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A Comparative Study on Register and Genre of Review Texts in Teen Ink Magazine

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Abstract

This research focuses on two review texts published in a teenage magazine Teen Ink. It aims to discover the language style and text structure used by the same text producer. Using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach, this research describes the register and genre employed in the two analyzed texts. The analysis was done by examining and comparing the generic structure and the metafunctions of each text. The description of data led to the interpretation of field, tenor, and mode. From the genre analysis, it can be seen that the text producer follows the same text structure for both texts, although differences were found in the technique used to compose each stage of the text. In terms of register, different dominant transitivity and circumstance types were found in both texts. Meanwhile, the text producer puts all participants surrounding the texts in equal position, and positive assessment is implied in both texts. In addition, as the texts are written in a language style that tends to be spoken, the texts are considered appropriate for the medium, namely the review column of Teen Ink magazine.

Keywords: genre, magazine, register, review text, systemic Functional Linguistics

A Comparative Study on Register and Genre of Review Texts in Teen Ink Magazine

Review has become a familiar word in everyday life, especially in the field of commerce and marketing. As a genre functioning to critically examine or evaluate a particular product, review plays a big role as a tool to inform, compare, or even promote and justify the significance of a product in its related fields (Etaywe, 2017; Hyland & Diani, 2009). Review is also considered useful for marketing purposes, as it provides opinions regarding certain products, which then may determine the current trends and demands (Han, et al. 2018). In particular, book review can be described as a report by a party with expertise of a certain field, containing an evaluation of a book as an identification of the book's significance in the related fields (Etaywe, 2017). The report should cover several characteristics showing the credibility of both the reviewer and the review he or she produces (Ingaish, 2016).

Because of its natural features, book review genre has been widely employed, both in academic and popular fields. This leads to the development of scientific researches focusing on book review genre. In their studies, the researchers usually employed Text Structure Analysis (Move Analysis) (Valensky, 2010; Etaywe, 2017; Ingaish, 2016; Basturkmen, 2009; Gea-Valor & Ros, 2009) or Sentiment Analysis (Han, et al. 2018). Some researchers also employed computer-assisted analysis (Hajibayova, 2010) or the combination of two or more methods (Nodoushan & Montazeran, 2012). However, there have not been much researches conducted to analyze review texts by employing Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

Since SFL focuses on the function of language in the meaning-making process (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), it suggests that the function of a language element affects the meaning of the whole text (Martin, 2016). As every language element may serve different functions, it creates language style or register. Analyzing review texts using this approach may lead to a deeper understanding of how register represents the writer's language style, particularly in its

relation to the text structure of the genre.

Some researches focus on the academic book review texts (Etaywe, 2017; Nodoushan & Montazeran, 2012; Valensky, 2010; Hyland & Diani, 2009), while some others focus on online user-generated review texts found in popular sources, like Goodreads (Hajibayova, 2010) and Amazon (Chik, 2018). The researches mainly focus on classifying the writers into several groups, but none of them looks at the writer as an individual. In addition, previous researches involving popular book review texts do not focus on the writing style of an individual writer. The previous researches mainly make use of the evaluative characteristic of review genre, which makes the genre a preferable tool to analyze public opinion.

However, as review genre involves arguments and negotiation of position in public discourse (Rose, 2010), analysis on individual reviewer's language style is still needed to explore the reviewer's perspective and responses of social texts. Therefore, this research is aimed to explore the register used in two young adult novel review texts written by the same teenage contributor. The objectives are to describe how the review texts are organized, describe the registers of the review texts, and explain the similarities and differences of both texts. For the analysis, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was used as an approach. In addition, this research also analyzes the similarities and differences of the employed registers in both texts to identify the writer's language style.

The review texts analyzed in this research are two review texts written by Aushaz Irfan, a teenage contributor of Teen Ink magazine. The first text is a review of a young adult novel by Jennifer Niven, All the Bright Places, and the second text is a review of Will Grayson, Will Grayson, a young adult novel written by John Green and David Levithan. Teen Ink magazine was chosen to provide the texts for this research as it claims to be "the oldest and largest magazine" written by, and targeted to, teenagers (Teen Ink, 2018). Since the magazine's website allows teenagers from outside the United States to contribute their works, the texts written by

Aushaz Irfan, who is a contributor from Pakistan (according to his profile on the website), were taken as samples of texts written by international contributors of the magazine. Moreover, both texts were accepted by the editorial board to be published in the printed version of the magazine. Consecutively, the first text is published in the January 2018 issue of Teen Ink magazine, while the second text is published in the February 2018 issue of the same magazine.

