EXAMINING TAXIS AND LOGICO-SEMANTIC RELATIONS OF CLAUSE COMPLEXES IN SPOOF
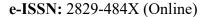
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the taxis system and logico-semantic relations within clause complexes in a spoof text using the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as developed by Halliday and Matthiessen. Spoof, a genre designed to amuse through unexpected twists, is examined to determine how its structure aligns with spoken or written discourse. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, and data were drawn from a spoof text containing at least 30 clauses, selected randomly from a humor website. The analysis focused on identifying the types of clause interdependency (parataxis vs. hypotaxis) and the logico-semantic relations (expansion and projection) present. Findings reveal that paratactic relations dominate over hypotactic ones, with 65% of the clause complexes connected paratactically. This indicates a greater resemblance to spoken discourse, which contrasts with previous studies suggesting written texts typically feature more hypotaxis. In terms of logico-semantic relations, extension (as part of expansion) is the most frequent, and projection—especially locution—is used more often than idea. The frequent use of locution projection, which is more typical in spoken discourse, further supports the conclusion that spoof texts, though written, adopt structures associated with spoken language. This tendency likely stems from the genre's purpose to entertain, as simpler structures enhance readability and comprehension. These findings contribute to a better understanding of how humor texts manipulate linguistic structures to achieve communicative goals.

Keywords: clause complex, taxis system, logico-semantic relations, spoof text, systemic functional linguistics

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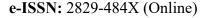*Vol_5 No_01 Edisi 20 Juni 2025*

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INTRODUCTION

Human uses language as a mean to express needs and intentions. As a mean of interaction, language is indeed a complex system consisting structures and functions that go hand in hand to establish meaningful communication. Therefore, the study of language is a never-ending journey. In the past century, many linguists have developed language systems and perspectives. One of the prominent linguists is Halliday as he proposed the Systemic Functional Grammar that provides tools to solve ambiguities and issues in language.

Martin et al. (1997) was one of experts that introduced the concept functional grammar which views how grammar is used. SFL actually enables us to discover more beyond sentences. It considers language as a means to make meanings. Gerot and Wignell (1994) divides meaning within grammatical structure, namely ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning. Ideational meaning conveys the meaning trough the construction of experience and logical relations. On the other hand, interpersonal meaning involves the negotiation of meaning and how people interact. The textual meaning, at last, has the fundamental function to keep the information flow by using devices to connect it.

The flow information is not only important to tie the clauses and sentences, but also it is one of indicators of good text. The information is presented in a logical sequence, gradually enhancing the reader's understanding through a clearly intended message conveyed in the text. Sometimes, the complicated clause structure found in a text causes confusion among the readers, especially for the non-native readers. An example of unfamiliar text genre for non-native readers is spoof. Spoof is often presented in quite short paragraph.

As an EFL readers, some of us acknowledge spoof as one of those text genres found in English text books. Depart from this fact, some readers consider it as a written text genre similar to other genres such as narrative, recount, and so on. Indeed, spoof is one of text genre that its function to retell a story. But, in broader sense, a spoof is a piece of funny or silly writing, music, theater, or other piece of arts (*SPOOF | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary*, n.d.). In this case, spoof is a written text that can trigger laughers from its readers. However, in terms of genre, is spoof text is to retell an event with a humorous twist (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). The twist found in spoof is the distinctive feature that any other genres don't have.

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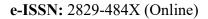*Vol_5 No_01 Edisi 20 Juni 2025*

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The twist is the part of a spoof text that converts the usual event becomes a humorous one. Gerot and Wignell (1994) also mentioned that each genre demonstrates different meaning-making through the grammar in different ways. For example, spoof tends to use past tense because it retells an event with a humorous twist, use material processes, and individual participants.

In terms of meaning in spoof text, the concept of functional grammar meanings is also applied for this genre as it deals with participant and processes that makes them belong to the ideational meaning. Specifically, in clause complexes, as one of aspects from ideational meaning, which deals with how ideas are logically connected across clauses. In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the term clause complex, as discussed by linguists like Halliday and Eggins, is distinct from the term sentence. Unlike a sentence, which applies only to written language, a clause complex can be found in both spoken and written discourse. Eggins (2004) explains that a clause complex is a grammatical and semantic unit present in all modes of language, while a sentence is merely an orthographic unit relevant to written text. Therefore, using the term sentence restricts the concept of language to its written form. Halliday & Matthiessen (2013) also emphasize that clause complexes cover a broader scope in grammatical analysis. Halliday further states that the term sentence specifically refers to the highest-level punctuation unit in writing. There are two systems involved in the formation of clause complexes. One is Tactic System or Interdependency and the other is Logico-Semantic relation and all of which operate within clauses.

