

## APPLYING ACTIVE LISTENING SKILL FOR STUDENTS' LISTENING ASSESSMENT BY SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS APPROACH

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### ABSTRACT

Listening is one of language competences as a set of communication and interpersonal skills by listening ideas, integrate information, and evaluate what we hear. Student's listening ability is also assessed by educator. Among tests applied commonly to students, active listening skill is a good choice. It was firstly used by therapist to paraphrase his client's matter for improving other's understandably feeling. In fact, it is applicable for checking listening skill by paraphrasing what a listener hears. It requires interpretation for allowing student to independently make sense of listened information. This way results drawing conclusion or stating expansion. By systemic functional linguistics approach, the results can be explored. They are explored through clauses. The analysis can assess students' ability towards their interpretations. In this descriptive qualitative research, the writer assesses his students taking listening for hotel subject by performing active listening skill. This skill will be analogous with his students' language skill to recheck, ensure, and convey information while encountering their guests in hotel. The data collection is done by observation while assessing his students' active listening skill through paraphrasing information from the audios. They are the data source supported with transcription which is for analysis later. Lexicogrammar is the primary data. Purposive sampling is done by taking students' clauses with mood structure, transitivity, theme-rheme, and separating minor clauses. This active listening skill research results that most students express declarative clauses together with monologue mode, but their qualities can be tracked from the abilities of showing exchanges to know taking-giving impacts. Their perceptions are not only propositions, but also drawing proposals. In processes, there are some additional processes newly added by their active listening skill. They are also able to draw conclusion resulted from interpreting multiple processes. For thematic structures, there are shift and development on the theme types. Active listening skill is recommended to comprehend students' skill fully. In addition, it makes listening assessment become precious and valuable because of considering multiple dimensions which are ideationally, interpersonally, and textually.

**Keywords:** *active listening, listening skill, systemic functional linguistics*

### A. INTRODUCTION

In order to perform communication, everyone is highly required to grasp language skills. This way is done because real communication asks us to enable dealing with various language users in many applications. Fairclough (1995: 239) say that communication is one of core competences which aim to develop communication skills as a way of structuring relationship between people in a changing and multicultural society. He also explains how five aims (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), as people learn, is broken down into specific skills.

Among those aims, listening is exclusively designed for interpreting and making sense of language by receiving the stimulation with auditory sense. Fairclough (1995: 239) lists

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listening focuses into the statement saying “listening is glossed as to listen and respond appropriately to oral requests and presentations”. This skill figures phenomena listened by students under the aim of role identification within social skills. *The Common Core State Standard for Speaking and Listening* (in Palmer, 2010: 24) requires students to develop a range of broadly useful communication and interpersonal skills by listening to ideas, integrate information from oral, visual, quantitative, and media source, and evaluate what they hear to help achieving communicative process.

Listening is commonly used for assessing someone’s language skill by tests. However, students should not just be prepared for test only because the skill is continued in whole life. Learning method should be developed in order to internalize the skill so that students are able to deal it both test and social interaction.

To reach the goal, it is recommended to allow students to express what they hear independently in freedom. Educator should appreciate the way of students in comprehending the matters they are being listened. It is important to note for assesment, not just sourced from answering question only (i.e filling blanks or choosing multiple choice).

The other important thing to assess students’ is how the expressed idea enables showing or drawing conclusion even expansion on their listening skill. It can be shown through their expressed clauses for interpretation.

## **B. REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE**

### **1. Active Listening (AL)**

As listening requires students’ comprehension towards the issues being listened, they are better to interpret the situation and to have the image. AL is a good choice to realize. AL is the decision of expressing listening skill by paraphrasing messages.

AL skill requires listener’s interpretation with working mind. Related to brain system, Munte and Klump (2008: 1) say that AL happens on all levels of auditory system from the cocklea via the brainstem structures and the mid brain to the auditory cortex and beyond.

Basically, it is usually used by therapists in order to encounter their clients’ problems. AL is designed for helping receiver to communicate his or her idea much satisfying to improve other’s understandably feeling. AL shows higher level than comprehension by simple acknowledgment. In addition, people will be much attracted socially to those who support their way of thinking about the world (*see* Weger, Castle, Emmet, 2010).