Methods

This research is considered descriptive because it describes the register and genre employed in two book review texts published in Teen Ink magazine, which are written by the same author. In addition, it is also considered a qualitative research because the data collected are discursive, which means it could be in the form of words, phrases, or clauses in a paragraph or texts. Comparative method was used in this research to explain the similarities and differences between the two review texts and to discover the language style of the text writer.

The sources of data of this research are the texts taken from the Teen Ink magazine. As for the data, they were collected from the two review texts written by the same writer. The texts are both published in the Book Review column of the magazine; the first text is published in the January 2018 issue, and the second one on the February 2018 issue.

In addition, the primary data analyzed in the research are the lexicogrammar, text structure, and genre. Lexicogrammar was analyzed and interpreted into field, tenor, and mode to identify the register of each text. Meanwhile, text structure analysis was used to discover the genre of each text. Next, the interpreted data were compared to find out the similarities and differences between the texts, and thus conclusions could be drawn.

The research began after the review texts from Teen Ink magazine were picked to be analyzed and compared. The magazine was chosen for its claim to be the pioneer of a magazine written by and targeted for teenagers. The two review texts were chosen because they were written by the same contributor, a Pakistani teenager named Aushaz Irfan. In addition, the texts

were published one after the other, so the time range between texts is not too lengthy.

Next, analysis was done using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach. The first step was to identify the genre of the text, including the text structure. The identification of text structure was done by dividing the texts into several parts following the structure of a review genre. It was followed by the analysis of register system of each text. The analysis includes the identification of the text register from the perspective of transitivity system, interdependency relation, Mood structure and MOOD system, thematic structure, lexical system, clause system, nominal group, and congruency.

The register system was later interpreted into field, tenor, and mode. Field refers to the topic of the text, realized by the activity sequences realizing the situation (Martin & Rose, 2007; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Tenor can be defined as the role of participants involved in the texts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), and the analysis includes status (equality or inequality of participants), contact (social distance), and affect (positive or negative assessment). Meanwhile, mode concerns the language style (channel) and the relation of the text in social process (medium) (Martin, 1992). The next step was to analyze the similarities and differences between two texts. Lastly, conclusions were drawn from the whole analysis.

Result

The analyzed review texts are published in the January 2018 and February 2018 issue of Teen Ink magazine. The texts are written by Aushaz Irfan, a Pakistani contributor of Teen Ink who goes by the alias "Aushaz" on the magazine website. So far, Irfan has submitted two book reviews, both of which have been published in the printed version of the magazine.

The first analyzed text is a review of All the Bright Places novel. It is an international best-selling young adult novel written by Jennifer Niven. Published on January 6, 2015 by Knopf, a New-York-based publishing house, the book tells a story about two teenagers, both dealing with their mental health conditions. It has received many awards, and a film adaptation is

currently in pre-production.

In his review, Irfan describes his impressions of the book. He explains how each element of the book, like the characters, plot, and setting, affects his perspective and emotions. He also relates the accuracy of the story depicted in the book to the issues of today's society, especially regarding young generation and mental health.

The second text is a book review of Will Grayson, Will Grayson, a young adult novel published in April 2010 by Dutton Juvenile. Written by John Green and David Levithan, which tells a story about two boys with the same name but different personalities. John Green wrote the part of the first Will Grayson, while the other Will Grayson's part was written by David Levithan.

Beginning with an excerpt from The New York Time Book Review, Irfan elaborates how the book affects his emotions. He describes his impressions of the book's plot, characters, uniqueness, and originality, as well as the book's position in literary field. In addition, he includes some precautions regarding the book language that may not be suitable for younger readers

1. Text Structure

. Based on the text structure, the first text is built up through four parts, which are Orientation, Interpretation, Evaluation, and Recommendation. These stages are parts of the structure of review genre. In general, the text consists of main idea expressing the writer's point of view, interpretation of the book contents, evaluation of the book, and recommendation as a final statement.

