



THEMATIC STRUCTURE, TRANSITIVITY, AND MODALITY IN INTRODUCTION SECTION OF ACADEMIC JOURNALS: A CASE STUDY OF *APPLIED LINGUISTICS* JOURNAL – OXFORD ACADEMIC

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Abstract: This aims of this research are describing the schematic structures and the scientific ideas presented in the introduction section of RA published in *Applied Linguistics*, and describing the authors position themselves in the introduction section of the scientific publication. This study is applied qualitative descriptive and used a documentary technique to collected the data. The data were collected from five research articles from highly cited article in published *Applied Linguistics* Journal released by Oxford University Press. The results of research findings showed that three schematic structures were presented in five introduction section. There are three thematic structures were found namely 71 marked ideational/topical (34.78%) and 51 unmarked ideational/topical themes (25%), 12 interpersonal themes (3.92%), and 73 textual themes (35.78%). The transitivity was found five processes consist of 31 material processes (20.80%), 42 mental processes (28.18%), 16 verbal processes (6.71%), 50 relational processes (33.55%), and 10 existential processes (6.71%). This result modality was found two types namely 116 modalization (89.92%) and 13 modulation (10.7%). The time of modality three kinds were had 95 present (73.64%), 27 past (20.93%), and 7 future (5.77%), whereas for speaker judgments were found, consists of 86 high (66.66%), 34 median (36.35%), and 11 low (9.42%). Therefore, the highest of thematic structure is ideational/topical theme. The scientific ideas presented in introduction section are ideational process. The authors position themselves in the introduction section of the scientific ideas troughs modalization, present tense time, and high speaker judgments. It can be concluded that the frequency of use of thematic structure, transitivity and modality are decided by the language used in the contents of an introduction.

Keywords: *Thematic structure, Transitivity, Modality, Academic journal, Introduction section*

INTRODUCTION

According to Bertin *et al.*, (2013), an academic article typically follows a standardized style known as IMRAD (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) structure. IMRAD is one of the textual structures widely used in academic article writing with international reputation. In the view of Swales and Feak (2011), these four sections present different contents and purposes. The introduction section holds background of the study providing general information. The method section describes the data methodology and the approach. The result section describes the research findings depending on the methods and number of variables. The discussion section explains the analysis of the findings.

According to Arsyad and Wardana (2014), the fourth sections of the structure of writing academic articles, the introduction section of research article (ISORA) is the most important section in structure of writing academic article. The introductory section is function to motivate readers to read the all section of the RA. Therefore, the introductory part needs to be written interestingly and convincingly. According to Belcher (2009:209) (in Arsyad & Wardana, 2014), explain the principal purposes of introduction section is to “*provide enough information for the readers to be able to understand your argument and its stakes*”.

Similarly, Swales and Feak (1994) declare that the introductory part of RA has two primary goals: to provide a logical justification and to entice readers to read the research article. The arguments of the introduction section will specify whether or not readers are impressed and reassured to will continue reading the article.

Oxford Academic (OA) or Oxford University Press (OUP) is a website for research to access books and journals academic. According to Clarivate's most recent *Journal Citation Report*, 6 OUP journals are ranked #1, and 43% of OUP journals are the top quartile of their subject. One of the journal disciplines is the *Applied Linguistics Journal* has ISSN: 0142-6001 – EISSN: 1477-450X. This journal is an international journal that has a Quartile 1 (Q1) category. According to the SCImago Journal Rankings, *Applied Linguistics Journal* has an index of H- 107, SJR 2.717, an impact factor of 4.155, and ranks 15th out of 194 in linguistics. Based on the index journal Scopus, *Applied Linguistics* is fourth in world journals where it has cited course 10.4, the highest percentile of 99% 3/1032 in Linguistics and Languages.

