

SEEING BEYOND WORDS: METAFUNCTIONS ANALYSIS OF EFL TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract: This study carefully applies Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to identify common linguistic patterns to examine English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks. This descriptive qualitative study addresses the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks as the research focus. The frequent use of material process, particular nominal group types such as Thing (T) and Numerative Thing (NT), the nuanced modality conveyed by "should," "would," and "will," and the use of narrative perspectives with third-person singular pronouns ("he" and "she") are noteworthy among these patterns. The identified linguistic features furnish invaluable pedagogical insights for the stakeholders of English learners, including the teachers, and provide guidance for targeted language instruction. Furthermore, these results are also invaluable for material development since the study highlights the importance of integrating SFL principles within the classroom discourse. The study also emphasizes the significance of SFL-based textbooks as learning facilitates. The study discovers that SFL-based textbook analysis provides well-informed instruction, allowing teachers to modify their teaching methods to meet students' communicative needs better. Despite limitations, the analysis remains a valuable tool in the classroom discourse as it better portrays the foreign language classroom discourse.

Keywords: Systemic Functional Linguistic, ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, textual metafunction, English as a Foreign Language

INTRODUCTION

As with any other foreign language, teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in classroom discourse is closely associated with the crucial function of textbooks. Textbooks play significant roles in molding the language learning process. Specifically, textbooks provide a well-organized route to language competency and are vital tools for teachers and students. As we set out to explore the subtleties of EFL textbooks, it is critical to acknowledge their significant impact on the development of English language proficiency in a variety of global educational settings (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2021; Meihami & Khanlarzadeh, 2015; To, 2018; Limberg, 2016; Rahimi & Hassani, 2012). It raises the interest of linguists in EFL textbooks, which indicates

the rise of awareness of critical analysis of the textbooks as the teaching materials. Since language learning is complex, it is important to look closer at the instructional approaches, content, competency, and design of these textbooks for the successful language learning process.

The layout and design of EFL textbooks—a factor beyond aesthetic considerations—are essential to the discussion. Studies by Niman et al. (2020) and Soto and Cevallos (2021) have examined how these textbooks' layout, format, and visual components affect students' comprehension and engagement. For teachers looking to build the best possible learning environment, it is crucial to comprehend the complex relations that exist between design features and

pedagogical goals. Furthermore, inclusivity in EFL textbooks has become a critical subject. Alshenqeeti (2020), Derakhshan (2021), Ayu (2020), and Wahid et al. (2023) underscore the significance of varied representation in terms of language and culture to guarantee that students from different backgrounds connect with the content. Understanding EFL students' varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds emphasizes how important it is to create inclusive learning environments by carefully crafting textbooks.

A paradigm shift in EFL instruction has resulted from technological improvements. As such, recent research highlights the incorporation of digital materials into textbooks (Knight, 2015). With the introduction of interactive exercises, e-books, and online platforms, classic learning materials take on new dimensions that call for investigating their effects on learner outcomes and pedagogy. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has become a popular educational strategy. Research by Ahmadian (2012) explores how language teaching uses this paradigm. Teachers hope to give students relevant language contexts by including real-world, practical projects and promote a more engaging, communicative learning environment and high thinking order (Ariawan et al., 2023). In addition, another aspect of language learning resources studied in recent research is authenticity. Smith's (2023) research emphasizes how important it is for EFL textbooks to include actual materials and cultural context. By including authentic texts and cultural allusions, teachers hope to close the gap between classroom instruction and real-world application, improving students' language skills and awareness of other cultures (Darong et al., 2021; Gunantar, 2017; Niman et al., 2020; Rinekso, 2021; Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021).

These preliminary studies lay the groundwork for a more thorough investigation of EFL textbooks. A thorough analysis of the nuances of pedagogical approaches, inclusivity, technology integration, and textbook design is made possible by understanding these factors. The forthcoming examination is expected to shed light on EFL textbooks' dynamic and changing terrain, with significant implications for teachers, curriculum designers, and students alike. Such examination should be

conducted to reach the teaching-learning process's expected learning goals.

