

---

# A STUDY OF THE EXPERIENTIAL MEANING OF MALAYSIAN LECTURE DISCOURSE

---

Tengku Silvana Sinar  
Fakultas Sastra  
Universitas Sumatra Utara

## Abstract

This paper is based on a research that aims at investigating one major area of inquiry, namely the experiential meaning of Malaysian lecture discourse (MLD). To obtain the information on this area of investigation, this study uses a qualitative/quantitative descriptive approach and employs an observational method. The data on which this study is based are seven lectures-in-texts collected from the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya. The data analysis is carried out by employing a complementary method of analysis based on Young's model and Halliday's model.

As far as the data are concerned, the study findings show that in transitivity terms the experiential meaning of MLD is typically realised and characterised by three most prominent transitivity process types, namely (1) the Relational type – which is related to the experiential semantic field of Being - as the first rank in the overall scale of the MLD-in-texts under study, (2) the Material - which is related to the experiential semantic field of Doing - coming in the second, and (3) the Mental - which is related to the experiential semantic field of Sensing - in the third. These are subsequently followed by the Behavioural - related to

the Behaving, the Verbal - related to the Saying, and the Existential related to the Existing as the least frequently occurring process type.

In addition, three most prominently occurring participant functions appear to be (1) the Carrier, (2) the Attribute, and (3) the Actor respectively. In terms of participant types, the NHP type occurs much more dominantly than the HP type. Furthermore, in respect of circumstantial types, three most prominently occurring circumstantial types are (1) the Location, (2) the Manner, and (3) the Matter.

Particularly at the level of language the study findings above only provide experiential semantic and transitivity grammar representations of the MLD-in-texts under study. At this semiotic level of investigation it is therefore recommended that there should be further studies particularly in the areas of (1) logical semantic and complexity grammar representations, (2) interpersonal semantic and mood grammar representations, and (3) textual semantic and theme grammar representations of the MLD-in-texts in question.

## 1. Background

Human societal development carries values or meanings, which is made possible through social processes. Human discourse manifests itself in various forms and modes of human interaction and activity. Through human discourse human society develops in the way it does.

Discourse comes into being through social processes in social settings, in which human participants as social beings can do and mean things. This leads to the question of how the behaviour potential of what one can do is turned into the meaning potential of what one can mean which is then turned into the verbal potential of what one can say. Formulated in global terms, the question then is how the human behaviour (doing) potential is turned into the meaning potential, which is then turned into the verbal (saying) potential – in the overall sociosemiotic space of human societal activity. But these potentials are potentials that need to be actualised. The whole question then is how – all along the line - *what one can do* (behaviour potential) turns itself into *what one actually does*, interrelated with *what one can mean* (meaning potential) which turns itself into *what one actually means*, interrelated with *what one can say* (verbal potential) which turns itself into *what one actually says*. One of the motifs underlying the present paper relates to this issue.

Discourse enables human society to develop through school education activities in the classroom. Classroom discourse is institutional, for the classroom is part of the designed school education system as an institution. It is one kind of education(al) and institution(al) discourse whereby the institutional human society of education(al) institutions develops in a context of school education process which takes place in the classroom setting. In other words, classroom discourse intrinsically realises education(al) and institution(al)

discourse, which in turn realises nation(al)/state discourse in the overall semiotic space of discourse.

Classroom discourse as a particular kind of discourse may be seen as a general concept to refer to any discourse which takes place in the classroom setting in general whereas lecture discourse in the lecture room setting represents one kind of institutional classroom culture. As a kind of institutional discourse, lecture discourse has features that are characteristic of its own, and this discourse may be different from culture to culture in certain respects. In other words, there may be features of lecture discourse that are characteristic of its own institutional culture, which may be distinct from those of other lecture discourse. In this, globally, lecture discourse of a particular tertiary education institution may be culturally different from that of another tertiary education institution.

The question of institutional culture is a question of institutional values or meanings, which are perceived, shared and practised by members of a given institution typical of that institution. That there are institutional cultural meanings characteristic of each particular institution as such needs to be investigated in an academically responsible manner. Those meanings in question happen because members of the institutional culture make them happen, that is, they create them. That there are institutional cultural meanings as such raises a specific question relevant to this paper, "what are then the meanings typical of lecture discourse at the University of Malaya as an institution, how are they created and in what way can they be identified, described and explained"? The question of what the meanings are, how they are created and in what way they can be identified, described and explained is a threefold question that seeks answers to three different and yet interrelated matters. The scope of this study is delimited to answer this in part.

The defined realisation relationship between lecture discourse and lecture text in this study is indicated by the wording *lecture discourse-in-text* (hereafter LD-in-text). It is evident that, as far as this study is concerned, the LD-in-text under investigation is institutional and educational. It is institutional in the sense that it resides in an institution, and it is educational in the sense that this LD-in-text resides in an education(al) institution. Stated in simple terms, this study is concerned with institutional and educational LD-in-text. This being the case, the relevant areas of investigation relate to the assumption that the meaning-making activities of this LD-in-text are motivated by the underlying institutional and educational values or meanings of the given institution. The relevant question here is how the meanings are linguistically realised in lecture texts.

Let me state that LD-in-text is generally understood to mean one kind of classroom discourse-in-text at the tertiary level of education, and this is the sense that this paper adopts. It should be noted that there are human meaning-making activities that might be regarded by people at large as activities of LD-

in-text but they spatially do not take place in a classroom – in the general sense of the term ‘classroom’ – nor do they have any relation with a tertiary education institution. If this is accepted, such activities of LD-in-text would not represent a kind of the defined classroom discourse-in-text under discussion.