The introduction section of RA is a part of the structure text. Therefore, to analyze it using by approach that deals with text analysis. One of the approaches to analyzing and studying texts is to apply *Systemic Functional Grammar* (SFG). SFG is not only a grammatical model, but also helps provide to how to represent a method for analyzing discourse. According to Gerot & Wignell (1994:6), explains that SFG is not only related to structure but also to how it develops meaning and how to embody meaning in a text. Therefore, it explains that SFG uses language as a source that creates meaning (Wardani, 2019:3). With a focus on the text and its context, this is an attempt to describe language as it is used. In SFG there are three systems namely thematic structure, transitivity, and modality.

The thematic structure was chosen for this study because it emphasizes the information flow, which is textual meaning (Wardani, 2019:5). The textual meaning in the introduction section of RA can show how language as a means to help convey messages is used by authors to aid in informational flow of communications. Transitivity was chosen for this study because it mirrors the ideational meaning discourse content of the introduction section of RA (Wardani, 2019:4). This research was written to find out the content of what was conveyed by the author in an article introduction. Therefore, transitivity as the meaning of experience that expresses the real experience of a discourse can assist the reader knows the content of the introductory part. Modality was used for this study because it as ideational meaning that describes the link between the subjects included in the introductory part as an exchange clause (Wardani, 2019:4).

The CARS structure in the introduction section can help build an introduction in research article. The CARS consist of three rhetorical structures that help identify the background of study and motivation. This structure or moves can help readers and give an essential idea of a larger writing project. The CARS Swales model has proved useful as a way of teaching and explaining how to teach introductory writing (Swales & Feak, 1994). The CARS model predicts that the writing of the introductory part of the research article begins with a step (Move 1: establishing a territory) is to establish the topic to be discussed. Next, followed by a step (Move 2: establishing a niche) is to create a niche in the field of the research and discuss topics. Last (Move 3: occupying a niche) is to explain the specific purpose or concerns of the research that is reportedly outlined.

Thus, the purpose of this research is to describe the schematic structures presented of introduction section of RA published in *Applied Linguistics*, the scientific ideas presented in the introduction section of RA published in *Applied Linguistics* and to describe the author position themselves in the introduction section of the scientific publication.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research will design by using qualitative descriptive to answer third research questions. The research design used case study. The analysis of the data was based on the procedure developed and applied in Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). However, this research to investigate the thematic structure, modality, and transitivity in introduction section of research article on *Applied Linguistic Journal*. The sample of this study is used only 5 journal articles. From five journal articles, the authors were taken from several continents, namely 2 from the Asian, 2 from the European, and 1 from the North American.

The target population of this research is the journal articles in *Applied Linguistics* were divided into five subjects namely art and humanities, law, medicine and health, science and mathematics, and social science subjects. The sample was selected by highly cited articles and selected through three get access and two only open access journals. The source and the object of the study is the academic journal "*Applied Linguistics*" released by Oxford University Press (OUP) and the editor of this journal is Christina Higgins. The data were collected through a documentary technique which is collect the data by getting the data from search and download the journal article of the "*Applied Linguistics Journal*" released by Oxford University Press with the website (<https://academic.oup.com/applij>). The journal articles were collected from highly cited articles with the website ([Highly cited articles | Applied Linguistics | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#)).

The data were analyzed in the following steps accordingly:

1. The researcher identified text of research articles in *Applied Linguistics Journal*. The text of RA is divided according to its type of IMRAD structure (introduction, method, result, and discussion). The researcher was chosen the introduction section of RA and then researcher analysis schematic structure in introduction section. Then, it was categorized into clauses. From these clauses, the researcher analyzed the thematic structure, transitivity, and modality.
2. The researcher analyzed the thematic structure, will categorized clauses into the types of theme; namely ideational or topical theme, textual theme, and interpersonal theme. After that, the researcher linked the introduction section of RA is presented in certain types of thematic structure.
3. The researcher analyzed the transitivity process contained in the clause. It categorized clauses into types of the participants, processes, and circumstances. After that, the researcher linked this analysis with the process types.
4. The researcher analyzed the modality contained in the clause. It categorized into types of modality, time, and speaker judgment. After described it, the researcher linked this analysis with author's position.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

The theories of Halliday and Matthiesen (2004) and (2014) are used to identify thematic structure, transitivity and modality in the introduction section of *Applied Linguistics Journal* – Oxford Academic. The data findings were identified based on thematic structure analysis, transitivity analysis and modality analysis. The five introduction sections of RA have the total number of clause is 94 clauses. Which is the introductory section derived from the first introduction of RA consists of 19 clauses. The second introduction of RA consists of

16 clauses, the third introduction of RA consists of 14 clauses, the fourth introduction of RA consists of 35 clauses and the fifth introduction of RA consists of 10 clauses.