While design, inclusivity, technology integration, and pedagogical approaches have all been discussed in previous research, more should be known about how linguistic elements are embedded in textbooks. This study fills such a gap by analyzing how SFL concepts are applied to the language used in EFL textbooks. Specifically, the study thoroughly examines the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions that these resources play, as Halliday's SFL paradigm suggests. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to understand better how linguistic choices, such as word selection, text organization, and grammatical structures, fit with the SFL tenets.

Moreover, the research deficit that has been highlighted encompasses the intersectionality of SFL principles in EFL textbooks across a range of fields and competence levels. Although inclusion, materials, and cultural contexts are acknowledged as necessary, a more detailed investigation is required into how SFL metafunctions appear in the textbooks and how they accommodate varying competency levels. It is necessary to understand how ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions differ across learning resources such as textbooks. This research gap highlights this need. Filling in this knowledge vacuum could benefit all classroom discourse stakeholders who want to match language learning to SFL concepts.

SFL offers a methodical approach to examining how language creates meaning, and it offers a strong foundation for comprehending the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions inside language (Alwasilah & Gunawan, 2023; Darong et al., 2022; Darong, 2021, 2022b, 2022c; Hasan, 2014; Kusumawardani & Putu Putra, 2021; J. Wang, 2010). By bridging this gap, teachers can better grasp how the linguistic elements found in EFL textbooks relate to SFL principles. It allows teachers to design instructional strategies that support language systems and help students become more proficient in the language. Furthermore, addressing the research gap in applying Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) principles to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks holds

profound significance for enhancing teaching and learning practices. As a result, EFL students benefit from a more inclusive learning environment that considers their varied linguistic requirements and experiences.

METHOD

A qualitative study design is used to thoroughly examine the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook using the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) framework. The study's subjects include two purposefully chosen junior EFL textbooks representing skill levels and cultural contexts. This deliberate choice adds to the analysis's depth and richness by ensuring a nuanced evaluation of how SFL principles appear in diverse linguistic and educational contexts. Furthermore, the process of gathering data includes a careful examination of the language elements of the selected EFL textbooks. Using SFL as a framework, the researcher looks at ideational metafunctions through the transitivity pattern, interpersonal metafunctions through the modality and pronoun usages, and textual metafunctions through theme development, coherence techniques, and nominalization. The primary tool for gathering data is a coding framework created especially to adhere to SFL principles. This framework directs the methodical classification of language characteristics according to textual, interpersonal, and ideational metafunctions (Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1985). To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the language landscape, observational notes, and anecdotal records are used to record contextual observations and potential nuances in the application of SFL concepts inside the textbooks.

In terms of data analysis, a rigorous qualitative method based on theme coding was carried out. The coded data are systematically categorized based on SFL metafunctions, allowing for the identification of recurrent linguistic patterns and deviations. Then, comparative studies are carried out between the two selected textbooks to determine how SFL principles metafunction in various contexts and the validity and trustworthiness of the results; triangulation techniques like peer debriefing and intercoder reliability are incorporated into the analysis process. This approach guarantees a thorough examination

of the subtleties of linguistic choices made in EFL textbooks, demonstrating how such choices either conform to or deviate from Systemic Functional Linguistics' tenets.

While acknowledging potential limitations, such as the inherent subjectivity of qualitative analysis, the researcher adopts a reflexive stance to minimize bias. Delimitations of the study include concentrating on particular textbooks and excluding surveys or interviews with teachers or students because the main goal is to examine the linguistic elements in the texts thoroughly. Overall, this thorough technique aims to offer nuanced perspectives on EFL textbooks from the standpoint of SFL. It advances the understanding of how linguistic choices affect language teaching in context-based classroom discourse.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Language features, including transitivity process types, modality, pronoun usage, and nominal group structures, can be analyzed to provide essential insights into language choice nuances. Different transitivity process types highlight the roles and relations between the many entities involved in a text's action and interaction (Henry, 2023; Nurhadi Maya et al., 2020; J. Wang, 2010). Modality analysis examines the degree of necessity, probability, or desirability conveyed in language, offering a deeper understanding of the attitude and certainty (Siregar et al., 2021; Yang, 2021). Pronoun analysis reveals patterns that reflect the subtleties of reference and identification (Darong, 2022b). Nominal group analysis, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of nominal elements in information transmission by breaking down noun phrases to reveal the structure and complexity of concepts (Darong, 2022c). These studies enable the researcher to unlock the meaning concealed in language, improving understanding and promoting efficient teaching-learning instruction.