## 2. SFLT framework

This paper is a data-based paper that adopts the SFLT framework, and it is a part of the writer’s research work. The reason to adopt this framework is because for years SFLT has always focussed its research and academic activities on language, text, discourse, and context - theorising, modelling, describing and explaining them for a variety of needs and purposes. Its linguistics has always been theoretical and at the same time descriptive, practical and applied. Its study of language always means a study of *overall* language related to its study of *overall* context in which language is used. SFLT’s applications of linguistics “range from research applications of a theoretical nature to quite practical tasks where problems have to be solved” (Halliday 1994:xxix), the purposes of which among others are: “ ...to understand the nature and functions of language; to understand what all languages have in common (i.e. what are the properties of language as such), and what may differ from one language to another; ..... to understand the quality of texts: why a text means what it does, and why it is valued as it is; to understand how language varies, according to the user, and according to the functions for which it is being used; ..... to understand the relation between language and culture, and language and situation; ..... to design systems for producing and understanding speech, and converting between written and spoken text” (Halliday 1994:xxix, also cf. Halliday 1985:2-11). The SFLT’s solid conception of language, text, discourse and context as implied in the points quoted above has motivated the writer to adopt the SFLT framework in this study. The writer finds the SFLT’s conceptual framework can meet the needs, and it is therefore applied as a framework particularly for understanding, analysing, describing, interpreting and explaining the linguistic realisations and features of the lecture discourse in this study.

Following the SFLT framework, the linguistic meanings of the LD-in-texts under study need to be understood as meanings that are internally located in the semantic system of the language and they are intrinsically and functionally diversified into three major kinds of linguistic modes of meaning: ideational (logical and experiential), interpersonal and textual.

Halliday (1985/94) defines language (i.e. adult language) as a tristratal semiotic system: semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology/graphology. As has been indicated above, at the level of language the different modes of meaning can functionally be diversified into three major linguistic modes of meaning:

ideational, interpersonal and textual. Conceptually, the three kinds of meaning in the semantic system of the language are realised into wordings in the lexicogrammatical system of the language. The wordings in the lexicogrammatical system of the language are represented in three major kinds of representation: the ideational lexicogrammatical representation (the experiential and logical lexicogrammatical representations), the interpersonal lexicogrammatical representation and the textual lexicogrammatical representation.

This paper is only concerned with the experiential meanings of the Malaysian lecture discourse (hereafter MLD) by examining the transitivity system representation. The data on which this paper is based were collected and obtained from the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics of the University of Malaya.

### **3. Delimitation of the problem**

This study focusses by only on the aspects of the semantics and lexicogrammar of the language. The semantic aspects are internally organised in the semantic domain and the lexicogrammatical aspects are internally organised in the lexicogrammatical domain, and these aspects in the two different domains are interrelated within the tristratal linguistic system of the language. The semantic aspect in focus in this paper is concerned with the experiential meaning, and consequently the lexicogrammatical aspect in focus is concerned with the transitivity system representation. Lexicogrammatically, the focus includes the following:

- (1). The process types,
- (2). The inherent participant functions;
- (3). The inherent participant types;
- (4). The circumstantial types.

### **4. Methodology**

The research approach on which this paper is based was qualitative/quantitative-descriptive in nature, and the method was observational. The setting was the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya. The subject population was lecturers and students of the institution. The sample consisted of 7 lecturers and 387 students that were selected by employing a random sampling technique. Of all the lectures that involved the sample, 7 lectures-in-texts were selected as data by applying a judgement sampling technique. The data were collected by means of audio-visual recordings and transcriptions, and they were analysed by employing a complementary method of analysis

that combined Young's model and Halliday's model. The primary instrument of the study was the researcher herself, whereas the secondary instruments were (1) classification schemes of the semiotic aspects that were in focus, (2) data sheets that contained 7 lectures-in-texts, and (3) notes on each lecture-in-text.

The analysis of the data was carried out by following four procedures. First, the transcribed data were classified into discourse 'categories', i.e. MLD-in-text 1 (lecture discourse-in-text 1), MLD-in-text 2, MLD-in-text 3, MLD-in-text 4, MLD-in-text 5, MLD-in-text 6 and MLD-in-text 7. Second, the transcribed and classified data were read, observed, specified and coded with respect to the number of clauses and sentences. Third, the written transcriptions were then numbered according to the sets of sequences of clauses that appeared in the data. Fourth, the transitivity types of processes, participants and circumstances are labelled. There were two potential inherent participant types under investigation to be analysed, i.e. the human and the non-human participant types (hereafter HP and NHP). There were a number of potential inherent and additional participant functions to be analysed, i.e. the actor, goal, identified, identifier, carrier, attribute, senser, phenomenon, sayers, verbiage, behavior, existent, range, beneficiary, recipient, client, receiver and target. In addition to the process types and participant types and functions, there were a number of circumstantial transitivity types, i.e. the location, extent, manner, cause, contingency, accompaniment, role, matter and angle.

## 5. Analysis

The experiential realisations of the situational values of the MLD under study that are represented in the seven lecture texts are observable in the linguistic representation that is demonstrated by the transitivity grammar representation in terms of the process types, participant functions and types, and circumstantial types. The following descriptive analysis of linguistic processes focuses on these transitivity processes.

There are three dominant experiential process features that mark the MLD-in-texts: the relational, the material and the mental. These are subsequently followed by the three less frequently occurring process types: the behavioural, the verbal and the existential, which to a certain extent also characterise the MLD-in-texts under study. Of all the occurring process types, it is the relational that occurs most prominently.

### 5.1 The relational processes

It is shown in the data that the prominently occurring relational processes in the MLD-in-texts typically realise statements, explanations and definitions of

terms, concepts or notions, quotations as well as conclusions such as summary and emphasis of terms, concepts or notions. The instances below in which *be* verbs such as *is* in transitivity terms express identifying relational processes. These transitivity processes are used particularly to realise Statements (STs) that state certain concepts, ideas, points, etc. In the occurring statements of the terms or techniques as shown in the sample text fragments below *The next drill*, *The next stage* and *the type of activity* and *the practice stage* are the Identifieds and the Identifiers. All these functions or roles are *non-human* participants (NHPs). Observe the fragments.