1. The Schematic Structures Presented in The Introduction Section of RA Published in *Applied Linguistics*.

To analyze the thematic structure in introductory of RA, researcher was conducted analyze follows theory of Swales' (1990:141) "Create a Research Space" as we know (CARS) pattern. In introduction structure analysis the CARS Model consists of three structures or moves. The three structure of CARS model presented in the introduction section of RA in *Applied Linguistics Journal*. From three structures of CARS model, they are consists of Establishing a territory, Establishing a nice and Occupying a niche. Establishing a territory there are three points, claiming centrality (CCE), making topic generalization (MTG) and reviewing items of previous research (RIPR). Establishing a nice consists of four points; they are counter claiming (CCL), indicating a gap (IG), question-raising (QS) and continuing a tradition (CT). Occupying a niche has four points that consists in the introduction section. They are outlining purposes (OP), announcing present research (APR), announcing principles findings (APF) and indicating RA structure (IRAS). The data schematic structure of introduction sections of RA were found in *Applied Linguistics Journal* can be seen in the summary data in table below.

Table 1 Schematic Structure in Introduction Section of Research Article

Schematic Structure	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3	Text 4	Text 5
Establishing a Territory Claiming Centrality	Paragraph 1 Clause 1	Paragraph 1 Clause 1	Paragraph 1 Clause 1	Paragraph 1 Clause 1 Paragraph 6 Clause 23	Paragraph 1 Clause 1
Making a Topic Generalization	Clause 2,3,4	Clause 2	Clause 2	Clause 2,3,4	Clause 2,3
Reviewing Previous Items of Research	Paragraph 2 Clause 5,6,7	Clause 3,4	Clause 3	Paragraph 2 Clause 5,6,7,8,9,10 24,25	Clause 4
Establishing a Niche Counter – Claiming	Paragraph 3 Clause 9,10,11,12,13	Clause 5	Clause 4	Paragraph 3 Clause 11 26,27	Clause 5
Indicating a Gap	Clause 14	Clause 6	Paragraph 2 Clause 5	Clause 12,13,14 28	Clause 6
Continuing a Tradition	Clause 15,16	Clause 7	Clause 6,7	Clause 15,16,17,18 29	Clause 7

Occupying a Niche Outlining Purposes	Paragraph 4 Clause 17	Paragraph 3 Clause 8,9	Paragraph 3 Clause 8	Paragraph 4 Clause 19 Paragraph 7 Clause 30	Paragraph 2 Clause 8
Announcing Present Research		Clause 10,11,12	Clause 9	Clause 20	Clause 8
Announcing Principal Findings	Clause 18	Clause 13,14,15	Clause 10	Paragraph 5 Clause 21 Paragraph 8 Clause 31,32,33,34	Clause 9
Indicating RA structure	Clause 19	Clause 16	Clause 11,12,13,14	Clause 22 35	Clause 10

The conclusion is that the five text introduction sections of RA in Applied Linguistic Journals have similarities in schematic structure where writing structure of the introduction section has the same structure. However, Text 4 has a long introduction structure so that it has an 8 paragraph sections. In paragraph 7 and 8 re-conclude the results of the text content in paragraphs 1 to 6 in text 4.

