

Prepositional Phrases Analysis Found in BBC News Based on Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the prepositional phrases appearing in bbc.com/news from the systemic functional linguistics perspective. The method applied was library research using observation and note-taking technique. Prepositional phrase is a phrase which is started with a preposition followed by noun or pronoun. Additionally, in language metafunction, prepositional phrases have three different functions namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunction. The outcome gained from this research was that the prepositional phrases appear in BBC News have different purposes based on three metafunctions. Firstly, in ideational metafunction, prepositional phrases were realized by circumstance of location, time, duration, manner, purpose, and point of view. Then, in interpersonal metafunction, prepositional phrases aim at creating clarity, indicating relationship between people, expressing feeling and intention effectively. Lastly, in textual metafunction, prepositional phrases help to give cohesion and coherence into the text.

Keywords: Prepositional phrase, SFL, Metafunction, Linguistics, System

1. Introduction

Language is a tool of communication which is beneficial in stating purposes and expressing ideas. The expression can have different meaning based on the structure as well as the context. As the uniqueness of language, there were several theories that can be used in analyzing meaning and one of them is Systemic functional linguistics theory.

Systemic functional linguistics is one of the linguistics studies which was introduced in the beginning of 1960 by Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday, a linguist who was born in 1925 in England. The word “system” refers to choice of system, whereas in paradigmatic theory, the use of language can be seen in the choice of form. Take as an example, in communication practice, the language users are faced from the choice of clauses, whether they are declarative, active, or passive. Meanwhile, the word “functional” means language is analyzed based on its context of use; therefore, all forms of language have functions. Thus, systemic functional linguistics is linguistics study that focuses on language forms that are selected in the context of

using language as a text. Compared to Ferdinand De Saussure (1857-1913), Halliday has a different perspective towards language; Saussure sees language from its syntagmatic and paradigmatic differently while Halliday sees language both from syntagmatic or paradigmatic sides by using structure and system (Martin, 1992). From syntagmatic views, the elements of language are seen as structure; while in paradigmatic views, the elements of language are seen as choice of system.

From systemic functional linguistics perspective, language is a structured tool of communication in the form of words, phrases, and clauses that language is always in a form of text and has three functions namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunction. First, Ideational language is aimed to describe experience or anything happened in the universe which is realized by clauses. Then, interpersonal language explains the roles of each participant in the text so there will be relationship between the speaker/writer and the hearer/ reader. Lastly, textual metafunction is used to express message, formulate language, and emphasize information.

When discussing about system of language in construing meaning, it is also constructed by phrases and one of them is a prepositional phrase. Prepositional phrase is important in systemic functional linguistics as it supports creating meaning and convey relationship between elements in a text; therefore, the communication will remain effective.

Prepositional phrase is a phrase is a group of words that consist of a preposition followed by a noun or a pronoun. It is a group of words comprising a preposition and its object that modifies a verb or a noun. Prepositional phrases functions as a complement and adjunct. The complement and adjunct position often contain prepositional phrases that communicate obligatory and optional information like where, when, and why. Prepositional Phrase can be either an obligatory complement of the verb (Brinton L et al, 2010). Complements are modifiers that are usually positioned near the head and are prohibited by specific lexical elements. Miller, (2002) argues that complements "complete" the meaning of the verb, giving it both syntactic and semantic completion, while adjuncts simply provide additional information that could be dispensed with. The position of complement that verbs are not the only categories that take complements. Prepositions also take complements. Therefore, in a phrase like "in the kitchen", "the kitchen" is the complement of the preposition in. Certain adjectives also take complements for example fond in 'She is fond of music'. The PP 'of music' is the complement of the adjective "fond". Without this PP, the sentence is ungrammatical" Meyers et al., (1994) state that the verb has an argument theta role: theme, source, goal, patient, recipient, experiencer, proposition, question, etc. It means that the sentence consists of complement in form of prepositional phrase depends on the verb; if the verb is dynamic, it should need argument. The term "adjunct" is a concept in grammatical theory used to describe an optional or secondary element in sentence construction. Removing an adjunct does not alter the fundamental structure of the rest of the

sentence. For instance, consider the sentence "She baked the cake with chocolate chips," where "with chocolate chips" is an adjunct. Removing it results in "She baked the cake," and the core structure remains unchanged. Other elements, such as vocatives and adjectives, have also been categorized as adjuncts in various grammatical descriptions. Additionally, prepositional phrases serve as adjunct in the modal structure of the clause that can serve as circumstantial adjunct or interpersonal adjunct. They consist of a preposition plus a nominal group. For instance, "the burning deck" (Matthiessen:2014).