- [1 ]. The next drill is the type of activity of what is called the interaction activity
- [2 ]. The next stage is the practice stage

From the transitivity perspective, in the instances below the verb *is* in the first and *is* in the second express identifying relational processes, and these transitivity processes realise a Statement (ST) sub-phase of examples. In respect of inherent participant functions and types, *An example of theoretical linguistic* and *Another example* function as Identifieds and they are NHPs, whereas *the audible method* and *ESP* function as Identifiers, and they are also NHPs. Observe the sample text fragments.

- [3 ]. An example of theoretical linguistic and research pedagogy is the audible method.
- [4 ] Another example is ESP

In the instances below the verbs *means*, *stands for* and *refers to* are employed by the speaker in transitivity terms to express identifying relational processes. The occurrences of the transitivity processes here realise a Definition sub-phase that aims at defining concepts, facts ideas, terms that are related to knowledge being lectured. In terms of participant types, all the participants involved are NHPs. In terms of participant functions, *Language pedagogy research*, *information gap activity*, *ESP* and *An allomorph* are all Identifieds, whereas *all aspects of language...*, *the activity requires.*, *English for Special Purpose*, *morphs that have been.* are the Identifiers. Observe the sample text fragments.

- [5 ] Language pedagogy research means all aspects of language devoted to understanding and improving the teaching languages that are non-native to their learner.

- [6 ]. Ok, information gap activity means the activity requires two students to work together and these two students have information which the other do not have
- [7 ]. ESP stands for English for Special Purpose.
- [8 ]. An allomorph refers to morphs that have been identified as a meaning.

From the point of view of transitivity, in the instances below the verbs *is called* and *call* express identifying relational processes and these realise a Definition (DE) sub-phase in which the speaker names the concepts, facts, ideas and terms as information or meaning (knowledge). This is called an ergative type. The transitive interpretation is that the clause exhibits what Halliday (1994:171, 287) calls a causative structure of the enhancing type of expansion. In causativity, other participant functions or roles that may be involved are Assigner, Attributor, Inducer and Initiator. In terms of inherent participant types and functions, *We* is a HP and it functions as an Assigner, *This transcription* in the first instance and *it* in the second instance are NHPs they both function as Identifieds, whereas *a broad transcription which...* and *readability index* are also NHPs and they both function Identifiers. Observe the sample text fragments.

- [ 9 ].This transcription is called a broad transcription which are always in slant lines.
- [10] We call it readability index

In the instance below the speaker produces clauses that elaborate on the meanings of other clauses by specifying and describing the terms (in the primary clauses) under discussion. This is what Halliday (1994:225-29) calls "elaboration" In transitivity terms, the verb *concerns* in the sample text fragment below expresses a relational process. This transitivity process realises the existence of an Explanation (EP) sub-phase. Furthermore, the verb *concerns* expresses a circumstantial relational process. The inherent participant expressed by *it* is a NHP and it functions as a Carrier, whereas *how you acquire speech...* a NHP and it functions as an Attribute. Observe the sample text fragment.

- [11] It concerns with how, how you acquire speech, what goes on – you know why sometimes your speech affected things, why do people slur, why do people stutter, and so on.

In the instance below the verbal group *can be* is employed by the speaker (lecturer) in transitivity terms to express an attributive relational process which at the higher semiotic level realises a Quotation (QU sub-phase). In terms of



inherent participant types and functions, *natural approach hypothesis of Krashen and Drenellan* is a NHP and it functions as a Carrier and *L1 acquisition* functions is also a NHP and it functions as an Attribute. Observe the sample text fragment.

- [12] Right, natural approach hypothesis of Krashen and Drenellan the main assumption underlying this approach L2 acquisition can be like L1 acquisition and that the L2 acquisition is natural.

In the sample text fragment below the verb 's that occurs in the first and *is* that occurs in the second, third and fourth in transitivity terms all express identifying relational processes. These transitivity processes realise an Interchange (IC) sub-phase. In terms of inherent participant types and functions, *what*, *One* and *the other* are NHPs and they function as Identifiers, whereas *the difference*, *acquired* and *learned* are also NHPs and they function as Identifieds. Observe the sample text fragment.

- [13]. L: So what's the difference between FLA and SLA then?  
S: 'acquired' and 'learned'  
L: One is 'acquired' and the other is.....  
S: is 'learned'

In the illustrations below the verbs *are* and 's in the first and second clause expressions in transitivity terms express identifying relational processes. These transitivity processes realise a Summary (SM) sub-phase and an Emphasis sub-phase in which the points that have just been lectured are summarised and emphasized. In terms of inherent participant functions and types, *these* and *that* in the first instance function as Identifieds and *the kinds of questions that..* and *the end of a language description* in the second instance function as Identifiers. All these participant functions or roles are NHPs. Observe the sample text fragments.

- [14] So these are the kinds of questions that this whole course are addressed, the source of your research topics, research questions and research problems.  
[15] So that's the end of a language description on ESP.

In the sample clause configurations below the verb *is* in the first instance and the other *is* in the primary clause of the second instance in transitivity terms express attributive relational processes and the verbal group *is written* in the secondary clause of the second instance expresses a material process. At the higher semiotic level of interpretation, these transitivity processes realise an Evaluation (EV) phase. In terms of inherent participant functions and types,

*Reading* in the first and *The text of encyclopedia* in the primary clause of the second instance function as Carriers and *very complex skill* in the first and *very difficult* in the second function as Attributes. All these participant functions or roles are NHPs. Observe the sample text fragments.

[16] Reading is very complex skill.