To analyzed theme in introduction section of RA, the types of themes in textual meaning described by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and (2014), they are textual theme, interpersonal theme and ideational/topical theme. These three themes were found in the introduction section of RA in the *Applied Linguistic Journal*. The total number of theme was occurred in the five introduction section of RA are 204 times theme from 94 clauses. This consists of 73 textual themes (35.78%), 12 interpersonal themes (3.92%), 71 marked ideational/topical themes (34.80%) and 51 unmarked ideational/topical themes (25%). The data that has been found in the five introduction section of RA in *Applied Linguistics Journal* consists of three types of theme analysis as showed in the table below.

Table 2 Types of Theme in Introduction Section of Research Article.

No.	Introduction section		Article 1		Article 2		Article 3		Article 4		Article 5	
	Types of Theme		Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
1.	Textual Theme		14	38%	12	40%	15	40.54%	24	31.57%	8	33.33%
2.	Interpersonal Theme		0	0%	1	3.33%	1	2.70%	6	7.89%	0	0%
3.	Topical	Marked	10	27.77%	7	23.33%	13	35.13%	32	42.10%	9	37.5%
		unmarked	12	33.33%	10	33.33%	8	21.62%	14	18.42%	7	29.16%

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Σ	Total themes occurs		3 6	100 %	3 6	100 %	3 6	100 %	7 6	100 %	2 4	100 %

2. Scientific ideas presented in the introduction section of RA published in *Applied Linguistics*.

There are six processes of transitivity in SFL theory; they are material process, mental process, verbal process, behavioral process, relational process and existential process. But in the five introduction of RA there were five processes transitivity occurred. The type of process transitivity in the five introduction of RA can be seen in the following table.

Table 3 Process Types of Transitivity Analysis

Introduction section	Article 1		Article 2		Article 3		Article 4		Article 5	
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%
Material	1	42.30 %	6	23.07 %	1	85.71 %	5	8.77 %	1	5.26 %
Mental	7	26.92 %	6	23.07 %	3	14.28 %	1	33.33 %	7	36.84 %
Verbal	4	15.38 %	6	23.07 %	3	14.28 %	2	3.50 %	1	5.26 %
Behavioral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Relational	4	15.38 %	7	26.92 %	7	33.33 %	2	45.61 %	6	31.57 %
Existential	0	0	1	3.84 %	0	0	5	8.77 %	4	21.05 %
Total	2	100%	2	100%	2	100%	5	100%	1	100%

3. The authors position themselves in the introduction section of the scientific publication.

There are some types, time and speaker judgment of modality described by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and (2014). The types of modality consist of modalization and modulation. In modality analysis there are three times, they are present, past and future. The speaker judgment of modality has three; they are high, median and low. From 94 clauses in the five introduction section of RA in the *Applied Linguistic Journal*, it was found that the total numbers of types, time, and speaker judgments of modality are 129 times. The types of modality consist of 116 modalization (89.92%) and 13 modulation (10.07%). The time of modality occurs 95 times present (73.64%), 27 times past (20.93%) and 7 times future (5.77%). The speaker judgment of modality consists of 86 times high (66.66%), 34 times median (26.35%) and 11 times low (9.42%). It can be seen in the table below the total number of type, time and speaker judgment of modality analysis.

Table 4 Type, Time, and Speaker Judgment in Modality Analysis.

Introduction section of RA		Article 1		Article 2		Article 3		Article 4		Article 5	
Type	Modalization	2	96.15%	1	78.26%	19	95%	4	87.23%	1	100%
	Modulation	1	3.84%	5	21.73%	1	4.34%	6	12.76%	0	0
Time	Present	2	76.92%	2	91.30%	16	80%	3	63.82%	8	61.53%
	Past	2	7.69%	2	8.69%	4	20%	1	31.91%	4	30.76%
	Future	4	15.38%	0	0%	0	0%	2	4.25%	1	7.69%
Speaker Judgment	High	1	73.07%	1	60.86%	17	85%	2	57.44%	9	69.23%
	Median	7	26.92%	8	34.78%	2	10%	1	27.65%	4	30.76%
	Low	0	0%	3	13.04%	1	5%	7	14.89%	0	0%
Total		2	100%	2	100%	20	100%	4	100%	1	100%

Discussion

As mentioned in the fourth previous study, in introduction section of article published in Indonesian National Journals showed that the higher theme structure used in the text introduction section is topical theme than others type theme has low frequency occurred in five research articles. This shows that the writer emphasizes the topic of the message or information sharing rather than showing the relationship between clauses. Introduction section focus on 'who or what (participants)', 'what (process)', and 'where, when, why, which and how (circumstances)' (Zein *et.al*, 2023).