When associated with language metafunction (ideational, interpersonal, and textual), prepositional phrases also have different purposes. In ideational metafunction, prepositional phrases are included in circumstantial elements in a clause. The prepositional phrases in the perspective of systemic functional linguistics are not only seen as syntactic unit, but also as an integral part of social meaning and language function. They answer the questions of where (location), when (time), why (reason), and how (ways). The first example of this can be observed in the sentence "she is in the kitchen", the Prepositional phrase "in the kitchen" shows location. Another example can be seen in the sentence "the baby slept after taking a bath" whereas "after taking a bath" shows time. Furthermore, it can be realized by circumstances which explain location, extent, manner, role, and cause. Circumstances add information in order to boost up the context of experimental within the text (Eggins: 2004).

In interpersonal metafunction, prepositional phrases can be used to arrange social interaction or give specific tone. Prepositional phrases have a contribution to interpersonal metafunction by conveying mood, evaluative meaning, and structuring information. Cite as an example, prepositional phrase "with respect to your question" in sentence "with all due respect to your question, I disagree" modifies the mood in the statement, to soften the opposite opinion in a polite tone. Another example can be found in prepositional phrase "to her surprise, she agreed with the plan, whereas it indicates how the attitude of the speaker towards the plan.

In textual metafunction, prepositional phrases contribute to cohesion because they connect ideas and building relationship and also serve as themes. For example: the prepositional phrase "at the meeting in the sentence "at the meeting, the decision was made" introduces link to place. Another example of prepositional phtase in textual metafunction can be seen in the example "before dinner" in the sentence "before dinner, we will talk about that" which introduces link to the time. This kind of phrase which shows reason can be seen in the sentence "because of the rain, the picnic was cancelled" with prepositional phrase "because of the rain".

There were some researches that analyzed prepositional phrases; however, only a few researches applied the perspective of systemic functional linguistics theory. First, research entitled "An Analysis of Using prepositional phrases in students writing" by Moh Yusril Jaya, et.al, University of Tadulako. This study analyzed prepositional phrases found in the fifth semester students' work; However, it uses traditional linguistics theory proposed by Brinton

(2010). It did not analyze how prepositional phrases function in the students' work. Another research in regards to prepositional phrases was conducted by Irawati, et.al, University of Hasanuddin entitled "Analysis of Circumstance in Translated Text; Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach". It analyzed the circumstantial elements in children' books which showed that the types of circumstance found were location, extension, role, matter, manner, accompaniment, and causes which were formed by words, groups, and prepositional phrases. This research did not specifically analyze prepositional phrases based on the language metafunction. In addition, research conducted by Dwi Putri Amaliya Putri (2022) in Scripta, English Department Journal analyzed prepositional phrases in the Carlo's short story Pinocchio and its application in teaching writing. The result was that prepositional phrases found function as adverb and adjective; whereas, it did not seek for their functions in the text. One of the researches analyzing prepositional phrases based on the above mentioned theory was written by Khusnul Aisaro (2023) entitled "Transitivity and Context of the Situation in the News Text". In this research, there is a description of transitivity process system and the prepositional phrases are one of them and included in the circumscisions (consists of range, location, way, cause, role, and view). There was no specific analysis regarding the prepositional phrases.

Because of the importance of prepositional phrase in systemic functional linguistics, this study will analyze the existence of prepositional phrases in some academic articles found in bbc.com/news based on their function in the clauses.

