



The Analysis of Semantic Roles in Descriptive Texts of “Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X” Textbooks

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Abstract. Textbook is a learning material used in English language teaching in the classroom. There are numerous types of text in English textbooks, one of which is descriptive text. English teachers usually teach students how to understand the sentence in the text by explaining the grammar, which does not help students comprehend the meaning. Semantic roles can help students understand the meaning of sentences. This study aims to analyse the types of semantic roles and find out the most dominant type in descriptive texts in the textbook “Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X” that was released by the Ministry of Education and Culture based on Saeed’s theory. The research is qualitative method and content analysis method. The research objects are two descriptive texts in textbook “Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X.” The total of data in this textbook is 42 sentences. The researchers used documentation in order to collect the data and used Miles and Huberman’s qualitative analysis to analyse the data. The research results show that nine kinds of semantic roles contained the descriptive texts: agent, patient, theme, experiencer, beneficiary, instrument, location, goal, and source. From those data, the most frequent type of semantic roles is theme which appeared in 28 data.

Keywords: Descriptive Text · Semantic Roles · Textbook

1 Introduction

Textbook is an educational resource that is used in teaching-learning activities. It is an important reference that is used as a learning source and a learning media. Nimasari defines a textbook as a written form that contains information about a particular subject for those who are studying [1]. Furthermore, the textbook provides educational materials that can be used as the source of material for teaching and learning.

Various materials are available in the textbook that aims to serve what students, as well as a teacher, need in teaching-learning activities. In addition, the English textbook covers four language skills, which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the textbook, various activities, exercises, dialogues, and texts are provided for the students to learn. The textbook can be used to encourage students in order to improve their skills in English.

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U. Widiati et al. (Eds.): ASIATEFL 2022, ASSEHR 749, pp. 247–256, 2023.

https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-054-1_21

Various kinds of text are provided in the textbook. The texts that are available in the textbook are used as an example and as media for students to learn English. One of the kinds of texts that are taught to the students is descriptive text. Gerot and Wignel, as cited in Knapp and Watkins; Noprianto, state that descriptive text is a text that describes a thing, someone, animal, place, or situation [2].

Additionally, students not only need to know how language is used as a medium for exchanging information, but they also need to understand the meaning that contains in sentences. Sentences must convey the meaning for readers in order to understand them. Similar to this point, Cameron, as cited in Wulansari and Cahyati, mentions that reading is about comprehending the word and the message of the text [3]. In addition, the students also need to comprehend how the text works to interpret the meaning. As mentioned by Sakinah, Latifah, and Nuraeni people mostly just read without knowing the meaning of a sentence [4]. Therefore, they need to comprehend the content of each sentence that they read in a text.

Meaning is the essential component in a language. It is the source or sender that expresses, communicates, or transmits meaning to the observer or receiver via their message, as well as what the recipient infers from the existing situation. According to Palmer, as cited in Akanya and Omachonu, meaning is a concept that speakers can communicate to listeners by expressing them as if it were a type of language [5]. Understanding sentences' meaning is significant in order to fully comprehend the text because people should comprehend the sentences' meaning.

Semantics is one of many subfields in linguistics. It is the study of language meaning. As stated by Setyanida in her journal that semantics is a branch of semiotic philosophy concerned with study signs and symbols and their relationships to languages [6]. Moreover, Searle, as cited in Agung, Wibow, and Wilujeng, defines semantics as the study of meaning as it is represented by language components as a system of symbols [7]. It is concerned with the relationship among signs and the meaning to which they relate.

There are many concepts in semantics. One of them is semantic roles. Yule states that semantic roles theory means words have the "roles" that they fulfil within the sentence described by the sentence [8]. Many linguists refer to semantic roles as thematic relation, participant role, or thematic role. Semantic roles are the role that the participant has in the sentence that is related to the main verb. Hurford states, as cited in Setyanida, that semantic roles are the relationships between a verb and the referring expressions in a sentence [6].

Sidabutar and Zakrimal state that the function of semantic roles is to explain the language in actuality, with an emphasis on texts and situational contexts [9]. It is also to assist readers in comprehending how the text functions in order to interpret the meaning. According to Saeed's theory, the types are agent, patient, theme, experiencer, beneficiary, instrument, location, goal, and source [10].

An example of a sentence that contains semantic roles is *Luna gives a letter to her boyfriend in the park*. From the example, it can be analyzed that *Luna* is agent since she is the one that initiates the activity, and *a letter* is a theme since it is the thing moved by the activity. It is also found *the park* is a location which a place where the action happens.