A clause complex is made up of two or more clauses that are functionally connected. The structure of clause complexes is shaped by the system of interdependency, known as taxis. This system defines the relationship between clauses as either parataxis (clauses of equal status) or hypotaxis (clauses of unequal status) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). Hypotaxis describes a relationship where one clause depends on another, whereas parataxis links clauses of equal status, with one initiating and the other continuing the sequence. Paratactic relations are typically indicated using numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.), and this is commonly referred to as coordination in traditional grammar (Gerot & Wignell, 1994).

In contrast, hypotaxis refers to a hierarchical relationship where one clause relies on another more dominant clause. This dominance is marked using Greek letters, with the main clause labeled as

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alpha, and dependent clauses as beta, gamma, and so on. In traditional grammar, this is known as subordination (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). Notably, the dominant or alpha clause doesn't always appear first in the sequence.
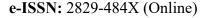
The distinction between parataxis and hypotaxis serves as a crucial grammatical tool for shaping the rhetorical structure of a text. Each connection between clauses within a clause complex involves a choice between these two types of interdependencies, and many clause complexes include a combination of both paratactic and hypotactic relations.

The logico-semantic relationship system refers to the specific type of logical connection between clauses. Within a clause complex, these relationships fall into two main categories: expansion and projection (Gerot & Wignell, 1994), each serving a distinct function. These types of relationships can occur between both dependent and independent clauses.

Expansion links clauses by adding more information. It includes three subtypes: elaboration, extension, and enhancement, each represented by a unique symbol. Elaboration provides further details, rephrasing, examples, or commentary, and is symbolized by an equal sign (=). Extension adds new, additional

meaning to a clause, forming relationships like and, but, or or, and is marked with a plus sign (+). While enhancement introduces circumstantial meaning—such as time, cause, condition, concession, space, or manner—by expressing it in a separate clause rather than embedding it. This type is marked with a cross sign (×).

On the other hand, projection occurs when one clause represents another clause's meaning or wording, either through quoting or reporting (Gerot & Wignell, 1994:91). Projection can involve either ideas (meanings) or locutions (wordings). Ideas are indicated using single quotation marks (' '), while wordings are shown with double quotation marks (" "). Projection can also express either propositions (statements or information) or proposals (offers or requests), and it typically arises through mental or verbal processes.

Several researchers have explored this topic. For instance, Rukmini (2010) analyzed the logico-semantic relations within clause complexes found in the abstracts of final project reports written by English Department students at Semarang State University. Her findings revealed that the abstracts included both paratactic and hypotactic clause complexes. The most common logico-semantic relations identified were elaboration, extension,

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enhancement, and idea projection, while locution projection was not observed at all.

In another study, (Eid, 2016) examined clause complexes in news articles from two different online news websites. His goal was to apply systemic functional linguistic analysis, based on Halliday's framework, to investigate clause complexes in news writing. The results showed that even though both texts belonged to the same genre, they differed slightly in their use of clause complexes. The first article displayed a higher percentage of hypotactic relations than the second. Both articles predominantly used extension and enhancement as their primary logico-semantic relations.

Brisk & De Rosa (2014)conducted research on the development of logico-semantic relations in children's writing, specifically focusing on additive extension and enhancement. Their findings indicated that temporal enhancement appeared first, followed by relations expressing reason, condition, location, purpose, manner, and concession. They also noted that young children's writing tends to consist of single clauses or clauses linked by additive conjunctions. Temporal dependent clauses were typically the first to emerge and were frequently placed in the marked Theme position of the sentence.

The studies mentioned above share a common interest in logico-semantic relations and clause complexes. However, the present study differs by focusing specifically on the analysis of all types of taxis and logico-semantic relations within a particular genre—spoof. Unlike the previous studies that dealt with broader genres or unclassified texts such as legal letters, this research narrows its scope to written spoof texts. Spoof is a unique genre due to its close connection with humor and culture, making it distinct from other types of writing. Moreover, based on the researcher's understanding, spoof has received limited scholarly attention in relation to taxis and logico-semantic analysis, which further justifies its selection for this study.

As for these reasons, this paper aims at identifying the taxis system and logico-semantic built within it. The spoof is selected randomly from a website namely http://www.jokesoftheday.net/ which provides its readers with abundant humor. This paper also aims at identifying the distinctive features in spoof in terms of clause complexes. The analysis is done by adopting taxis system and logico-semantic examination as proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013).

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RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, a descriptive qualitative method is employed. This approach is selected because it enables the researcher to describe, analyze, and interpret the data in depth. Qualitative research allows for a rich, detailed examination of language phenomena within their natural context. Specifically, the descriptive design suits the aim of this study, which is to investigate the taxis system and logico-semantic relations within clause complexes in spoof texts. Rather than focusing on quantifiable outcomes, this method seeks to uncover underlying patterns and relationships through systematic observation and interpretation.

