

# METAFUNCTION PATTERNS OF THE TOBA BATAK LANGUAGE

Hepnyi Samosir

STMIK Prabumulih, Sumatera Selatan

[hepnis@yahoo.com](mailto:hepnis@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

This study aims at finding out the metafunctions patterns of clauses of the Toba Batak Language. The data was gained from the speech of *tulang* (the mother's brother) in delivering *ulos saput* at the Bataknese *sari matua* (an old person who died but he/she still has children who are unmarried) ceremony. The result shows that 74% of the clauses are patterned with Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct followed by Mood, whereas 26% of them are patterned with Mood followed by Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct. The majority of the clause pattern is Predicator followed by Mood. The most dominant theme is the Marked Topical Theme that reached 73% whereas 26% of them have Unmarked Topical Themes; the rest clause is imperative that has no theme. It can be concluded that clauses in the Toba Batak Language are dominantly patterned by Predicator followed by Mood. The Mood consists of Finite preceding the Subject. Residue itself mostly precedes Mood. The most dominant theme is the Marked Topical Theme in which the theme is not the Subject.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Function, Textual Function, Theme, Toba Batak Language, Mood



### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan pola *metafunction* dalam bahasa Batak Toba. Data penelitian ini adalah klausa-klausa yang disampaikan oleh *tulang* (saudara laki-laki dari ibu) ketika menyerahkan *ulos sapat* dalam acara *saur matua* (orang Batak yang meninggal dalam kondisi sudah lanjut usia akan tetapi masih memiliki anak yang belum menikah). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 74% klausa terdiri dari *Mood* yang didahului oleh *Predicator*, *Complement* dan *Adjunct*, dan hanya 26% *Mood* mendahului *Predicator*, *Complement*, dan *Adjunct*. Kebanyakan klausa dalam bahasa Batak Toba dibentuk dengan pola *Predicator* yang kemudian diikuti oleh *Mood*. *Theme* yang paling dominan adalah *Marked Topical Theme* yang mencapai 73% sementara 26% merupakan *Unmarked Topical Theme*; selebihnya merupakan kalimat perintah yang tidak memiliki *theme*. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa pola klausa dalam bahasa Batak Toba adalah *Predicator* diikuti oleh *Mood*. *Mood* terdiri dari *Finite* yang mendahului Subjek. Kebanyakan *Residue* mendahului *Mood*. *Theme* yang paling dominan adalah *Marked Topical Theme* dimana *Theme* bukan merupakan Subjek.

**Kata kunci:** *Interpersonal Function*, *Textual Function*, *Theme*, Bahasa Batak Toba, *Mood*

### Introduction

The rules and contexts of language are learned by the term known as grammar. Grammar is necessary for people to understand both spoken and written texts as Gerot & Wignell (1994, p. 2) state that grammar is a theory of language, of how language is put together and how it works. Grammar also functions to create meaning as Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, p. 31) say “grammar is seen as a resource for making meaning — it is a ‘semanticky’ kind of grammar”. Gerot & Wignell (1994, p. 5-6) classify grammar into three: traditional, formal, and



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functional grammar (p. 5-6). Functional grammar is distinguishable from the traditional and formal ones. Briefly explained that the first one describes language by focusing on texts and contexts. On the other hand, the traditional one concerns with the rules for constructing sentences by word classes. Formal grammar itself concerns with the description of the structures of certain sentences.

Functional grammar attempts to describe both the function and the surface forms of language. It differs from many other functional theories in its emphasis on comprehensive, text-based descriptions – descriptions that can be used in text analysis; other functional theories have tended to foreground linguistic comparison and typology based on descriptive fragments from a wide range of languages (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 56). Functional grammars view language as a resource for making meaning. According to Gerot & Wignell (1994, p. 6) these grammars start with the question “How are the meanings of this text realised?”. Furthermore, taking into account what Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, p. 4) say that functional grammar attempts to describe and explain the meaning-making resources of modern English and their argument that the contexts for analysis of discourse are numerous and varied — educational, social, literary, political, legal, clinical and so on (p. 4-5), this study applies functional grammar theory to analyze the Toba Batak Language. Metafunctions come within the scope of the study in terms of textual and interpersonal functions. Some previous studies have dealt with metafunctions. McCabe & Heilman (2007), Feng & Yuhui (2010), and Yang (2017) dealt with textual and interpersonal metafunctions, focusing on texts and their contexts but what to focus in this study is the pattern of clauses in terms of textual and interpersonal functions.