### **2. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**

In order to support the assessment on student’s independent listening interpretation, SFL is the right decision to choose. SFL mediates how AL is able to know students’ abilities in comprehending messages. From expressed clauses, the writer explores their developments, improvements, and appreciations through SFL’s lexicogrammar.

In this article, the writer monitors his students’ ALs ideationally, interpersonally, and textually as SFL defines in language metafunctions. By the metafunctions, the writer analyzes AL on speech function and exchange, process, and thematic structure sourced from lexicogrammatical aspects as follows:

#### **a. Mood**

The way of exchanging messages is shown through mood structure. It is categorized in interpersonal metafunction. Mood structure use subject and finite as the core of speech and exchange functions. The speech function has three types. They are declarative, interrogative, and imperative; whereas the exchanges are proposition and proposal. Proposisiton is by taking

and giving information. On other side, proposal is by taking and giving goods or service. Mood structure is shown by grammatical elements such as polarity, modality, and tense. They are provided in finite. Subject stands side by side with finite as the negotiation or transaction devices (Djarmika, 2012: 47; Santosa 2003: 111).

There are two types of mood structure. The first is indicative which is categorized into declarative and interrogative (polar and Wh). Declarative has Subject<sup>^</sup>Finite structure. Interrogative has Finite<sup>^</sup>Subject for polar and Wh<sup>^</sup>Finite<sup>^</sup>Subject for Wh. The second type is imperative with Predicator as the main structure (*see* Santosa, 2003: 109).

#### **b. Transitivity**

Clauses represent how language user express about the “world”. This way is “what’s going on” function of language. This function is also suitable for listening skill so that listeners are able to imagine the world they are encountering with.

SFL refers this phenomenon as process. It is classified as language function on ideational: experiential (Halliday, 1990; Martin, Matthiessen, dan Painter, 2003; Gerot dan Wignell, 1995). There are six processes such as material, verbal, mental, behavioral: (verbal & mental), relational: (attributive & identification), and existential. These various types of process are categorized to classify our experience along with suitable involved participants (Martin, Matthiessen, dan Painter 2003: 102). Gerot dan Wignell (1995: 54) say that the process is the core together with various participants and circumstances. The process is realized by verb, participant by noun, and circumstance by adjunct.

#### **c. Theme-Rheme**

The third metafunction working on clause is textual. This function involves the use of language in organizing the text itself. The exploration can be proved from the analysis of theme and rheme. Halliday (1990: 38) states that theme is the element of beginning point on the message. Furthermore, it becomes the attention of clause because sequenced information places theme as the beginning naturally bringing character of clause as message. Rheme exists by following theme. It is the new information for developing theme.

There are three types of themes. They are ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Ideational theme involves topical theme which is then categorized into unmarked and marked cases. For unmarked, the topical theme is subject. In contrast, marked case is not subject. It is adverbial, prepositional phrase, and complement. They are all positioned in the beginning of clause. Every clause must be analyzed until reaching topical theme. For textual theme, it relates clause with its context. There are conjunction, conjunctive adjunct, and continuative. It has logico-semantic relation, so it is also labeled. Interpersonal theme includes modal adjunct, finite, and WH (*see* Gerot & Wignell, 1995: 104-105).

### **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This article applies qualitative research as Blaxter et al (1996: 60) says it focuses on collecting and analyzing non-numerical data. This article is presented from analyzing clauses expressed by students. The clause analysis is shown through the descriptions of mood structure, transitivity, and theme-rheme. This treatment is analogously like Sutopo (2006: 40) saying that qualitative research concerns on the description of data containing words, clauses, or sentences having more meaningful and arousing much than just numeric or frequency. That is why this article is provided in qualitative descriptive.

