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Grammatical Concepts and their Application in Foreign Language Teaching

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Michael Halliday is one of the most influential leaders in Systemic Functional Linguistics. Numerous researches in linguistics, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics have been based on Halliday’s Functional Grammar Theory. The following theoretical concepts are useful in understanding how language works in terms of linguistic complexity:

- Theme and rhyme
- Lexical density
- Grammatical metaphor
- Nominalisation

It is argued in this paper that these four theoretical concepts are significant theoretically and practically. They can be implemented in enhancing language and literacy development. This paper represents a study which incorporated those four concepts in Halliday’s Functional Grammar in the teaching of writing to tertiary students. The study shows that teaching these four concepts enhances students’ awareness of English grammatical complexity and their writing development.

1. Introduction

The grammatical concepts referred to in this study are Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which has great potential for teaching writing to tertiary students. Since the late 1970s and early 1980s there has been a great deal of research in Australia using SFL theory in developing children’s writing. Studies focussed on identifying the text types or various genres required, how to get more information about texts and how they work in a systemic way. And from the mid-1990s to the present, the research of SFL in China has also focused on the areas of the metafunctions of language, text analysis, and grammatical metaphor and of the lexico-grammatical issues (Huang, 2002). Of all the important concepts in Hallidayan linguistics, ‘cohesion’ and ‘theme’ have attracted the most attention of Chinese Hallidayan linguists. A number of papers have been published on Thematic progression and coherence, Theme and Rheme theory and textual coherence of English writing, English grammatical metaphor and discourse analysis, grammatical metaphor and
stylistic features of English science writing, cognitive effects of grammatical metaphor, semantic analysis of grammatical metaphor; nominalization in English and its discourse function, stylistic functions of nominalization in English scientific writing, but more papers are on the description of English and Chinese than those on the teaching of English and/or Chinese (Hu, 1990; Hu & Fang, 1997; Huang, 2002a; Huang & Wang, 2002; Lu & Wei, 1992, 1996; Ren, 1995; Ren, Guthrie, & Fong, 2001; Yu, Li, & Peng, 1998; Zhu, 1993, 2001). Unlike Australian systemicists who have made good use of Hallidayan linguistics in the educational field, Chinese Hallidayan linguists seem to be more interested in the descriptive applications of the theory. There are relatively few studies on the generative aspect of Hallidayan linguistics though a large number of universities in China offer courses on SFL in their MA and PhD programs (Huang, 2002).

This paper takes a look at the theoretical concepts of Halliday’s Functional Grammar, Theme and Rheme, Lexical density, nominalization and Grammatical metaphor in understanding how language works in terms of linguistics complexity such as lexical use in writing, how to compress more information in clauses to make writing more creative and flexible, how to distinguish spoken and written English and how to write coherently through thematic progression and how to develop their academic writing skills etc. A study which incorporates those four concepts in Halliday’s Functional Grammar in the teaching of writing to tertiary students is represented and the study shows that teaching these four concepts enhances students’ awareness of English grammatical complexity and their writing development.

2. Theoretical concepts of Theme and Rheme, Lexical density, Nominalization and Grammatical metaphor

2.1 Theme and Rheme

**Theme** functions as the ‘starting point for the message’ (M. A. K. Halliday, 1985a, p. 39), the element which the clause is going to be ‘about’ has a crucial effect in orienting listeners and readers. Theme is the starting point of the clause, realised by whatever element comes first, and **Rheme** is the rest of the message, which provides the additional information added to the starting point and which is available for subsequent development in the text. The different choice of Theme has contributed to a different meaning and English uses first clausal position as a signal to orient a different meaning of the sentences. For example,

*Li Ping* read a very good book last night.
*A very good book, Li ping* read last night.
*Last night Li ping* read a very good book.
*What Li Ping read* last night was a very good book.
*Li Ping, he* read a very good book last night.

In each case above, the writer starts the message from a different point, that is, to choose a different Theme for the clause. As Halliday (1994, p.38) mentioned Theme as the ‘starting-point for the message’ or ‘the ground from which the clause is taking off’. And also,
the different choice of Theme has contributed to a different meaning. What makes these sentences different is that they differ in their choice of theme and they tell us what *Li Ping, A very good book, Last night or What Li Ping read* is going to be about.

Theme can be identified in different mood of a clause. The pattern can be summarized as follows (Hasselgård & Johansson, 2000):

### 2.1.1 Theme in different mood of a clause

- **Theme in declarative sentences**
  - Unmarked (Theme = Subject): Subject is the ‘normal’ Theme choice. Nominal group functioning as Subject;
    - *The two Indians stood waiting.*
    - *The Indian who was rowing them was working very hard.*
    - *Of course it’s an accident.*
  - Marked (Theme ≠ Subject): A Theme that is something other than the subject, in a declarative clause, we shall refer to as a Marked Theme (M. A. K. Halliday, 1994a, pp. 44-48).
    - *Across the bay they found the other boat.*
    - *And when you got down there you find he hasn’t actually got any.*
    - *What she had felt he never knew.*
    - *Most troubling of all to some social scientists is the message men get that being a good father means learning how to mother.*

The most usual form of marked Theme is an adverbial group, such as today, suddenly…, or prepositional phrase, such as at night, in the corner, without much hope, functioning as Adjunct in the clause.

- **Theme in exclamative clauses**: WH-element as Theme, normally nominal group or adverbial group functions as exclamative (WH-) element.
  - *How cheerfully he seems to grin!*
  - *What tremendously easy questions you ask!*

- **Theme in interrogative sentences**
The typical function of an interrogative clause is to ask a question and people in real life ask questions for all kinds of reasons to request for an answer. The natural theme of a question is ‘what I want to know’.

- **Polarity (yes/no) questions**: unmarked Theme = finite + Subject (What the speaker wants to know is the polarity ‘yes or no?’). Normally, the first word (finite operator) of verbal group together with nominal group functions as Subject.
a. Are you interested in Syntax?
b. Would you like a cup of tea?
c. By the way, were you serious about moving to Milton Keynes?