2. Methods

This research is qualitative research as it applied descriptive approach with a review of some references using "Systemic Functional Linguistics" theory proposed by Halliday. The method aims at understanding language systematically by the analysis of prepositional phrases based on three language metafunction namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The data was taken from articles in bbc.com/news and obtained through library research (Sudaryanto: 1993) using observation and note-taking techniques. Research activities in all studies including diachronic dialectology or comparative historical linguistics are basically divided into three steps, namely (1) data provision, (2) data analysis, and (3) data presentation (Mahsun: 2017).

In qualitative research, data cannot be presented as numbers because this type of data tend to answer questions like "how" and "why" whereas it encompasses three main categories including observations, document reviews, and in-depth interviews (11). Observational technique helps researcher to find out reason beyond the data and includes an engagement with the setting, a clear expression of the events, technical improvisations, high attention, and good recording (Taherdoost: 2022). In addition to descriptive method, it aims at achieving a data description that the it needs a description basis theory for gaining description of the phenomenon. (Taherdoost: 2022).

The process of collecting the data was divided into three prime steps as mentioned previously; it was provided, analyzed, and presented with its analysis. In providing the data, all articles in *bbc.news* were read in order to find the prepositional phrases; whereas, the list of prepositional phrases was then identified and classified based on their metafunction (ideational, interpersonal, textual). Then, the categorized prepositional phrases were analyzed under the perspective of systemic functional linguistics. The result of the data analysis was descriptively presented using words, phrases, and sentences.

3. Findings and Discussion

a. Prepositional Phrases in Ideational Metafunction

Data 1. Prepositional Phrase explaining place

Exploring the diverse meanings that artists past and present attach to the landscapes they depict was the subject of an exhibition at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery.

<i>At</i>	<i>Bristol Museum & Art Gallery</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun Phrase</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

The data above shows the circumstance of place which is realized by preposition **at** followed by noun phrase **Bristol Museum & Art Gallery**. This prepositional phrase is aimed at showing location as the subject of the exhibition. Besides, the reader will also understand that all meanings given by artists in a form of landscapes. The data found is clear enough to prove circumstance of place that aims at giving information about location or places where actions or events happened.

Data 2. Prepositional phrase giving information about the time

The iconic 6ft-wide oil painting, frequently voted one of Britain's favourite artworks, was on loan from London's National Gallery as part of the museum's bicentenary celebrations in 2024.

<i>in</i>	<i>2024</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

The data above gives information about the time which is realized by circumstance in a form of prepositional phrase **in 2024**. It gives specific information towards the iconic painting so

the clause can be seen in detail. Circumstance of time can keep communication specifically and bring the clause into a clear context.

Data 3. Prepositional phrase giving information about duration

The fields are agriculture, a managed landscape." And though Constable was a pioneer of painting en plein air, the masterpiece was painted from sketches gathered over almost two decades and completed back at his studio in Hampstead, London – then just a village but, within a century, subsumed into the capital's urban sprawl.

over	<i>Almost two decades</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun phrase</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

within	<i>A century</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun phrase</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

Based on the data, prepositional phrase **over almost two decades** and **within a century** give information about the length of masterpiece that was painted from sketches and how long it was subsumed into the capital's urban sprawl. Both of them in ideational metafunction is called circumstance of duration. This type of circumstance could give clarity of length of time needed to do an activity.

Data 4. Prepositional phrase explaining manner

In some ways, he's offering up a fiction: a highly curated landscape containing elements that have been added later to improve the composition and broaden its appeal.

In	<i>Some ways</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun phrase</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

The above data gives information about the way to offer up a fiction; although it is not specifically mentioned, the prepositional phrase **in some ways** shows manner to accomplish the

fiction. Circumstance of manner gives information about ways, tools, or approaches that are used to do an action. This circumstance can answer questions like how or in what way

Data 5. Prepositional phrase explaining purpose

With the academic hierarchy in mind, "a lot of people who wanted to paint landscapes were starting to use history painting as a way to do it," says Carver, referencing Constable's predecessor Richard Wilson.

