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**An Analysis of Language Meta-functions in Clause Complexes from EFL Thai  
Upper Secondary School Students' Personal Experience Recount Writing  
Products : SFL Perspective**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper aims at presenting the results of language meta-functions analysis in clause complexes from personal experience recount texts of the six selected EFL Thai upper secondary school participants, selected from the results of pretest writing analysis and the English subject grade point average report of the school's academic staff. With respect to the case study method, 26 Mattayom Suksa 5 in the math and science program students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of high school education were from the purposive randomization from the 6 classes of Mattayom Suksa 5 at the school. This selection made 2 high students (HS1, HS2), 2 middle students (MS1, MS2), and 2 low students (LS1 and LS2). The class was conducted through Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) genre-based approach at Hunkhapittayakom Secondary School, Hunkha District, Chainat Province, Thailand in the second semester of the academic year 2015 (Mingsakoon, 2018a; 2018b). The above-mentioned participants' certain clause complexes in the personal experience writing work were analyzed through the framework of clause complex construction and the meaning making with the language meta-functions in SFL. It revealed that the complex clauses the students constructed in the personal experience recount writing work were made communicably, and the structures of those clauses were complicated under the layers of interdependencies (paratactic and hypotactic relations) and logico-semantic relation serving to the sources of meaning making in the language meta-functions in personal experience recount genre described in the school's curriculum.

**Keywords : Clause Complexes / Language Meta-functions /  
Ideational Function Interpersonal Function / Textual Function**

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### Introduction and background

Halliday (1994) exposes the role of Systemic Functional (SF) model of language as the resource of meaning. The language meanings are revolved with a systemic network of two inseparable contexts, including: context of culture and context of situation (Martin & Rose, 2003, p.6). The context of culture provides structure of a text under its particular social purpose. On the other hand, the context of situation covers three aspects of language feature: field, tenor and mode, which are always recognized in the concept of register.

Regarding the contexts of the written language, a clause is in common as a traditional notion of a sentence in that both terms present sensible logico-semantic relating subdivision of the grammatical rank. That means the clauses are logically accumulated together as a particular text because of the goal-oriented context (Martin, 1997). However, a clause complex is different from a simple clause in that it is constructed with more than one clause to make complicated concept presentation (Halliday, 1994).

That is to say, a clause complex generally consists of two dominant types of syntactic constructions. First, it is depicted by two equal independent clauses, e.g. primary independent clause decoded with (1) and secondary independent clause decoded with (2). Both of them are linked together with logico-semantic relation markers, such as ‘and, or, nor, but, for, so, yet’ so called paratactic relation clause (compound sentence). Second, it is differently constructed with two unequal clauses, namely as a hypotactic relation clause - consisting of an independent clause or main clause (**α**), and a primary dependent clause or sub-ordinate clause (**β**) or another dependent clause (**γ**) linked together with logico-semantic relation words (Halliday, 1994, p.126; Thompson, 2014).

With the relation between language meta-functions and meaning making of a clause, Rose (2007) reviews that the meaning of the clause is systemically communicable since it serves to the three domains of language meta-functions where a grammatical resource logically threads the trivialities together (Halliday, 1994).

First, ideational function logically represents a person’s world of experience or field of what the going-on in people’s life is. Thompson (2014) additionally addresses it as a series of active messengers’ experiences in the world. Thus, the experiences, exposed through the situational context and process, are represented through the system of TRANSITIVITIES where the content of the complex clause could present the meaning of the language through processes, participants and circumstances.

Second, interpersonal function showing people’s interactions and social roles provides the meaning of the tenor in the clause complex as an exchange or a move (Halliday, 1994). This language function is reviewed through the system of MOOD showing the interactions or relationships between message senders, including writers or speakers and message receivers, including readers and listeners (Droga & Humphrey, 2003; Martin, 2001). Mood, in this context,

reflects to the function of the clause when Subject and Finite work complementarily through the systems of Mood and Modality (Halliday, 1994). Moreover, Halliday (2007) argues the interpersonal function in the meaning of the clause as a mechanism of those grammatical resources realizing the relationship between the interlocutors.