[17]. The text of encyclopedia is very difficult

## 5.2 The material processes

As the data show, the material processes that represent the second prominent transitivity process type of the MLD-in-texts particularly realise explanations of terms, concepts or notions, techniques and in turn they focus the students' attention to what is going to happen or proceed on the description of terms, concepts or notions. To demonstrate this, in the sample clause configurations taken from the data the verbal groups *Moving on* in the primary clause of the first instance and *start* in the secondary clause, and *am going to start* in the second instance are employed by the speaker (lecturer) in transitivity terms to express material processes. These transitivity processes realise a Focus (FO) sub-phase as a proceeding to an activity In terms of inherent participant functions and types, *we* in the secondary clause of the first instance and *I* in the second instance function as Actors and they are HPs, and *the test paper* in the secondary clause of the first instance functions as a Goal and it is a NHP In addition, *with organization of morphs* is a non-participant element which functions as a Circumstance of Quality Manner and *to morphophonemic processes* is another non-participant element which functions as a Circumstance of Spatial Location. Observe the sample text fragments.

[18]. Ok. Moving on to the three basic questions that we should ask before we start the test

[19] Right, so, I am going to start with organization of morphs and then proceed to morphophonemic processes

The sample clause configuration below in transitivity terms exemplifies the occurrence of a material process in which the verb *use* is employed. In the given lecture context this transitivity process in technical terms micro-functionally realises a Direction (DR) sub-phase in which the speaker (lecturer) gives a direction to the students in teaching grammar. Moreover, in transitivity terms the relevant participant function and type performed are analysable in the following. In the instance we have *the students' name* that is functionally a Goal and it is a NHP Observe the sample text fragment.

[20]. Right, please use the student's name.

The sample instances below provide illustrations of how the occurring verbs operate to realise the material processes in the following way. In the first instance we have *put*, in the second we have *plan* and *start*. In the present context these transitivity processes realise a Direction (DR) sub-phase in which the speaker (lecturer) gives tasks to the listeners (students). Returning to the transitivity interpretation, the related participant functions and types can be glossed as follows. In the first instance we have *You* (Actor, HP), *this chart* (Goal, NHP); and in addition we have the non-participant elements *here* (Circumstance of Spatial Location) and *on the board* (Circumstance of Spatial Location), whereas in the second we have *You* (Actor, HP) and *a lesson* (Goal, NHP), and in addition we have the non-participant element *at the presentation stage until practice stage* (Circumstance of Spatial Location). Observe the sample text fragments.

[21] You put this chart here on the board

[22]. You plan a lesson, start at the presentation stage until practice stage

The sample instances below demonstrate the employment of *let*-expressions to indicate the plan of how the speaker (lecturer) will proceed with the lecture focus by means of exemplification. For another thing, the selection of these *let*-expressions is to avoid an authoritative impression on the part of the speaker (lecturer). (For the *let*-expressions, see Young's *optative imperatives* 1990:90). From the transitivity viewpoint, the verbs and the transitivity processes that occur are the material type of processes. In the first instance we have *give* and in the second we have *take*. Furthermore, in transitivity terms the clause elements and the participant functions and types that are involved are demonstrate the following. In the first instance we have *me* (Actor, HP), *you* (Recipient, HP) and *an example* (Goal, NHP); in the second we have *'s* (Actor, HP) and *an example of root word*. (Goal, NHP). These are observable in the following sample text fragments.

[23] Let me give you an example.

[24]. Let's take an example of root word

### 5.3 The mental processes

In the instance that is observable in the clause configuration below the verb *Remember* in transitivity terms expresses a mental process. In the given lecture context this transitivity process realises a higher level semiotic value, which is a Message (ME) sub-phase. In the transitivity interpretation, the

participant *tomorrow no tutorial* functions as a Phenomenon and it is a NHP, and in addition *on Wednesday* functions as a Circumstance of Temporal Location. Observe the sample text fragment.

[25]. Remember tomorrow no tutorial, but on Wednesday ..

The verb *Remember* in the first instance below and the other *Remember* in the second in transitivity terms express cognitive mental processes. These transitivity processes represent a Reminder (RE) sub-phase in the higher level semiotic. In respect of inherent participant functions and types, in both instances the inherent participants expressed by *last week when we talked about..* and *when you talked about...* function as Phenomenons and they are NHPs. These are observable in the sample text fragments.

[26]. Remember last week when we talked about what language is,

[27] Remember when you talked about language teacher problem and also learners' problem,

The sample clause configurations below in transitivity terms exemplify the occurrences of mental processes. In the first instance we have *have to remind*, in the second we have *have to bear in mind* and in the third we have *have to consider*. In the given lecture context these transitivity processes in technical terms realise a Reminder (RE) sub-phase in which the speaker (lecturer) reminds the students of what happened previously and what will happen in the given lecture or in the next lecture. Moreover, in transitivity terms the clause elements and the relevant participant functions and types they perform are analysable in the following. In the first instance we have *I*, in the second we have *you* and in the third we also have *you*; these participants function as Sensors and they are all HPs. Observe the sample text fragments.

[28]. I have to remind you to look at two words

[29]. you have to bear in mind when selecting text the style of writing

[30]. you have to consider with this subject biased text or technical text that they dated text

From the transitivity perspective, in the instances below the verbs *should see* and *see* in the clause configurations express perceptive mental processes. In the given lecture context these transitivity processes realise a Direction (DR) sub-phase. In terms of inherent participant functions and types, the inherent participant *You* plays its role or function as a Sensor and it is an HP, whereas the inherent participants *that theoretical linguistic...* and *how they relate..* function as Phenomenons and they are NHPs. Note that the verb *see*

in the given context may relate to a durative activity in which the speaker (lecturer) directs the students to focus on the theory or ideas under discussion, not to eyewitness an event. Observe the sample text fragments.