Lincoln and Guba (1985: 42) explain research location as *focus-determined boundary* and the limitation decided by research object. This research takes place on the occasion of assessing listening skill by AL when the writer (as the lecturer) observed his students’

listening skill. Furthermore, the source of the data are taken by observation in the class. This research is conducted by asking students in the classroom to listen the audios on hotel activity. The audios are played in different occasions with same roles and participants in the topics of handling hotel industries, like the students are concentrating on, because they took listening for hotel subject. The audios are chosen on the occasion happening on reservation and check-out by receptionist and hotel guest. This application is done for his students. The writer didn't lead his students for AL results. The observation was done naturally. So, there are two data sources. They are students and their recording transcription reflecting participant and document. Sutopo (2006: 57) explains data source as where the data are taken including place, informant, event, document, site, etc.

The primary data in this article is the lexicogrammar which is used by the writer to do analysis. It has hold scientific status (*see* Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 335) as the data related to SFL approach. To providing the required data, the writer chooses selectively by purposive sampling. Goetz and Le Compte (in Sutopo, 2006: 65) refers this technique as *criterion-based selection*. The data selections in this article are by considering: a) the clauses expressed by the students, b) the clauses with mood structure, transitivity, and theme-rheme, c) the separation of minor clause because of incapability of expressing complete context.

The writer recorded his students ideas by recording what they said for interpreting the audios. It shows method triangulation by document analysis and observation, while source triangulation is from students' AL transcriptions and the students themselves. To perform the research, the audios were played in different events but they were performed by participants with same roles and in the topics of handling hotel industries. The occasions happen on reservation and check-out by receptionist and guest. The decision of choosing reservation and check out comes from the detail information. Reservation shows how guest gives much information about identity, schedule, type of room, and price. In other hand, check out reveals the result of all guest's activities using hotel facilities until resulting total price. They are two related sequence showing the beginning information to the result of leaving the hotel room.

#### D. DISCUSSION

The writer breaks the expressions uttered by participants into clauses. Because of using SFL approach, clause is the base of analysis. The selected clauses contain the essential elements used for SFL analysis such as subject and finite. The clauses below are the examples taken from the receptionist as the hotel staff (symbolized by "s" on the coding) and guest (g) on the events of reservation (re) and check out (co)

My name	is	Ann Rafferty
S	F	C

(au/re/g/1/1)

And	I	'll	get	the bill	for you
conjunction	S	F	P	C	adjunct

(au/co/s/2/1)

**Table 1.** Expressed clauses from the audios

No	Roles	Clauses		Total
		Reservation	Check out	
1.	Guest	6	7	13
2.	Hotel Staff	11	8	19

In this research, the writer wants to know his students' comprehension on listening by using AL skill. This skill requires students' ability to paraphrase what they hear, then interpret the messages based on their perceptions.

**Table 2.** Expressed clauses by students on AL

No	Students	Clauses		Total
		Reservation	Check out	
1.	Ik	7	3	10
2.	In	6	7	13
3.	Ai	4	1	5
4.	Tr	4	3	7
5.	Ar	6	5	11
6.	Ag	7	4	11

The table above shows how students are able to retell their perceptions into their own words. The number of retold message can be fewer than the original. This finding happens because they retell by summarizing the details. It is acceptable as long as the core information is still on hand. It is also the fact that we commonly summarize everything in brief.

### 1. Speech Function and Exchange

Speech functions and exchanges are sourced from mood structure analysis. The tables here are provided to compare the students' AL skill and the original audio. Firstly, the speech functions are the early attention. The numbers are united both reservation and check out.

**Table 3.** Speech function realization from the audios

No	Roles	Declarative	Interrogative	Imperative	Total
1.	Guest	12	1	-	13
2.	Hotel Staff	11	2	1	14

**Table 4.** Speech function realization by students with AL

No	Students	Declarative	Interrogative	Imperative	Total
1.	Ik	10	-	-	10
2.	In	13	-	-	13
3.	Ai	5	-	-	5
4.	Tr	7	-	-	7
5.	Ar	11	-	-	11
6.	Ag	11	-	-	11

The speech functions from the audios are various because the conversations are arranged suitably with the context as if listeners are really in the place. This arranged situation makes the speech functions almost include those three types. It is different when students paraphrase the messages uttered by the participants in the audio. The AL results declarative clauses. It is a nature that we will retell in declarative mode easily, unlike advanced story teller who can express various speech functions in the way of mimicking told event.