Third, textual function represents the meaning of mode explaining how the information in the clause is linked together logically under the grammatical construction. To clarify, the trivialities in the clause are woven in the Theme and Rheme functions so called THEMATIC structure. The strand of the meaning is in the structure of the clause as a message representing a quantum of informative messages. Halliday (1994) argues the theme as the point of departure for the message, and the rheme is addressed as the arrival of the event discussion. Of course, the textual meaning links the meaning of language to the environment through verbal language (realized by oral or writing strands), or even non-verbal language (realized by the contexts of culture and situation) (Martin & White, 2005).

To clarify, the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) gives precedence to the relation of the structure of a clause and its language meta-functions when addressing the meaning making of the message in the clause. When applying the knowledge of linguistics, teaching methods to conduct writing and the needs of the school's curriculum, it is interesting if the clause complexes the EFL upper secondary school students produced in their personal experience recount texts are meaningfully made and systematically constructed serving to the language meta-functions.

### **Significance of the study**

This paper is significant for two key reasons. First, it aimed to expound how the clause complexes in the personal experience recount texts produced by the EFL upper secondary school students are sensibly constructed to serve to the language meta-functions. Second, the paper aimed to investigate how the meaning of the complex clauses the students produced served to purpose of personal experience recount texts in the Communicative Writing course as described in the school's curriculum. That means the students' complex clauses in the personal recount texts are predominantly analyzed by means of meaning making influenced by language meta-functions and social-oriented purpose of the target texts.

### **Research objectives**

To expound how the clause complexes in the students' personal experience recount texts are meaningfully constructed, the research questions are intended to address as follows:

1. How are the clause complexes in the personal experience recount texts produced by the EFL upper secondary school students sensibly constructed to serve to the language meta-functions?

2. How does the meaning of the clause complexes the students produced serve to purpose of personal experience recount text?

### Scope of the Study

This study approached to qualitative research, which intends to investigate the EFL upper secondary school students' clause complex construction realizing the meaning of language meta-functions in the framework of SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) and purpose of personal experience recount genre. It is beneficial for developing teaching writing applied for mentoring both teachers and students to enhance communicative language use competence, especially writing and creative thinking skills, in a particular purposive genre (Martin, 1997).

#### 1. Content scope

In this regard, the study is focused on the frameworks of applied linguistic ideologies (SFL discourse analysis at the layer of clause complex construction, meaning making of clause complex with understanding of language meta-functions and language learning development in the EFL upper secondary school students' certain personal experience recount writing texts) (Martin, 1997). Thus, it pinpoints to how the clause complex the students created in the posttest personal recount writing texts after learning writing through the SFL genre-based approach at the school made sense via the language meta-functions and the social goal of personal experience recount genre (Halliday, 1985).

#### 2. Population and sampling scope

The population of this study was from 189 students from 6 classes of Mattayom Suksa V in Hunkhapittayakom Secondary School, Chainat, Thailand. These students were registered to learn in Communicative Writing course based on the school's curriculum description in the first semester of academic year 2015. The sample of the study was 26 students in Matayom Suksa 5/ Math and Science Program -special program derived from convenience sampling because the teacher researcher was obligated from the academic staff of the school. There were 6 participants including 2 High Students (HS1, HS2), 2 Middle Students (MS1, MS2) and 2 Low Students (LS1, LS2) selected by randomization.

#### 3. Variable scope

The variable scope of this study was involved with two main variables. They were 1) language meta-functions in SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) linking to interdependency in clause complex constructions and purpose of personal experience a recount writing texts (Halliday, 1985; Martin, 1997) and 2) clause complex construction and meaning making in the clause complexes the students constructed in the personal experience recount texts in the posttests.