Clauses to be analyzed were taken from the speech of *tulang* in delivering *ulos saput* at the Batakese *sari matua* ceremony that concerns on the addressers' language based on the textual and interpersonal metafunctions. This study does not concern with the ceremony practice but the language use, so the objective of the study is to find out the answer for the problem of the study “how are metafunctions patterned in the Toba Batak language?”



Related to the study, to help understand what are going to be discussed, it is necessary to describe some terms of the Toba Batak Language used here; (1) *Tulang*; in a narrow meaning is the mother's brother; (2) *Ulos*; the traditional cloth of the Batak people of North Sumatra; (3) *Tujung*; the traditional cloth of the Batak people given to a person whose wife or husband is dead; (4) *Sari Matua* is an old person who died but he/she still has children who are unmarried; and (5) *Ulos saput*; the last traditional cloth of the Batak people that is given by *tulang* to cover the corpse of his nephew/niece.

### **Metafunctions**

The way people use language is divided into three metafunctions; ideational, interpersonal, and textual as Halliday & Matthiessen (2014, p. 30) say "language provides a theory of human experience, and certain of the resources of the lexicogrammar of every language are dedicated to that function. We call it the ideational metafunction, and distinguish it into two components, the experiential and the logical". Metafunction means that language is functional as it is certain that language has functions. Related to the scope of the study, here are discussed interpersonal, and textual ones.

### **Interpersonal Function**

The interpersonal concerns with the use of language to interact with other people (Thompson, 2014). Halliday & Matthiessen (2014, p. 30) also argue that the clause of the grammar is not only a figure, representing some process – some doing or happening, saying or sensing, being or having – together with its various participants and circumstances; it is also a proposition, or a proposal, whereby we inform or question, give an order or make an offer, and express our appraisal of and attitude towards whoever we are addressing and what we are talking about. This kind of meaning is more active: if the ideational function of the grammar is 'languages reflection', this is 'language as action'. As an exchange of experience, a clause is divided into five structural elements namely Subject, Finite, predicator, Complement, and Adjunct.



### Textual Metafunction

Bloor & Bloor (1995, p. 10) explain that textual function is realized through the word order of the sentences, through which the writer orders the message for the reader, and also through the numeral, first, second, and fourth, which the writer uses to signal the salient points of his message. This metafunction is classified into two elements, namely Theme and Rheme. Halliday (2004, p. 64) states:

“The Theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context. The remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed, is called in Prague school terminology the Rheme.”

This statement indicates that a Theme is always accompanied by a Rheme.

### The Toba Batak Language

The Toba Batak Language is the language spoken by Toba Batak people of North Sumatera Indonesia. The Batak is one of the tribes which consists of some sub-ethnic groups, namely: Toba, Karo, Pakpak, and Mandailing. Each group has its own language.

Generally speaking, the Toba Batak language is unique. Van Der Tuuk (1971, p. XLVII) explains that it is especially poor in words which can express the general, and very rich in those that define the particular. For example, it has no word for *monkey* in general, but it has a name for each particular kind of monkey.

The sentence patterns of the Toba Batak language are different from English. Basaria (2014, p.7) explains that syntactically, the sentence structure of TBL is VOS (Verb, Object, Subject). She gives the following example:

Mangalompā indahan inang  
to cook        rice        mother  
V                O                S  
'Mother cooks rice'



## **Method**

This study applies the qualitative research as Ary et al. (2010, p. 22) states that qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in natural settings.

The object of the study is the speech of *tulang* in delivering *ulos saput* at the Bataknese *sari matua* ceremony. The location was in Tigabaru, a small town in the district of Dairi, North Sumatera, Indonesia. The data needed were gained from the speech of *tulang*, Mr Situngkir, during the process of delivering *ulos saput* and covering it on the corpse. For further information, an interview also was done with him.

