



Functional Syntactic Analysis of Nominally Functioning Elements of Clause Structure In The Book The Twits by Roald Dahl

Marsa Haniya Putri¹, Ayendi^{*2}

^{1,2}Universitas Andalas, Padang, Indonesia

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Correspondence :
ayendi@hum.unand.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the types of nominal elements that appear in the book and determine which element type is most dominant. Moreover, this study also discusses the context of situation in the book *The Twits* and reveals its relation to the dominant use of a particular functional element. The data was collected using the close reading and note-taking techniques. This study applies G David Morley's theory of nominally functioning elements and context of situation in both his books, *Syntax in Functional Grammar* (2000) and *Explorations in Functional Syntax* (2004). The findings for the functional elements show a total of 1275 data points of nominal elements. Among these, the nominal subject appears as the most dominant type of nominal element with a total of 931 data, followed by the direct object with 247 data, the oblique object with 48 data, the direct non-identifying complement with 29 data, and the direct identifying complement with 20 data. For the context of situation, the field reveals that the book is a character-oriented narrative text that mainly discusses the daily life and traits of the two main characters, delivered in written language with an informal and friendly tone between the narrator and the audience. The result highlights the dominance of the nominative subject, emphasizing its crucial role in constructing clauses and sentences and its use in a narrative text.

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important elements in human life as a social creature. According to Verderber (1999), language is the collection of words and the method for using them in communication shared by people from the same community or nation, geographical location, or cultural heritage. Moreover, Sapir (1921) states that "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols." Based on these statements, it can be seen that language is indeed one of the most important things in communication.

Language as a communication tool always comes with context. According to Morley (2004), context refers to the surrounding situation in which language is uttered. Halliday developed the study of context in the 1960s with a context of situation. He defines the context of situation as the social and situational environment in which the discourse occurs, and was studied through three parameters of register: field of discourse, tenor of discourse, and mode of discourse.

The study that deals with human language is called Linguistics. It has several branches, including syntax. Syntax has a very close relation with syntactic analysis. While syntax sets rules on how sentences are formed, syntactic analysis uses those rules to analyze the structure of the sentences that have been

formed.

Clauses, phrases, words, and even sentences are five formal units of syntactic structure. The clause refers to the group of words that contains a subject and a predicate and expresses a complete thought. Morley (2000) points out that, in meaning terms, clauses serve to express a single idea or proposition. A subject and a predicate contained in a clause are considered the elements of clause structure.

Clause structure is the internal structure of a clause that involves the arrangement of elements that come together to produce a complete thought. The elements of clause structure share the same syntactic function, which is classified into four broad groups of functional elements: verbal, nominal, adjectival, and adverbial functioning elements.

A nominal function element is a function element that serves as a noun within a sentence. According to Morley (2000), this function element is associated with the representation of a syntactic participant or entity and answers the question of “Who?” or “What?”. Morley (2000) adds that three different roles can be performed by the nominal function element. Those three roles are Subject, Object, and Complement.

Several previous studies have analyzed the related topic of this research. For instance, Ida (2020) investigated simple sentences in English, especially declarative ones, using the functional syntax approach that focuses on the different roles of sentence elements. Moreover, Bonar et al. (2022) investigated the function of noun clauses found in an English textbook for first to third-grade students. Furthermore, Nada (2023) conducted her study to determine the roles of clause elements semantically and syntactically. Yet, rather than analyzing data, this study was more of a brief descriptive introduction to clause elements.

Previous studies have provided valuable insights into clause structure, yet they mostly focus on general analysis, giving little attention to functional elements and context of situation. This gap calls for further investigation into the nominally functioning elements of clause structure in relation to context. To fill this gap, this study aims to identify the types of nominal elements that appear in the book and determine which element type is most dominant. Moreover, this study also discusses the context of situation in the book *The Twits* and reveals its relation to the dominant use of a particular functional element.

This research addresses two main questions: 1) What are the elements and the most dominant functional elements of the nominally functioning elements found in the book *The Twits* by Roald Dahl? and 2) What is the context of situation in the book *The Twits* by Roald Dahl, and how does it relate to the dominant use of a particular functional element? Based on the formulation of the problem, the objectives of the study are: 1) To identify the elements and the most dominant function elements of the nominally functioning elements found in the book *The Twits* by Roald Dahl and 2) To discuss the context of situation in the book *The Twits* and to reveal its relation to the dominant use of a particular functional element.

This research adopts several theoretical frameworks. Halliday’s (1989) theory is used to examine the context of situation. Other than that, Morley’s (2000, 2004) theory of nominally functioning elements and context of situation. The scope of this research limited on the analysis of the nominally functioning elements of clause structure and the context of situation in the book *The Twits* by Roald Dahl.

METHOD

For this study, the data were taken from a narrative children’s book, *The Twits*, by Roald Dahl. This book comprises 29 chapters and 81 pages, with a total of 698 sentences to analyze. The data were analyzed using the close-reading and note-taking method. This study is conducted using the theory of context of situation developed by Halliday in the 1960s, and a functional analysis study by G. David Morley in his books *Syntax in Functional Grammar* (2000) and *Explorations in Functional Syntax* (2004).

The analysis uses a line marking scheme, separating each sentence, clause, and phrase by triple, double, and single lines. This data is then grouped and labelled based on its roles in the sentence. The roles include the subject, which is labelled with (S), the object labelled with (O), and the complement labelled with (C).