## Research method

### 1. Population and participants

With reference to Mingsakoon's (2018a) study, the population of this study consisted of 189 students from 6 classes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year high school students (Mattayom Suksa V) Hunkhapittayakom Secondary School, Chainat, Thailand. Undertaken with the purposive randomization and the need of the school curriculum the teacher researcher responded, 26 students in the program of math and science were selected to engage as the sample in this study. In regard with the ordering of their grade point average of English subject from the academic staff of the school and the writing score in the writing pretest, the students in the sampling class were classified into 3 groups (High, Middle and Low). According to the students stratified in each group, they were randomized by lottery to make 6 students (2 High Students-HS1 and HS2, 2 Middle Students-MS1 and MS2 and 2 Low Students-LS1 and LS2) as the participants of the study.

### 2. Research instruments

In respect to the ideologies of discourse analysis and functional grammar in SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) (Halliday, 1985), this study deployed 3 principal research instruments. They were 1) structures of clause complexes in the SFL framework, including paratactic and hypotactic interdependency and logico-semantic relations, 2) the relations between the clause complexes constructed in the personal experience recount texts and the meaning making in the language meta-functions, and 3) the social purpose of the personal experience recount writing.

### 3. Data collection

The data collection was proceeded after the sampling class had been taught writing the recount through the cycling stage of SFL genre-based approach, including 1) Building Knowledge of the Field, 2) Modeling Text, 3) De-contextualization and Organization, 4) Joint Construction, 5) Independent Construction of a Text, and 6) Linking Related Text (Mingsakoon, 2018a; Feez, 2002). When finishing the stages of teaching cycle, the sampling class did the posttest of personal experience recount writing, and each participant's writing text was collected to analyze under the above-mentioned analytic framework of SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) to investigate how the clause complexes the students wrote in their personal experience recount texts were sensibly made.

### 4. Data analysis

Actually, the study discussed the analytic information of the 6 participants' personal experience recount writing texts in the posttest. The data presentation intended to show how the clause complex construction from posttest writing texts were woven in terms of structuring (interdependency-paratactic and hypotactic relations), meaning making serving to

the language meta-functions and purpose of personal recount text as described in the literature review.

### Key findings

1. Language meta-functions in clause complexes in the high-grouped students' (HS1 and HS2) written texts

In her personal experience recount text, the HS1 could make her 27<sup>th</sup> clause very complex in terms of sentence construction complication, and showed how her thoughts and language knowledge were logically related as well as they were systematically ordered as the hypotactic relation clause and made sense through the language meta-functions. For instance, she generated the 27<sup>th</sup> clause in her personal experience recount text:

**Sentence 27:** [[It was very fun ( $\alpha$ ), but (+) I felt exhausted ( $/\alpha/$ ) when arriving my grandparents' home. ( $\beta$ )] ] = [[ $\alpha + \wedge / \alpha / \wedge \beta$ ]] = Hypotactic relation with projection-mental process of perception

Of course, this clause represented the logical meaning making some process in ongoing human experience as described in the threefold components of experiential function as follows. Firstly, the participants classified as the **carrier** engaged with (...It...) in the primary clause and as the **sensor** (Gerot & Wignell, 2001) with (...I...) in the secondary clause where the coordinate conjunction (but) represented the controversy of the meanings between the two mentioned clauses. Secondly, the circumstance as functionally described in SFL with '**Location ~ Time (adverb of time)**' where the clause started with the marker '...when...' completed the meaning of the whole sentence and led the reader to understand the time relevant to event occurrence. Thirdly, the clause was constructed with the meaning of the **Relational Attributive** process in the primary clause because the meanings of the carrier and the attribute (...very fun...) were compatibly sensible with the verb to be '...was...' However, in the secondary clause the process was categorized into **Relational Attributive Intensive** unit because the meaning of the linking verb '...felt..' combined the meaning of the attribute '...exhausted...'

