

## ***A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF TEXTUAL METAFUNCTION IN DONALD TRUMP'S INSTAGRAM POSTS***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Social media has become a potent political communication tool that allows leaders to interact with their followers and influence public opinion. Instagram is a powerful tool for political branding and persuasion because it provides a distinctive blend of textual and visual components. Using Donald Trump's Instagram postings as a case study, this research investigates how his communication techniques are influenced by textual metafunctions as suggested by Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Although Trump's usage of Twitter has received a lot of scholarly attention, this study emphasizes the textual structure and coherence of his Instagram postings, an area that has received less attention. A qualitative content analysis of a subset of posts from Trump's presidency and post-presidency is used in the study. The study shows how Trump strategically employs linguistic and semiotic resources to support his political narrative by looking at themes, rhemes, and how they interact with visual semiotics. Key findings show that finite verbs and rhemes provide his statements clarity and consistency, while unmarked themes like "Seniors" and "Kamala Harris" act as focal points. By combining text and images, he strengthens his political identity and successfully engages his audience while also enhancing the performative and persuasive aspects of his posts. This study adds to our expanding knowledge of the function of digital media in modern political communication. It illustrates how thematic patterns and literary metafunctions play a crucial role in influencing public opinion and political narratives. The results highlight Instagram's importance as a vibrant forum for political discussion and provide fresh perspectives on how social media and contemporary political tactics interact.*

**Keywords:** Donald Trump, Instagram, Posts, Textual Metafunction.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social media has emerged as a vital medium for political communication, giving public leaders a special way to develop their brands and engage with followers. Donald Trump's usage of Instagram is a particularly interesting case study in this regard. Trump, a divisive personality and former US president, uses a variety of textual features in his Instagram posts to engage his audience, build his character, and persuade.

Social media has developed into a potent tool for political communication, influencing narratives, rallying support, and spreading messages. Instagram is unique among the platforms because of its combination of text and images, which makes it an engaging way for political leaders to interact with their followers. The 45th president of the United States, Donald Trump, is well known for using social media strategically to bolster his political brand and sway public opinion. Although his use of Twitter has received the majority of scholarly attention, his Instagram posts offer a unique site for examination since they combine text, visuals, and semiotic resources to accomplish different communicative goals.

Based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the idea of textual metafunctions offers a strong framework for examining how texts are organized to produce coherence and organize information. The logical and coherent organization of language parts inside a

text is governed by textual metafunctions, which facilitate efficient communication. Textual metafunctions when applied to Trump's Instagram postings, assist uncover the underlying tactics employed to create meaning through his posts. The researchers choose Trump's Instagram because he has an impact in the world and one of famous president in United State with 29,7 million.

By examining how language, images, and context interact to support Donald Trump's larger communication objectives, this study aims to do a thorough analysis of textual metafunctions in his Instagram postings. This study clarifies the persuasive and performative aspects of his social media speech by analyzing the theme structure, coherence, and organization of his posts. The study also takes into account how these findings can affect our understanding of modern political communication and how digital media shapes political personalities.

This study makes the case that Trump's Instagram postings are carefully constructed to support his political goals through the perspective of textual metafunctions, providing insights into the strategic use of linguistic and semiotic resources in online political discourse. By doing this, the study advances our knowledge of the changing nature of social media communication and how it affects political participation. This study can be analyzed by using Halliday theory.

According to Halliday (1994) created a theory of the basic functions of language, classifying the three primary meta-functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. A distinct facet of the universe and a distinct form of clause meaning are the focus of each of the three meta functions. The ideational meta function is concerned with the natural world in its widest sense, which includes our own consciousness, and it is related to sentences as representations. The interpersonal meta function deals with the social environment, specifically the interaction between the speaker and the hearer, and is related to clauses as exchanges.