- Wh-questions: unmarked Theme = Wh-word (What the speaker wants to know is the identity of some element in the content.) Nominal group, adverbial group or prepositional phrase functions as interrogative (WH-) element.

a. What are you doing here?
b. Then, in the name of goodness, why does she bother?
c. Which platform does it leave from?
d. How often are you supposed to take them?

Marked Theme choices are relatively rare with questions, please see the following sentence.
e. After the party, where did you go?

● Theme in imperative sentences: The imperative is the only type of clause in which the Predicator (the verb) is regularly found as Theme. Verbal group functions as Predicator, plus preceding don’t if negative.

a. Wake me up before the coffee break.
b. Don’t disturb me while I’m taking a nap.
c. Let’s have a look at this recipe. (Let’s, plus preceding don’t if negative)
d. Please stop it.

● Thematic equative: Theme = Rheme

a. What he meant by this was that he was no longer an apprentice.
b. What they did was go into the stern of the boat.
c. The reason he asked you where going is because he hoped you would be visiting other areas.

When some other element comes first, it constitutes a ‘marked’ choice of Theme; such marked Themes usually either express some kind of setting for the clause or express a feature of contrast.

2.1.2 Theme in clause complexes
We have known the position of themes in single clauses and now we will have a look at themes in clause complexes, clauses consisting more than one clause. Let’s take the following sentence as an example:

As the universe expanded, the temperature of the radiation decreased.
There are two different ways of analysing of the dependent clause and each captures different aspect of what is going on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As the universe</th>
<th>expended,</th>
<th>the temperature of the radiation</th>
<th>decreased.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Rheme</td>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Rheme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1.2 Theme analysis in dependent clause

### 2.1.3 Multiple Themes

From the Theme theory, the first position in the clause is important and the kernel sentence structure may be altered to bring elements to the front of the sentence when the speaker or writer decides where to start the sentence and the beginning of each sentence is its theme. In English three possible themes are found: Textual theme (discourse markers and conjunctions) + Interpersonal theme (vocatives) + Topical theme (SVOA elements). And this clause is said to have multiple Themes.

- Textual theme, functioning to relate the meaning of the particular clause to other parts of the text;
- Interpersonal theme, often functioning to code the speaker’s or writer’s personal judgement on meaning;
- Topical theme, functioning as the point of orientation for the experiential meanings of the clause;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>metafunction</th>
<th>Component of Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Textual      | • **Continuative** (discourse signallers/ Markers: yes, no, well, oh, now, which signal that a new move is beginning)  
• **Structural** (conjunction: and, or, nor, either, neither, but, yet, so, then, when, while, before, after, until, because, even, in case... or WH-relative: which, who, whose, when, where, that...)  
• **Conjunctive**: relate the clause to the preceding text such as that is, for instance; rather; in any case; in fact; in short; actually; and, also, moreover; but, on the other hand; instead; meanwhile, then; likewise; so; if; yet; as to that; |
| Interpersonal | • **vocative**: any item used to address such as a personal name.  
|              | • **modal**: any of the model Adjunct which expresses the speaker’s judgment regarding to relevance of the message such as probably, possibly, certainly, perhaps, maybe; usually, sometimes, always; occasionally, generally regularly; of course…; I think, in my opinion, personally; frankly, to be honest; honestly; please, kindly; evidently; hopefully; in general; strictly speaking; wisely; to my surprise…  
|              | • **mood-marking**: a finite verbal operator  
|              | • WH (interrogative or relative)  

| experiential | • **Topical** (participant, circumstance, process)  

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**Figure 2.1.3.1 Components of a multiple Theme (M. A. K. Halliday, 1994a, p. 54)**

(a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>oh</th>
<th>soldier, soldier</th>
<th>won’t</th>
<th>you</th>
<th>marry me</th>
<th>continuative</th>
<th>vocative</th>
<th>finite</th>
<th>topical</th>
<th>textual</th>
<th>interpersonal</th>
<th>experiential</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>please</th>
<th>doctor</th>
<th>don’t</th>
<th>give</th>
<th>me any more of that nasty medicine</th>
<th>modal</th>
<th>vocative</th>
<th>finite</th>
<th>topical</th>
<th>interpersonal</th>
<th>experiential</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(c)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On the other hand</th>
<th>maybe</th>
<th>on a week day</th>
<th>it would be less crowded</th>
<th>conjunctive</th>
<th>modal</th>
<th>topical</th>
<th>textual</th>
<th>interpersonal</th>
<th>experiential</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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We should also consider sentences that contain more than one element other than the subject brought to the front place. For example, *Moreover, personally, he thinks he is the right person who can solve your problems.* The first front place element (*Moreover*) organises the text sequentially and tells us that this section is coming to a close (a *textual* function); *personally* signals his attitude towards what he has to say, and has an interpersonal function. The next element, *he*, is part of the *content or ideational* meaning of the message, as Halliday (1985, p.56) calls it, the *topical* theme. The unmarked (most frequent) order for complex themes can thus be started as *textual + interpersonal + ideational*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Textual</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Ideational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe smith…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>frankly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglars…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>obviously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>personally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1.3.3 (Adapted from Halliday, 1985, pp.53-54)

**2.1.4 Thematic progression**

Readers and addressees usually need to be reassured that they are following the development of the text, and many texts are signposted by placing elements from the Rheme of one clause into the Theme of the next, by repeating meanings from the Theme of one clause in the Theme of subsequent clauses. There are Thematic progression patterns and the basic principle underlying these patterns is that Thematic choices should not be unexpected – they should be connected with ideas presented in a previous Theme or Rheme.

Danes’ (1974) concept of thematic progression is that extending the concept of theme as point of departure of a single utterance (sentence) to that of explaining the inner connexity of texts. Thematic progression might be viewed as ‘the skeleton of the plot.’

- There are five main distinct patterns of Thematic progression:

  (1) Parallel progression: This pattern keeps the ‘same’ topical Theme (T) in focus throughout a sequence of clauses. Information is built up in the Rheme (R) of each clause.