- (1) and I would like to make reservation for the weekend of Friday June twenty first  
Indicative: Declarative; Proposal (au/re/g/1/2)
- (2) How long do you plan to stay with us?  
Indicative: Interrogative; Proposition (au/re/s/2/2)

(3) To Sunday the twenty third = minor clause<sup>4</sup>

(au/re/g/2/1)

(4)

And	she	wants to stay	at the hotel	for three days [from twenty first June up to twenty third]
Conj	S	F / P	adjunct	Adjunct
	Mood	Residue		

Indicative: declarative; proposal

(al/re/ik/2)

The clause (1), (2), and (3) are the sequence of checking which involves the staff and the guest. The clause (4) is expressed by *ik* (one of the researched students) by expressing her AL skill. It shows how she summarizes the sequence. The details are expressed in brief in an adjunct constituent.

After getting speech functions, mood structure is also the base of finding exchanges. SFL allows us to get how language plays its role on exchanging message. There are two types of exchange. First, it is proposition which shows taking or giving information. Second, it is proposal presenting clause with taking or giving goods or service.

The clause (2) can be the example of proposition. It is the example how the participant – in this case, the staff – wants to get information from his guest. It is expressed by uttering interrogative clause.

On the other hand, the clause (1) and (4) express proposal exchanges. (1) delivers the guest's intention towards asking the staff to do something for her. That is for reservation. To reveal this discussion, AL skill is also able to express proposal like what is shown on (4). In this clause, the student tries to visualize the guest's request. Here is the table.

**Table 5.** Exchange realization from the audio

No	Roles	Proposition	Proposal	Total
1.	Guest	10	3	13
2.	Hotel Staff	9	10	19
Total		19	13	32

Table 5 provides exchange total happening on the participants involved in the audios. It can be meant that the staff plays his role more than the guest. The staff expresses more proposals. This finding relates to the reality that most hotel staffs try to satisfy their guests by offering services (e.g facility, help, room key, etc) and asking for administration requirements (e.g identity card, days of staying, etc).

AL includes exchange as well. This way happens together with the ideas through expressed clauses by the speaker. The table below is provided to compare the exchanges.

**Table 6.** Exchange realization by students' AL

No	Students	Proposition	Proposal	Total
1.	Ik	5	5	10
2.	In	9	4	13
3.	Ai	4	1	5
4.	Tr	5	2	7

<sup>4</sup> This clause is minor because there aren't any subject and finite. In SFL, minor clause is left for analysis. Without these elements, language meta-function cannot be executed.

5.	Ar	10	1	11
6.	Ag	6	5	11
Total		39	18	57

Based on their paraphrasing skill, they tend to focus on telling about taking or giving information by the staff and the guest. Those numbers prove their perceptions on telling exchanges happening on the encountered context which dominantly deal with registration and administration needs than service because the receptionist here highly involves on filling forms of reservation and informing the bill.

The guest	will	stay	on Friday June twenty first
S	F	P	Adjunct
Mood		Residue	

Indicative: Declarative; Proposition

(al/ai/re/1)

And	she	has	additional charge on local phone
Conjunction	S	F / P	C
Mood		Residue	

Indicative: Declarative; Proposition

(al/ag/co/2)

This dominance does not make proposal left from analysis. The way of paraphrasing proposal must be appreciated. The proposals direct them to comprehend the goods and services being exchanged. Of course, they will work much on them next time while working in hospitality industry.

She	will	pay	fifty dollars per night
S	F	P	C
Mood		Residue	

Indicative: Declarative; Proposal

(al/Ai/re/4)

The guest	wants to check out
S	F / P
Mood	Residue

Indicative: Declarative; Proposal

(al/Ik/co/1)

Speech function and exchange can be considered as the indicators of students' AL skill in comprehending what they hear. When mood structures show how they express and exchange clauses on taking-or-giving impacts, the messages are better to validate with the contents; what is going on the context? It is described in the term "message as process".