When students read an English text, they may misinterpret the meaning of various words. Agustina, Kaomaneng, and Nurmala mention that various interpretations may occur when people attempt to understand [11]. Different interpretations may lead to misunderstandings, and the students might not be able to comprehend the text well. Thus, semantic roles can assist to avoid misleading interpretations.

Furthermore, English teachers typically teach students how to understand the formation of a sentence through grammatical rules, which does not assist students in fully comprehending the content of each sentence. In addition, the students need to avoid grammatical mistakes that may cause misunderstanding. As stated by Listia and Febriyanti that if the students make an incorrect grammatical pattern, they might not be able to comprehend the sentence [12]. Nurul and Bambang also mention that the students convey their ideas using words which should be structured in a certain way, so that others can comprehend what they mean [13]. However, it will be difficult to grasp the ideas if the ideas do not be arranged in well-structured.

Another study that conducted by Azar, as cited by Handayani and Johan, states that students with inadequate grammar knowledge struggled in academic writing, whereas students with excellent grammatical knowledge grasped the meanings of the sentences [14]. As a result, students need not only know the structure, but also comprehend the meaning of its usage in sentences.

Moreover, the teachers can deliver the material about grammar by using semantic roles, for example, when the teachers explain about the grammatical rules, such as transitive and intransitive verb. It is also supported by Fiktorius that the students commonly find it difficult to understand which verbs require an object and which do not [15]. For example, when they make incomplete sentences, the sentences could lead to incorrect sentences that lose their meaning and become incomprehensible.

Another example of grammatical rules is active and passive voice. As stated by Lesmana and Adnan (2020), the students face some obstacles when changing from active to passive voice [16]. The sentence structure of passive voice is reversed from active voice. Even though it is reversed, the sentences' meaning is the same. For instance, the passive voice of *my friend read a book* is *a book was read by my friend*. It can be analyzed that the object of passive sentence is my friend, which is the subject in active sentence. However, according to semantic roles analysis, *my friend* is agent. Therefore, semantic roles can assist the students in comprehending the meaning of sentences and the context of a text.

There are some previous studies that conducted research about semantic roles. The first is the study entitled "Semantic Roles in Joko Widodo Re-elected as President of BBC Online News" by Sidabutar and Zakrimal [9]. This study showed that there were eight different kinds of semantic roles, and the most frequent type is theme. Another previous study is a journal entitled "Thematic Roles in the Tale of 'Macbeth' by E.F Dodd" that conducted by Efrizah [17]. The research showed that there were agent, patient, theme, experiencer, beneficiary, goal, source, and location. In addition, the biggest role found was agent, and the lowest role was source. The last previous study is the research that conducted by Setyanida with the title "The Analysis of Participant Role in the Jakarta Post Headlines' Titles" [6]. This study revealed that there were 22 patterns that were classified into three roles, they were location, agent, and experiencer. This study also

showed that in the case of denotative and connotative is that the meaning of the titles is more clearly and comprehensively.

This research, the researchers were interested to figure out the descriptive texts as the text that would be analyzed using semantic roles because the researcher found sentences that contain specific things which could be the data. In addition, the researchers used the textbook “*Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X*” that was released by the Ministry of Education and Culture as the research object. It was first released in 2014, with a revised version following in 2017. The reason why the researcher chose this textbook was that textbook is based on Curriculum 2013 and used as learning material in senior high school. It is also because there are descriptive texts that are available in the textbook.

Based on all these statements, the researchers intended to analyze the types of semantic roles and find out the most frequent types of semantic roles in descriptive texts in textbook “*Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X*” 2017 Revision Edition that released by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

2 Method

The study used a qualitative method and content analysis method to analyze semantic roles in descriptive texts. Bogdan and Taylor, as cited in Nugrahani, define the qualitative method as a type of research method that generates data from people’s words and information [18]. Moreover, Anderson, as cited in Ayu and Indrawati, explains content analysis is the method used in a variety of studies, including language studies, to analyze the content of specific subjects by means of classification, tabulation, and evaluation [19]. Therefore, the researchers decided to use qualitative research and content analysis methods to examine the semantic roles in descriptive texts.

The data of the research were the sentences in descriptive texts of textbook “*Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X*” 2017 Revision Edition. The total of sentences is 42 sentences. In addition, researchers also used several books and journal articles related to semantic roles in order to support the research. Moreover, the method of data collection was documentation. The researchers read descriptive texts. Then, the researchers observed the sentences in the descriptive texts to determine the types of semantic roles. Last, the researchers analyzed the descriptive texts by giving underlining the word.

The researchers used Miles and Huberman that involves three stages. They are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. First, the researchers classified the sentences based on theory. Second, the researchers presented the classifications and description of the data in the table. Last, the researchers drew conclusion.