In regard with the interpersonal meaning, both clauses in the sentence 27 of the HS1 showed the mood system into threefold layers of meaning making. To begin with, the **clause structure** was developed into the **statement forms** representing the language purpose of giving information. Then, the meaning of the processes in both clauses reflected the language function of **appraisal** (Martin & White, 2005) in terms of Positive Affect (...very fun...) in the primary clause and Negative Affect (...felt exhausted...) in the secondary clause. Regarding the appraisal, the meaning of the processes '...was very fun...' also fell into the **Appreciation Composition** because the natural phenomena or constructions were personally assessed. On the other hand, the meaning of the processes '...felt exhausted...' was scrutinized into the negative pillar of the personal assessment. Subsequently, both primary and secondary

clauses of the sentence 27 were personally commented. They were in a positive way (...very fun...) in the primary clause as well as in a negative way (...felt exhausted...) in a secondary clause.

For the textual function, the HS1 manifested the meaning relations between the theme and rheme pillars. For the theme pillar, ‘...it...’ in the primary clause and ‘...!...’ in the secondary clause functioned as the doers or actors of clauses. The textual theme (conjunction) was resorted with ‘...but...’ appearing at the middle of the whole clause and showing how the meanings of the former and the latter clauses were related in terms of confliction or contradiction. Regarding the rheme pillar, most of the meanings were functioning into the part of predicative. This was connected with the meaning of the theme compatibly. That is to say, the rheme of this clause fell into the sections of ‘...was very fun...’ and ‘...felt exhausted when arriving my grandparents’ home...’

The HS2 also constructed the clause complex with hypotactic relation in the personal experience recount text to match the meaning of the clause with the language meta-functions as presented in the following linguistic feature analysis section. For example, the HS2 wrote in

**Sentence 2:** [[I /felt/ happier ( $\alpha$ ) than I did last year ( $\beta$ ) because it was my first birthday celebration at home with my parents, my friends and my boyfriend.

( $\gamma$ )]=[[ $\alpha$ / $\beta$  $\gamma$ ]] = Hypotactic relation with projection-mental process-cognition

In fact, the ideational function of the meaning of the clause construction evolved with the participants ‘...!...’ as the sensor in both independent and principal dependent clauses. However, ‘...it...’ was represented as the world of ‘thingness’ concept (Butt., et al, 2003) because of concerning with the nucleus of a typical pronoun at the beginning of the subordinate dependent clause. Then, the sentence was mobilized with the meaning of the circumstances with the entire dependent clauses. For instance, the clause ‘...than I did last year...’ showed the comparative situational meaning towards the independent clause. Also, the dependent clause ‘...because it was my first birthday celebration at home with my parents, my friends and my boyfriend...’ post-modified the meaning of the independent clause with giving rationale notions into the significance of the situation on a happy day as the sensor described. For the process analysis, this clause was one of the greatest discourse developments in the HS2’s personal experience recount text because it presented the meanings of mental process where the writer was able to show the internal world through the meaning of the sentence. That is to say, the phrase ‘...felt happier...’ reflected the HS2’s thinking process how she thought about the event through the senses in her mind. The word ‘did’ in the principal dependent clause ‘than I did last year...’ referred to the verbal process and the target process with giving reason in the subordinate dependent clause ‘...because it was my first birthday celebration at home with my parents, my friends and my boyfriends.’

Finally, the verb to be ‘...was...’ referred to the relational process to echo that the meanings of the word ‘...it...’ and ‘...birthday celebration...’ were sensibly similar.

Regarding the interpersonal language function, the clause structure was observed dominantly as the statement to serve the purpose of giving information and giving the reason towards the situation (Droga & Humphrey, 2003). With the benefit of appraisal (Martin & White, 2005), the meaning of clause logically exerted positive judgment of morality in social sanction where the writer felt happy with the exposed situation in the personal experience recount discourse.

Actually, this clause also served with the textual language function where the theme fell into the topical theme “...I...” at the beginning of the clause and followed with the rheme of the residual part of the theme. It began with ‘...felt happier than I did last year...’ to ‘...because it was my first birthday celebration...’ One of the valuable examples of the text connectives showing signal of logical relationship between the clause in the discourse was the textual rhemes of conjunction signpost ‘...than...’ and cause and effect signpost, ‘...because it was my first birthday celebration at home...and my boyfriend...’. The former textual rheme echoed the meaning of comparison. The latter one indicated the reason contributing 1) why the writer felt happier than she did last year and 2) how those goal participants were valuable to the situation.