The data source for this research is a spoof text obtained from the website http://www.jokesoftheday.net/. The spoof text was chosen through random sampling with one important criterion—it must contain a minimum of 30 clauses to ensure that sufficient data is available for analysis. This criterion ensures the presence of multiple clause complexes, enabling a comprehensive examination of the logical relationships within the text.
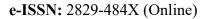
The data collection process began with an intensive reading of the selected spoof text. This initial stage was essential for gaining a thorough understanding of the content, including the text's overall structure, humor, and cultural elements. Understanding the context of the spoof is crucial, as humor and cultural nuances can influence the construction of clause complexes and the use of cohesive devices.

Following the initial reading, the clause complexes were identified and grouped as the first analytical step. These groupings served as the foundation for the subsequent analysis. Each clause complex was then examined in detail using the theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly the concepts of the taxis system and logico-semantic relations as proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013).

The taxis system analysis involved determining whether the relationships between clauses were paratactic (equal status) or hypotactic (unequal status). In parallel, the logico-semantic relations were identified, classifying the connections as either expansion (elaboration, extension, enhancement) or projection (locution or idea). This dual-level analysis provided insights into how meaning is structured and conveyed across the clause complexes in the spoof text.

Finally, the results of the analysis were interpreted in order to draw conclusions relevant to the study's research

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questions. The interpretation stage involved synthesizing the findings to explain how taxis and logico-semantic relations function in the spoof genre. This comprehensive process allowed the researcher to reveal patterns of meaning-making in humorous texts and contribute to the limited body of research on spoof texts within the field of functional linguistics.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings on Taxis and Logico-Semantic Relations in clause complexes are as follows. After conducted initial analysis, it was found that the spoof consisted of 30 clauses. Those 30 clauses were connected one to another and thus they became 9 clause complexes. From the text, a number of those clauses, consisting of 65 % parataxis and 35 % hypotaxis was found. The parataxis was dominant in the spoof text. This relation showed that in spoof, two or more clauses having equal status continued the other clauses to make meaning. While hypotaxis showed that one or more dependent clauses attached to the dominant one. All these taxis were connected by the logico-semantic relations that covered several types.
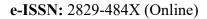
The logico-semantic relations found in the spoof were diverse and it included almost all kinds of the relation. All the findings of logico-semantic relation found in the spoof could be seen in table 1 as followed.

Table 1. The number of taxis and logico-semantic relations in spoof text

Taxis	Logico-semantic					Total	%
	Expansion			Projection			
	Elaboration	Extension	Enhancement	Locution	Idea		
Hypotaxis	1	-	-	2	3	7	35%
Parataxis	2	4	2	6	-	13	65%
Total	3	4	2	8	3	20	100%

The table showed that in terms of expansion relation the extension was dominant over enhancement and elaboration. This could be interpreted that clauses in the equal status – because in the spoof they were in parataxis – extended another clause by adding new information. The mark symbol of extension in this following example shows construction of parataxis in clauses of text.

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(1)   Example 1: /// 1 The oldest came out // +2 and asked his grandpa…///

The example 1 above shows logico-semantic relation of the two clauses which is related paratactically. Concerning to the logico-semantic, the continuing clause or the second clause is expanded from the first clause in which there is addition of new meaning.

The elaboration relation happened both in hypotaxis and parataxis. Whether they were related hypotactically or paratactically, in elaboration relation one or more clauses elaborate another one. Elaboration provides more detail information. It can be specifying, restatement, exemplification, or comment. Meanwhile the least relation found was enhancement with 2 clauses. Enhancement provides circumstantial explanation, it can temporal, conditional, causal, concessive, spatial, or manner. In these findings, the enhancement gives manner and temporal explanation.
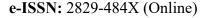
The selected spoof text contains both types of projection relations. According to Gerot and Wignell (1994), projection involves one process being projected through another, either in the form of quoting or reporting. There are two main types of projection clauses: locution (related to verbal processes) and idea (related to mental processes). These projections can be structured either paratactically or hypotactically, depending on the nature of the clause connection.

In the spoof text, idea projections were found in only three clauses, all of which were connected hypotactically. In contrast, locution projections appeared more frequently, with a total of eight clauses representing this type. Among these, six clauses were paratactically connected, while the remaining two were linked hypotactically. This indicates that locution projections play a more dominant role in the text compared to idea projections.