## 2. Process

Process is taken from transitivity analysis. The processes here are firstly analysed on the audios as the learning media. The happening processes involve three types. They are material, mental, and relational: attributive processes. Material process shows physical action (e.g *I reserve you and your daughter a room facing main street from Friday June 21st until Sunday June 23rd*). Mental process is done through senses without physical action (e.g *I hope you have pleasant stay here*), and relational: attributive happens through giving attribute (e.g *I'm Miss Ann Rafferty in room 1206*).

**Table 7.** Process realization from the audios

No	Roles	Mat	Verb	Ment	Behavioral		Relational		Exist
					Verb	Ment	Attr	Id	
1.	Guest	6	-	2	-	-	5	-	-
2.	Hotel Staff	7	-	8	-	-	4	-	-
Total		13	-	10	-	-	9	-	-

The various processes from the audios are then compared with students' AL. The purpose of identifying student's process is for showing how they are able to represent the events from the audios by their own ideas.

**Table 8.** Process realization with AL

No	Students	Mat	Verb	Ment	Behavioral		Relational		Exist	Total
					Verb	Ment	Attr	Id		
1.	<i>Ik</i>	4	3	1	1	-	1	-	-	10
2.	<i>In</i>	5	-	-	3	-	3	-	3	14
3.	<i>Ai</i>	3	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	5
4.	<i>Tr</i>	6	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	7
5.	<i>Ar</i>	8	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	11
6.	<i>Ag</i>	9	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	11
Total		35	3	1	7	-	7	-	5	58

Based on table 8 above, it seems that the students are able to expand the processes from the event. When the table 7 only shows three processes, this table is able to prove their abilities in expressing process types which have not been mentioned yet in the audios.

There are additional processes such as verbal, behavioral: verbal, and existential. Verbal process is the real saying process without behavioral element. There are three participants such as sayer (who is saying), verbiage (the thing which is being said), and receiver (who is receiving the message).

And	the receptionist	retells	about the charge
	Sayer	Pro: Verbal	Cir. Matter

(al/co/ik/2)

Unlike the previous process, behavioral: verbal shows not only saying process, but also physical action. The participants are behavior (who is doing this process), verbiage (the message being talked), and receiver.

And	she	refuses	the receptionist's help
	Behavior	Pro: Behavioral: Verbal	Verbiage

(al/co/ag/3)

Existential process requires existent as the participant which is exist. This process is commonly followed by the word "there" as the existential marker.

In the audio,	there	are	two persons
Cir. Angle		Pro: Existential	Existent

(al/co/in/1)

To assess students' AL skill based on the table 8, it is shown that although *Ik* doesn't express so many in number, this student is able to say various processes than others, there are 5 processes. *In* wins for clause total, although this student expresses 4 processes. *Ai* and *Tr* are weak in expressing the "what is going on", but *Ai* wins the process spread. *Ai* is able to express the process which is missed by *Tr*, that is by giving attribute through relational:

attributive process. This case involves educator's attention whether deciding better mark based on clause total or creative perspective.

By looking at the table of process, teacher or lecturer can know how many perspectives the students enable to express. In addition, it relates to the way of AL participants in exploring the "world".

### 3. Thematic Structure

In this research, the writer has provided the thematic structures expressed by the audios and students. This way is used for exploring the dynamics of themes from the audios, students, and their results. The findings show whether there are shifts and developments on the themes.

**Table 9.** Themes from the audios

No	Roles	Ideational		Interpersonal	Textual
		Marked	Unmarked		
1.	Guest	-	13	2	3
2.	Hotel staff	1	19	8	3

The table above shows the guest just focuses on what she is talking about. There is no marked case so that it shows the guest straight to the point. She prefers more to whom she is negotiating (e.g *My name is Ann Rafferty*). She also uses interpersonal and textual themes on the communication with the staff. The interpersonal themes are dominantly in interrogative clauses (e.g *is the price different?*). Textual ones are for connecting the previous expressed clauses (e.g *and I'd like to check out?*). Topical marked theme is expressed by the hotel staff. This finding is analogous with what is commonly uttered to guest. Marked themes show that the messages are attributed with supporting issue (e.g *in addition to the charge for the two nights, you see there is a charge for a couple of phone calls*).

