

ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC REALIZATIONS OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN STUDENTS' WRITTEN RETELLINGS OF A NIAS FOLKTALE COMIC STRIP

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ABSTRACT

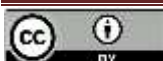
This research aimed to analyze the linguistic realizations of narrative structure in students' written retellings of a Nias folktale comic strip through narrative structure and transitivity system. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method involving 17 eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Kristen Agios Nikolaos. The data were collected through written retellings test, interviews, and documentation. The students' texts were analyzed using Hyland's (2019) narrative structure framework and Halliday's (2014) transitivity system, while interview data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings showed that students generally succeeded in realizing the narrative structure of Lawomaru's story. All students (100%) realized the orientation structure, (94.12%) realized the complication structure, and (58.82%) realized the resolution structure. The linguistic realization varied across structure. Orientation was predominantly realized through relational attribution and relational possession (processes), value (participants), and spatial place (circumstances) reflecting the students' tendency to introduce the characters, identify their identities, describe their attributes, and establish the setting of the story. Complication was mainly realized through material (processes), goal (participants), and spatial place and accompaniment (circumstances), indicating that the students' constructed their narrative using action based event sequencing rather than emotional. Resolution was predominantly realized through material (processes), goal (participants), in contrast, no (circumstances) elements were identified in the Resolution stage, showing students' attempts on actions and outcomes, resulting in shorter or less developed endings, the Resolution was present at the level of narrative structure but lacked explicit linguistic realization through the transitivity system. Interview findings revealed that students tended to use simple and familiar expressions due to linguistic limitations, including limited vocabulary, difficulties in sentence construction, and fear of making mistakes. Although students were generally able to convey the main content of the story, they still faced challenges in expressing their ideas accurately and effectively in English.

Keyword: Narrative Text, Transitivity System, Written Retellings, Systemic Functional Linguistics

I. INTRODUCTION

The Background of Research

In contemporary English learning, students are required to comprehend not only texts but also to convey meanings in written expression. Writing, especially narrative retellings requires students to structure events coherently, order activities properly, and conveys

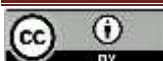


ideas using appropriate linguistic choices. (Putri, 2025) underlines that coherence and logical sequencing are critical features in students' narrative writing because they demonstrate how ideas and events are meaningfully related in the text. As a result, narrative writing is essential in helping students acquire the capacity to in structuring a sequence of events and effectively convey meaning in writing.

Narrative texts are essential in English lessons because they demonstrate how events, and characters are structured into meaningful stories. From a genre standpoint, narrative writing requires students to follow to conventional story development patterns that determine how meanings are organized in text (Hyland, 2019). Successful narrative recounting thus requires not just memorizing tale information, but also the capacity to combine these steps coherently and articulate them clearly using appropriate linguistic choices.

In accordance with the curriculum, the utilization of local cultural elements becomes an essential concern in English language learning. The Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum prioritizes meaningful learning and the incorporation of local culture into classroom education (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, & Teknologi, 2022). Local folktales, particularly those from Nias Island, provide students with culturally relevant and meaningful narrative content because they represent local values, locations, and sequence of events that they encounter on everyday life. This cultural familiarity provides students with common background information that helps them grasp tale events and characters. Using Nias folktales in English class helps students to interact with culturally relevant narratives while also developing narrative writing. When students retell Nias folktales in written form, they are required to organize narrative structure and select linguistic forms that accurately convey events, characters, and settings.

Despite the availability of instructional materials and media, preliminary observations of eighth-grade students at SMP Swasta Kristen Agios Nikolaos indicate that many students experience difficulties in constructing coherent narrative retellings. Their texts often present unclear organization of the orientation, complication, and resolution stages, as well as limited ability to express actions, identify participants clearly, and provide relevant circumstances of time and place. These difficulties suggest that students face challenges not only in organizing the narrative structure but also in realizing meanings through language. To examine these challenges more systematically, this research analyzes the linguistic realizations of each narrative structure through the transitivity system, focusing on processes, participants, and circumstances. In addition,



the research identify the students' reasons for using particular linguistic realizations in their written retellings. Through this analysis, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how narrative meanings are constructed in students' writing.