    T ----- R1
    T ----- R2
    T ----- R3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li Ping</td>
<td>was born in China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>was very interested in learning English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And (he)</td>
<td>always tried to find opportunities to speak English with his friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When he</td>
<td>was twelve,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>could communicate with his foreign friends freely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1.4.1 Parallel progression

(2) The continuous, linear or ‘zig-zag’ progression: In this sequence, an element that is first introduced in the Rheme of a clause becomes the Theme of the next clause, and so on. Each R becomes the T of the next utterance.

T1------R1
    T2 (R1) ------ R2
         T3 (R2) ------ R3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outside my window</td>
<td>is a big lawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the middle of the lawn</td>
<td>is a flower bed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The flower bed</td>
<td>is full of roses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The roses</td>
<td>are my favourite flowers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1.4.2 The continuous, linear or ‘zig-zag’ progression

(3) The crisscross progression: Here the Theme in the first clause becomes the Rheme in the second clause. And the Theme in the second clause becomes the Rheme of the third clause and so on.

T1 ------ R1
    T2 -------R2
         T3 -------R3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The play (T1)</td>
<td>was interesting,(R1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But I(T2)</td>
<td>didn’t enjoy it.(R2/T1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A young man and a young woman(T3)</td>
<td>troubled me.(R3/T2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (T4)</td>
<td>turned round and looked at them,(R4/T3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But they(T5)</td>
<td>didn’t pay any attention to me.(R5/T4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1.4.3 The crisscross progression

(4) The split Rheme pattern: Here the Rheme of a clause contains an element which can be split up and used for the Themes of subsequent clauses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There (T1)</td>
<td>are four basic types of clowns.(R1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteface clowns(T2/R1.1)</td>
<td>cover their face with white make-up(R2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and (they)(T2/R1.1)</td>
<td>do a lot of physical stunts like leaping and tumbling.(R3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auguste clowns(T3/R1.2)</td>
<td>wear colourful, ill fitting clothing and oversized shoes.(R4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They (T3/R1.2)</td>
<td>also have bulbous noses and brightly coloured wigs.(R4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character clowns(T4/R1.3)</td>
<td>make fun of the human condition(R5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and (they)(T4/R1.3)</td>
<td>may impersonate characters such as a cowboy, fireman, tramp or policeman.(R6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The more recent “New Vaudeville” clowns(T5/R1.4)</td>
<td>involve the audience in the performance.(R7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1.4.4 The split Rheme pattern

(5) Centralized progression: Here each clause has got different Theme but same Rheme.

T1
   T2
     R
   T3
   T4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>went to the theatre last week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>went to the theatre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>went to the theatre, too.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1.4.5 Centralized progression

2.1.5 Discourse analysis and Theme

Discourse analysis is the study of meaningful language units larger than a sentence. Much of the language teaching is conducted with: clause, pronoun, adverbial, conjunction and so on. Discourse analysis makes the link between grammar and discourse by using a set of less familiar words: theme, rheme, reference, anaphoric and so on. Structuring the individual utterance, clause and sentence is inseparable with structuring the larger units of discourse and creating textual coherence. Discourse analysts are interested in the implications of these different structural options for the creation of text. Further more, they not only concentrate on thematising in clauses, but the sequencing choices of clauses with sentences, and sentences within paragraphs, discourse-related type. In English the first sentence of a paragraph is also the theme of that paragraph (topic sentence), whereas the following sentences have a rhematic value (supporting sentences), which develop the idea proposed by the theme by means of examples, counterarguments, etc…
It is a good way to start by teaching the ways of presenting variation in clause structure in relation to discourse functions because discourse analysis is to have an influence on how language is taught and the notion of theme and how it is realised in English is an area where grammatical structure and discourse function seem most closely allied. However, the natural data show that variations of standard SVOA order are much more frequent than might be thought. So the structural options are organised to describe how meanings are made in texts and theme and discourse can not be separate with each other.

Theme can often assist writing development of different genres, such as academic essays, reports and other forms of abstract materials and so on. Taken an example of a report text analysed for Theme. Themes are displayed in black and bold (Unsworth, 1993, p. 214).

**Whales**

(1) Whales are facing extinction. The few whales which are left travel along the coastlines of many countries. The whales travel in large groups. Whales are large mammals. They have a layer of skin, blubber, meat, then their bones.

(2) Japan kills around 600 whales per year. When the Japanese hunters arrived in boats to kill some whales Greenpeace went into action. Greenpeace went in inflatable boats close towards the Japanese boat to prevent the killing. Greenpeace managed to save 60 whales, but unfortunately the Japanese did kill 24. The Japanese claim that whale meat is apart of their culture.

(3) I think that there should be a law against the killing of whales, but if the scientists must do some research, they can kill one a year, but the scientists need a permit.

The thematic progression of the three paragraphs of the above text is as follows:

(1) T ----- R1
    T ----- R2
    T ----- R3

(2) T 1----- R1
    T 1----- R2
    T2 (R2) ----- R3
    T2 (R2) ----- R4
    T3 (R4) ----- R5

(3) T1 ----- R1
    T2 ----- R2
    T2 ----- R3
    T2 ----- R4

From the above paragraphs, the distribution of Themes are expected and they are connected with the ideas presented in the text which has some control of paragraphing, in that each
paragraph is organised around related Topic Themes. They are *whales* in the first paragraph; Japan and *Greenpeace* in the second; and *scientists* in the third. Topical Themes also clearly realise logical relationship between the clauses within each paragraph. **But unfortunately Japanese didn’t kill 24.** In this sentence, *but* is the Textual Theme, which functions to relate the meaning of the particular clause to other parts of the text; and *unfortunately* is the Interpersonal Theme, which indicates a writer’s or speaker’s personal judgement on the meaning; and *Japanese is* the Topical Theme.