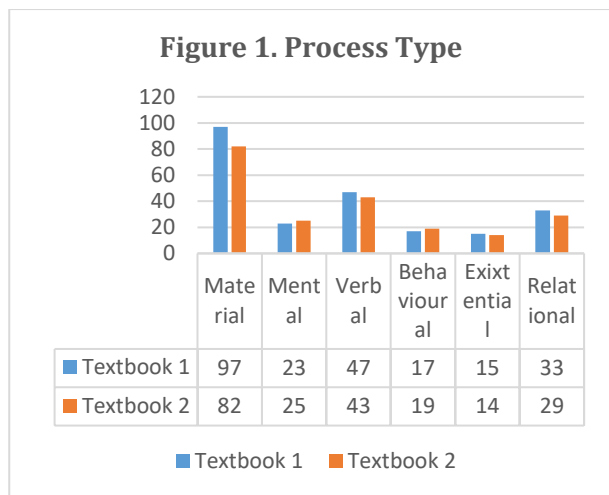


Figure 1: Process types found in the data

The data presented deals with process types found in two textbooks; the numbers in the data reflect how frequently distinct process types appear in each book. Process types classify the different events or actions mentioned in the text. The most common process type in Textbook 1 is "Material," which occurs 97 times. "Verbal" comes in at 47, "Relational" at 33, "Mental" at 23, "Existential" at 15, and "Behavioral" at 17. The most common process type in Textbook 2 is "Material," which has a count of 82. "Verbal" is next at 43, "Relational" at 29, "Mental" at 25, "Existential" at 14, and "Behavioral" at 19. Figure 1 shows that both textbooks emphasize "Material" processes—that is, concrete acts and physical processes. Nonetheless, variances exist in other process types, suggesting possible distinctions in the subject matter and emphasis of the two textbooks.

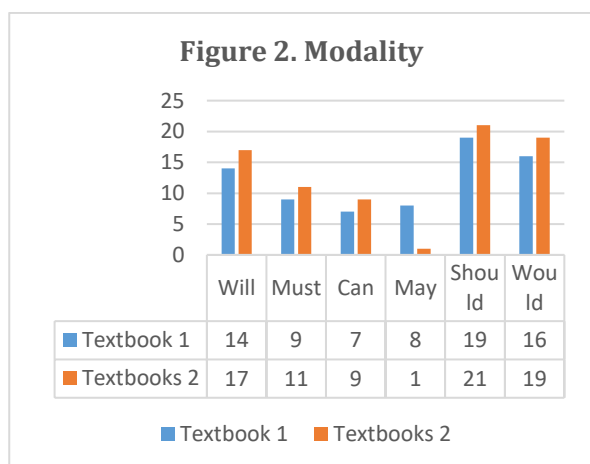


Figure 2: Modalities found in the data

Figure 2 shows a modality analysis of two textbooks, including the frequency of various modal verbs in each textbook. Modal verbs express the speaker's viewpoint regarding an action's possibility, importance, or desirability. In this respect, "Should" appears 19 times in Textbook 1, more than any other modal verb. "Would" comes in at 16, "Will" at 14, "Must" at 9, "May" at 8, and "Can" at 7. "Should" is the most commonly used modal verb in Textbook 2, with 21 times. "Would" comes in second with 19, "Will" with 17, "Must" with 11, "Can" with 9, and "May" with 1. In this respect, the data reveals a shared emphasis on expressing necessity and desirability in both textbooks through the repeated usage of the word "should" in textbooks 1 and 2. Furthermore, "Would" and "Will" are often employed modal verbs in both textbooks, suggesting an emphasis on potential future activities. The two textbooks' differing modal verb frequencies could be due to variances in the texts' topic matter, writing styles, or communication goals.