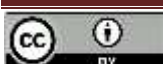
Previous research in EFL contexts have investigated narrative writing using Systemic Functional Linguistics that EFL learners frequently struggle to produce cohesive narrative writing, such as structuring events and sustaining clear plot development in English (Falihah et al., 2022). Furthermore, local culture stories have been investigated as literacy tools, such as students' production of folklore-based writing, which improves engagement with culturally recognizable narrative content (Lubis & Bahri, 2021). In terms of visual media, empirical data show that comic strips can help students improve their writing ability by providing better plot signals and assisting learners in developing written ideas from visual sequences (Amrizal, 2022). Beyond the local context, international research on using comics in EFL writing reveals that comics-based assignments might influence how students organize written texts and transmit meaning through multimodal storytelling (Estrella, 2024). Despite these contributions, there has been limited attention has been given to how students linguistically realize narrative structure in written retellings of local folktale comic strips, especially when cultural familiarity influences how events are structured and meanings are provided.

From a theoretical standpoint, this research adopts the genre-based perspective of Hyland (2019) to analyze narrative structure in educational writing and employs Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as proposed by Halliday (2014) to examine how narrative meanings are realized through language. This research investigates how students linguistically construct narrative meanings in written retellings based on the comic strip “*Lawomaru*” by examining participants, processes, and circumstances at the clause level, together with students' explanations of their reasons for using particular linguistic realizations in their written retellings.

Based on these considerations, this research investigates how narrative structures are constructed and how they are linguistically realized in students' written retellings of a Nias folktale presented in comic-strip form. Therefore, this research is entitled “*Analysis of Linguistic Realizations of Narrative Structure in Students' Written Retellings of a Nias Folktale Comic Strip.*”

The Problem of Research

Based on the background of the research, the problems of the research are:



1. What narrative structure (orientation, complication, and resolution) are present in eight- grade students' written retellings of a Nias Folktale Comic Strip?
2. How are the linguistic realizations of each narrative structure represent through the transitivity system(processes, participants, and circumstances) in the eight- grade students' written retellings of a Nias Folktale Comic Strip?
3. What are the students' reasons for using particular language realizations in their written retellings of a Nias folktale Comic Strip?

The Objective of Research

Based on the problem above, the objective of the research are:

1. To identify the narrative structures (orientation, complication, and resolution) present in eighth-grade students' written retellings of a Nias folktale comic strip.
2. To analyze the linguistic realizations of each narrative structure through the transitivity system (processes, participants, and circumstances) in the students' written retellings.
3. To explain the students' reasons for using particular linguistic realizations in their written retellings of a Nias folktale comic strip.

The Scope of Research

Based on the background of the problem, this research analyzes eighth-grade students' written retellings of a Nias folktale presented in comic-strip form. Specifically, this research focuses on the analysis of narrative structure and transitivity elements (processes, participants, and circumstances) in students' written retellings, as well as students' explanations of their reasons for using particular linguistic realizations in their written retellings obtained through follow-up interviews.

This research is limited to the analysis of eighth-grade students' written retellings of a Nias folktale presented in comic-strip format. The research focuses on the narrative structure (orientation, complication, and resolution) and the transitivity elements (processes, participants, and circumstances) found in the students' written texts. It does not examine other narrative aspects, text genres, grammatical accuracy, writing mechanics, or overall writing proficiency. In addition, follow-up interviews are conducted to obtain students' explanations for using particular linguistic realizations in

their written retellings. The data are restricted to students' written retellings of the Nias folktale comic strip entitled *Lawomaru*.

II. THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Definition of Linguistics

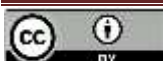
Linguistics is the scientific study of language that focuses on how it works as a system of human communication. Linguistics, as defined by (Oviogun and Veerdee, 2020) is the systematic study of language, including how linguistic forms are formed and employed to express meaning. Linguistics, in this sense, is concerned with understanding how language allows people to convey their thoughts, experiences, and information through structured linguistic patterns.

Linguistics is crucial in understanding how students use language in written texts. According to (Emilia and Hamied, 2020) linguistic analysis in educational contexts allows educators to evaluate how students build meaning and organize ideas in writing. This perspective emphasizes that students' written compositions represent purposeful language choices rather than isolated grammatical patterns. As a result, linguistics provides a foundation for investigating how meaning is realized in student writings' written narratives.

Definition of Linguistic Realizations

The expression of meaning through language is known as linguistic realization. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics, meaning in language is realized through grammatical choices, where meanings become explicit through particular linguistic forms. Therefore, language is seen as a tool for creating meaning, a linguistic realization dealing with how meanings are not abstract but rather realized within sentences and other grammatical structures.