The exploration takes turn on students' interpretation then. With AL, the writer finds shifts and developments on expressing various types of theme. Thematic structure allows us to analyze topicality in the understanding of coherence on a part of text with others (Halliday & Hasan, 1985: 45). Here is the table of themes from students' AL.

**Table 10.** Themes from Students' AL

No	Students	Ideational		Interpersonal	Textual
		Marked	Unmarked		
1.	Ik	-	10	-	9
2.	In	3	11	-	4
3.	Ai	-	5	-	2
4.	Tr	1	6	-	4
5.	Ar	-	11	-	6
6.	Ag	-	10	-	8

Table 10 shows students' ALs expressed in ideational and textual themes. None of interpersonal theme is uttered by students in their ALs. This finding realizes the mode of using language. In the way of examining this AL research, the language activity is done by monologue. The writer was not involved in directing students' ALs. He recorded and transcribed what the students said only. Interpersonal theme tends to appear on dialogue mode, because expressed language units are more expected to prepositions and proposals which get effects on speaking partner (or addressee). Gerot and Wignel (1995: 106) list

interpersonal theme realized by modal adjunct, vocative, finite, and WH. Specifically, Martin, Matthiessen, and Painter (2005: 25) specifies the identification of interpersonal theme on finite for expecting response (from addressee), WH element for requiring addressee's answer, vocative for identifying addressee, and adjunct chosen for showing speaker's comment, assessment, and attitude toward the message.

The uses of such themes have particular function to express students' ideas from what they hear. Unmarked topical theme is uttered for directly saying participant involved in the message. The examples, according to the students' ALs, are *the guest*, *the receptionist*, *they*, and *she*. This is the strategy by students in performing their ALs.

The guest	will	stay	on Friday [June twenty first]
Unmarked Topical Theme	Rheme		

(al/re/ai/1)

Unmarked theme is not only said for showing participant, it is also expressed for existential clause. The unmarked topical theme is shown by *there* as Martin, Matthiessen, and Painter (2005: 34) saying that *there* serves as subject on clause.

There	are	some additions from the hotel
Unmarked Topical Theme	Rheme	

(al/co/in/5)

Students also have strategy to express their ALs with textual theme. This kind of theme appears in the beginning of clause they speak. Mostly, it is said in the form of conjunction. Students use conjunction to connect a clause which is being said with the previous. Gerot and Wignell (1995: 105-106) refer conjunction as structural label specified for textual theme.

There are several markers for textual theme expressed by the students such as *and*, *then*, and *but*. For those conjunctions, the dominant is *and*. The students use it for adding information.

And	the guest	Will	stay	three days
Conjunction	Unmarked Topical Theme	Rheme		
Textual Theme	Ideational Theme			

(al/re/ag/3)

Besides giving addition, conjunction is also used by the students to show continuity. This finding indicates that the students are able to include sequence of multiple events or actions.

Then	the guest	will	Stay	two days	there
Conjunction	Unmarked Topical Theme	Rheme			
Textual Theme	Ideational Theme				

(al/re/ai/2)

Student's AL is able to show contrast relation on the way of interpreting the listened event. Contrast meaning is lead by conjunction *but*. With this conjunction, the student has ability to relate an contrast idea from the previous information.

But	the guest	rejects
Conjunction	Unmarked Topical	Rheme
Textual Theme	Ideational Theme	

(al/co/ik/4)

#### D. CONCLUSION

AL can be used for students' assesment on listening skill. The assesment becomes much precious and valuable by SFL approach. SFL is able to show the students' abilities on multiple dimensions through language metafunctions ideationally, interpersonally, or textually. This approach provides educator alternative choice for deciding score.

By paying attention on AL, educator is able to observe his students' listening skill. The skill is assesed from the ideas expressed. This article shows how students exploit their perceptions by making conclusion and expanding ideas. The lexicogrammar analysis tries to show the source of their creativities while expressing their ideas.

Assesing listening through AL is a creative option for educator to comprehend student's skill fully, especially for intermediate, upper level, or adult students. Instead of providing listening test by filling blanks or multiple choices, AL has goal for presenting student's comfort as its firstly use by therapist.

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