The data needed were collected by recording the speech of *tulang* when delivering *ulos saput* using a video camera. The speech was then transcribed and segmented or parsed into clauses. The data collection was interpreted which the interpretation used is the interactive data analysis model propounded by Miles & Michael (1994, p. 23). This model includes four different interconnected processes: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

## **Findings**

The data gained were represented in form of transcription and then segmented into clauses. Each clause is translated into English to make it readable and understood by nonnative speakers of the Toba Batak Language. Some terms are abbreviated; TBL is Toba Batak Language, EL-1 is for English Language (Direct Translation), EL-2 is for English Language (Grammatically Correct Translation), TF is for Textual Function, IF is for Interpersonal Function, S is for Subject, F is for Finite, P is for Predicator, C is for Complement, Circum. Adjunct is for Circumstantial Adjunct, Subj. Adjunct is for Subjunctive Adjunct, Com. Adjunct is for Comment Adjunct, M is for Mood, R is for Residue, Part. is for Particle.



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Table 1

*Nuaeng naeng pasahatan nami ma saput.*

TBL	Nuaeng	naeng	Pasahatan	Nami	Ma	Saput
EL-1	Now	Will	Deliver	We	Pr.	saput
EL-2	We are going to deliver ulos saput.					
TF	Theme		Rheme			
	Marked					
IF	Circum.	F	P	S		C
	Adj					
		M				
						R

Table 2

*On ma ulos terakhir sekali tu laekkon.*

TBL	On	Ma	Ulos	Terakhir	Sekali	Tu	laekkon
EL-1	This	Pr.	Ulos	Last	Very	For	My brother in law
EL-2	This is the last ulos for my brother in law.						
TF	Theme		Rheme				
	Unmarked						
IF	S	C					
	M	R					

Table 3

*On ma na parpudi.*

TBL	On	Ma	Na	Parpudi
EL-1	This	Pr.	That	Last
EL-2	This is the last			
TF	Theme		Rheme	
	Unmarked			
IF	S	C		
	M	R		



Table 4

*Tu hamu nama angka na manjalo tu pudian ni ari.*

TBL	Tu	Hamu	Nama	Angka	Na	Manjalo	Tu	Pu dia n	Ni	Ari	
EL-1	To	You	Pr.	All	That	Receive	To	Lat er	Pr	day	
EL-2	You will receive in the future.										
TF	Theme		Rheme								
	Marked										
	C			S		P		Circum. Adjunct			
IF	R				M						

Table 5

*Asi ma roha ni Jahowa.*

TBL	Asi	Ma	Roha	Ni	Jahowa
EL-1	Love	Pr.	Heart	Last	Very
EL-2	God loves us.				
TF	Theme		Rheme		
	Marked				
	P		S		
IF	R		M		

Table 6

*Dilehon ma tu hita angka hahipason*

TBL	Dilehon	Ma	Tu	Hita	Angka	Hahipason
EL-1	Give	Pr.	To	Us	All	Salvation
EL-2	God gives salvation.					
TF	Theme		Rheme			
	Marked					
	P		C		C	
IF	R					

Table 7

*na boi jaloan muna angka ulos sian hami.*

TBL	Na	Boi	Jaloan	Muna	Angka	ulos	Sian	Hami
EL-1	That	Can	Receive	You	All	Ulos	From	Us
EL-2	That you may receive ulos from us.							





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TF	Theme Marked	Rheme
	P	S C
IF		M
	R	

**Table 8**

*Alai anggo laekkon do Oppu Raden dison, on ma ulos parpudi, ulos saput on.*

TB	Al	An	Laek- kon	Do	Oppu Raden	Di so n	On	Ma	Ulos	Par- pudi	U I o s	Sa - pu t
EL	B	If	My broth er in law	Pr.	Oppu Raden	H er e	This	Pr.	Ulos	Last	U I o s	Sa - pu t

EL -2 But for my brother in law Oppu Raden, this is the last ulos, ulos saput

TF	Theme Marked	Rheme
	Subj. Adjunct	C
IF		C i r- cu m A d- ju nc t
		M
	R	

**Table 9**

*Alani i sada do sinta-sintani roha nami sian ulos saput on*

TBL	Alani	I	Sad a	Do	Sinta -sinta	roha	Nami	Sian	Ulos saput	On
EL- 1	Beca use	It	On e	Pr.	Hope	Heart	Our	From	Ulos saput	This

EL-2 That is why there is a hope by this ulos.