### 2.2 Lexical Density

Halliday and Martin (1993) defines **lexical density** is a measure of the density of information in any passage of text, according to how tightly the lexical items (content words) have been packed into the grammatical structure. It can be measured, in English, as the number of lexical words per clause. Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992, p. 163) defines lexical density as “a measure of the ratio of different words to the total number of words in a text.”

#### 2.2.1 Lexical density levels distinguish writing from speech

Lexical density levels distinguish writing from speech, with the latter being characterized by lower levels. Halliday (1985a) analysed the functions of written English, and showed that it is not simply “spoken language written down”. Written English tends to be lexically dense; that is, it has a high ratio of content to function words and a small number of clauses. Content words include nouns, regular /main verbs, and most adjectives and adverbs (Eggins, 1994, pp. 60-61). There are so many of them in our language, such as John, room, answer; happy, new, large, grey; search, grow, hold, have; really, completely, very, also, enough and so on. And grammatical/Function words have little lexical meaning, but they express grammatical relations with other words within a sentence, or specify the attitude or mood of the speaker. They are often short words include pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, articles, and auxiliary verbs, such as in, here, will, I, the, after, when, though, since, because, to and, them, for, thus, where, how, you, who, his, but, while, whose etc.

Typically lexical density is regarded as a measure which distinguishes spoken and written texts. In spoken texts, lexical density is said to be lower (Eggins, 1994, p. 61). Let’s consider the ratio of the content words in the two sentences (The lexical words are in bold type.).

*Magnetic materials are materials that are attracted to magnets. (5/9)*

*My mother used to tell me about the singer in her town. (4/12)*

From the above two sentences we can see that the first one (5/9) has higher lexical density than the second one (4/12), therefore the sentence information in the first sentence is more than that of the second one and also more meanings have been packed into the first sentence. In any piece of text or discourse there are variations in lexical density from clause to clause but, generally, the lexical density of spoken language tends to be lower than
written language since writing is more planned and formal, so the second sentence is more spoken.

2.2.2 The formula of lexical density
In contrasting written and spoken versions of the same text, Eggins (1994, p.61) found that on average the spoken text was 33% lexical, while the written version was 42% lexical. Written texts try to pack more meanings into each clause. The lexical density of a text can be calculated and the formula is as follows:

\[ T = \text{total number of the words of a text} \]
\[ L = \text{lexical / content words of a text} \]
\[ \text{Lexical density} = \frac{L}{T} \times 100\% \]

For example, a text has 51075 words and 44518 content words \((T = 51075; L = 44518)\)

\[ \text{Lexical density} = \frac{44518}{51075} \times 100\% = 87.16\% \]

From the result we know that the lexical density in this text is very high and it is much higher than the average percentage of a written text (42%). In this case the passage becomes difficulty to read.

2.2.3 Lexical density of scientific writing
In scientific writing the lexical density may go much higher and the language appears complicated because it involves a large number of inter-relating technical terms and each of which has been defined and ‘contains’ information the reader is expected to already understand and scientific language has developed to enable scientists to communicate effectively. Halliday and Martin (1993) suggested seven headings which could be used for illustrating and discussing the difficulties that are characteristic of scientific English: 1. interlocking definitions; 2. technical taxonomies; 3. special expressions; 4. lexical density; 5. syntactic ambiguity; 6. grammatical metaphor; 7. semantic discontinuity; Lexical density is one of the seven headings which could be used for illustrating and discussing the difficulties that are characteristic of scientific English. Let’s have a look at the three clauses adopted from Halliday and Martin (1993) with a lexical density from Scientific American (December, 1987).

(1) Griffith’s energy balance approach to strength and fracture also suggested the importance of surface chemistry in the mechanical behaviour of brittle materials. (13/22)

(2) The conical space rendering of cosmic strings’ gravitational properties applies only to straight strings. (10/14)

(3) The model rests on the localized gravitational attraction exerted by rapidly oscillating and extremely massive closed loops of cosmic string. (13/20)
The calculation of the lexical density of the above three sentences are 60% (1), 71.4% (2) and 65% (3). According to the results above, the three sentences are all high in lexical dense and the lexical density of these three sentences are higher than the average percentage of a written text (42%). When the lexical density is to this extent, the texts become difficult to read and this is the characteristic of the scientific writing. After analyzing these three sentences, we may find that the nominal groups and strings of lexical words without any grammatical words in between are the main characteristics of the scientific writing, and nominalization builds long noun phrases to produce a lexically dense style, such as the importance of surface chemistry, the mechanical behaviour of brittle materials, The model rests… and Griffith’s energy balance approach, cosmic strings’ gravitational properties…and these characteristics make the sentences difficult to understand because each word contains information, however scientific language has developed to enable scientists to communicate effectively.

2.3 Nominalization
In linguistics, nominalization refers to the use of a verb or an adjective into a noun, with or without morphological transformation, so that the word can now act as the head of a noun phrase. In English, some verbs and adjectives can be used directly as nouns, for example, change and good, while others require some form of morphological transformation requiring a suffix, for example, nominalization from nominalize; movement from move; investigation from investigate; difficulty from difficult; carelessness from careless and so on. When a verb is nominalised, it becomes concept rather than an action("Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia ", 2006).

2.3.1 The nominalised structure adjustments
Givón (1993, pp. 288-289) describes a set of structural adjustments of nominalization. Based on the structural adjustments, learners can produce a nominalised structure consciously. They are as follows:

1. The verb in the verbal structure has to be made the head noun of the nominalized structure.
2. The verb has to lose its verbal inflections and take on noun-like morphology. For example,
3. The subject and direct object often take on the genitive (possessive) case.
4. The subject and the object may become possessive determiners. The whole nominalized NP may acquire a definite or an indefinite article.
5. Manner adverbs in the verbal structure, in most cases, become adjectives that modify the head noun in the nominalized NP.