In text analysis, linguistic realization allows researchers to investigate how meanings are expressed through language use. (Suherdi et al, 2020) show that students' academic texts show systematic linguistic realizations via phrase structures and grammatical patterns that generate meaning in language. Linguistic realization is also seen in how authors establish voice and engagement through language. (Latipah and Gunawan, 2021) demonstrate that the meaning in students' writing is achieved through linguistic choices that affect interaction and attitude, meaning that language



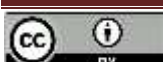
use reflects how authors organize ideas and information in texts. These findings show that linguistic realization may be noticed in practical language aspects rather than as an abstract idea. Furthermore, (Kurniawan and Sabila, 2021) demonstrate that different parts of academic writings exhibit various language realizations that correspond to communicative aims. This lends support to the idea that linguistic realization gives insight into how meaning is constructed and delivered in written language.

According to this view, linguistic realization in this research is defined as the manifestation of meaning through observable linguistic forms in students' written retellings. This concept serves as the basis for investigating how narrative meanings are linguistically formed in students' writings.

Linguistic Realization in Narrative Text

Narrative writings are meant to illustrate human experience through a series of events, characters, and places. Meanings are not simply told, but are realized by systematic language choices that allow readers to follow who is involved with what occurs, where and when events occur, and how events are related. According to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) Theory, meaning is achieved through the lexicogrammar of sentence language choices that encode experience, enact relationships, and arrange information in a coherent flow (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Narrative meanings are frequently investigated in SFL by looking at how clauses express sequences of events (e.g., acts, ideas, and interactions) and how such sequences are created around tale participants and conditions. This is why SFL serves as a natural bridge in narrative analysis, explaining how a story is formed through language, this allows the researcher to determine which types of events are included and how the narrative world is made familiar to readers (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Narrative meanings may be observed through particular language realizations. For example, (Manar, 2022) demonstrates that the establishment of participants is strongly supported by the development of nominal groups, which assist writers in representing characters and entities with varying degrees of complication where this affects how clearly the narrative text is built for the reader. Research on students' written texts demonstrates that meaning in genre-based writing may be revealed by following how students arrange language to influence text formation. (Gunawan, etc 2020), for example, show that student



writing can be examined by identifying how language resources work together to create a coherent text and communicate meanings systematically, which is consistent with Systemic Function Linguistics' (SFL) view of language as a resource for meaning in context.

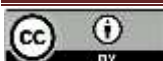
In summary, linguistic realization in narrative texts refers to the visible ways in which narrative meanings are conveyed through grammatical and lexical choices. In this study, SFL provides an explanatory pathway for understanding how narrative meanings are realized in students' written retellings, namely through clause-level resources that create participants, describe events, and situate events in time and place (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Systemic Function Linguistics (SFL)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a language theory that sees language as a tool for conveying meaning in social context. In SFL, language is described as systemic because it provides speakers and writers with a set of choices (systems) for expressing meaning and functional because those choices are explained in terms of what language does in communication rather than just how it is structured. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). A key concept of SFL is that language is best understood by looking at how it operates in texts (spoken or written), since meanings emerge from patterns in discourse. This makes SFL extremely important for assessing students' writing because it provides an explicit framework for describing how meanings are ordered in a text and how those meanings are realized through grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). According to SFL, meaning is realized concurrently through three metafunctions. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) identify three types of metafunctions: ideational (expressing experience and logical relation), interpersonal (enacting relationships, attitudes, and appraisal), and textual (ordering messages into coherent speech).

This research analyzes how narrative meanings are generated in students' written retellings, with a theoretical framework naturally focusing on the ideational metafunction. Narrative writing frequently generates a tale scenario by presenting events: what happened, who was involved, and under what conditions. Within ideational meaning, SFL gives a clause-based explanation of how a series of events are described through grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the ideational metafunction relates to how language is used to construct narrative and reflect "what is occurring within the



context" in the setting, such as actions, events, states, connections, and the players involved. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) indicate that this metafunction is involved with describing experience in language and is essential to how clauses function as representations of reality and tale experience. One of the component is experiential meaning, Experiential meaning focuses on how experience is reflected in the sentence within the clause. It is often investigated using the transitivity system, which divides experience meaning into three main components: processes, participants, and circumstances (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

A process is the core component of experience meaning in a clause, which is usually realized by the verbal group. Processes specify the kind of experience represented, such as doing, feeling, being/having, talking, behaving, or existing. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) divide the major process types into six categories: material, mental, relational, linguistic, behavioral, and existential.

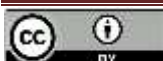
Participants are the entities participating in the process, which are usually represented by nominal groupings. The process type determines participant roles since each process defines experience differently (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Participant I and Participant II roles (depending on process) are frequently expressed to identify the essential roles that are most distinctive to each process. This indicates that "Participant I/II" are not new types of participants, but rather positional names assigned to distinct participant roles based on the type of process.