Previous researchers have examined textual metafunction. One study is come from Adi Sutrisno (Sutrisno, 2024). The study have explored ideational metafunctions in political discourse. Titled "Ideational Metafunction Analysis of Indonesian Presidential Candidate Speeches" used qualitative methods to analyze Prabowo Subianto's speeches during the Indonesian presidential election campaign in 2024. Using Halliday's theory, the study examined the context and inferences in the speeches, focusing on the themes of campaigning, enthusiasm, and optimism. This research aims to increase understanding of how language functions in a political context, providing insight for students of systemic functional linguistics on the application of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) in analyzing political language. Second is come from Nadia Nur Fadzila (Fadzila, 2021). This study titled "Textual Analysis in TEDx Salem Speech on 'Prioritizing Mental Health in Schools by Hailey Hardcastle'" used qualitative method as its methodology and applied Halliday's theory to analyze textual metafunctions. The research aims to explore how messages are organized in the context of a speech on mental health, as well as to identify the dominant themes in the speech. The results of this study are expected to help students of systemic functional linguistics understand the way language is used to shape meaning in social contexts. The third study is come from Shela Noviriantika Hidayah *et al* (Hidayah et al., 2023) in title "TEXTUAL METAFUNCTION ANALYSIS ABOUT EDUCATION NEWS TEXT ON SELECTED NATIONAL ONLINE NEWSPAPERS" used Halliday's theory and applied qualitative method as its methodology to analyze Textual Metafunction, especially the flow of information in a text, and is concerned with clauses as messages. The fourth study is come from Hoang Van Van (Van, 2021) "METAFUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE" IN SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL

LINGUISTICS: A FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF MEANING OF TEXT IN SOCIAL CONTEXT used Halliday's theory to analyze how the metafunctional framework can be used to analyse and interpret the meaning of text in social context. The study aims to contribute to our understanding of language as a system of metafunctions, opening up vast potential for the application of the SFL model to language teaching, learning, and research. Last previous research is Exploring the metafunctions to improve EFL learners' writing ability in the perspective of systemic functional linguistics from Herman Herman *et al* (Herman et al., 2023). This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze students' writing ability by focusing on three metafunctions in Halliday's theory: Ideational Metafunction, Interpersonal Metafunction, and Textual Metafunction. The study aims to assist students and teachers in understanding the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory to improve EFL students' writing skills. The results show the importance of metafunction analysis in overcoming students' challenges and strengthening their critical thinking ability as well as academic writing skills.

From these previous studies, it is clear that textual metafunction analysis serves as a versatile and insightful framework across various discourse domains. For example, while Sutrisno (2024) investigated ideational metafunctions in Prabowo Subianto's political speeches, highlighting campaign themes and optimism, Fadzila (2021) focused on textual organization in mental health discourse, emphasizing coherence and thematic structuring. Similarly, Hidayah et al. (2023) explored information flow in educational news texts, while Van (2021) extended the application of Halliday's metafunctional framework to interpret meaning in a broader social context. Herman et al. (2023) demonstrate the importance of metafunctions in improving EFL students' writing skills, thus illustrating the pedagogical potential of systemic functional linguistics.

Based on previous studies, this research differs by concentrating exclusively on textual metafunctions in Donald Trump's Instagram posts. Unlike previous studies that focused on ideational or interpersonal aspects or emphasized other social media platforms such as Twitter, this study offers a new perspective by analyzing coherence and thematic structure in Trump's Instagram posts. This approach not only enriches our understanding of the strategic use of textual features to craft

### **Theoretical Framework**

Textual metafunctions is a concept in linguistics proposed by M.A.K. Halliday. This is part of systemic-functional theory which explains how language is used to construct meaning in communication contexts. Textual metafunctions focuses on how information is arranged and organized in text, making it easier for readers or listeners to understand. The types of textual metafunction there are:

#### **1. Topical Theme**

The topical theme is the element that serves as the main focus in a sentence. This is usually the subject of the sentence and provides context about what is being discussed.

##### **a. Unmarked Theme**

An unmarked theme refers to the default or typical choice for the theme of a clause. It aligns with the grammatical subject in a declarative sentence. In most cases, this is the neutral and expected element that introduces the main idea of the clause.

##### **b. Marked Theme**

A marked topical theme is an experiential element other than the subject that is placed at the beginning of the clause to highlight or emphasize it. These elements might include circumstantial adjuncts (time, place, manner) or complements.

##### **c. Modal Adjunct**

A modal adjunct is part of the interpersonal metafunction of language, not part of the

topical theme, but it often occurs before the topical theme in a clause. Modal adjuncts express the speaker's attitude, assessment, or judgment about the proposition or information in the clause.