<i>with</i>	<i>the academic hierarchy</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun phrase</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

The prepositional phrase **with the academic hierarchy in mind** shows circumstance of purpose whereas in the clause, many people aim at painting landscapes; so how do they do it? The answer is with the academic hierarchy in mind. Circumstance of purpose gives information about why something is done so communication can be more descriptive and informative. This circumstance can answer the question “what for”, “to what purpose” or “why”

Data 6. Prepositional phrase showing perspective

Yet, in other ways, The Hay Wain is a paragon of verisimilitude, painted by an artist who was true to his artistic vision despite the low position landscapes occupied in the European Academies' hierarchy of artistic genres.

<i>in</i>	<i>Other ways</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun phrase</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

The prepositional phrase **in other ways** shows circumstance of point of view that the writer aims at explaining other views of “The Hay Wain”. This type of circumstance involves considering behavior and perspective.

b. Prepositional Phrases in Interpersonal Metafunction

Data 7. Prepositional phrase explaining negotiation

For something completely different, London's Courtauld Gallery's Abstract Erotic (20 June to 14 September) will explore the sculptural works of Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse and Alice

Adams, highlighting their "commitment to using humour and abstract form to ask important questions about sexuality and bodies".

<i>for</i>	<i>Something completely different</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun phrase</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

The prepositional phrase **for something completely different** is used to manage negotiation or engagement that signals turn-taking. This phrase in the clause can enrich the interaction between the writer and reader. It can also help establish tone in the text.

Data 8. Prepositional phrase showing interpersonal dynamic

A planning application to demolish the 19th Century building on St Saviours Hill has been submitted on behalf of the lieutenant-governor.

<i>On</i>	<i>Behalf of the lieutenant-governor</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun phrase</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

The prepositional phrase **on behalf of the lieutenant governor** explains the writer's position as a representative to convey a message of demolishment application; therefore, this prepositional phrase influences the interpersonal dynamic; in this case shows language as interpersonal metafunction.

c. Prepositional Phrases in Textual Metafunction

Data 9. Prepositional phrase building coherence

He went on to explain that the Budget was already having a negative impact on his restaurant. "After the Budget, we had a key meeting hoping to get some investment signed off to enable us to grow the business, open a couple more sites and employ more people.

<i>After</i>	<i>The budget</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun phrase</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

Prepositional phrase **after the budget** shows textual metafunction as this phrase could give coherence into the overall text. As can be seen in the data above, the first clause gives information about the budget (“he went to explain that the budget was already having a negative impact”); therefore to create a good flow and coherence, the writer starts the second clause with the theme **after the budget**, which is categorized as a prepositional phrase in the syntactic category.

Data 10. Prepositional phrase building coherence

While speaking at an environmental youth protest in Alaska, ChasingHorse was scouted by casting director Shay Nielsen for a 2020 Calvin Klein campaign. "Her energy and confidence really set her apart," Nielsen tells the BBC. "At just 18 years old, she was already a powerful leader advocating for her Indigenous community." After her Calvin Klein breakthrough, ChasingHorse was invited to meet with modelling agencies in New York.

<i>After</i>	<i>Her Calvin Klein breakthrough</i>
<i>preposition</i>	<i>Noun phrase</i>
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	

Similar to data 9, prepositional phrase **after her Calvin Klein breakthrough** is also a continuation of the preceding clause that explains about “Calvin Klein campaign”. This prepositional phrase can give coherence into the text and the writer would like to tell another information without leaving the reader into confusion. Prepositional phrase “after her Calvin Klein breakthrough” also functions as theme, the first phrase appears, in the clause.

4. Conclusion

In analyzing prepositional phrases based on systemic functional linguistics perspective, they are not only seen in syntagmatic but also paradigmatic views. The use of prepositional phrases give clarity of what are going to be expressed in a text. Three language metafunction are the main analysis because when prepositional phrases appear in a text; they can give information about time, duration, manner, purpose, and point of view as in ideational metafunction that are realized by circumstance. The next language metafunction is interpersonal that prepositional phrases give clarity between people or ideas; The last metafunction is textual whereas aims at creating coherence; it can be analyzed by the choice of theme in a clause.

BBC News.com provides a number of prepositional phrases which have three metafunction based on the systemic functional linguistics perspective; ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Each of them gives clarity towards meaning and coherence of the text. They give

information about location, time, duration, manner, purpose, relationship between people, as well as logical order of the text. Thus, the articles have good flow and unity.

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