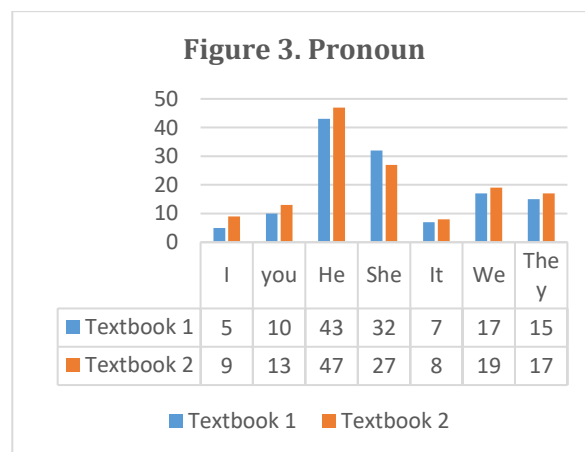


Figure 3: Pronoun types found in the data

Figure 3 shows how frequently various pronouns occur in Textbooks 1 and 2. Pronouns are essential for identifying the individuals and entities in a text and providing information about the narrative's focus and point of view. With 43 instances, "He" is the most used pronoun in Textbook 1. "She" is next with 32, "We" with 17, "They" with 15, "you" with 10, "I" with 5, and "It" with 7. Across 47 instances, "He" is still the most used pronoun in Textbook 2. "She" is next with 27, "We" with 19, "They" with 17, "you" with 13, "It" with 8, and "I" with 9. Based on this data, it appears that both textbooks emphasize third-person

singular pronouns ("He," "She") a lot, suggesting that they place much emphasis on people other than the non-human participant. Differences in narrative viewpoint may be reflected in the fluctuations in the frequency of first-person ("I," "We") and second-person ("you") pronouns, with Textbook 2 emphasizing second-person pronouns more than the other. Each textbook's general pronoun distribution offers insight into the relationships between the text and its audience or characters and the narrative structure.

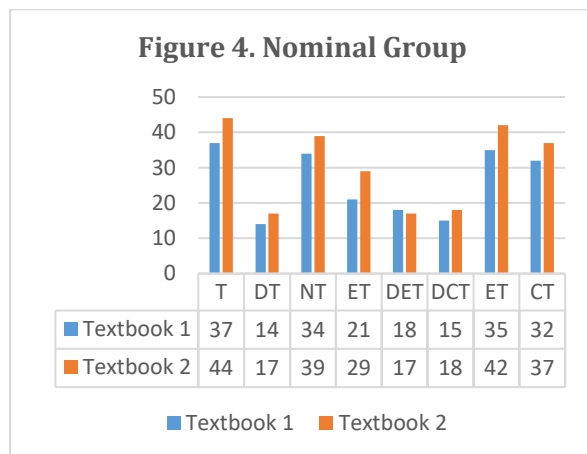


Figure 4: Nominal groups found in the data

Data in Figure 4 offers an examination of the Nominal Group patterns found in Textbooks 1 and 2, where various patterns are denoted by acronyms such as Thing (T), Deictic Thing (DT), Numerative Thing (NT), Epithet Thing (ET), Deictic Epithet Thing (DET), Deitic Classifier Thing (DCT), and Classifier Thing (CT). Examining these patterns can provide insight into the language's complexity and organization. Nominal groups are syntactic structures made up of a noun and its modifiers. Thing (T) appears 37 times in Textbook 1, more than any other pattern. Numerative Thing (NT) comes in at 34, Epithet Thing (ET) at 21, Classifier Thing (CT) at 32, Epithet Thing (ET) at 35, Deictic Epithet Thing (DET) at 18, Deictic Classifier Thing (DCT) at 15, and Deictic Thing (DT) at 14. With 44 occurrences, Thing (T) is the most frequent pattern in Textbook 2. Nummereative Thing (NT) has 39, Epithet Thing (ET) has 29, Classifier Thing (CT) has 37, Epithet Thing (ET) has 42, Deictic Classifier Thing (DCT) has 18, Deictic Thing (DT) has 17, and Deictic Epithet Thing (DET) has 17. Thus, based on this data, both textbooks display a range of Nominal Group patterns,

with Thing (T) and Nummerative Thing (NT) being the most common. These patterns reflect various textual structures for nouns and their modifiers. The variances between the two textbooks could result from differences in the subject matter being covered, writing styles, or language complexity.

This analysis aims to reveal textbooks' ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. The analysis concerns transitivity pattern (process types), modality and pronoun, and nominal group. As such, a focus on actions and concrete processes is highlighted by the extensive usage of material process types in the ideational metafunctions. It is consistent with the communicative language education methodology. The frequency of material processes in EFL materials points to a common instructional focus on language usage in everyday contexts. This purposeful selection of material process types attempts to develop communicative competence by immersing learners in the real-world and action-oriented language (Darong, 2022a).