2. Language meta-functions in clause complexes in the middle-grouped students’ (MS1 and MS2) written texts

In sentence 25, the MS1 obviously constructed one of the clause complexes with the meaning of logico-semantic relation of expansion-extension in paratactic clause construction in her personal experience text to serve with the meaning of language meta-functions. For example,

**Sentence 25:** [He smiled and (+) received it from her (1), and (+)I really had a broken heart.(2)] = [+1^2] = Paratactic relation with expansion-extension

The ideational function of the language mobilized the MS1’s sentence 25 with the meaning under the external word, seeing her lover get a gift from the other girl and the internal world, showing unpleasant feeling to encounter with this affecting event. Actually, ‘He’- her boyfriend at the beginning of the sentence, was regarded as the participant called as ‘behavior’ (Gerot & Wignell, 2001). Then, ‘smiled’ and ‘received’ worked as the process of behavioral connected by ‘and’ as the process connector. The gift that the other girl gave to her boyfriend referred by ‘it’ functioned as the ‘participant: direct receiver,’ so the ‘participant of indirect receiver’ came in the phrase ‘from her.’ Her external world (meaning mobilized in the primary clause) was connected with the internal world (meaning mobilized in the secondary clause) by the process connector ‘and’ once again, but here was the equivalently meaning linking between ‘a clause and a clause.’ Likewise, the pronoun ‘I’ referring to the



writer and functioning as 'participant: behavior' (Gerot & Wignell: *ibid.*) was linked to the internal world meaning of '...really had a broken heart...' as the 'material process.'

Outstandingly, the MS1's sentence was significantly constructed to serve with the purpose of personal experience recount text. Appraisal framework in an interpersonal language function expounded that her feeling affected by the unpleasant scene she faced incidentally where her boyfriend got a gift from the other girls and this caused her to express feeling of judgment in a negative social esteem in the secondary independent clause, '...I really had a broken heart...' However, the cause affecting to her negative feeling was from the external world of affirmative statement at beginning of the sentence with the primary independent clause, '...He smiled and received it from her...' The processes '...smiled and received' were evaluated in terms of 'Explicitly Direct Affect.'

Regarding the textual function, the sentence 25 of the MS1 was one of evidently developed sentences in the personal experience recount text because it showed qualifying of communicative organization at the layer of word choice and sentence execution. To illustrate, the sentence began with the unmarked topical theme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2004) to foreground that 'He' referred as the 'guy in her dream' she preferred to be her lover. In fact, the rhemes, '...smiled...' and '...received it...' at the primary independent clause were conflated with the textual theme -...and...- highlighting the relationships between the first rheme-...smiled...-and the second one - ...received it...- compatibly. The text connective 'and' did not only appear to link the relationship meanings of the rheme at the primary independent clause but also combined the meanings between the two independent clauses. Notably, the primary independent clause - ...He smiled and received it from her...- was connected with '...and...' situated in front of the second independent clause -...I really had a broken heart... with the meaning highlight of the modal 'really.'

Moreover, it was interested that the MS2 could construct a higher degree of clause complex by conflating the meaning of the hypotactic and paratactic relations beyond the sentence construction instructed by the modeling text. That meant, due to having the opportunities to concern with the meanings of the modeling texts, the MS2 could develop understandings about clause constructions and meaning weavings complicatedly. The MS2 evidently showed the linguistic feature development at the layer of trivialities executions in the clause complexity construction in the sentence 36 through the meaning of the language meta-functions in the following descriptions:

**Sentence 36:** [[Finally (+), he softly sang a sweet song at my ears ( $\alpha$  /1), and (+) he confessed that he liked me so much. (2/ $\beta$ )]=[[ +(  $\alpha$  /1) $^{\wedge}$ ( $\beta$ /2) ] = Hypotactic-Paratactic relations with expansion-extension