The Orientation part contains a sentence stating the main idea of the story, followed by the outline of the writer's evaluation of the book. In the Interpretation part, the writer summarizes the story, starting by introducing the main characters, as well as what they are dealing with throughout the story. The writer already gives inputs of his thoughts about the

characters in this part.

The next part of the text, the Evaluation, mostly consists of the writer's opinions regarding the characters and setting. In this part, the writer also provides his opinions about the way the book brings up the main issues contained in the story. The writer ends the text by using persuading words to recommend the book to everyone in the Recommendation part.

Similarly, the second text is also built up through the four stages of review text. It begins with an excerpt from The New York Times Book Review, which is in accordance with the writer's point of view. The Interpretation part consists of the description of the two main characters and their encounter with each other. In this part, the writer only provides the big picture of the story.

Meanwhile, in the Evaluation part, the writer explains his opinions about the story and the characters in general. The writer also mentions about the book's being the first LGBT-themed young adult novel on The New York Times best-seller list. In addition, the writer includes a precaution regarding the language style, which may not be suitable for some readers. The text is concluded with Recommendation, in which the writer emphasizes his opinion by recommending the book, reiterating that based on the language style, the book is not suitable for younger readers.

2. Field

Regarding transitivity, the text mostly uses Mental Behavioral Process (40%), which is mostly found in the Evaluation and Recommendation part. The other types of transitivity found in the text are Material Process (20%), Attributive Relational Process (16%), Identifying Relational Process (12%), Mental Process (4%), Verbal Process (4%), and Verbal Behavioral Process (4%). Meanwhile, the text does not contain any Existential Process.

Five types of circumstances are found in the text. They are: circumstance of location consisting time, circumstance of location consisting place, circumstance of manner consisting

quality, circumstance of cause consisting purpose, and circumstance of accompaniment. In addition, the text contains more simplex than complex clauses. In terms of complex clauses, hypotactic interdependency is used more often than paratactic.

As for the second text, it mostly uses Attributive Relational Process (57.1%), which is mostly found in the Interpretation part of the text, compared to the Mental Behavioral Process (21.4%) and Verbal Behavioral Process (7.1%). In addition, the text uses the same portion of Material Process, Mental Process, Verbal Behavioral Process, and Ideational Relational Process (3.6%). On the other hand, the text does not contain Existential Process.

There are seven types of circumstances found in the text. These circumstances are circumstances of location consisting place, circumstance of cause consisting behalf, circumstance of manner consisting means, and circumstance of manner consisting quality. There are also circumstances of location consisting time, circumstance of manner consisting comparison, and circumstance of cause consisting reason. The text also contains more complex than simplex clauses, with paratactic extension used more often than the other types of complex clause.

3. Tenor

The analysis of status shows that the author puts every character from the book All the Bright Places on the same level in the first text, making the relationship between the participants inside the text equal or horizontal. It is also shown by how the writer does not use special terms to refer to them. Similar findings were obtained in the second text, as there were no special terms used throughout the text.

In addition, the writer uses more descriptive lexis than attitudinal lexis, such as teenagers, girl, and characters, suicide and depressed in the first text, and teenagers, gay, characters, and sums up, in the second text. In terms of attitudinal lexis, the writer uses rather blunt adjectives to describe the characters in the first text, which can be seen in clause (3a) troubled and clause (6)

cringingly, both used to describe Finch, one of the main characters in the story. In the second text, attitudinal lexis is mostly used in the Evaluation part of the text, as the part contains more opinion from the writer.

In terms of MOOD system, both the first and second texts are dominated by Proposition (92% in text 1 and 85.7% in text 2), showing the equal or horizontal relationship between the writer of the text and the readers. The Proposition system shows that the writer only gives the readers information about the book without demanding anything from them. Moreover, although the writer uses Proposal system in the Recommendation part, he does not use imperative words to recommend the book to the readers of his review.