TF	Theme	Rheme		
	Marked			
	Conj.	C	S	Circum. Adjunct
IF	Adjunct			
		M		
	R			

Table 10

*Ulaon na tama.*

TBL	Ulaon	Na	Tama
EL-1	Job	That	Good
EL-2	Good job		
TF	Theme	Rheme	
	Unmarked		
IF	S	C	
	M	R	

Table 11

*Angka pahompu simbur magodang.*

TBL	Angka	Pahompu	Simbur	magodang
EL-1	Every	Grandsons/ granddaughters	Fertile	Grow
EL-2	Grandsons and granddaughters grow well.			
TF	Theme		Rheme	
	Unmarked			
IF	S		P	
	M		R	

Table 12

*Gabe pahompu siboan las ni roha di tonga-tonga muna, ditonga-tonganta sude.*

TB	G	Pah	Sibo	Las	N	roha	D	Tong	M	D	Tongat	S
L	ab	omp	-an		i		i	aton	un	i	ongant	u
	e	u						ga	a	a		d
												e
EL	Be	Gra	Wh	War	P	Hea	i	midd	yo	i	Our	a
-1		nds	o	m	r.	rt	n	le	u	n	middle	ll
		on/ dau	brin g									



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	ghte r							
EL	-2	Become grandsons/granddaughters who bring happiness to the family.						
TF	The me	Rheme						
	Mar- ked							
	P	S	S	C	Circum. Adjunct			
IF	M		R					

Table 13

*Dipasahat hami ma saputmu, lae dibagasan ombas on.*

TBL	Dipasa hat	Hami	Ma	Saput mu	Lae	Dibag asan	Ombas	on
EL-1	Deliver	We	Pr.	Your saput	Brot her in law	In	Time	this
EL-2	Right now we deliver your saput, brother in law.							
TF	Theme	Rheme						
	Marke d							
	P	S	C		Circum. Adjunct			
IF	M		R					

Table 14

*Aturanna bapa do pasahat on tu ho*

TBL	Aturanna	Bapa	Do	Pasahat	On	tu	Ho
EL-1	Rules	Father	Pr.	Deliver	This	To	You
EL-2	My father should deliver this.						
TF	Theme	Rheme					
	Marked						
IF	Com. Adjunct	S	Part.	P	C	Circum. Adjunct	



	M
R	

Table 15

*Ingot hamu ma i.*

TBL	Ingot	Hamu	Ma	I
EL-1	Remember	You	Pr.	That
EL-2	Remember that.			
TF	Theme	Rheme		
	Marked			
	P	S		C
IF		M		

Table 16

*Ingkon pajong-jong on muna kasih sayang satu dengan yang lain*

TBL	Ingko n	Pajong- jong	On	Muna na	Kasih saya ng	Satu	dengan	Yang	Lain
EL-1	Mu- st	Build		Yo- u	Love	One	With	That	Other
EL-2	You have to love each other								
TF	Th- em- e	Rheme							
	Marked								
	F	P		S	C	Circum. Adjunct			
IF		M							
	R								

Table 17

*Ima pajong-jong hamu di tonga-tonga ni keluarga muna.*

TBL	Ima	Pajong- jong	Hamu	Ditonga- tonga	Ni	Keluarga	Muna
EL-1	That	Build	You	In the middle	Pr.	Family	You
EL-2	You must have it in your family						



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TF	Theme	Rheme
	Marked	
	C	P
		S
		Circum. Adjunct
IF		M
	R	

Table 18

*Nuaeng pe angkang sian Sipali-pali, anakkon nami, Oppu Tanty baen ma ulos saput ni baomi,*

T	Nu	P	Ang	Si	Sipali	Ana	Na-	Op	Ba	M	Ulos	n	Ba
B	ae	e	kan	an	-pali	kko	mi	pu	en	a	sa-	i	o-
L	ng		g			n		tan			put		mi
E	No	P	Sis-	Fr	Sipali	Chil	Our	Op	Ma	P	Ulos	P	Yo
L	w	r.	ter	o	-pali	dre		pu	ke	r.	sa-	r	ur
-				m		n		tan			put		'b
1								ty					ao

E Now my sister from Sipali-pali, my son, Grandmother of Tanty, deliver the  
L ulos saput

-  
2

T	Theme	Rheme
F	Marked	
	Circum	S
		P
		C
I	Adjunct	
F	t	
		M
	R	

Table 19

*Baen ma.*

TBL	Baen	Ma
EL-1	Make	Part.
EL-2	Deliver, please	
TF	Rheme	
IF	P	



Based on the data analysis, the findings of the study are as follows:

a. Interpersonal Function

The result shows that 74% of the mood of the clauses of the speech is preceded by Predicator, Complement and Adjunct, whereas 21% of them precede Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct. The majority of the clause pattern is Predicator that is followed by Mood.

b. Textual Function

The result of data analysis shows that the theme of the clauses of the speech is dominated by Marked Topical Themes. There have been 19 clauses to analyze. 73% of the clauses have Marked Topical Themes whereas 26 % of them have Unmarked Topical Themes; the last clause is imperative that has no Theme.