- [31]. You see that theoretical linguistic research seems to be wondering around level one to six  
 [32]. See how they relate to language pedagogy

The sample clause configurations below in transitivity terms exemplify the occurrences of mental processes that are expressed by the verbs *understand* and *Do-understand*. In the given lecture context these transitivity processes in technical terms realise a Check (CH) sub-phase in which the speaker (lecturer) applies the checking. Moreover, in transitivity terms the clause elements and the relevant participant functions and types they perform are analysable in the following. In the first instance we have *You* and in the second we also have *you* and both function as Sensers and they are HPs, whereas the NHP *what I am saying* in the first instance functions as a Phenomenon. Observe the sample text fragments.

- [33]. You understand what I am saying?  
 [34]. Do you understand?

#### 5.4 The behavioural processes

The verb *look at* in the first instance below and another *look at* in the second in transitivity terms express behavioural processes. These transitivity processes realise a Focus (FO) sub-phase in the given lecture context. In respect of inherent participant functions and types, in the first instance *you* functions as a Behaver and it is an HP, whereas *SLA* functions as a Phenomenon and it is a NHP. In the second instance the first inherent participant functions as a Behaver as well but it is made implicit in the clause, which is *You*, and it is therefore an HP, whereas *opinions by few people, Krashen* functions as a Phenomenon and it is a NHP. Observe the sample text fragments.

- [35]. Now, you look at SLA.  
 [36]. All right. Now. Look at opinions by few people, Krashen.

From the transitivity standpoint, in the sample instances below the verbs *looking at* and *talk about* express behavioural processes. In the given lecture context these transitivity processes realise an Orientation (OR) sub-phase as ways of introducing and announcing what is going to be given in the lecture at the time. In terms of inherent participant functions and types, *we* in the first

and another *we* in the second function as Behavers and they are HPs, whereas the inherent participants *morphology* and *morphophonemics which is...* function as Phenomenon and both are NHPs. In addition, the speaker also employs the time expression *today* that functions as a Circumstance of Temporal Location. Observe the sample text fragments.

[37] Ok, right, today we are looking at morphology - morphophonemics which is part of phonetics and phonology

[38]. Today we're going to talk about

### 5.5 The verbal processes

From the transitivity point of view, in the illustrations below the verbs *argues* in the first, *says* in the second and *emphasises* in the third in transitivity terms express verbal processes. At the higher level semiotic these transitivity processes realise a Quotation (QU) sub-phase. As regards inherent participant functions and types, in the instances *Hill*, *Thomas Scovel* and *Brown* function as Sayers and they are HPs, whereas *that adult can acquire* and *that the plasticity of brain prior to* function as projected Verbiages and they are NHPs, whereas *on the fact of lateralisation of* functions as a Verbiage and it is a NHP (For the notion of "projecting" and "projected" clauses, see for example Halliday 1994:219-20). Observe the sample text fragments.

[39] Now, Hill argues that adult can acquire authentic second language perfectly.

[40] Thomas Scovel says that the plasticity of brain prior to puberty can have affect on ...

[41] OK. Now, Basically Brown emphasises on the fact of lateralization of the brain.

In instances below the first functional element of each instance in transitivity terms acts as a Circumstance of Angle. In this, *According to Krashen*, *According to Lenneberg* and *According to Piaget* are non-participant functional elements that function as Circumstances of Angle that at the higher level semiotic realise a Quotation (QU) sub-phase. Observe the sample text fragments.

[42]. According to Krashen, ..

[43]. According to Lenneberg

[44]. According to Piaget

As with the other instances found here and there in the data that demonstrate the use of *let*-expressions, the instances below provide another set of transitivity processes in which the typical *let*-expressions are exercised, from which the processes come into being. In this, the verb that is honoured to carry out the job is *let-say* that occurs twice in the instances, and both express verbal processes. These transitivity processes are utilised by the speaker (lecturer) to draw the students' attention to the examples. As regards inherent participant functions and types and the clause elements that represent them, the transitivity analysis tells the following. The 's in the first and another 's in the second function as Sayers and they are HPs, whereas *the word 'sign'* in the first and *particular example of doctor patient* in the second function as Verbiages and they are NHPs. Observe the sample illustrations.

[45]. Let's say the word 'sign', it has meaning, isn't it?

[46]. So let's say particular example of doctor and patient

### 5.6 The existential processes

The least frequently occurring type of processes found in the data is concerned with the existential processes. To exemplify this type, the verb 're in the first instance below, *are* in the second and another *are* in the third in transitivity terms express existential processes. In the given lecture context these transitivity processes realise the existence of a Statement (ST) sub-phase in which the speaker (lecturer) states the concepts, facts, ideas and terms that are associated with the relevant academic knowledge to be transferred through the lecture. In respect of inherent participant functions and types, *hundred of muscles working together...* in the first, *two types of morph.* in the second and *different types of testing* in the third function as Existents and they are NHPs. Observe the sample text fragments.

[47]. There're hundred of muscles working together to produce your lovely, sweet melodious.

[48] There are two types of morph; one is being segmental and the other

[49] There are different types of testing, placement, assessment, diagnostic

## 6. Summary of the LD-in-texts

The sample clause instances above just demonstrate and exemplify some experiential transitivity processes representing six experiential transitivity process types at the linguistic semiotic level of analysis, and to a certain extent they are related to the realisation of the higher level semiotic in the given lecture contexts, particularly the semiotic of sub-phases or micro-functions.

Focussing on the linguistic semiotic level of analysis, and with respect to the degree of prominence measured in terms of frequency of occurrence of each experiential transitivity process type, the table below demonstrates the revealing evidence that the Relational process type/the Being experiential semantic field occur most prominently in the overall production of the MLD-in-texts as a whole, subsequently followed by the Material/the Doing, the Mental/the Sensing, the Behavioural/the Behaving, the Verbal/the Saying and least prominently the Existential/the Existing. Observe the table.

Table 1 Overall summary of frequency distribution of process types in the MLD-in-texts.

