayed in the third to sixth lines of the poem: *what does the mother do?; lay out the honey; and what does the baby do?; eat up the honey*. The verb phrases “lay out” and “eat up” emphasises the fact that the mother and kid leave nothing to eat for the father. This criticism also serves as a reminder to future father, mother, and kids to function symmetrically well both in the family and in the society.

In the context of mode of communication, the five-selected students agree that the mode of the poem is a written form, but it is specifically constructed in the form of a simple dialog.

The title itself is written in an interrogative form: what does a bee do? This seems to invite readers to think for a while for the answers. The lines in the poem are developed in a simple exchange which contains a single question and a single answer. This makes it easier for reader to understand the intention of the author as apparent in the title of the poem. If the poem was written in a different style, things will be different.

In investigating the second poem, the five selected students don't seem to have problems in guessing the topic of the second poem entitled "The Season of Flower, Which I Long to See Tomorrow" written by Lala Bumela. The keywords used in the field include phrases such as *hopes, dreams, love, and life survival*. The poem, which is written in three pages, portrays someone's dire exhaustion in a specific time and place. However he/she doesn't want to give up easily. This is evidenced from the 7th and 8th lines of the first verse in the poem which reads:

Aku lelah...ya aku sangat lelah...tapi aku
bukanlah orang yang kalah
Aku memang berkeluh kesah, tapi aku tak
pernah berputar arah

(I am exhausted...a lot...but I am not such
the looser)

(I do make complaints, but I never turn my
face around)

Many students, in the class discussion, were amazed by these two lines as they truthfully confessed that in many occasions they gave up easily without making any attempts to fix things up. Everyone feels exhausted in life. They get disappointed, but it doesn't mean that they can just give up that easily. They said that they should never lose the focus on their life if they want to make their dreams come true. A sense of relevance with the text is, in fact, evident in the discussion of field.

Textual evidence on hopes can be found in the first and second line of the

first verse which reads "*Orkestrasi hujan baru saja dimulai sore ini kawan; langit meredup dan harapan-harapan terpendam masih berdegup*" (*The orchestra of raindrops has just begun my friends; the sky dimmed already and the hidden hopes are still beating*). To the respondents, these first two lines are regarded as the thesis statement of the poem, which are supported by many other lines in different verses.

In the case of tenor, the five selected students revealed the tenor of the text by first investigating the mode of the text. The information in the text is organised in the written form. However, it contains a dialogic interaction between some participants reciting the poem. This is evidenced in the last line of the poem which says "Bagaimana denganmu kawan?" or "What about you fellow?" When the poem is recited, the five performers read out the poem as they mingle in a conversation. The video is shown to the students after they made their first responses. When the poem was merely read by the students, the poem doesn't look real and it only triggered confusion. Students' responses, however, changed dramatically after they watched the poem being recited. In this practice, the emphasis is given on the aspect of monomodality and multimodality. Students in my class are now getting aware that the mode of the text has a great effect on how a text will be perceived by the reader.

In investigating the last two texts – news item taken from *republica.com* – the five selected students seem to find it easy to uncover the field of the texts. The keywords used to represent the field in the third text include *Indonesian teenager's sexual behaviour, free sex cases in Indonesia, and Government's effort to overcome free-sex behaviour*. The text itself shows a set of data on Indonesian teenagers' sexual behaviour, which is nerve-racking. The text also highlights

governments' effort in overcoming the problems.

In the perspective of the students, the tenor in the text shows the negative attitude of the author towards the issue raised. This is evidenced in the following keywords: *ouch, worrying, and moral degradation*. The article, which is briefly written, contains two quotations – the data of free-sex behaviour and the forming of a special task force – from the trusted sources. This implies that the writer of the news attempts to show to the reader that the government is concerned with the problem. In the context of mode, the five respondents highlighted the generic structure of the text: newsworthy event (paragraph 1); background event (paragraph 2); and sources (paragraph 3-5). The prominent process type used in the text is material process which functions to retell the phenomenon.

In the last text, the five selected students mention that the field is about the protest on fuel-price hike. All of them agree with the title, which is quoted from Hatta Rajasa's statement on the protests. The tenor of the text, as perceived by the students, represents the writer's support to the government to increase the fuel price. It is evidenced even from the title of the text which is written in the form of quotation of Hatta. The mode of the text, as revealed by the students, include

newsworthy event (paragraph 1); background event (paragraph 2); and sources (paragraph 3-4). The prominent process type used in the text is material process which functions to illustrate the events.