Circumstances offer extra experiential knowledge about the process. Circumstances are often realized through adverbial groups or prepositional phrases are widely used to answer questions such when, where, how, why, with whom, as what, about what, and according to whom. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) frequently utilized scenario types contain nine primary categories: extent (duration, frequency, and distance), location (time or place), manner (means, quality, and comparison), cause (reason, purpose, and behalf), contingency (condition, concession, and default), accompaniment (with or without), role (as what), matter (what about), angle (according to whom, viewpoint, and source)

III. THE RESEARCH METHOD

The Research Design

This research employs a qualitative approach because the data consist of students' written retellings and follow-up interview responses. The research aims to



analyze how narrative structure and transitivity elements are realized in students' writing. According to (Creswell, 2018), qualitative research is ideal when researchers desire to dig deeply into meaning by employing rich textual data and presenting interpretative descriptions rather than numerical generalizations.

The Location of Research

This research conducted at SMP Swasta Kristen Agios Nikolaos, focusing on the eighth-grade students. The school is located at Jln. Yos Sudarso, Km 4,5 Desa Hilihao, Kecamatan Gunungsitoli, Sumatera Utara and is chosen as the research setting because it implements narrative text teaching in its English curriculum, the site where students' difficulties in organizing narrative structure in written retellings have been identified and also provides access to students' written retellings as research data. The participants of this research are eighth-grade students who are learning narrative texts through a Nias folktale comic strip. The setting is chosen to support the investigation of how students realize language in organizing narrative structure in their written retellings.

Technique of Collecting Data

Qualitative research commonly uses multiple techniques to generate rich textual data and contextual understanding, including documents/texts and interviews. According to (Creswell, 2018) combining different data sources helps researchers develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In this research, data collection focuses on obtaining a set of students' written retellings texts based on a Nias folktale comic strip and gathering follow up data through semi-structured interviews with the students to understand students' explanations for using particular linguistic realizations in constructing the story.

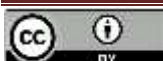
Techniques of Data Analyzing

In this research, the primary data consist of students' written retellings and interview responses, the analysis relies on manual linguistic analysis using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the analytical lens. (Miles and Huberman 2014)'s interactive data analysis framework used in this research. The analysis process divided into numerous interconnected steps, including data reduction, data display, conclusions drawing & verification.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Data Analysis

1) Generic Structure Identification in Narrative



Based on Hyland's (2019) narrative structure framework, the students' written retellings were examined and divided into three structures: orientation, complication, and resolution. Using this framework, the researcher determined how the students realized each structure of narrative structure in their written retellings. The results of the generic structure identification are shown in the table below:

Table 1. Generic Structure Checklist in Students' Written Retellings

No	Students' Initials	Narrative Structure Checklist		
		Orientation	Complication	Resolution
S1	ALZ	√	√	√
S2	DHT	√	√	√
S3	FST	√	√	-
S4	IJT	√	√	-
S5	ICZ	√	√	-
S6	JSL	√	√	√
S7	JSPT	√	√	-
S8	JH	√	√	√
S9	JL	√	√	√
S10	KH	√	√	√
S11	MYT	√	-	-
S12	MKT	√	√	√
S13	NKH	√	√	√
S14	PFH	√	√	√
S15	PAT	√	√	-
S16	RSH	√	√	-
S17	SKG	√	√	√
Total		17	16	10
Percentage		$\frac{17}{17} \times 100$ = 100%	$\frac{16}{17} \times 100$ = 94,12%	$\frac{10}{17} \times 100$ = 58,82%

The results showed that most students were able to effectively complete the orientation and complication structure in their written retellings, but the resolution structure was not consistently achieved by all. All students managed to introduce characters and settings, and the majority of them effectively structured conflicts and key narrative events. However, many stories had endings that were incomplete, brief, or not fully developed.

2) Transitivity System In Students' Written Retellings

The students' written retellings were classified using Halliday's (2014) transitivity system framework to determine the manifestation of process elements at each structure of the narrative structure. The analysis focused on how students represented

actions, ideas, relationships, and events using various types of processes during the orientation, complication, and resolution structure. The results of process realization in the students' written retellings are shown in the table below:

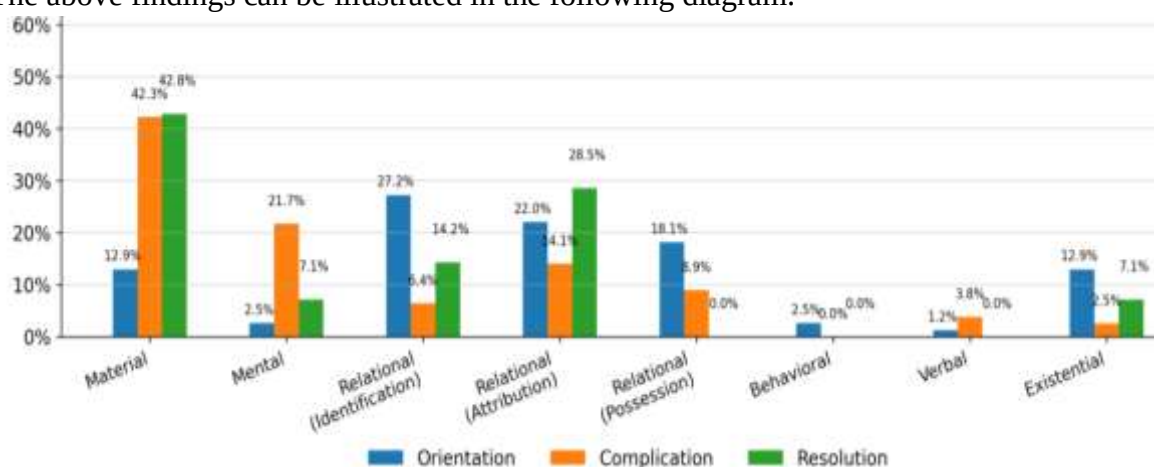
a). Process

This section explains the identification of process types in students' narrative writing.

Table 2. Identification of Process Types in Students' Written Retellings

Process Type	Orientation	Complication	Resolution
Material	10	33	6
Mental	2	17	1
Relational (Identification)	21	5	2
Relational (Attribution)	17	11	4
Relational (Possession)	14	7	0
Behavioral	2	0	0
Verbal	1	3	0
Existential	10	2	1
TOTAL	77	78	14

The above findings can be illustrated in the following diagram:



Picture 1. Percentage of Process Types in Students' Written Retellings

Table 1 and Figure 1 show that different process types characterize each narrative stage. In the Orientation stage, Relational Identification is the most dominant process (27.2%), followed by Relational Attribution (22.0%) and Relational Possession (18.1%), indicating that students mainly introduced and described participants before the story developed. In the Complication stage, Material Process becomes the most frequent (42.3%), followed by Mental Process (21.7%), showing that students developed the conflict primarily through actions supported by characters' thoughts and

feelings. Similarly, the Resolution stage is dominated by Material Process (42.8%), with Relational Attribution as the second most frequent process (28.5%), suggesting that students concluded their narratives mainly through actions while providing limited descriptions of the participants' final conditions. Overall, the findings indicate that Relational Processes are predominantly used to establish the narrative background, whereas Material Process is the primary linguistic realization for developing and resolving the storyline.

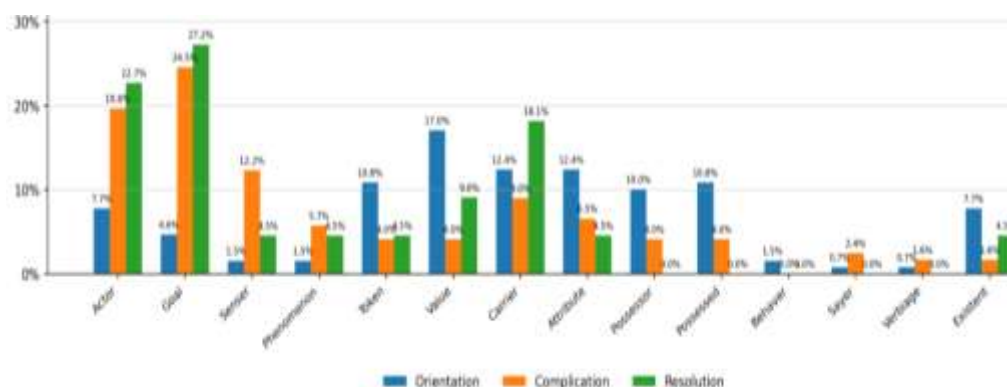
b) Participant

This section presents the identification of participant types realized in students' written retellings across the orientation, complication, and resolution structure.

Table 3. Identification of Participant Types in Students' Written Retellings

Participant Type	Orientation	Complication	Resolution
Actor	10	24	5
Goal	6	30	6
Senser	2	15	1
Phenomenon	2	7	1
Token	14	5	1
Value	22	5	2
Carrier	16	11	4
Attribute	16	8	1
Possessor	13	5	0
Possessed	14	5	0
Behavior	2	0	0
Sayer	1	3	0
Verbiage	1	2	0
Existent	10	2	1
TOTAL	129	122	22

The above findings can be illustrated in the following diagram.