As elaborated in the previous section, spoof belongs to a text genre. This genre is indeed quite different from other genres. Besides its content, there were some different features of taxis system and lexico-semantic relations findings. The findings, in fact, show that spoof has more features of spoken text where it should be opposite because spoof is a written text.

Spoof is considered as a written genre. When it comes to written form of language, it can be separated from its opposite, the spoken form of language. The notion of written and spoken language has remained in debate for centuries. However, Biber (1988) suggests that written and spoken discourses in English do not have single absolute differences. These

variations are as a result of different texts and genres. They can be mixed with each other in settings where spoken language occurs in the form of written text such as in email or personal letter. Some other experts also pointed out the differences between written and spoken language. But, in this discussion it is limited only what is related to the case of spoof text.

The findings of this research indicate that the spoof text deviates from the typical characteristics of written discourse in terms of its taxis system and logico-semantic relations. Specifically, the study found a greater use of parataxis rather than hypotaxis in the spoof text. This result contrasts with the conventional understanding of written texts, which are usually marked by a higher occurrence of hypotactic structures.
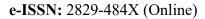
Ngongo (2013) argues that written texts tend to feature more hypotaxis than parataxis. This is often achieved through a range of conjunctions, which contribute to the increased lexical density of written language compared to spoken forms (Halliday, 1989). Higher lexical density is one of the key elements that make written texts more complex and information-rich. Eggins (2004) also supports this view by suggesting that hypotaxis is more prevalent in written texts, as it requires more deliberate effort from both the writer and

the reader. The use of hypotaxis allows writers to present ideas in a hierarchical structure, making the logic between events more tightly controlled and explicit.

However, the results of this study challenge these perspectives. Instead of showing a predominance of hypotactic constructions, the spoof text analyzed contains more paratactic relations. This finding suggests a structural alignment that is more typical of spoken discourse, where ideas are often presented side-by-side without complex hierarchical connections.

Supporting this observation, Halliday (1989) asserts that spoken language, while less lexically dense, is not less organized than written discourse. He notes that spoken language possesses its own form of grammatical intricacy, often realized through more extended clauses. This aligns with the findings of the current study, where extension relations were found to dominate. In contrast, Paltridge (2006) maintains that written texts are generally more elaborate and structurally complex, further highlighting how the spoof text diverges from standard written discourse norms.

Another distinguished finding of this research is the use or more projection than expansion. It is different from the finding from Ngongo (2013) in which written text has more expansion that

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projection. This finding also confirmed by other research such as Anggara, (2015), Eid (2016), Setia et al. (2009) in which written text is investigated and shared the same conclusion that projection is not significant in written text. The projection particularly locution is dominant. The reported speech form is used almost in the entire text. Beside for the sake of understandability, this kind of reported speech makes the text more attractive.

From all those findings, it can be drawn a conclusion in terms of taxis and logico-semantic relation that spoof is more similar to spoken text than written text. It is likely because the writer of spoof wants its reader to understand it easier as spoof is designated to amuse them with humor. It would be dull if it contains complex grammatical features. Schallert et al., (1977) noted that most people acquired the ability to understand spoken text even in early age with only little or no formal education. This could be in fact one of the reasons why spoof is made more similar to spoken text.
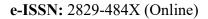
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

After analyzing the text, there are found 30 clauses which consisted of 20 complex clauses. This could happen due to the arrangement of the clauses that one or more two clauses join together. The

combinations found in the text are both hypotaxis and parataxis. However, parataxis is appeared more frequently than hypotaxis. Parataxis is found in 65% of the findings, while hypotaxis only 35%.

In terms of logico-semantic relation, in the category of expansion, extension is the most frequently appeared among the finding with 4 clauses. While other categories such as elaboration only found in 2 clauses, and enhancement found in 3 clauses. The projection relation consists of two categories, first is locution and the second is idea. Locution is more dominant than idea, in which locution found in 8 clauses. Only 3 clauses are grouped into idea relation.

The findings also suggest that in terms of taxis and logico-semantic relation, the selected spoof text is more similar to spoken text than written text. It contains more extension whereas written text is in fact should contain more elaboration. The clauses extend the existing clause by adding new information. This could happen because in spoken text tend to more unorganized than the written one. Another fact found in the research is the selected spoof text has more projection relation, especially locutions. Locutions actually are more likely appeared in the spoken text. The reason of this phenomenon – when spoof is more similar to spoken text –

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because the writer of this text probably wants to preset it in less complicated form. Spoof is an amusing story thus the readers should enjoy it as the way it is with simple presentation that can help them enjoy and understand the twist. The dense lexical density and less locution relation would also make the spoof dull. Therefore, this perhaps the best way to present spoof as it is suggested by the findings.

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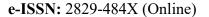Eggins, S. (2004). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics*. Continuum.

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