In terms of ideational functional analysis, the MS2 had linguistic features in the sentence 36 developed significantly because she could succeed in constructing reasonably

meaningful sentence with the most complex clause weaving together in her personal experience text. To illustrate, it could fulfill the informational gap to readers with details the MS2 exposed in the event and drew the clearest picture in the readers' mind to see what happened and to understand what the each character played role in a particular situation. Of course, in the primary independent clause, the participant of this sentence was a material actor, '...he...', who was inherently involved in the verbal process, '...softly sang...' and '...a sweet song...' as the verbiage process accompanied by the circumstance of location, '...at my ears...' At the secondary clause, she consecutively executed it with the complex clause construction. Once again, the pronoun '...he...' still played the greatest role as the actor, in both independent and dependent clauses, who '...confessed...' loving to her. The word 'confessed' was functioning as the psychologically behavioral process.

In the dependent clause, the word '...liked...' fell into the loop of mental process because it reflected the meaning through the sense of thinking modified with the meaning of high degree manner '...very much...' The verbiage '...me...' completed the meaning of participant who was a receiver of the mental process '...liked...' In fact, the appraisal framework in the interpersonal meaning also functioned in the structure of the MS2's sentence 36. Notably, the directly positive feeling in the affect dimension of appraisal systemic mobilization was expressed in this sentence because she was so pleased to perceive that the boy liked her. This might be reviewed that the boy's action significantly impacted to her emotional reaction where this was called 'appreciation' (Martin & Rose, 2008).

For the textual function, the sentence 36 of the MS1 was evidently compatible to the purpose of giving information in the compound complex sentence falling in an affirmative form. It began with deploying 'Finally' as the expansion connective to indicate time so called 'textual theme,' following with the 'topical unmarked theme' of the subjective pronoun 'he.' The rheme consecutively corresponded to the meaning of the theme with the meaning of the process of the main verb 'sang' together with the circumstance of attributive participant or objective of the main verb 'a sweet song' modified with the meaning of an additional locative rheme 'at my ears.'

The meaning of the secondary main clause was linked with the meaning of the primary one with the additional conjunction 'and' to show the complexity of the meaning of the sentence noticing that there was the other meaning of the latter clause to add more information for the former one. The second clause started with the topical unmarked theme 'he' referring that 'he' in the former clause was the same person of 'he' in the latter clause. The rheme was in the process 'confessed' and followed with the relative pronoun 'that' at the end of the main clause '...he confessed...' to show the relation in that '...he liked me so much...' as the circumstantial rheme or the object of the process '...confessed...'

For the subordinate clause ‘...he liked me so much...,’ the participant ‘he’ still was similar to ‘he’ in the primary independent clause (...he softly sang...) and ‘he’ in the secondary independent clause (...he confessed...). This showed the evident of thematic development of using the subjective pronoun to link the meaning and to give new information.

3. Language meta-functions in clause complexes in the low-grouped students’ written texts

In sentence 6, the LS1 obviously constructed one of the hypotactic clause complexes with the meaning of logico-semantic relation of expansion-extension and elaboration in her personal experience text. The analysis shows how she made her clause link to the meaning of the language meta-functions. For instance,

**Sentence 6:** [[She told me “ $\alpha$ ” that she was very excited ( $\beta$ ) because it was her first time to go to Chiang Mai ( $\times Y$ ) and(+) to visit a famous zoo in the country.( $Y$ )]= [[“ $\alpha$ ” $\wedge$  $\beta$  $\wedge$  $\times Y$ + $\wedge Y$ ]=Hypotactic relation with projection expansion-extension and Enhancement With the meta-language function realization, the LS1’s sentence 6 was completely represented from all developed clause complexes serving to the situation and the purpose of the personal experience recount text. For the ideational function, the sentence provided the meaning of the student writer’s internal world with ‘... She told me that she was very excited...’ and external world with ‘...to go to Chiang Mai... in the first time...’ The participant ‘...She...’ became the sayer coming together with the verbal process ‘...told...’ and the participant receiver ‘...me...’ The circumstance ‘...that she was very excited...’ was developed in the structure of a noun clause as the verbiage. In this clause, ‘she’ working as the participant carrier was at the beginning of the clause and followed with verb ‘be-was’ as the relational intensive process providing ‘very excited’ as the attribute participant.