These structure adjustments are illustrated in the examples below:

The police investigated the murder → the police’s investigation of the murder
Structural Adjustments 1 and 2: investigate → investigation
Structural Adjustment 3: the murder → of the murder (the object becomes the genitive)
Structural Adjustment 4: The police investigated → the police’s investigation (the subject becomes the possessive determiner)

2.3.2 The characteristic of nominalization
Nominalizations were found to occur most frequently in academic papers, 92 occurrences per 1,000 words, as compared to 27 per 1,000 in conversations, 56 per 1,000 in lectures, and 55 per 1,000 in letters (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987). Nominalization has the following characteristics (Ling, 2005):

- Nominalization makes actions or processes (verbs) become concepts (nouns).

  *We walked for charity. We raised money for the Children’s Foundation.*
  *The charity walk raised money for the Children’s Foundation.*

Academic writing or adult writing frequently uses nominalizations; that is, the noun forms of verbs. The process of nominalization turns verbs (actions or events) into nouns (things, concepts or people). And the text is now no longer describing actions: it is focused on objects or concepts. As you can see from the examples above, when a verb is nominalised, it becomes a concept rather than an action. As a consequence, the tone of the writing sounds more abstract and also more formal. And one powerful means of producing a lexically dense style is by using nominalization to build long noun phrases.

- With nominalization, a single sentence packs in several complex abstract ideas.

  *Every day shops lose thousands of dollars worth of valuable items. And this affects us all because prices increase and we have to pay extra.*

  *The daily loss of thousands of dollars worth of valuable stock ultimately affects us all through an increase in prices.*

When writers nominalize, instead of using a verb in a clause to represent an action, they change the verb into a noun in a noun phrase. By comparing the above two sentences, we can see that several complex abstract ideas are packed into one single sentence.

- Nominalization builds long noun phrases to produce a lexically dense style.

  *Hubble’s finding about the expansion of the galaxies revolutionized our understanding of the Universe and its origins.*

- Nominalization reduces the number of clauses and more information is able to be compressed into each nominal (noun) group.
If you invest in rail facility, this implies a long-term commitment.

Investment in rail facilities implies a long-term commitment.

The original sentences have three clauses while the nominalised sentence has only one.

- When verbs are nominalised they become concepts rather than actions; as a result, the writer is able to increase in the amount and density of information to make further comment or observation about the concept in the sentence. For example:

  The company decided to expand its asset base.
  The decision to expand the asset base… (The verb is nominalised)
  The decision to expand the asset base was a significant shift in the company’s financial strategy. (More information commenting upon the newly formed concept can now be added.)

From the above examples, the verb is nominalised in the second sentence; therefore the writer can add more information commenting upon the newly formed concept.

- Nominalization enables an academic writer to concisely refer to recurring abstract ideas, for example:

  My thesis is that there is “unity in diversity”. However, we can neither understand nor appreciate the world’s diversity without perceiving how unity itself generates and continually changes diversity. We all have to live in this one world in which diversity must be tolerated and could be appreciated in unity. Of course, I refer to toleration and appreciation of diversity in ethnicity, gender, culture, taste, politics, and colour or “race”. I do not advocate acceptance of inequality in gender, wealth, income, and power without struggle(Frank, 1998).

The nominalized phrase “toleration and appreciation of diversity” in the above text allows the writer to refer to three ideas mentioned in the preceding context and link them to long list of items included in the notion of diversity, namely, gender, culture, taste, politics, colour, and race. In the next sentence, the phrase “acceptance of inequality” marks a new topic, and syntactic structure of the whole nominal phrase, including the list of items in the prepositional phrase that follows, echoes the structure of the previous nominalized phrase and thus creates a sense of stylistic balance and cohesion.

Nominalization builds long noun phrases to produce a lexically dense style and this is the reason why scientific writing is difficult to understand. Among the specific grammatical features of scientific writing discussed by Halliday and Martin (1993) is the nominalization of processes.

2.4 Grammatical Metaphor
A grammatical metaphor (GM) is a substitution of one grammatical class, or one grammatical structure, by another; for example, “his departure instead of he departed.” (M. A. K. Halliday & J. R. Martin, 1993, p. 79) Put it simply, the process of departing has been turned into a noun. Grammatical metaphor (Thompson, 1996, p. 165) is the expression of a meaning through a lexical-grammatical form which originally evolved to express a different kind of meaning. The expression of the meaning is metaphorical in relation to a different way of expressing the ‘same’ meaning which would be more congruent.

Consider the following examples:

(1) a. Water *evaporates* from a puddle.
   b. *Evaporation* occurs more quickly in hot weather.

(1) b is grammatical metaphor because in this sentence a process *evaporates* is rendered in a nominal type *Evaporation*.

(2) a. Mary saw a wonderful sight. (Congruent form)
   b. Mary *came upon* a wonderful sight. (Metaphorical form)
      (M. A. K. Halliday, 1985a, p. 322)
   c. A wonderful sight *met* Mary’s eyes. (Metaphorical form)

(2) b and c are interpreted as metaphorical variants of (2)a.

(3) a. Great changes have *taken place* in my hometown in recent years.
      (Congruent form)
   b. Recent years have *seen* great changes in my hometown.
      (Metaphorical form)

(3) b is interpreted as metaphorical variant of (3)a.

(4) a. *in a difficult situation because of the effects of the industrial revolution* (congruent form)
   b. *crippled with the burden* of the industrial revolution (in a difficult situation) (metaphorical form) (Thompson, 1996, p.163)

(4) b is metaphorical and *crippled with the burden* is the different way of expressing the meaning of *in a difficult situation*.

Normally three types of GMs are presented in academic language at college level. Ideational GM is an incongruent representation of the experiential meaning, logical GM refers to ideas that are organized in an incongruent form at the level of discourse and interpersonal GM is a more implicit or explicit way of presenting the authorship in the text.

2.4.1 Ideational metaphors
A framework has been suggested for interpreting the clause in its ideational function and three steps are involved (Halliday, 1994, p.343).

1. selection of process types: material, mental, relational, with their various intermediate and secondary types;
2. configuration of transitivity functions: Actor, Goal, Senser, Manner, etc. representing the process, its participants, and any circumstantial elements;
3. sequence of group-phrase classes: verbal group, nominal group, adverbial group, prepositional phrases, and their various sub-classes.