From the affect analysis, both texts indicate the writer's positive assessment regarding the reviewed books. Positive attitudinal lexis such as heart-wrenching, original, and balanced were found in the first text. Attitudinal lexis with the same positive meaning were also found in the second text, such as simple, unique, and realistic.

As for the analysis of contact, both texts show the high level of readability level, which can be seen from the employment of clause system and nominal group. In the first text, nine simplex clauses (52.9%) are employed, which is dominant compared to the 6 complex clauses (35.3%) and the 2 minor clauses (11.8%). It is also supported by the employment of embedded facts in the simplex clauses. In terms of complex clauses, the writer uses hypotactic enhancement, hypotactic extension, and paratactic elaboration. The group system analysis shows the employment of 68 simplex nominal groups (97.1%) and two complex nominal groups (2.9%).

In the second text, complex clauses (58.8%) dominate the text, compared to simplex clauses (29.4%) and minor clauses (11.8%). Most of the complex clauses used in the text take form of paratactic extension. Meanwhile, there are five simplex clauses found in the text. In terms of group system, the text employs 61 simplex nominal groups (93.8%) and 4 complex

nominal groups (6.2%).

4. Mode

Channel can be inferred by analyzing the use of clause, lexis, grouping, and cohesion system. As mentioned before, the first text is dominated by simplex clauses (52.9%) and simplex groups (97.1%). Meanwhile, the second text is dominated by complex clauses (58%) and simplex nominal group (93%). The domination of simplex clauses and simple groups in the first text indicates that the text is likely to be built in spoken style, while the complex clauses indicate the written style of the text.

In addition, the writer uses more congruent lexis (85.6% in text 1 and 88% in text 2) than incongruent lexis (14.4% in text 1 and 12% in text 2). Descriptive lexis also dominates both text (63.3% and 62.1% respectively), compared to the attitudinal lexis (36.2% and 37.9%). Both the congruent and descriptive lexis support the previous analysis of channel characteristics, which indicates that the texts are written in spoken style.

It should be noted that the percentage shows some significance in the language style in the text. In some cases, the gap between components indicating written style and components indicating spoken style may be big, but if combined with the other components, these components are significant to indicate the written or spoken style throughout the text. Therefore, it can be concluded that, as the writer uses both spoken and written style, with the spoken style dominating the text, the language style used in the text tends to be spoken.

Analyzing the appropriateness of the text in the medium based on the language style can be concluded by the channel characteristics. As previously mentioned, both texts are written in the same language style that tends to be spoken. In terms of medium, the texts are published in Teen Ink magazine, which is a platform for teenagers to share their ideas with their fellow teenagers. It means that in written creations, the language style used should be readable and understandable for teenagers.

Even if the language style analysis shows an academic writing style (based on how the reality is exposed in the text), the employment of writing style that tends to be spoken creates a sense of intimacy between the writer and the readers. For a magazine whose readers are mostly teenagers, this kind of language style builds a familiar environment, and therefore channeling the point of view of the writer and the point of view of the readers. From the elaboration above, thus, it can be said that the style employed in both texts written by Aushaz Irfan is appropriate with the medium, namely the review column of Teen Ink magazine.

5. Register

Register is analyzed through three variables: field, tenor, and mode (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). From the interpretation of field, both texts are written by the same writer, namely Aushaz Irfan, a contributor of Teen Ink magazine. Each text reviews a popular young adult novel, namely All the Bright Places by Jennifer Niven in text 1, and Will Grayson, Will Grayson by John Green and David Levithan in text 2. Both texts are also published in the printed version of the magazine, with the first text published in the January 2018 issue and the second text in the February 2018 issue.

Although both texts are essentially similar, they still contain different linguistic components. In terms of transitivity, for example, text one is dominated by Mental Behavioral Process, which indicates the writer's way of delivering his idea by combining senses and behavior. Meanwhile, in text 2, Attributive Relational Process is mostly used, showing the way the writer delivers his idea, which is by giving attributes directly to the participants. In addition, the first text mostly employs circumstance of location consisting time, while the second text mostly employs circumstance of location consisting place.