To give more information about her internal world, the other clause showing rational relations between the meanings of independent clause and the dependent clause began with the marker of connective ‘because’ together with some more trivialities ‘...it was her first time to go to Chiang Mai...’ The pronoun ‘it’ referring to her first traveling to Chiang Mai was determined as carrier participant connected with the verb ‘be-was’ as the relational process to link with the attribute participant ‘her first time to go to Chiang Mai’ showing the purpose of giving destination of traveling. The connective marker of adding information with ‘and’ showing some more details to extend in that traveling to Chiang Mai at that time gave her more experiences to visit the zoo too. This clause, subsequently, served with the function of phenomenon participant.

Evidently, the LS1’s sentence 6 in the personal experience recount text was concerned with the interpersonal language function at the layer of mood system where the affirmative or declarative sentence was structured to express the positive opinion and attitude towards the experiences of going to travel in Chiang Mai. In appraisal framework, the social

esteem in the judgment was expressed apparently in this sentence with the meaning of the clause ‘...she was very excited...’ This sentence also reflected to the development of meaning execution in the system of ‘appreciation’ because the writer valued the proposed event with positive worth of ‘to be excited.’

In the textual function, the topical theme in the independent clause was ‘She’ and the rheme was ‘...told me...’ In the dependent clause, the topical theme was also fallen into a reiteration theme pattern because the subjective pronoun ‘she’ was repeatedly used. The rheme at this clause should be ‘...was very excited...’ The following clause such as ‘...because it was her first time to go to Chiang Mai...’ was logically linked with the previous clause with the greatest outstanding connection ‘...because...’ showing the relation of cause and effect. The meaning of the independent clause was also extended with the connective marker of adding information ‘..and..’ before the goal rheme clause of ‘...to visit a famous zoo in the country...’

Likewise, the LS2 also constructed a hypotactic clause construction under the logico-semantic relation in terms of expansion-extension and meaning of the language meta-functions in the sentence 26 in her personal experience recount text. For example,

**Sentence 26:** [[And (+), I thought ‘ $\alpha$ ’ that Song Kran Festival was very great.( $\beta$ )] = [[+ ‘ $\alpha$ ’ $\wedge$  $\beta$ ]] =Hypotactic relation with mental process of cognition and projection

In terms of meta-language function analysis, the sentence 26 could be developed meanings underpinned with three language functions in the SFL framework. First, the sentence matched with the ideational function because completely reflected the LS2’s internal world of thinking. She learned to express her opinion towards situation by using the clause ( $\alpha$ ),...I thought..., and this was completely extended the meanings with trivialities of the dependent clause,...that Song Kran Festival was very great ( $\beta$ ). The subject ‘I’ in the independent clause worked as the sensor to link with the main verb of mental process of projection ‘thought.’ In the dependent clause, ‘Song Kran Festival’ was working as the ‘carrier’ because it linked the meaning with ‘attribute -...very great...’ by the identified relational process in the form of the past tense of verb to be ‘was’ in the middle between the subject and the modifier. Second, the interpersonal meaning also connected the writer’s thoughts or opinions to the readers’ perceptions. As can be seen, the sentence 26 of LS2 in her personal experience recount text was in the ‘Affect’ in the appraisal framework because it showed the resource of positive feeling under the clause structure of affirmative statement serving the purpose of giving information towards the situation in Song Kran Festival in Thailand she had participated herself. At the dependent clause meaning source, the ‘Expression of Judgment’ in terms of ‘Social Sanction’ was prominently deployed to show positive admiration with ‘...very great...’ which the LS2 felt about the special event she experienced. Particularly, ‘very’ was the source of adverbial modal to enhance the

meaningful degree of 'great.' Third, the textual meaning organized the sentence meaningfully keeping the audiences communicatively informed about the direction of the meaning of the sentence. Evidently, the topical theme of the independent clause was 'I' as the personal pronoun connected with the rheme '...thought...' this clause was linked with the text connective 'And' working as the 'textual reference – endophora (Droga & Humphrey, 2003: 105)' in a typical written text showing consecutive meaning sources related to the previous phenomenon with the purpose of adding information. In the dependent clause, the topical unmarked theme was 'Son Kran Festival' followed with the rheme '...was very great...'