## **2. Interpersonal Theme**

The interpersonal theme refers to elements in a clause that contribute to interaction between the speaker (or writer) and the listener (or reader). These themes help express attitudes, negotiate relationships, and manage the exchange of information or goods and services. Here are the primary types of interpersonal themes:

### **a. Vocatives Theme**

Vocatives are words or phrases used to directly address someone within a conversation or text. They are an important part of interpersonal themes because they establish or reinforce the relationship between the speaker/writer and the listener/reader. Vocatives can express familiarity, respect, authority, or affection, depending on the context and the choice of words.

### **b. Finite Theme**

Finite verbal operators are part of the verb group and are essential in expressing tense, polarity, and modality. In the context of interpersonal themes, finite helps manage the interaction by clarifying the speaker's stance or negotiating meaning. They are auxiliary verbs or part of the main verb, and they anchor the clause in time (tense) or express mood (e.g., declarative, interrogative, imperative).

## **3. Textual Theme**

A textual theme is a key concept in the textual metafunction. It is part of the theme, the element in a clause that comes first and serves as the starting point for the message. Textual themes help organize information and ensure coherence in discourse. They often include words or phrases that connect clauses, create logical relationships, or guide the reader through the text. The main types of textual themes are as follows:

### **a. Conjunctive Theme**

Conjunctive adjuncts are adverbial elements (single words or phrases) that indicate the logical relationship between clauses, sentences, or paragraphs. They are not grammatically necessary to join clauses but instead act as cohesive devices that clarify the connection between ideas. Examples, moreover, furthermore, in addition, besides.

### **b. Conjunctions Theme**

Conjunctions are grammatical linking words that join clauses, phrases, or words. They create syntactic relationships between the elements they connect and are essential for the grammatical structure of compound or complex sentences. Examples; and, but, or, so, yet, for, nor.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This current study focuses on Donald Trump's Instagram posts as a primary source of data, since the medium offers an unprecedented combination of text and visual aspects that provide new avenues to investigate political communication strategies. The posts have been purposely selected during his presidency and post-presidency periods, focusing on those which depict major political or ideological messages.

Qualitative content analysis will be adopted in this research to analyze the posts. Textually, each post was checked for its clause structure concerning the theme and rheme elements that identify the topic or participants of the discourse, using language to achieve specific discursive goals. Further, the semiotic resources drawn upon to support textual strategies involve images, the format of the text, and other visual elements to realize meanings in the postings.

The analysis has its underpinning in SFL through Halliday's theory of textual metafunctions (Bast, 2021). As such, this theoretical underpinning guided the data analysis toward logical coherence with respect to the internal organizational structure of the posts. Because this is not a statistically oriented study, reliability can be achieved by carefully moving through the systematic thematic and textual analysis. Multiple researchers are involved in the coding and data analysis process to check that reliability is maintained by having multiple persons interpreting findings from subjective bias.

This methodological approach forms a basis of insights to analyze the strategic use of linguistic and semiotic resources that underpin Donald Trump's Instagram postings and contribute to understanding the political discourse in the light of digital media.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. The show some pictures in Donald Trump posts on Instagram

The following are some images that illustrate key moments and statements from Donald Trump's Instagram posts. Each image serves to reinforce the thematic elements discussed in the analysis, providing a visual context that enhances understanding of the themes and schemas identified.



Figure 1. Posted by Donald Trump on 15 October 2024

This post was posted on Donald Trump's Instagram reel to inform his fans that he was coming somewhere.



Figure 2. The post shown to Kamala Harris on 12 October 2024

In this picture, Donald Trump posted on his Instagram to show a word that was shown directly to kamala harris with a meaning.

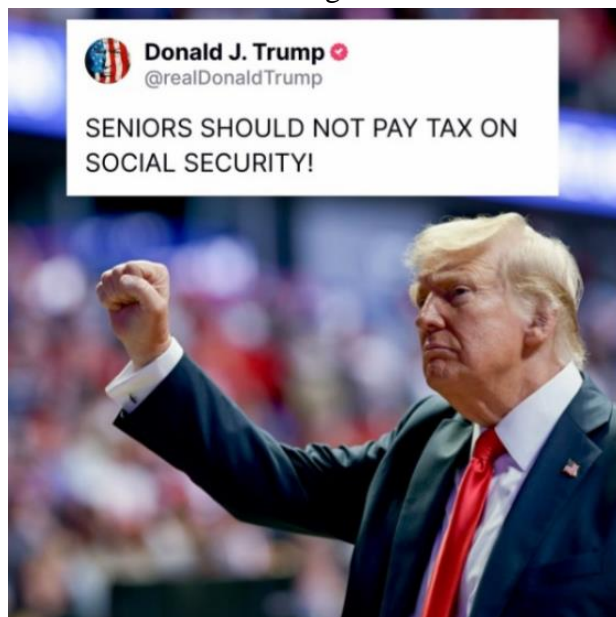


Figure 3. Donald Trump posted to seniors on 31 July 2024

Donald Trump delivered a message to seniors through his Instagram post with the intention that seniors do not have to pay taxes in his post.