Picture 2. Percentage of Participant Types in Students' Written Retellings

Table 3 and Picture 2 show that the distribution of participant types varies across the three narrative stages. In the Orientation stage, Value is the most dominant participant type (17.0%), followed by Carrier and Attribute (12.4% each), indicating that students mainly introduced and described participants at the beginning of the narrative. In the Complication stage, Goal is the most frequent participant type (24.5%), followed by Actor (19.6%) and Senser (12.2%), suggesting that students developed the conflict through actions involving affected participants and characters' experiences. Similarly, the Resolution stage is dominated by Goal (27.2%) and Actor (22.7%), with Carrier ranking third (18.1%), indicating that students concluded the story by emphasizing the completion of actions while describing the participants' final conditions. Overall, the findings demonstrate that participant types were employed according to the communicative functions of each narrative stage, with Value, Carrier, and Attribute characterizing participant introduction in Orientation, and Goal and Actor predominating in the development and resolution of the storyline.

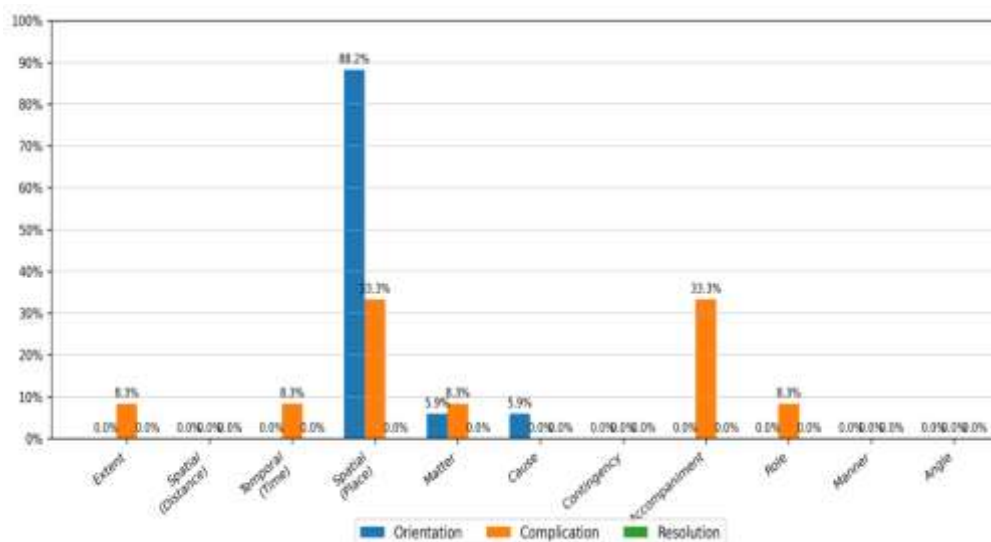
c) Circumstances

The realization of circumstance types in the orientation, complication, and resolution structure is presented in Table below.

Table 4. Identification of Circumstances Types in Students' Written Retellings

Participant Type	Orientation	Complication	Resolution
Extent	0	1	0
Spatial (<i>Distance</i>)	0	0	0
Temporal (<i>Time</i>)	0	1	0
Spatial (<i>Place</i>)	15	4	0
Matter	1	1	0
Cause	1	0	0
Contingency	0	0	0
Accompaniment	0	4	0
Role	0	1	0
Manner	0	0	0
Angle	0	0	0
TOTAL	17	12	0

The findings above can also be visualized in the following diagram.



Picture 3. Percentage of Circumstance Types in Students' Written Retellings

Table 4 and Figure 3 show the distribution of circumstance types across the three narrative stages. In the Orientation stage, Spatial (Place) is highly dominant, accounting for 15 occurrences (88.2%), indicating that students primarily used circumstantial information to establish the story setting. In the Complication stage, Spatial (Place) and Accompaniment are the most frequent, with 4 occurrences each (33.3%), showing that students mainly specified the location of events and the participants involved in the conflict. Other circumstance types occur only occasionally. In contrast, no circumstance types were identified in the Resolution stage (0%), indicating that students concluded their narratives without additional contextual information. Overall, the findings show that circumstances mainly functioned to establish the setting in Orientation and support the development of events in Complication, while they were absent in Resolution.