Data analysis was conducted by following several steps. First, the data was divided into sentences and numbered. Then, using the line marking scheme, each sentence, clause, and phrase was separated by triple, double, and single lines. The nominally functioning elements were then identified within each clause. The elements that were analyzed are written in bold, underlined, and labelled based on their function, such as SNOM for the nominative subject, ODIR and OOB� for direct and oblique object, and =CDIR and CDIR for the identifying and non-identifying direct complement. After that, a functional

syntactic analysis was conducted to examine how each nominal element operated within the clause. After all the data was gathered, the analysis result was displayed in a table, and the frequency of each element was counted. This step aimed to answer the first research question, which is to identify the elements and the most dominant function element found in the book *The Twits* by Roald Dahl.

After identifying the elements and the most dominant functional element of the nominal element, the analysis was then continued to discuss the relation between the most dominant functional elements and the context of situation. Guided by G David Morley's book, which was published in 2000 and 2004, the theory of context of situation developed by M.A.K. Halliday was applied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the data that has been analysed using Morley's theory of nominally functioning elements of clause structure and context of situation. The data of this study were focused on investigating the types of nominal elements and finding out which type of nominal element is most prevalent. Moreover, this study also discusses the interpretation of the dominant functional element related to the context of situation.

Analysis of Nominally Functioning Elements

Table 1: Types of functional elements of nominally functioning element

Nominal Element	Types of Nominal Element		Total
Subject (S)	Nominative (S ^{NOM})		931
	Attributive (S ^{ATT})		-
	Circumstantial (S ^{CIRC})		-
Object (O)	Direct (O ^{DIR})		247
	Oblique (O ^{OBL})		48
Complement (C)	Direct (C ^{DIR})	Direct identifying to subject (=C ^{DIR(S)})	20
		Direct non-identifying to subject (C ^{DIR(S)})	29
		Direct identifying to object (=C ^{DIR(O)})	-
		Direct non-identifying to object (C ^{DIR(O)})	-
	Oblique (C ^{OBL})		-
Total Data			1275

The table above presents the total amount of research data found from the book *The Twits*. Out of 29 chapters, a total of 1275 nominal elements were found. Based on the analysis results, the nominative subject (S^{NOM}) is found to be the most dominant type of nominal element, with a total of 931 data points. Followed by a direct object (O^{DIR}) and oblique object (O^{OBL}) with a total of 247 and 48 data points, and direct non-identifying ($C^{DIR(S)}$) and identifying ($=C^{DIR(S)}$) complement to the subject with a total of 29 and 20 data points.

Analysis of Context of Situation

This section of the study reveals the interpretation of the context of situation of the book *The Twits* by Roald Dahl. It examines the relationship between the context of situation and the most dominant functional element found in the previous analysis. According to Halliday (1989), context of situation is the social and situational environment in which the discourse occurs. The context of situation is studied through three parameters of register: field of discourse, tenor of discourse, and mode of discourse.

The field of discourse mainly concerns the subject matter of the text. *The Twits* by Roald Dahl is a character-oriented narrative book that tells the story of the lives of two main characters, Mr. and Mrs. Twits. This book describes how the lives of the two characters are full of malicious pranks on one another and animal abuse of the birds and monkeys. Both characters are portrayed as ugly, wicked, and unsympathetic figures who live in an isolated brick house.

The next parameter of the register is the tenor of discourse, which concerns the social status and interpersonal relationship between the participants involved. In Roald Dahl's book *The Twits*, the

discourse is delivered in a third-person perspective, where the narrator acts as a storyteller who tells the audience everything the characters do, think, and say. Despite using an informal and playful tone, the social status between the narrator and the audience is unequal, with the narrator holding a higher and authoritative role as the storyteller.

The last parameter of the register is the mode of discourse. The mode concerns the language medium through which the interaction is expressed. For Roald Dahl's book, *The Twits*, the discourse was delivered through a written medium in the form of a book.

From the interpretation of the three parameters of the register above, it can be seen that the field, tenor, and mode of discourse play an essential role in influencing the choice of grammatical elements within the text. Given the fact that *The Twits* by Roald Dahl is a character-oriented narrative book, whose story revolves around the characters and their action, explain why the nominative subject becomes the most dominant functional element of nominally functioning element of clause structure.

CONCLUSION

The result of this research is drawn based on Morley's theories of Nominally Functioning Element and Context of Situation in his book *Syntax in Functional Grammar* (2000) and *Exploration in Functional Syntax* (2004). The finding shows a total of 1275 data points of nominally functioning elements found in the book *The Twits* by Roald Dahl. Among all the data results, the nominative subject was found to be the most dominant function element with a total of 931 data points. Joined by the direct object with 247 data points, the oblique object with 48 data points, the direct non-identifying complement with 29 data points, and the direct identifying complement with 20 data points.

As for the context of situation, the finding shows that the register categorized the book *The Twits* as a character-oriented narrative text that mainly discusses the daily life and traits of the two main characters, Mr. and Mrs. Twit. The book was delivered in written language with an informal and friendly tone between the narrator, as the storyteller, and the audience.

This result of the dominance of the nominative subject is supported by the fact that a narrative text, like the book *The Twits* by Roald Dahl, revolves around the involvement of the characters and their action. Moreover, it can also be attributed to its crucial role as the basic syntactic subject in the construction of clauses and sentences.

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