Process types/semantic representations LD-in-texts	Re/ Being	Mat/ Doing	Men/ Sensing	Beh/ Behaving	Ver/ Saying	Exist/ Existing	Overall	%
MLD-in-text 1	202	132	70	26	23	16	469	11.8
MLD-in-text 2	167	129	83	20	52	14	465	11.7
MLD-in-text 3	187	159	82	39	14	16	497	12.5
MLD-in-text 4	165	133	75	30	32	21	456	11.4
MLD-in-text 5	397	200	49	60	35	20	761	19.3
MLD-in-text 6	226	298	85	50	55	12	726	18.4
MLD-in-text 7	260	104	93	51	63	20	591	14.9
Overall	1597	1159	527	294	272	114	3963	100
Percentage	40.3	29.2	13.3	7.4	6.9	2.9	100	

In respect of the degree of prominence measured in terms of frequency of occurrence of each experiential transitivity participant function, the table below demonstrates the revealing evidence that the Carrier as one transitivity participant function of the Attributive Relational process type occurs most prominently in the overall production of the MLD-in-texts as a whole, subsequently followed by the Attribute, the Actor, the Goal, the Identifier, the Identified, the Phenomenon, the Senser, the Sayer, the Behaver, the Verbiage, the Range, the Existent, the Receiver, the Beneficiary, the Attributor, the Assigner, the Initiator, the Inducer, and least prominently the Target.

The degree of prominence (frequency) of the other transitivity participant functions in the MLD-in-texts is also observable in the table below.

The participant profile concerning the experiential transitivity participant types is summarised in the table below. In this respect the participant types fall into two categories: the Human (HP) and the Non-human participants (NHP). As is observable in the table below, comparatively the NHP type occurs much more prominently (frequently) than the HP.



Table 2: Overall summary of frequency distribution of participant functions in the MLD-in-texts.

MLD-in texts	ML D1	ML D2	ML D3	ML D4	ML D5	ML D6	ML D7	Overall	percentage
Participant functions									
Carrier	121	112	97	85	224	136	155	930	13.80
Attribute	121	119	104	84	203	139	156	926	13.73
Identified	70	56	76	54	176	85	97	614	9.10
Identifier	83	64	74	55	168	88	114	646	9.60
Actor	75	113	122	105	155	219	85	874	12.97
Goal	60	42	106	70	122	196	64	660	9.80
Senser	30	64	49	68	32	63	54	360	5.34
Phenomenon	38	64	60	85	60	68	69	444	6.60
Sayer	13	51	14	27	35	49	65	254	3.77
Verbiage	11	48	11	30	36	43	41	220	3.26
Behaver	10	30	30	32	50	46	42	240	3.56
Existent	17	16	18	16	22	10	22	121	1.80
Attributor	1	1	2	8	2	6	5	25	0.38
Assigner	0	1	1	8	10	4	1	25	0.38
Initiator	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	7	0.10
Inducer	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	0.04
Range	26	25	30	25	22	45	13	186	2.75
Beneficiary	6	8	7	6	20	39	9	95	1.40
Receiver	0	5	4	12	28	40	19	108	1.60
Target	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0.02
Overall	682	819	805	774	1368	1277	1015	6740	100

Table 3: Overall summary of frequency distribution of participant types in the MLD-in-texts.

Participant types MLD-in-texts	Human	Non-human	Overall	Percentage
MLD-in-text 1	161	521	682	10.11
MLD-in-text 2	397	422	819	12.15
MLD-in-text 3	276	529	805	11.95
MLD-in-text 4	356	418	774	11.49
MLD-in-text 5	399	969	1368	20.29
MLD-in-text 6	542	735	1277	18.94
MLD-in-text 7	345	670	1015	15.11
Overall	2476	3894	6740	100.0
Percentage	36.73	57.77	100	

In respect of the degree of experiential transitivity circumstantial type potentiality realisation in terms of frequency of experiential transitivity circumstantial type occurrences in the overall MLD-in-texts, the table below demonstrates that the highest degree of prominence (frequency of occurrence) falls into the Location circumstantial type, subsequently followed by the Manner, the Matter, the Accompaniment, the Cause, the Extent, the Role and finally the Angle as the lowest.

Table 4: Overall summary of frequency distribution of circumstantial types in the LD-in-texts.

LDs Circumstantial types	MLD 1	MLD 2	MLD 3	MLD 4	MLD 5	MLD 6	MLD 7	Overall	%
Extent	2	10	7	10	20	10	3	62	5.98
Location	60	59	64	55	72	101	55	466	45.0
Manner	15	33	25	15	27	30	24	169	16.31
Cause	7	7	14	3	5	19	5	60	5.78
Contiguity	2	1	0	0	2	2	0	7	0.66
Accompaniment	13	14	14	10	26	25	2	104	10.4
Role	4	3	4	5	7	4	11	38	3.65
Matter	20	20	13	9	15	10	27	114	11.0
Angle	1	4	2	2	5	0	1	15	1.44
Overall	124	151	143	109	179	201	128	1035	100
Percentage	11.98	14.58	13.81	10.53	17.29	19.42	12.36	100	

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

The description has particularly been focussed on the experiential process features that are characteristic of the MLD-in-texts under study. At the transitivity level of analysis, the analysis has been focussed on the identification and description of the occurrences of the dominant transitivity process types, participant functions and types and circumstantial types in particular.

As the findings show, in terms of transitivity processes the relational process type, which is experientially related to the semantic field of Being, represents the predominant feature of each MLD-in-text, except the MLD-in-text 6 whose predominant feature is realised and characterised by the material process type. In the overall scale, this relational process type represents the predominant feature of all the MLD-in-texts compared to the other process types across the MLD-in-texts. The occurrence of the relational process type is far above the average occurrence of each process type. The second rank in the overall scale is the material process type followed by the mental process type in the third.