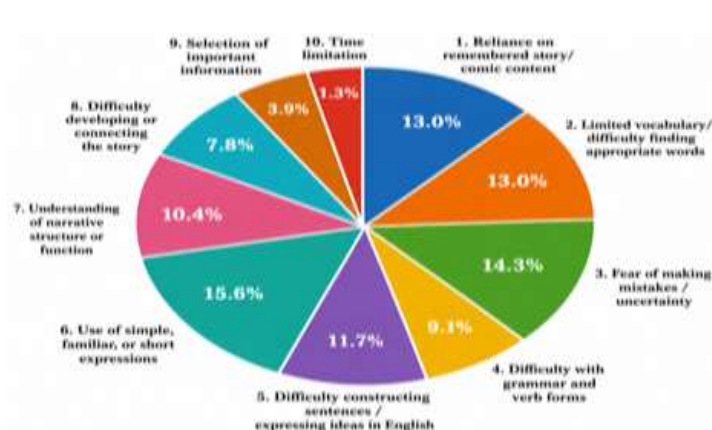
3) Students' Organization of Narrative Events and Their Reasons in Written Retellings

The findings from the students' interviews revealed several reasons underlying their language realizations in the written retellings. These reasons reflect the students' experiences and considerations when organizing and expressing the narrative events in English. The frequency and percentage of each reason identified from the interview data are presented in Table below

Table 5. Students' Reasons for Language Realization

NO	Reason for Language Realization	Frequency	Percentage
1	Reliance on remembered story/ comic content	10	13.0%
2	Limited vocabulary/ difficulty finding appropriate words	10	13.0%
3	Fear of making mistakes / uncertainty	11	14.3%
4	Difficulty with grammar and verb forms	7	9.1%
5	Difficulty constructing sentences / expressing ideas in English	9	11.7%
6	Use of simple, familiar, or short expressions	12	15.6%
7	Understanding of narrative structure or function	8	10.4%
8	Difficulty developing or connecting the story	6	7.8%
9	Selection of important information	3	3.9%
10	Time limitation	1	1.3%

The findings presented in Table 5 show that the most frequently reported reason for the students' language realizations was the use of simple, familiar, or short expressions, identified in 12 students (15.6%). This was followed by fear of making mistakes or uncertainty, reported by 11 students (14.3%). Two reasons were identified by 10 students (13.0%) each, namely reliance on remembered story or comic content and limited vocabulary or difficulty finding appropriate words. Furthermore, difficulty constructing sentences or expressing ideas in English was reported by 9 students (11.7%), followed by understanding of narrative structure or function, identified by 8 students (10.4%). Difficulty with grammar and verb forms was found in 7 students (9.1%), while difficulty developing or connecting the story was reported by 6 students (7.8%). The less frequently reported reasons were selection of important information, identified by 3 students (3.9%), and time limitation, reported by only 1 student (1.3%). These findings are visually illustrated in Figure below, which presents the percentage distribution of the students' reasons for their language realizations. The diagram shows that the use of simple, familiar, or short expressions represents the largest proportion, while time limitation accounts for the smallest proportion of the reported reasons.



Picture 4. Students' Reasons for Language Realization

Discussion

The outcomes of this research indicated that most students were able to recognize the orientation and complication structure in their written retellings, whereas the resolution structure emerged less frequently. The findings of this research are also supported by (Rumapea et al. 2025), who discovered that students recognized orientation and complication structure more consistently because these structure were simpler to identify and arrange within narrative writing. This implies that students typically understand how to start and construct a narrative, but they still struggle to maintain coherence until the finish of the story. This might be because generating a resolution requires students to interpret previous events and organize them into a cohesive finish; nevertheless, students frequently struggle to complete narrative structures while being able to order events chronologically (Idris, dkk 2025). The findings of this research provide several theoretical implications for the study of narrative writing from the perspective of genre theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). First, the findings support Hyland's (2019) view that narrative texts are organized into three main stages: Orientation, Complication, and Resolution, each serving a different communicative purpose. Most students were able to construct the Orientation and Complication stages appropriately, indicating that they generally understood how to introduce the story and develop the conflict. However, the Resolution stage appeared less consistently, suggesting that students experienced greater difficulty in completing the narrative. This finding indicates that mastering the overall structure of narrative texts does not necessarily mean that all stages can be realized equally well.

Second, this research demonstrates that the realization of transitivity generally corresponded to the communicative function of each narrative stage. Relational Processes were dominant in the Orientation stage because students mainly introduced characters,

places, and their characteristics, whereas Material Processes dominated the Complication and Resolution stages because students developed and completed the story through actions and events. Likewise, Value was the most dominant participant type in the Orientation stage, while Goal became the dominant participant type in the Complication and Resolution stages. Spatial (Place) also appeared as the most frequent circumstance in the Orientation and Complication stages, reflecting the students' awareness of the importance of establishing the setting of the story. These findings support Halliday's (2014) theory that experiential meaning is realized through the interaction of processes, participants, and circumstances, and that different transitivity elements serve different communicative functions within a text.