What can be concluded from this event is that a text simultaneously construe the field, tenor, and, mode. The three of them are related to each other and should be investigated objectively. To understand the construction of meaning, it is important to investigate which context of situation that plays the most vital role. The following section will discuss this matter.

Discussion 3: Metafunctions in Students' Perspective

This section reveals how the five selected respondents perceive the metafunctions of the texts. At the end of the course all of them were interviewed on how they perceive the importance of revealing the metafunctions of the texts. The result of the interview shows that by taking a closer look at the metafunctions, students can identify how grammar realises the meanings. More importantly, as they confessed, interpersonal metafunction, which realises the interpersonal meaning, has a big effect on how a text will be constructed. Table 3 presents the finding of the interview.

Table 3: Metafunctions in the Students' Perspective

S	T1			T2			T3			T4		
	ID	INT	TE	ID	INT	TE	ID	INT	TE	ID	INT	TE
S1		✓				✓				✓		✓
S2		✓				✓				✓		✓
S3		✓				✓				✓		✓
S4		✓				✓				✓		✓
S5		✓				✓				✓		✓

As can be seen from the table, interpersonal metafunction is perceived as the gist of the overall meaning construction within a text. This sounds reasonable as interpersonal metafunction is related to the personal choices of the speaker/writer (Halliday 1994; Gerot and Wignell 1994; Eggins 1994; and Talbot 2007). Talbot (2007: 99-128) particularly extend the notion of interpersonal meanings in her analysis on several TV broadcasts in England. The notion of mood and residue, which is terminologically based, tends to be avoided in her investigation.

The extension made by Talbot is based on the idea of how the speakers in the broadcasts develop his/her pattern of interaction with the interviewees or guests. The patterns of interaction, based on Talbot's investigation, are hallmarked by gestures/body language, specific phatic exchanges; the use of vocatives; code-switching; eye contact; transactional interaction; number of initiating moves; criticising strategies; and confessions on other peoples' character. The discussion is getting increasingly interesting as Talbot presents the real examples of how interpersonal meanings affect the field and mode of communication of the text. Talbot's work can be used as an inspiring teaching resource in a functional grammar course.

What can be inferred from the third data set is that the analysis carried out by students has led open up a gate for further understanding of how meaning is negotiated by reader. In the context of this study interpersonal meaning turns out to be the focus of students' departure point in negotiating the meaning of the texts. In other studies, perhaps, students may determine that the point of departure should be ideational or even textual metafunction. The result of analysis can be accepted as long as a sound reason is available.

CONCLUSION

An important lesson that can be drawn from this study is that the analysis of text should normally incorporate three basic elements: text-context-reader. This paper introduces the responding-analysing method in approaching the texts. The biggest challenge faced by teacher in the functional grammar course is that the students don't seem to have a sufficient knowledge in traditional grammar and lack of textual experiences. The logic of functional grammar can never be well-understood if those two elements are missing from their intellectual and experiential sphere. Therefore, a proper method should be introduced especially in a TEFL context.

The responding-analysing method enables students to reserve their rights as the readers who serve as the main decision makers in the meaning negotiation. The meaning, in a poststructuralist perspective, is not produced but negotiated. In order to interpret the meaning reader has to take part in the "production of meaning". The process of producing meaning does not resemble the way speakers or writers produce his/her own meaning. As consumer of texts, readers have to negotiate the meaning by reading and responding to the texts. Responding to the texts will allow them to go further into the text in the phase of analysis.

In this study the types of responses commonly found are stating preference, degree of understanding, and referring to the background of experiences. Some students might come up with a more analytical response at the very first place. The choice belongs to the readers. It should be clearly stated that analysing something is a matter of making choices. Readers have their own authority to decide what is meaningful to them. However, the so-called educated guess still possesses its own criteria. The soundness of argument should be considered.

If the responses are based on the sound argument, the analysis of context of situation – field, tenor, and mode – and metafunctions – ideational, interpersonal, and textual – will then be easier to handle by the students. Personal responses are the gate that can open up students' horizon on the nature of the texts they are going to face. At the end of the analysis a clarification has to be made regarding the quality of responses and analysis produced by the students.

Last but not least, it should be stated here that the method adopted in this study is merely an option. As a teaching reflection, this study reminds teachers in the functional grammar course especially in an EFL context not to rush up in delivering the material. Students need time to increase their level mastery on traditional grammar and their reading experiences on different types of texts. As time goes by, strategic efforts need to be consistently made to enhance students' quality of sense-making practices.

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