**B. The application it to the types of theme on Instagram posts by Donald Trump**

This section outlines the roles of theme and rheme. These are explanations of the function associated with each type of theme and rheme from each posting on Donald Trump Instagrams.

<b>President Trump</b>	<b>is</b>	<b>coming to Madison Square Garden in NYC</b>
Unmarked	Finite	RHEME
Topical Theme	Interpersonal Theme	
THEME		

Table 1. The result based on figure 1

President Trump was identified as a subject. It explains that Donald Trump is an unmarked theme which is placed at the beginning of the position before the clause in the form of a nominal group. Then, the sentence 'is' as a finite where this verb shows a place and where in the sentence explains where Donald Trump will come to a place to be visited. Finally, 'coming to Madison Square Garden in NYC' as a rheme. This is because it provides new information that Donald Trump will come to a place in NYC. This explains an action taken by Trump to complete the meaning of the clause.

<b>Kamala Harris</b>	<b>pledged</b>	<b>free healthcare for illegals</b>
Unmarked	Finite	RHEME
Topical Theme	Interpersonal Theme	
THEME		
<b>They</b>	<b>are</b>	<b>coming to collage</b>
Unmarked	Finite	RHEME
Topical Theme	Interpersonal Theme	
THEME		

Table 2. The result based on figure 2

The words 'Kamala Harris' as an unmarked theme. This is where Kamala Harris is the subject who is in the initial position of the sentence. then followed by the word 'pledged' which functions as a finite which is used in the complementary sentence to explain the subject. The word pledged is a verb that describes additional information and what Kamala Harris is doing. and this word is followed by the sentence 'free healthcare for illegals' which provides additional information of what actions will be taken by Kamala Harris to complete the sentence. Then the second sentence with a new sentence 'they' as unmarked which is also located in the first position sentence with the nominal group as the subject. followed by the word 'are' located in the second sentence after the subject and as an adverbial verb showing the place of the sentence. The word 'coming to college' as a rheme. where this word provides information on where they are going.

Seniors	should	not	pay tax on social security
Unmarked	Finite	Modal Adjunct	RHEME
Topical Theme	Interpersonal Theme		
THEME			

Table 3. The result based on figure 3

'Seniors' was identified as an unmarked theme. This explains the word seniors describes a nominal group and is shown as the subject in the sentence. followed by a clause sentence filled with the word 'should' as finite and 'not' which is used as a modal adjunct. The last is the sentence 'pay tax on social security' as a rheme. This word provides new information which explains what seniors should not do as a complementary sentence.

## CONCLUSION

This study offers an in-depth meaning exploration of the textual metafunctions in Donald Trump's Instagram posts, employing Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as its analytical framework. The findings reveal Trump's strategic use of unmarked themes, finite, modal adjunct and rhemes, which he skillfully integrates to convey his messages in a coherent and persuasive manner. These linguistic features, alongside visual and semiotic elements, significantly enhance his political communication and engage his audience effectively. For instance, by utilizing unmarked themes such as Seniors, President Trump, and Kamala Harris. Trump draws attention to pivotal subjects, while rhemes deliver specific details that reinforce his ideological stances.

Additionally, the study highlights Instagram as a vibrant platform for political dialogue, where Trump masterfully combines textual and visual content to fortify his narrative. By examining textual metafunctions, this analysis enriches our understanding of how digital media intersects with contemporary political discourse. It emphasizes the critical role of thematic and cohesive structures in shaping public perception and constructing political identity in today's digital landscape.

These insights contribute to broader conversations about how political leaders leverage social media to sway public opinion and interact with their constituents. The findings present valuable perspectives for future research on political communication and the evolving influence of digital platforms in shaping political narratives.

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