Furthermore, (Halliday, 2014) emphasizes that transitivity elements in clauses express experience meaning via process, participant, and circumstances elements. Material processes emerged as the most dominant process type in this research because students constructed their narratives primarily around activities, conflicts, and significant occurrences. This conclusion is similar with (Budi, 2025), who discovered that material processes usually dominate students' narrative texts because narrative writing focuses on actions and sequences of occurrences. Relational processes were also emphasized during the orientation structure, as students strove to characterize people, identities, and places at the start of the novel. This study demonstrates that students grasped the functional significance of transitivity elements in building narrative meanings.

However, the findings also suggest that the students' narratives only partially reflected the conventional characteristics of narrative texts. Although Relational Processes appropriately dominated the Orientation stage, many of these processes were realized using present-tense forms such as *is*, *am*, and *are* rather than the past-tense forms *was* and *were*, which are conventionally associated with narrative texts that recount past events. This finding indicates that the students understood the functional role of Relational Processes in introducing participants, but the linguistic realization of these processes did not always correspond to the grammatical conventions of the narrative genre. Therefore, the realization of transitivity should be understood not only in terms of the types of processes employed but also in terms of whether those processes are realized in forms that are appropriate to the genre.

Another important implication concerns the relationship between transitivity realization and the social purpose of narrative texts. According to Hyland (2019), the



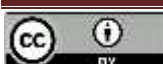
primary purpose of narrative texts is to entertain readers by presenting an engaging sequence of events consisting of Orientation, Complication, and Resolution. The findings show that students generally succeeded in constructing the conflict through the dominance of Material Processes in the Complication stage. However, the Resolution stage was less consistently realized, Mental and Verbal Processes occurred relatively infrequently, and no circumstance types were identified in the Resolution stage. As a result, the narratives tended to emphasize actions rather than characters' thoughts, emotions, dialogue, and the contextual details surrounding the ending. Consequently, although the narratives generally followed the expected organizational structure, they only partially achieved the social purpose of narrative texts because they functioned more as chronological retellings of events than as stories capable of fully engaging and entertaining readers. Furthermore, because many students were unable to construct the Resolution stage, their narratives were often left without a clear ending or solution to the conflict. As a result, their texts could not fully achieve the social function of narrative, which is to engage readers through a meaningful sequence of events and provide a satisfying resolution to the problems presented in the story.

The interview findings indicate that students' language realizations in their written retellings were mainly influenced by their linguistic limitations, confidence, and familiarity with English expressions. Students tended to rely on simple and familiar language forms to express the story, while the comic strip also helped them recall and reconstruct the narrative content. These findings suggest that students' language choices were not determined solely by their understanding of narrative structure but were also shaped by their available vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and fear of making mistakes. This finding is consistent with (Hyland, 2019), who emphasizes that L2 writing is influenced by writers' linguistic knowledge, the writing task, and the context in which writing takes place. Therefore, the students' use of simpler and more familiar expressions can be understood as a practical strategy for communicating the narrative content within the limits of their linguistic resources.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the students were generally able to construct the Orientation and Complication stages in their written retellings, while the Resolution was less consistently developed. In terms of transitivity, Relational Processes predominantly characterized the



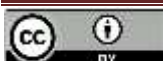
Orientation stage, whereas Material Processes dominated the Complication and Resolution stages. The frequent use of Actors, Goals, Carriers, Attributes, and Spatial Circumstances indicates that students mainly constructed narrative meanings through actions, participant descriptions, and settings. The students also tended to use simple, familiar, and short expressions, influenced by their limited vocabulary, linguistic resources, fear of making errors, and reliance on the comic content. These limitations affected their ability to express ideas clearly, construct complete narrative stages, and maintain the flow of events. Overall, the findings indicate that successful narrative writing in an EFL context requires not only an understanding of narrative structure and transitivity, but also adequate linguistic resources and confidence to express story meanings clearly.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this research, English teachers are recommended to provide clearer and more structured guidance in developing the Resolution stage of narrative writing. Since students demonstrated stronger ability to organize actions sequentially than to construct complete story endings, teachers can use comic strips combined with guided activities that help students develop narrative closure, express characters' feelings and final conditions, and use appropriate vocabulary, sentence structures, and grammatical forms in meaningful contexts. For future research, broader studies are recommended by involving larger numbers of participants, different school settings, educational levels, and text genres. Further studies may also examine other aspects of Systemic Functional Linguistics, such as interpersonal and textual metafunctions, Theme-Rheme organization, appraisal, or cohesion, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how students construct and express meaning in narrative writing.

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