This framework is a way of getting from the meaning to the wording and the three steps are in a systematic relationship to lead the natural sequence of steps towards its realization. For example, *1980 saw the great changes in Guangzhou.*

**Figure 2.4.1 Experiential metaphorical form of mental process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1980</th>
<th>saw</th>
<th>great changes</th>
<th>in Guangzhou</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>senser</td>
<td>process: mental</td>
<td>phenomenon</td>
<td>circumstance: place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In SFL model of language, the notion of a ‘process’ belongs to the ideational metafunction. However, grammatical metaphor is more than just nominalization. Some other types of expressions are also regarded as GM in SFL:

**2.4.1.1 Metaphors of transitivity**

In both spoken and written discourse, we’d better use both congruent and metaphorical forms in order to make our speech or writing not too flat and too artificial and contrived. However, getting to know the metaphors of transitivity is necessary in language learning. Here are some examples of metaphors of transitivity.

*John put the nail into the plank with a hammer.* (Circumstance: manner)

*The hammer put the nail into the plank.* (Participant)

*John hammered the nail into the plank.* (Material process)

*Great changes took place in Guangzhou in 1980.* (Circumstance: time)

*1980 saw great changes in Guangzhou.* (Participant / Senser)

*They arrive at the summit on the fifth day.* (Circumstance: time)

*The fifth day saw them at the summit.* (Participant / Senser)

Let’s take “*The fifth day saw them at the summit.*” as an example. If you are reporting the success of a mountaineering expedition, instead of writing they arrived at the summit on the fifth day you may choose an expression such the fifth day saw them at the summit. Here the time “*the fifth day*” has been dressed up to look as if it was a participant, an onlooker “seeing” the climbers when they arrived (M. A. K. Halliday, 1994a, p. 344). Grammatical metaphor of transitivity makes writing more vivid and expressive.
2.4.2 Interpersonal metaphors
Interpersonal GM mainly focuses on the areas of modality and mood. According to functional grammar, the function of modality is expressed not only by model verbs, but by nouns, adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases and its corresponding structures as well. Interpersonal metaphor of modality has its characteristic of subjective and objective and it also has got the value which is attached to the model judgement: high, median or low. Except these, interpersonal metaphor of modality also has the characteristic of the positive and the negative including direct negative and transferred negative.

2.4.2.1 Interpersonal metaphors of modality
Interpersonal metaphor of modality encourages us using the grammar metaphorically. For example, we say I think, when we mean—probably; or, I believe, when we mean—almost certainly; or, don’t you think, when we mean—definitely. Let’s have a look at these modal grammatical metaphors in the following sentences (Butt, Fahey, Spinks, & Yallop, 1997, p. 86):

(5)a. This is what (I think) a good teacher should be like ‘probably’.
Here the modality stays in the embedded clause.

b. I think ‘probably’ (that) this is what I a good teacher should be like.
Here the modality applies to the whole clause.

For another example, in order to express the likelihood of Li Ping having gone to Beijing already, we may have a few possibilities:

a. Li Ping must have gone to Beijing.
b. Li Ping will certainly have gone to Beijing by now.
c. I think Li Ping has already gone to Beijing.
d. It is very likely that Li Ping has already gone to Beijing.
e. Everyone believed that Li Ping had already gone to Beijing.
f. It is clear that Li Ping has already gone to Beijing.

In (a) and (b) clauses the same meaning of likelihood can be realized by a model verb must (a) or a model adverb certainly (b). Halliday calls these expression of modality which occur within the clause structure itself. While in (c), (d), (e) and (f), the different degree of certainty is decided by the word with modal meaning outside of the original clause, such as verbs think(c) and believe(e), or particular types of adjectives likely (d) and clear (f). Halliday (1994a, p. 354) calls such expressions interpersonal metaphors of modality, because the modal meaning is realized outside the clause (in contrast with the standard encoding by means of modal verbs or adverbs, which lie within the clause structure). In this case, again, the metaphors are based on a borrowing. For example the verb think can be borrowed to express a modal meaning, as in example (c).
2.4.2.2 Interpersonal metaphors of mood

The other main type of interpersonal metaphor is the metaphors of mood. According to Halliday (1994a, p. 363), mood expresses the speech functions of statement, question, offer and command. Statements are expressions which give information, questions are expressions which ask information, offers are the expressions which put forward something to be considered and accepted or refused and commands are expressions which ask for something to take place. Each of these functions has its standard, default type of encoding: statements are encoded by the declarative, questions by the interrogative, and commands by the imperative clauses, For example:

a. Where did you park the car?
b. The car is in the garage.
c. Show me the car!

The examples a and b above illustrate the expression of question and statement and they are fairly straightforward, but with regard to command c, the situation is different. There is a large variety of expressions that can be used to express the same command:

d. Tell me where you parked the car, please.
e. Could you tell me where you parked the car, please?
f. I would advise you to tell me where you parked the car.
g. You are kindly requested to tell me where you parked the car.
h. It is recommended that you tell me where you parked the car.
i. It is advisable to tell me where you parked the car.

According to Halliday, the various expressions above are under the heading of the notion of interpersonal metaphor of mood because they are considered as metaphorical and the deviate from the standard, most straightforward realization of a command by means of the imperative mood. Interpersonal metaphor is mostly associated with mood which expresses the speech function.

2.4.3 GM and nominalization

Halliday (1998a) points out that lexical density, nominalization and grammatical metaphor as the main lexicogrammatical characteristics of the written (academic) language. The idea of a lexical metaphor in a conventional, lexical sense is accepted in SFL theory but it is the notion of GM, developed mainly by Halliday (1994) which represents the more original and innovative contribution to linguistic theory. Nominalization has been known as “the single most powerful resource for creating grammatical metaphor.” (M.A.K Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) It has been suggested that nominalization probably “evolved first in scientific and technical registers” and then gradually spread to other areas of adult discourse and become a mark of prestige and power (M.A.K Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). GM is a resource language uses to condense information by expressing concepts in an incongruent form which is very valued in scientific and academic registers as a way of expressing ‘objectification’ and ‘abstraction’. And GM has been of particular importance in the
evolution of scientific writing, especially in the form of nominalised processes. Here is an extract from a biology report. Nominalization has been used frequently in this passage to create a more academic, abstract tone.