It occurs to me that the first factor that has motivated the relational process type to dominate the MLD-in-texts as a whole relates to the goal-oriented lecturing/learning methods/techniques that are employed by the lecturers in the context of knowledge/information transfer to be carried out. To this end, the lecturers choose the methods or techniques that they think efficient and effective to achieve the common goal. On the part of the lecturers, the overall or global (i.e. discursal) goal of the lecture discourse-in-texts is in principle to provide knowledge/information to the students and to this end the speakers (as *academically* responsible lecturers) present definitions of relevant concepts, notions and the like to the students. In this respect knowledge/information transfer in the academic setting has some relevance to so-called *technicality* in 'linguaging'. In this, as Wignell *et al.* (1987:47) point out, one way of introducing technical terms is through relational process clauses. This being the case, the relational process type appears predominant in the transitivity realisation and characterisation of the MLD-in-texts in question. (For further discussion of technicality, see for example Halliday & Martin 1993:56-9, Eggins 1994:71, 74 and Harvey 1999:55).

Specifically, what has been raised above is reflected at the higher semiotic level in the occurrences of the Definition (DE) sub-phase type in particular, which have allowed or motivated the occurrences of the transitivity processes of the relational type to take place. To illustrate the points, for example the lecturers initially demand knowledge/information from the students to ensure that the knowledge/information being transferred has been learned. The students then would provide 'other' definitions of the concepts

Table 2. Overall summary of frequency distribution of participant functions in the MLD-in-texts.

MLD-in-texts Participant functions	MLD 1	MLD 2	MLD 3	MLD 4	MLD 5	MLD 6	MLD 7	Overall	Percentage
Carrier	121	112	97	85	224	136	155	930	13.80
Attribute	121	119	104	84	203	139	156	926	13.73
Identified	70	56	76	54	176	85	97	614	9.10
Identifier	83	64	74	55	168	88	114	646	9.60
Actor	75	113	122	105	155	219	85	874	12.97
Goal	60	42	106	70	122	196	64	660	9.80
Senser	30	64	49	68	32	63	54	360	5.34
Phenomenon	38	64	60	85	60	68	69	444	6.60
Sayer	13	51	14	27	35	49	65	254	3.77
Vorbiager	11	48	11	30	36	43	41	220	3.26
Behavior	10	30	30	32	50	46	42	240	3.56
Existent	17	16	18	16	22	10	22	121	1.80
Attributor	1	1	2	8	2	6	5	25	0.38
Assigner	0	1	1	8	10	4	1	25	0.38
Initiator	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	7	0.10
Inducer	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	0.04
Range	26	25	30	25	22	45	13	186	2.75
Beneficiary	6	8	7	6	20	39	9	95	1.40
Receiver	0	5	4	12	28	40	19	108	1.60
Target	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0.02
Overall	682	819	805	774	1368	1277	1015	6740	100

and notions being asked as a response. In this, the relational processes occur again. Sometimes the students' definitions do not reflect the received notions or concepts. If this is the case, the lecturers would elaborate on the defined concepts and notions as such that the students get them right, and the relational processes recur. As Harvey (1999:55) points out, definition techniques of this kind would allow transitivity processes of the relational type to occur more dominantly than transitivity processes of any other types, and this is precisely what has happened across the MLD-in-texts under investigation.

The dominance of the relational processes over the other process types has also been triggered by the occurrences of the other process types themselves. That is to say, the dominance of the relational process type is also attributed to the following procedures. (1) the lecturers describe events or activities, in which case the material processes are dominant, (2) the lecturers then check the students' understanding of the events or activities, in which case the mental processes are dominant, and (3) the lecturers finally generalise their explanations in which the events or activities and the students' cognition, perception and affection are encoded in nominalization, from which the relational processes emerge. In this respect the activity in question takes place when the lecturers summarise and emphasise certain facts, concepts or points particularly by way of identifying and classifying what has been described or discussed. In this context it is particularly here that the occurrence of the relational processes is dominant.

Furthermore, the lecturers sometimes start with the particular facts, events, principles, ideas, concepts or notions, from which they then move on to the general information. That is to say, instead of taking or following the general information as a departure point and subsequently moving to the particular things, as is observable here and there throughout the development of the given lecture discourse activities the lecturers now and then also take the opposite direction, moving from the particular to the general information. This evidence has relevance to some other context, that is, to the context of teaching-learning (lecturing) methodology. For one thing, this evidence implies that to a greater or lesser degree the lecturers perform some other way of delivering the lectures, making the MLD-in-texts as a whole relatively dynamic in nature. For another thing, in practical terms this evidence implies that the lecturers as the 'primary' speaking participants also apply inductive methods or techniques in the developmental creation of the MLD-in-texts.

Let me now proceed to the second rank in the overall scale which refers to the transitivity processes of the material type, which is experientially related to the semantic field of Doing. An inference drawn from the data relates to the fact that the lecturers have a tendency to demonstrate and/or simulate what practically happens in the outer world and what people actually do and how they do it out there. The lecturers as the primary speaking participants in the

lectures bring the actual doings and happenings in the environment into the lecture room by verbally encoding and describing them through the transitivity grammar representation, from which the transitivity processes of the material type emerge. Furthermore, the occurrences of the material processes are also generated by the lecturers' attempts to show how certain techniques of doing things, particularly teaching techniques, are to be put into practice. In this respect the lecture discourse activities as reflected linguistically in the MLD-in-texts under study indicate that demonstration and simulation have been commonly used as teaching-learning techniques in the lecture room. They seem to be viewed as efficient and effective ways of construing the 'natural' reality of the world out there and of bringing them into the semiotic reality of the lecture room world.

With respect to inherent participant functions and types in particular, as activity-focussed processes that are related to the real and observable doings, it is to be expected that Actors as the first inherent participant functions in transitivity processes of the material type would be dominantly HPs instead of NHPs, whereas Goals as the second inherent participant functions would be dominantly NHPs instead of HPs. As the findings show, this is precisely what happens with the MLD-in-texts, in which most of the Actors are HPs whereas most of the Goals are NHPs.