The reason behind these differences may be related to the purpose of writing each review text, as shown in the focuses used by the writer to deliver his idea. It has been mentioned before that the functions of a book review text include showing the significance of the book (Etaywe,

2017) and may create public opinion (Rose, 2010). As the first book campaigns awareness of mental health issue, the writer uses Mental Behavioral Process to emphasize the way the book affects his awareness regarding the issue. It is to show the significance of the book in affecting teenager's perspective regarding mental health issues.

Meanwhile, because the second book tells a story about two young boys with the same name but different personalities, the writer employs Attributive Relational Process to emphasize his ideas about the characters and the story. In the writer's point of view, this is regarded as the positive aspect of the book. Therefore, the purpose of this focus can be related to the writer's intention to glorify the excellence of the book, which may affect the reader's perspective towards the book. In addition, the writer seems to prefer the use of circumstance of location in both texts, with the one consisting time in the first text and the one consisting place in the second one. Both types of circumstance of location complement the transitivity used in the texts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

In the tenor analysis, both texts show equal or horizontal status between the participants of the text, as well as the writer and the readers. It can be seen from the dominant use of descriptive lexis over the attitudinal one. Besides, the writer does not use any special terms to refer to any participants or the readers. Furthermore, the writer directs the texts for general readers, as can be seen from the use of general reference for the readers, and he does not use any demanding words throughout either texts.

There are two possible reasons why the writer constructs the texts this way. First, the books reviewed by the writer are young adult novels, so the participants, especially the characters of the stories, are likely to be at the same level as the writer. Second, the reviews are written in a magazine, which aims to be a platform for teenagers to express themselves and share their creations with their fellow teenagers. Thus, the writer of the texts puts himself on the same level as the readers probably to create an atmosphere of community.

Regarding the affect analysis, the writer's assessment toward the participants of both texts are positive. It can be concluded from the use of linguistic features boosting the excellence of the books (Gea-Valor & Ros, 2009), such as positive attitudinal lexis, as well as the use of dominant transitivity indicating positive assessment.

As for the genre analysis, it can be seen that both texts focus more on the positive side of the reviewed book. Even though the writer mentions the negative side of the Will Grayson, Will Grayson in text 2, in the end he still emphasizes the positive side, uses words that soften the criticism (Hyland & Diani, 2009), and convinces that the book will catch the readers' interests. Based on this finding, it can be presumed that since the books reviewed by the writer are likely to be the ones that either have caught his interest or impressed him, he uses the texts to express and share his interests and impressions of the books, and may affect the readers with his opinions (see Nodoushan & Montazeran, 2012).

Concerning the contact analysis, both texts are generally similar. In terms of group system, both texts are dominated by simplex nominal groups, indicating the writer's preference to convey his ideas through straightforward lexis. Meanwhile, in terms of clause system, the first text is mostly comprised of simplex clauses, indicating the writer's attempt to emphasize the information and make the text more understandable. On the other hand, the second text mostly employs complex clauses, which shows the writer's attempt to deliver as much information as possible. Although there is a difference in the way the writer delivers the information, the employment of familiar lexis throughout both texts makes it easier for the readers to comprehend the information, thus makes both texts readable or understandable.

The writer uses writing style and choice of words that are easy to understand most likely because the target readers are his fellow teenagers, so a sense of familiarity and an intimate atmosphere are needed to channel his ideas and opinions properly. Moreover, the use of vocative in both texts shows that the writer involves the readers in the texts. This involvement of the

readers shows the writer's attempt to draw the readers into his sphere of ideas and opinions, which is in accordance to the characteristic of review text that considers the importance of both writer and readers (Hyland & Diani, 2009).

As for the mode analysis, both texts apply channel that tends to be spoken, as can be seen from the clause system, group system, as well as the employment of congruent lexis and descriptive lexis. In terms of medium, considering the writing style and the word choice, both texts are appropriate for the review column of Teen Ink magazine. This style of writing may be intended to legitimize the writer's expertise in the field (Etaywe, 2017) as a teenager writing a review of a book written for teenagers.

6. Genre

In general, the first and second analyzed texts employ review genre. Theoretically, a review text comprises of the following structure: Orientation – Interpretation – Evaluation – Recommendation (Djatmika, 2017). From the analysis, it can be seen that both texts follow the basic structure of the genre. Although they are similar, both of the texts still have some differences.