Many Australian plant species produce seeds with fleshy appendages called elaiosomes. It was hypothesized that elaiosomes are involved in the dispersal of seeds by ants. To test this hypothesis, the removal of seeds with elaiosomes was compared to seeds from which the elaiosome had been removed and observations were made to confirm that the agents of seed removal were indeed ants. It was found that the removal of seeds with elaiosomes was significantly greater than those without elaiosomes. Observations of the seed removal process confirmed that ants were the only agents of seed removal.

Written language is full of grammatical items that function in closed systems in language and grammatical metaphor is with a feature of written language and it makes the writing more expressive, more vivid and attractive.

Grammatical concepts of SFL not only help students explore and understand how the wonderful language works, but also tell them why certain grammatical concepts are used. They give a way of discussing the language and the way they are used to help improve students’ writing.

3. Writing developing of Chinese tertiary students’ writing by teaching these four grammatical concepts

3.1 Sampling
The teaching was conducted as a three-group SFL teaching involving 90 Chinese tertiary EFL students of three levels: elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. The whole teaching process lasted 16 weeks and each-group students had 3 hours study per week.

- Elementary level: students (30) who have not passed Grade 4 test for English majors (TEM 4);
- Intermediate level: students (30) who have passed TEM 4;
- Advanced level: students (30) who have passed TEM 8;
(Note: The English-major university students in China have two tests, TEM 4 and TEM 8 to evaluate their English levels).

They are students of the English Department, Taiyuan Teachers College, Shanxi Province, P. R. China. They are English-major students who have passed the National Entrance Examination and they will have four-year English language study in the college and they will be middle school English teachers after graduation, so developing their English language and literacy is very important.

3.2 The study design
### 3.3 Teaching process

Before SFL teaching, a narrative and an exposition writing teaching were designed to immerse students in narrative and exposition writing. First of all, the three-level students were shown examples to let them know the characteristics of narrative and exposition writing and students then were asked to explain why these essays were narratives or exposition rather than the other genres. After that they were encouraged to try narrative writing and exposition writing in their own notebooks and assessments and feedback were given when they have finished writing. Finally they were asked to write a narrative and an exposition essays in 60 minutes each with at least 200 words. Their writing was kept as the SFL pre-teaching data.

At the completion of narrative and exposition writing, each-level students were given SFL lessons separately. The lessons consisted of five units: Unit1: Brief introduction of SFL; Unit 2: Theme and Rheme; Unit 3: Lexical Density; Unit 4: Nominalization; Unit 5: Grammatical Metaphor and the teaching involved the following steps for each unit including the explanation of the grammatical features of each item, illustration by using as many examples as possible to help students master of these grammatical features, exercises given to students to see how they master the features, teachers feedback was also important and then further exercises to see further improvement.

As to the students in different levels, different examples were chosen just in case the students couldn’t completely master the features. For example, for the elementary level students, the basic examples with simple vocabularies were chosen. However, some problems might appear during the process of teaching. When they had learnt the features such as lexical density, but they might not use them in their writing, and the following ways might be taken to deal with the problems. First, just collected their first normal
writing and then asked them to turn first normal writing into a new piece of writing with lexical density. Second, let them apply lexical density as much as they could when they were asked to write a piece.

Exercises were creatively designed to satisfy the students so as to let them master the grammatical features well. The forms of the exercises included: to identify the grammatical features learnt, to compare the pieces of writing and to tell the differences between the two pieces of writing or tell what grammatical features were used in the piece of writing, to nominalise the clause and etc. For example, when students were learning the lexical density, the following exercises were given. Exercise 1: Please identify the content words of the following sentences. Exercise 2: Please count the content words in each clause and then calculate the lexical density of the clause and then tell the characteristics of the clause. Exercises 3: Please write 3 clauses with high lexical density. These exercises helped students know the differences between written and spoken language and academic or scientific writing was with high lexical density.

After SFL teaching, students were asked to write a narrative and an exposition essays again in 60 minutes each with at least 200 words. These were the post-teaching data of students’ writing.

4. Findings
An analysis of students’ application of the four grammatical concepts in their writing before and after SFL teaching was done according to the classroom observation, exercises done in classes, students’ writing assignments and the comparison between students’ writing before and after SFL teaching. The findings are as follows:

4.1 Theme awareness enhances students’ semantic coherence in writing.
In Theme application, the teaching was more effective than the teaching of the other three grammatical concepts. Writing after SFL teaching, by contrast with writing before SFL teaching, most of the students had Theme awareness and the thematic progression were effectively used in their writing to signal the development of the texts and most of the students could put their sentences in a logical order for the purpose of text coherence.

Theme theory tells students how the speakers and writers construct their conversations or writings smoothly. The different choice of Theme has contributed to a different meaning. When we look at language from the viewpoint of the textual metafunction of the language, we can see how speakers or writers construct their conversations or writings smoothly and in the textual metafunction, a clause is analysed into Theme and Rheme. English uses first clausal position as a signal. Since students were poor in semantic coherence in their writing and the ideas of their writing didn’t really tie together smoothly and the sentences, ideas, and details didn’t fit together clearly and consequently readers were hard to follow along easily. Therefore it is important to develop students’ Theme awareness in different mood of a clause and help them aware that different choice of Theme orients a different meaning of
the sentences. Thematic progression helps aware of dealing with students’ poor semantic coherence in a paragraph or a text is quite effective.