The third rank in the overall scale refers to the transitivity processes of the mental type, which is experientially related to the semantic field of Sensing. Having closely observed the data across the MLD-in-texts, one can infer that the occurrences of the transitivity processes of the mental type are particularly motivated by the higher semiotic occurrences of the Reminder (RE) sub-phase type within the confines of phases. As far as my observation is concerned, I find that the sub-phasal or micro-functional processes of the RE type themselves, which find their expressions particularly through the transitivity processes of the mental type that recur in each MLD-in-text, are more often than not motivated by the need to stress, illustrate or explain particularly important things or points.

Furthermore, the occurrences of the transitivity processes of the mental type are also related to some other context, that is, the context of teaching-learning methodology. It occurs to me that there seems to be a need to go beyond the given lecture discourse activities with respect to the lecture materials and contents in particular, and I think this is a general characteristic of any lecture discourse activity as an academic undertaking, in which the lecturers would particularly be concerned with what has or has not been lectured or learned (and understood) by the students, what is or is not to be lectured or learned at the time and what will or will not have to be lectured or learned in days to come. This is also evidently true with respect to the context of the present data, in which the lecturers are frequently motivated by the need to

remind the students or to make them think of what has been learned before, of what is to be learned at the time, of what will have to be learned in the near future or the like. This is observable for example in the sample text fragments below.

[50]. Please bear this in mind. .,

[51]. Remember [that] I have given you...

[52]. You have to consider that.....

In the teaching-learning context these sequential transitivity processes, in which the mental processes are dominant, represent one typical example of so-called "linking technique" in lecturing.

As the findings show, in terms of participant types both HPs and NHPs are involved in the MLD-in-texts. The Sensers as the first inherent participant functions in the transitivity processes of the mental type are found to be conscious beings that refer to the speakers themselves as HPs in the MLD-in-texts, whereas the Phenomenons as the second inherent participant functions are found to be generally NHPs which may refer to things, facts, thoughts, desires or the like. The fact that the Sensers prominently refer to the speakers themselves (who are physically present in the lectures) implies that the transitivity processes in question reflect the feature of being the *here-and-now* sensing processes which are inherently related to the *I-and-you* (or *we*) sensing participants.

In addition to the discussion of the three major transitivity process types above, let me briefly discuss the minor process types, namely the transitivity processes of the behavioural as the fourth rank in the overall scale of the MLD-in-texts under study, the verbal as the fifth and the existential type as the sixth or last rank. I shall do this in turn.

First, as behaviour-focussed processes that are related to the experiential semantic field of Behaving, it is evident that Behavers as the first inherent participant functions in transitivity processes of the behavioural type are dominantly HPs instead of NHPs whereas Phenomenons as the second inherent participants are dominantly NHPs instead of HPs. Second, as verbal-focussed processes that are related to the experiential semantic field of Saying, it is evident that Sayers as the first inherent participant functions in transitivity processes of the verbal type are dominantly HPs instead of NHPs whereas Verbiages as the second inherent participant functions are dominantly NHPs instead of HPs. And third, as existential-focussed processes that are related to the experiential semantic field of Existing, it is evident that Existents as the inherent participant functions in transitivity processes of the existential type are dominantly NHPs.

To turn briefly to the additional elements associated with the transitivity processes, as is evident in the statistical figures presented previously, the circumstantial elements of the location type are most prominent in their occurrences in the lectures subsequently followed by those of the manner, the matter, the accompaniment, the extent, the cause, the role, the angle and finally the contingency. The fact that the various circumstances are not created equally across the transitivity process types occurring in the MLD-in-texts under investigation is not surprising. The evidence supports the similar findings in Matthiessen's study (1999:1) on circumstantial processes and representations within the transitivity confines of linguistic semiotic phenomena. One important question to answer here is the question of why the circumstantial elements of the location type are most prominent in their occurrences in the transitivity processes of the MLD-in-texts in this study. My short and general answer to this is that it is closely related to the fact that these most prominent circumstantial elements of the location type found in the data have the potential to occur in any transitivity process types generally, and they as possible choices within transitivity processes across all types have actually been chosen by the participants of the MLD-in-texts in question for the purpose of achieving particular functional goals.

The findings in this study only provide one area of semiotic phenomena at the linguistic semiotic level of investigation, in which the focus has been on the study of the experiential semantic and transitivity grammar representations of the MLD-in-texts in question. At this semiotic level of investigation it is therefore recommended that there should be further studies particularly in the areas of (1) logical semantic and complexity grammar representations, (2) interpersonal semantic and mood grammar representations, and (3) textual semantic and theme grammar representations of the MLD-in-texts in question.



## References

- Egins, S. 1994. *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*, Pinter Publishers Ltd. & St. Martin's Press Inc., London & New York.
- Halliday, M.A.K. 1985b. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Edward Arnold, London.
- Halliday, M.A.K. 1994. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 2nd edition, Edward Arnold, London.
- Halliday, M.A.K. and Martin, J.R. 1993. *Writing Science. Literacy and Discursive Power*; The Falmer Press, London, Washington, D.C.
- Harvey, A. 1999 "Definitions in English Technical Discourse: a Study in Metafunctional Dominance and Interaction", in *Functions of Language* Vol.6.1, John Benjamins B V., Amsterdam, pp. 53-94.
- Matthiessen, C.M.I.M. 1999 "The System of Transitivity: an Exploratory Study of Text-based Profiles", in *Functions of Language* Vol. 6.1, John Benjamins B.V , Amsterdam, pp.1-51
- Sinar, T.S. 2002. Phasal and Experiential Realisations in Lecture discourse: A Systemic-Functional Analysis, A Ph.D. Dissertation, Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Wignell, P., Martin, J R. and Egins, S 1987 "The discourse of geography: ordering and explaining the experiential world", in Egins, S., Martin, J.R. and Wignell, P (eds.), *Working papers in Linguistics 5, Writing Project Report*, Sydney, University of Sydney Linguistics Department.