3 Findings

The researcher found 42 sentences in two descriptive texts in textbook “*Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X*.” It was found there were nine types of semantic roles,

Table 1. The Distribution of Types of Semantic Roles

No	Title of the Text	Frequency								
		Agent	Patient	Theme	Experiencer	Beneficiary	Instrument	Location	Goal	Source
1	Tanjung Puting National Park	12	0	16	7	1	4	7	14	4
2	Taj Mahal	8	5	12	2	0	5	2	1	2
Total		20	5	28	9	1	9	9	15	6

which are agent, patient, theme, experiencer, beneficiary, instrument, location, goal, and source. In addition, the most frequent type is theme.

The summary of the types of semantic roles in descriptive texts in the textbook “*Buku Bahasa Inggris Kelas X SMA/MA/SMK/MAK*” 2017 Revision Edition is displayed in Table 1.

The explanation of types of semantic roles that were contained in sentences in two descriptive texts in textbook “*Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X*” 2017 Revision Edition is as follows:

3.1 Agent

- 1) Visitors from foreign countries come to this park because of its amazing nature.

The word *visitors* represent the role of agent since they are the ones that start and perform the action, indicating that they are the ones who carry it out. If the word *visitors* are omitted, the sentence will be ambiguous.

- 2) To see orangutans, we should go to Camp Leakey, which is located in the heart of Tanjung Puting National Park.

The role of agent is described by the word *we* that represents that they initiate the action. If the word *we* are deleted, the sentence will be ambiguous.

- 3) Taj Mahal was constructed by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in the memory of his beloved wife and queen.

The word *Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan* is agent because it is the initiator of the action. It is represented by the verb *was constructed* that indicates the action verb. Therefore, the verb requires the action’s performer.

3.2 Patient

- 1) The mausoleum was constructed of pure white marble.

From sentence above, it can be seen that the word *the mausoleum* plays the role of patient since it is the object that is affected by the action that is described in the sentence.

- 2) The white marble is inlaid with semi- precious stones (including jade, crystal, lapis lazuli, amethyst and turquoise) that form the intricate designs.

It can be identified that the role of patient is represented by the word *the intricate designs* because they got the effect of the action.

- 3) At a moonlit night when the full moon rays fall on the glistening white marble, the cool moon rays reflect back from the white marble and give the Taj Mahal a tinge of blue color.

Based on the sentence above, it can be concluded that the role of patient is represented by the words the Taj Mahal since it is the object that is affected by the action in the sentence.

3.3 Theme

- 1) It is a real jungle, which is home to the most interesting animal in the world: orangutans.

It can be seen that the word *a real jungle* plays a role theme because the word *a real jungle* is the entity whose location is described in the sentence.

- 2) Orangutans, which literally mean the man of the forest, are the largest arboreal animal on the planet.

It can be identified that the word *orangutans* are theme which is the entity whose location is described.

- 3) Standing majestically on the banks of River Yamuna, the Taj Mahal is synonymous to love and romance.

The word *the Taj Mahal* is theme because it is an entity that the name of the place is stated in a sentence. Thus, it is regarded as theme.

3.4 Experiencer

- 1) This is called a park, but unlike any park that you have seen in your city, this is a jungle!

From the sentence, the word *you* regarded as the experiencer because it is someone that is conscious of the activity, however, does not have control over it. In this sentence, the verb is *seen* which the past participle form of the verb is *see*. The verb *see* means the action that is perceived by the eye. Thus, the word *you* has the role of experiencer.

- 2) Here visitors can see daily feedings to orangutans at jungle platforms as part of the rehabilitation process to their natural habitat.

From the sentence above, the role of *visitors* as experiencer is represented by the experience of seeing daily feedings to orangutans.

- 3) The monkeys anxiously await klotok arrivals.

It can be concluded that the words *the monkeys* are experiencer because they feel the experience of waiting for klotok arrivals. Thus, *the monkeys* are regarded as experiencer.

3.5 Beneficiary

- 1) This event gives them opportunity to see orangutans up close.

In sentence above, the word *them* in the sentence has the role of beneficiary because they get to benefit from the event to see orangutans up close.

3.6 Instrument

- 1) To reach the place, we should take a boat down Sekonyer river.
From sentence above, it can be seen the word *a boat* has the role of instrument because it describes how the agent visits the place.
- 2) The trip by the boat to Camp Leakey takes three days and two nights.
In sentence above, the role instrument is described by the word *by the boat* because it explains how the trip is done.
- 3) The dome is surrounded by four smaller domes.
It can be seen that the words *by four smaller domes* have the role of instrument because they are the means that surrounded the dome.