While reading my students’ writing, I found that some of my students’ writing was in poor semantic coherence because the ideas of their writing didn’t really tie together smoothly and clearly and the sentences, ideas, and details didn’t fit together clearly. Sometimes it was very hard for readers to follow along easily. For example,

(1) I went into the house, my mother was so happy that she couldn’t say anything. Father said that he had a piece of good news.

(2) At last, father borrowed some money. I was so excited to go into the Teachers College.

From these two pieces of writing, they don’t keep the readers on track and it seems there are no connections between clauses and I summarised the reasons as follows: They paid no attention to the thematic progression of the clauses or paragraphs or texts such as the repetition of a key term or phrase of the last clause to help focus their ideas and to keep their readers on track. In order to solve these problems, I tried to show students more examples to illustrate how to send information with semantic coherence with the help of thematic progression. For example, “The problem with contemporary art is that it is not easily understood by most people. Contemporary art is deliberately abstract, and that means it leaves the viewer wondering what she is looking at.” And they should have the idea that some pronouns such as this, that, these, those, he, she, it, they, and we are useful pronouns for referring back to something previously mentioned. For another example, “When scientific experiments do not work out as expected, they are often considered failures until some other scientist tries them again. Those that work out better the second time around are the ones that promise the most rewards.” And these are the ways to help students follow along and keep ideas tied together, and developing students these strategies with awareness of thematic progression of the clauses or paragraphs or texts is important.

4.2 Lexical density helps students aware how meanings are packed into a clause.

As to lexical density concept, there was no obvious difference from the writing before and after the SFL teaching, but they have known that lexical density levels distinguish writing from speech, and written language is characterized by high levels of lexical density. Sentences with higher lexical density have more information and meanings than the sentences with lower lexical density. Written English has a high ratio of content to function words and a small number of clauses.

Teaching lexical density helps students know that lexical words or content words are words that carry information which tell what a person is saying and lexical density helps students know how many different words are used in a text and it is a measure of how much information there is in a particular piece of writing or how many meanings have been packed into the one clause. It is the measure that distinguishes
spoken and written texts. After teaching, students had the awareness if their writing is written or spoken and they have more time to practice.

4.3 Nominalization enhances awareness of students’ the academic writing.
Teaching the grammatical concept of nominalization has helped students aware the complexity of the language and how the language works to pack various meanings in a sentence. Nominalization is a writing style of academic writing and scientific writing. It affects the register of the text, so learning to adjust their style according to the nature of social exchange between the writer and the reader is what students should do. Using nominalization can make students writing more abstract and formal and developing the writing skill is very useful and important in foreign language teaching. And grammatical metaphor is realized by nominalization.

Spoken and written language can be analysed at a number of levels, from discourses and texts, sentences, and words, down to individual sounds and letters. Halliday (1985, p.79) gave an example of a sentence in forms appropriate for written and spoken language as follows: written version; “The use of this method of control unquestionably leads to safer and faster train running in the most adverse condition”, spoken version; “You can control the trains this way and if you do that you can be quite sure that they’ll be able to run more safely and more quickly than they would otherwise no matter how bad the weather gets”. It can be seen in the spoken version that there are more clauses, and more function words. From the teaching of nominalization, the weaknesses of students writing were summarized as follows: At the discourse level, my students’ writing was less compact but more redundant and full of repetition. At the clause and sentence level, their writing was with less dense of content, with more clauses but packs less information and events. And at the word-level, their writing was frequented by hedge-like expressions, and characterised by a colloquial and colourful component of vocabulary, contractions, and clippings, but worse planned. During the process of teaching nominalization, students were asked to do some translation from Chinese to English. According to one of the students’ sentence translation before and after learning nominalization, the translation was quite different.

乘公共汽车或开私车的不断普及可能导致了骑自行车和步行的下降。
(1) Taking a bus or a car is becoming very popular and it is increasing very fast, so this decreases cycling and walking.
(2) The increasing popularity of taking a bus or a car, likely caused the decrease in cycling and walking.

From the above two sentences, sentences (1) and (2) both succeed in meeting the requirement of the original Chinese provided, but sentence (1) is more spoken. It has got more clauses than sentence (2) and the verbs in sentence (1) are expressing actions rather than concepts. However, in sentence (2), verbs are nominalised and they become concepts rather than actions; as a result, a number of ideas are packed into one single sentence.
After students had learnt the nominalization, they realized the specific grammatical feature of writing and they had also learnt how to produce a nominalised structure, such as *He objected to the proposal. --- his objection to the proposal; It crawls like a worm. --- Its worm-like crawl* and they gradually try to write more academic and more formal sentences in their writing.

4.4 GM helps students know a different way of expressing the ‘same’ meaning.

In students’ writing development in academic English the movement from congruent language into more incongruent language could be clearly recognized in their written language. In the teaching process, students were asked to rewrite what they had written before SFL teaching. The following sentences were taken from one of students writing before and after GM teaching.

\[a. \text{Great changes have taken place in my hometown in recent years. (congruent form)}\]
\[b. \text{Recent years have seen great changes in my hometown. (metaphorical form)}\]

From the example taken, we can see how this student tried to move her sentence from congruent language to metaphorical language and this made her writing more vivid and colourful.

And nominalizations could be found in their writing which was with the feature of written language. Students learnt to pack more lexical items in one clause by nominalising verbs of the clauses and imitating the expressions of the sentences they had read. For example,

\[\text{The school’s rapid development of computer facilities is getting a great satisfaction of teachers and students.}\]

In addition to recognizing what is congruent, students tried to write or choose to say things differently and tried to recognize the other possibilities of expressing themselves after they had learnt GM.

5. Conclusion

Writing is one of the four language abilities in EFL teaching and learning. It is not only very important for students’ academic discipline, but also for their future professions. Helping students’ improve their English writing skills is therefore the responsibility of an English teacher. Language teacher is responsible for helping students develop the linguistic tools that will enable them to learn and share what they have learned. The four grammatical concepts are very effective in enhancing language and literacy development for EFL or ESL learners but more exercises are needed during the processes of learning and teaching or it’s very hard for students to master of the features of the languages.
References