In the first text, the Orientation part begins with information regarding the main idea of the novel All the Bright Places, followed by the writer's general perspective regarding the book. It is similar with the that of the second text, although instead of writing the main idea of the book contents, the writer includes an excerpt from The New York Times Book Review, which is in accordance to his perspective of the novel Will Grayson, Will Grayson. Although the Orientation parts of both texts are written in different ways, they essentially have the same function, which is to lead the readers to the Interpretation part of the text (Djatmika, 2017).

As for the Interpretation part, the writer gives a short summary of the book contents, according to his interpretation, of both texts (The Writing Center of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2017). However, each text contains some differences in the way the writer

delivers the interpretation. In text 2, the writer only provides information about the characters of the story, as well as the plot. Meanwhile, in text 1, the writer has already given some inputs of his thoughts regarding the issues covered by the story, which is mental health. This difference shows the main ideas the writer attempts to emphasize throughout the texts, which also shows the different ways each book affects the writer.

Next, an Evaluation part usually contains critical assessment of the positive and negative aspects of the book (Djatmika, 2017; The Writing Center of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2017), which can be expressed by evaluative term or embedding the evaluation in grammar (Hyland & Diani, 2009). In both texts, the writer mostly gives a positive evaluation, emphasizing his favor toward the reviewed book. Meanwhile, the writer does not provide much negative evaluation in ether texts. In text 2, the writer only gives a precaution regarding the "strong language" and the humor contained in the novel Will Grayson, Will Grayson, which may not meet everyone's taste. On the other hand, the writer does not express any negative evaluation about the novel All the Bright Places in text 1.

It has been previously mentioned that the books reviewed by the writer are likely to be his favorites or the ones that give him positive impression. Therefore, the writer only focuses on the positive aspects of the books probably to express his favor and share his impressions and interest. Moreover, there may also be an intention of the writer to promote the books to the targeted readers by giving positive reviews (Basturkmen, 2009).

Lastly, in the Recommendation part, the writer emphasizes his favor toward the books in both texts by explicitly recommending the books to the readers, which suggests the significance of the book (The Writing Center of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2017). In addition, the writer also adds his final statement regarding the books, which is expressed by suggesting how the book may affect the readers emotionally (in text 1), and reiterating the precautions regarding the language style of the book (in text 2).

Conclusion

Based on the interpretation to the data as described above, it can be concluded that while both texts have similarities, different register styles are also employed in writing each text. Since the books reviewed by the writer are likely to be the ones that have caught his interest, the writer uses positive language to express and share his impressions of the books. In addition, the writer uses register that is easy to understand by teenagers in both texts as a means to create a sense of familiarity. He also involves the readers in the texts to create an atmosphere of community between the writer and the readers.

Meanwhile, different register styles are employed to show the emphasis the writer tries to convey regarding the contents of the books. For example, the writer mostly focuses on the topic of the book in text 1, thus he uses language style that emphasizes this focus. Similarly, in the second text, the writer puts mote focus on the characters of the story, thus a different register is used to emphasize this focus.

Furthermore, although both texts have the same genre that is built through the same structure, each stage of the structure is written in different ways. Even so, every stage of the structure still serves the same purposes of review genre's text structure. For example, in the Evaluation stage, the writer only focuses on the positive aspects of the book in the first text, while in the second text, the writer mostly focuses on the positive aspects and defends or counters the negative opinions by emphasizing the positive aspects. It shows the different ways in writing the stage although the function of the stage is still the same, which is to evaluate the reviewed books.

This research shows how different language styles employed by the same writer in building two texts with the same genre are related to the focus and intention of the writer in writing the texts. The scope of the research is still quite narrow, so there are a lot more to explore in the future. More data can be obtained, and deeper interpretation can be analyzed. Moreover, a

research can be conducted to analyze the writer's social ideology and its possible impacts in the society.

In addition, more data may also be obtained from other sources of data. More researches focusing on the patterns or styles of review texts may also be conducted. Furthermore, there may be a categorization of review texts based on their linguistic features.

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