### Discussions

The development of the EFL secondary-school students' clause complex constructing starts by giving the opportunities to the students to work with smaller components of clause constructions and a system of context where clauses represent functional meanings of the language. This implies that each clause should be demonstrated for the students to understand its central process of meaning units before starting to write any texts. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) argued that the process of the meaning in the clause is pivoted by the lexico-grammar described under the layers of lexis and structure as the source of speakers' particular sense to make clauses with different purposive grammatical structures serving to language functions, e.g. giving information, asking questions and denying to do things (Downing & Locke, 2006). It is necessary to encourage the class to discuss a wide range of error points most students make in clause construction. The whole class discussion would encourage the students to gain more confidence to reasonably argue about the suspicious items on the layers of taxis and logico-semantic relations when constructing the clauses and making the clauses cohesive in a paragraph and coherent in a whole text. Interestingly, the number of meanings of the text pivoted under the language meta-functions is suggested to explicitly consider before using these modeling texts to teach in any classes. The modeling texts should be graded down if the language presented is so complex that the students feel it is difficult to understand. Even though giving the greatest opportunities to the students regarding the components of language structuring and contexts takes times, beneficially, these would encourage students to gain confidence when starting to construct clauses meaningfully and develop them for creatively sensible stories in the future.

### Conclusions

As being conducted with the process of the SFL genre-based approach, the students present that they have developed linguistic knowledge by being able to construct many complex clauses in their recount written texts. As described in the key finding section, the complex clauses the students produced in the personal experience recount genre serve to the language meta-functions and purpose of the personal experience recount genre presented

in the literature review. That means they were properly grammatical-constructed and logically made sense. Because of having more opportunities to be concentrated with the meaning of language, context and situation of the text and its structuring construction and syntactic engagement, the students could generate communicable complex clauses to serve to the sources of language meta-function meanings and the purpose of the particular text as described in the school's curriculum (Feez, 2002). It may be concluded that concerning with TAXIS where the clauses are constructed as simplex sentences, paratactic relative sentences or even hypotactic relative sentence encouraged learners to generate meaningful details of particular social goal-oriented genre.

### **Implementations**

This study is under the conditions of limitations. It is limited with the small size of participants and effects of using only personal recount texts to teach writing; only six students (HS1, HS2, MS1, MS2, LS1 and LS2) are concerned with the items of new knowledge required in the research questions. Possibly, the ideas of deploying SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) genre-based approach might be applied with teaching writing other genres in other contexts such as lower secondary school students or even the students who are preparing language qualifications to match with the requirements of the workplaces. With the benefits of the SFL genre-based approach, it actually encourages both students and teachers to work with contexts and situations in the language. Of course, they are also given very great opportunities to consolidate by practicing language use under the concepts of lexco-grammar, functional grammar and language functions revolving around using language for communication.

### **Recommendations for further research**

Other areas of interesting knowledge affected by implementing the SFL genre-based approach to propel EFL Thai upper secondary school learners to express language through different purposes are suggested as the research gaps for other future valuable studies. To illustrate, the SFL genre-based approach advocates the greatest advantages for the upper secondary students' systemic writing skill developments. Regarding the benefits of using the modeling texts unfolded as the genuine language people use in social daily life, the students could improve their understanding from the small language element. For example, learning the meaning of a word by considering its grammatical function in a particular context to the meaning construction of a clause could help them mobilize the messages for a purposive-structured genre.

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