### Discussion

Based on the result of interpersonal function, which presents that most of the clauses is patterned with Predicator followed by Mood, it is clearly seen that the surface structure of the Toba Batak language is a predicate (verb) followed by object and subject. Moreover, the Toba Batak language operates Mood element consisting of Finite preceding the Subject. Residue, the remainder of each class, namely: Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct, itself mostly precedes Mood. Here are the comparisons between English and Toba Batak Language.

English:

1. We                 are going   to deliver   ulos saput.  
                  S                    F                    P
2. God loves us  
                  S    P
3. Right now we deliver your saput, brother in law.  
                                  S    P
4. You have to love each others

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S F P

5. You must have it in your family

S F P

Toba Batak Language:

1. Nuaeng naeng pasahaton nami ma saput

F P S

2. Asi ma roha ni Jahowa

P S

3. Dipasahat hami ma saputmu, lae dibagasan ombas on.

P S

4. Ingkon pajong-jong on muna kasih sayang satu dengan yang lain

F P S

5. Ima pajong-jong hamu di tonga-tonga ni keluarga muna.

P S

The clauses show that the Mood element in English, as Gerot & Wignell (1994, p. 2) state, consists of two parts: the Subject and the Finite. The position of the Subject is at the beginning of the clause then followed by the Finite, but in Toba Batak language, the Finite precedes the Subject to the contrary. In TBL, Predicator also comes before Subject. The Predicator may also exist between the Finite and Subject.

The result shows that TBL has a unique grammatical, phonetic, and semantic system as Sinaga (2002, p. vii) observes (cited in Pardede, 2012, p. 28). Sibarani (1997, p. 1) cited in Pardede (2012, p. 28) also explains that TBL has its own grammatical system. TBL has a predicate-object-subject pattern, in this case, Verb precedes the Subject.

The analysis of textual function shows that the theme is dominated by Marked Topical Themes as shown by the following clauses:



1. Nuaeng      naeng pasahatan nami ma saput.  
    Theme                      Rheme
2. Tu hamu nama angka na manjalo tu pudian ni ari.  
    Theme                      Rheme
3. Asi ma roha ni Jahowa.  
    Theme      Rheme
4. Dilehon ma tu hita angka hahipason  
    Theme      Rheme
5. na boi jaloan muna angka ulos sian hami  
    Theme      Rheme
6. Alai anggo laekkon do Oppu Raden dison, on ma ulos parpudi,  
ulos saput  
    Theme                                      Rheme  
on.
7. Alani i sada do sinta-sintani roha nami sian ulos saput on  
    Theme      Rheme
8. Gabe pahompu siboan las ni roha di tonga-tonga muna,  
ditonga-  
    Theme              Rheme  
tonganta sude.
9. Dipasahat hami ma saputmu, lae dibagasan ombas on.  
    Theme      Rheme
10. Aturanna bapa do pasahat on tu ho  
    Theme      Rheme
11. Ingot hamu ma i





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Theme Rheme

12. Ingkon pajong-jong on muna kasih sayang satu dengan yang lain

Theme Rheme

13. Nuaeng pe angkang sian Sipali-pali, anakkon nami, Oppu Tanty  
baen ma

Theme Rheme

ulos saput ni baomi

The clauses reveal that the dominated theme is Market Topical Theme as Gerot & Wignell (1994, p. 84) suggest the Topical Theme is usually but not always the first nominal group in the clause, Topical Themes may also be nominal group complexes, adverbial groups, prepositional phrases or embedded clauses . . . A Topical Theme which is not the subject is called a Market Topical Theme.

### Conclusion

Based on analysis of the data, it can be concluded that clauses in the Toba Batak Language are dominantly patterned by predicator followed by mood. The Mood in the Toba Batak language consists of Finite preceding the Subject. Residue itself mostly precedes Mood. Within the textual metafunction, the most dominant theme is the Marked Topical in which the theme is not the Subject.

Based on the result of the study, the writer would like to suggest to other researchers to conduct a study on functional grammar and analyze the use of language more deeply based on the context of situation and culture.

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