Previous research by Zein *et.al*, (2023) has confirmed that the use of textual themes in the text of introductory part is clearly necessary to show a good arrangement of clauses in a text. Textual theme was used more in the introduction than the interpersonal theme. Because the use of interpersonal themes in the introductory section is increasingly rare, it confirms that the ideas presented in the text are factual. In line with the suggestion in the previous study that a good introduction contains the findings and conclusions from previously published studies with this knowledge helps the authors to formulate research gaps. The result of used interpersonal theme in the text of introduction section was showing that interpersonal theme is the most of those used in the introductory section present research statements using limited interrogatives or W-H.

The use of interpersonal themes in research questions has been confirmed in previous studies. However, several introductory research articles did not require an introduction to included research questions, such as in the published *Applied Linguistics* articles, there were 4 articles that didn't included the research question section. Only 1 article includes a research question, namely the fourth research article. This section is replaced by research objectives that are not embodied in an interrogative mood. Therefore, the introduction section of RA has the same policy as the data source in this study. Because this causes the appearance of the lack of use of interpersonal themes found in this study. Based on the data analysis findings, it shows that textual theme is more frequently used than interpersonal theme. This emphasizes that in the introduction section already literature already in existence must explain why study is necessary as well as why readers should be interested in the article. Textual theme is necessary because they have a logical relationship between ideas and good reasoning in the introduction. This confirms the existing literature with the argument that textual themes are used to maintain the organization of ideas.

2. Scientific ideas presented in the introduction section of RA published in *Applied Linguistics*.

The most dominant transitivity process in the five introduction sections of RA is relational process. It shows that the text of introductory part of research article serve to characterize and an identify something. Relational process serves to convey the intent from the topic of research articles. Mental process is the second highest frequency of transitivity process. This process to shows that the text of introduction section often uses clauses that are related with the human experiences of the world of one's own awareness. Mental process is related to the process of feeling, thinking, wanting, and perceiving. Material process is the third highest frequency of transitivity process. It shows that the contents of the introduction section of RA indicate something that has been done physically between the two entities (turn on or off). The verb material process showed that the clause relates to a particular participant who is doing or something that has happened in the clause. Verbal process is the fourth highest frequency; it demonstrates that the clause in the texts of introductory part explains the feeling of bringing the inner world out by speaking. The verb of verbal process indicates the action which of saying and symbolically signaling the exchange of meaning (Gerot and Wignell, 1994). The lowest frequency of the transitivity process is existential process. This process indicates the clause in the text of introduction section of RA is represents that something exists.

From the five introductions data, it shows that relational and mental processes are more dominate than other process. Some transitivity processes also differ from the structure introduction. This is found in establishing a territory in the introduction section based on Swales' theory (1990: 191), where the most dominant process occurs in establishing a territory in first introduction is mental process, in establishing a niche is mental and material processes while structure 3 occupying a niche is mental process. In the second introduction section of RA, in establishing a territory was occurs mental process, establishing a territory was occurs relational process while occupying a niche is relational process. In the third article was occurs establishing a territory used the relational and material process. Establishing a niche used relational meaning while in occupying a niche used mental process. In the fourth article occurs establishing a territory used relational and mental process, establishing a niche used material processes while in occupying a niche used relational process. Because in fourth article has a long introduction the writer analyzed schematic structure in introduction was found structure 1, 2 and 3 repeats after structure 1, 2 and 3 have been done analysis. The writer found that after it, structure 1 appeared again using mental and existential process as

the dominant process that used. Establishing a niche used relational process while occupying a niche used relational process also.