3.7 Location

- 1) Most of their lives are spent in trees where orangutans travel from branch to branch by climbing or swinging with their long arms.
It can be seen that the word *in trees* is location because it is the name of place where something takes place.
- 2) You sleep, cook, and eat in that klotok, night and day during your journey into the jungle.
It can be seen that the word *in that klotok* is location because it describes the name of the place where the agent sleep, cook, and eat.
- 3) The traveling in the boat offers an unforgettable experience.
From the sentence above, the word *in the boat* is location because the boat is the name of a place where the action occurs.

3.8 Goal

- 1) Though the park is home to many animals, seeing orangutan is usually the visitors' main reason to visit the park.
It can be seen that the words *seeing orangutan* and *to visit the park* are the goal because it indicates that it is the destination of the action that is described in the sentence.
- 2) It is also a famous center for research about orangutans which has been conducted by the famous primatologist Dr. Birute Gladikas since 1970.
In sentence above, the word *for research about orangutans* is goal in the sentence because it indicates the target of the agent's action in the sentence.
- 3) In daylight, on your way to Camp Leakey, you can see trees filled with proboscis monkeys, monkeys that have enormous snout which can only be found in Kalimantan.
It can be seen that the word *to Camp Leakey* has the role of goal because it is the entity towards which something moves or the destination of the action.

3.9 Source

- 1) A troop of 30 light-brown monkeys may plunge from branches 10 m or higher into the river and cross directly in the front of the boat.

In sentence above, the word *branches 10 meters or higher* is source because it is the place which is the starting point of the action.

- 2) With such exotic nature, no wonder many tourists from foreign countries who love ecotourism frequently visit Tanjung Puting Park.

It can be seen in the sentence above that the word *from foreign countries* has the role of source because it is the entity which is the starting point of tourists' action.

- 3) The name "Taj Mahal" was derived from the name of Shah Janan's wife, Mumtaz Mahal, which means crown of palaces.

It can be seen that the word *the name of Shah Janan's wife, Mumtaz Mahal* is source because it is the entity that the name of the Taj Mahal comes from.

4 Discussion

According to the research findings, it was found the total types of semantic roles in descriptive texts in the textbook "*Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X*" were nine types. They were agent, patient, theme, experiencer, beneficiary, instrument, location, goal, and source which were in accordance with Saeed's theory which states there are nine kinds of semantic roles.

The type which mostly appeared in the descriptive texts was theme which appeared in 28 data. The theme is the thing moved by an action, or the name of the place is stated. One of sentences of this type was "Tanjung Puting National Park is an internationally famous ecotourism destination, which is located in the southwest of Central." This role of the theme was described by the word *Tanjung Puting National Park* because it is the entity which the location is described, and this could give an explanation about "what the sentence tells about." Therefore, it is regarded as the theme.

The least dominant type is beneficiary which occurred 1 data. The example was, "this event gives them opportunity to see orangutans up close." The word *them* plays a role of beneficiary because they get to benefit from the event in order to see orangutans up close.

The analysis of semantic roles contained in this textbook helps teachers and students in recognizing the grammatical function of a sentence. Furthermore, it also helped to comprehend the meaning of sentences and the content of the text. It was in accordance with the study "The Analysis of Thematic Role in Narrative Texts of Senior High School Textbooks" conducted by Marlina [20]. She suggests that the teachers have to explain to the students about semantic roles and how to recognize them. In addition, she also mentions that semantic roles can help the students identify the grammatical functions of a sentence. By recognizing the grammatical functions, the students will grasp the meaning of sentences and comprehend the text well.

Furthermore, it will help the students to comprehend the content and improve their reading comprehension. Meitasari and Ariatmi state that it will assist them to comprehend and give answers about reading skills [21].

5 Conclusion and Suggestions

It is concluded there are nine types of semantic roles contained in descriptive texts in the textbook “*Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X.*” It is all types of semantic roles that according to Saeed’s theory. The types of semantic roles found are agent, patient, theme, experiencer, beneficiary, instrument, location, goal, and source. In addition, the researcher concludes that the most dominant one is the theme that appeared in 28 data.

The researchers suggest to teachers emphasize sentence meaning as well as sentence structure. The researchers also suggest to further researchers who are interested in semantic roles to conduct the research using different kinds of text or other theories of semantic roles.

Acknowledgments. The researchers would like to express their gratefulness to Allah SWT and would also like to thank to Dr. Hj. Noor Eka Chandra, M.Pd and Yusuf Al Arief, M.Hum for giving guidance, advice, and knowledge in writing this study. The researchers would like to express gratitude to friends and family for the support that they gave.

Authors’ Contributions. All authors conceived and designed the study. Halissa Dewi Purnama carried out the study, analysed the research data, and wrote the paper. Noor Eka Chandra conducted the research and wrote the paper. All authors read as well as accepted the final article.

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