In addition, all texts embodied the ideational meta-function of language, where transitivity is a system grammar talks about the structure of clauses that appear for ideational meanings. This clause construed the quantum of change in the flow of events as a number, or a process, participants and any accompanying circumstance states as the central configuration of the element. Additionally, the results and findings of this research are different from previous studies. This study reveals that not all of the six transitivity processes are used in the introductory text of the journal *Applied Linguistics*. The researcher only found five transitivity processes that occurred in the introductory article in the journal *Applied Linguistics*. Only the behavioral process does not occur in the five introductory sections.

In the second previous research (Manar, M. *et al.*, 2020) was found material process is the most dominant process in the text. While the researcher found that the most dominant process that appears in the text introduction section of RA is relational process. What the researcher found has similarities with the third previous study, namely having a dominant process that occurs, namely the relational process. Therefore, the language being used in the context determines frequency each type of process is used. The speaker's ideational function is referred to the expression of the external world and the inner experiences, which can include actions of language and internal acts of consciousness such as cognition, perception and reaction. A transitivity system which attempts to identify participants, processes and the circumstances associated with them is mostly used to implement it.

3. The authors position themselves in the introduction section of the scientific publications.

From the data findings, it can be summarized that the most dominant types of modality is modalization 116 occurs accounting (89.92%), present as the higher time occurs in the five research article 95 times accounting (73.64%), while the speaker judgment that have higher frequency is high 86 times accounting (66.66%). From the five data findings in modality analysis, it showed that modalization type is the most dominant used by author in research article. A sentence has a propositional structure when a speaker constructs to exchange information using statements or inquiries. However, it is referred to be an offer when it is utilized to exchange products or services through a proposal. The results and findings of this study are different from the fifth previous study (Wahyuni, 2021). This study reveals the most dominant type of modality that appeared in the undergraduate thesis of English department students at IAIN Metro is the deontic modality. Deontic modality is a modulation type of modality. Meanwhile, this researcher was found that in the introduction section of RA published *Applied Linguistics Journal* is modalization as the higher frequency of type modality.

Modalization and Modulation have two types of sub-categories and various values to express between *yes* and *no*. If the speech is considered as a modalization, the modality explain how valid the information that will be introduced in the text article. Modalization also means when clauses are produced by speakers with direct of exchanging information through statements and inquiries. But modulation is used when exchanging goods and services through supply, to express them usually in the form of probabilities and conventions. In addition, if the clause is considered a modulation, the modality is related to the degree of obligation or inclination to carry out the order (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

The choice and degree of modality reveal the interaction between the writer and the reader in the text, in addition to the author expressing his opinion on the topics discussed in

the introductory text. Because of that; interpersonal meaning is recognized. The use of probability and usuality presents to linking the relationship between the writer in the article and the reader. Therefore, it can be summarized that modality is as the adequacy of what is expected, indicated, questioned, informed, and offered in terms, and conversely, can also indicate social role relationships (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that the schematic structures present in the five introduction sections of RA in *Applied Linguistic Journal* have established a territory consists of claiming centrality, making topic generalization and reviewing items of previous research. Establishing a niche consists of counter claiming, indicating a gap, and continuing a tradition. Occupying a niche consist of, outlining purposes, announcing present research, announcing principles findings and indicating RA structure. Thematic structure, transitivity and modality were occurring in the schematic structure of the introduction section.

Thematic structure in the five introduction sections of RA in the *Applied Linguistic Journal* is an ideational/topical theme which 71 times marked ideational/topical 34.78% and 51 times unmarked ideational/topical themes 25%. The scientific idea presented in introduction section published in *Applied Linguistics* is ideational process which has 50 times or 33.55%.

The author position themselves in the introduction section of the scientific publication is used modalization type has 116 times or 89.92%, present tense time has 95 times or 73.64% and high of speaker judgments has 86 times and 66.66%. The frequency of use of thematic structure, transitivity and modality are decided by the language used in the contents of an introduction.

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