When it comes to interpersonal metafunctions, the investigation of modality demonstrates a complex application of "should" and "would" in addition to "will." It is consistent with earlier research by (Firmansyah and Arianti, 2022), who noted communication strategy by means of language, such as modality changes in EFL settings. The frequent use of "should" and "would" indicates the method of communicating obligation and potential, meeting the needs of learners for complex language use (Hanifa, 2018). The addition of "will" emphasizes how crucial it is to communicate certainty while giving students a range of modal expressions to choose from in various communicative contexts. Meanwhile, third-person singular pronouns, particularly "he" and "she," predominate in pronoun usage, which points to a consistent narrative perspective across the examined textbooks. Third-person singular pronouns are common in the materials, which could help EFL learners relate to the subject and characters more efficiently and have a more personalized learning experience. Furthermore, the prevalent use of the Thing (T) and Nummerative Thing (NT) nominal group types in nominalization provides a pedagogical goal to inform a concrete and explicit manner.

Technical vocabulary is essential in EFL contexts (Laufer & Waldman, 2011). Their results are consistent with the prevalence of T and NT nominal group types, which suggests an attempt to introduce and reinforce subject-specific vocabulary (Somba et al., 2022). This method, which reflects the dual function of EFL textbooks in language instruction, is essential for developing disciplinary knowledge and language ability.

The interaction of these ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions highlights how EFL textbooks approach language learning with a pedagogically informed approach. The robustness of these findings is strengthened by matching findings with previous research, highlighting similar patterns across various educational settings (Trojan et al., 2022). These linguistic characteristics help learners build their language skills while improving their communicative competence and scaffolding their engagement with knowledge. In addition, the patterns found in ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions in EFL textbooks add to a more thorough comprehension of how language choices are made in textbooks (Alyousef, 2021; Wang & Zhou, 2018; Zhang, 2019). Through identifying and developing these patterns, teachers can improve their methods of instruction and guarantee that EFL textbooks suit the linguistic requirements and preferences of a wide range of students.

To sum up, the results of this analysis offer insightful information on the complex interactions between language, pedagogy, and content in EFL textbooks. The thoughtful language choices found in the study are consistent with well-established instructional strategies, demonstrating a continuous endeavor to produce resources that not only impart language skills but also enable significant interaction with topics. These observations add to the discussion about good language teaching practices and how textbooks influence language learning as EFL teaching develops. Furthermore, for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, examining EFL textbooks from a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspective has significant pedagogical results. It requires an interdisciplinary pedagogical strategy to integrate action-oriented, practical language into teaching practices in order to comprehend

the prevalence of material process types and particular nominal group types in ideational metafunctions (Hasan, 2014). In order to promote communicative competence, EFL teachers should place a strong emphasis on real-world tasks and activities that involve students in meaningful language use.

The complex usage of modality, including "should," "would," and "will," concerning interpersonal metafunctions suggests that EFL teachers should support a nuanced investigation of these modal expressions in the classroom. In order to promote good use of modality, teachers might provide exercises that allow students to communicate possibilities, obligations, and certainty in various circumstances (Darong et al., 2016). Giving students the chance to participate in discussions, debates, and conversations with various modal expressions improves their pragmatic language skills and communicative competency.

Moving further, a vital indicator of the significance of narrative perspective in EFL texts is the prevalence of third-person singular pronouns in pronoun usage. EFL teachers can use role-playing, storytelling, and creative writing exercises to enhance their use of this narrative approach in the classroom. In addition to improving language proficiency, these activities or textual enhancement immerse students in a narrative setting, resulting in a more individualized and engaging learning context (Rassaei, 2014). Teachers can also assist students in crafting their narratives, enabling them to include the narrative views found in textbooks. Recognizing T and NT nominal group types highlights the significance of teaching students how to navigate and generate cohesive texts. Such employment highlights the importance of including phrases related to the subject matter in language teaching, thereby integrating language learning with discipline-specific information and improving students' comprehension of academic material. Teachers enable students to generate coherent and cohesive text by giving them clear instructions and opportunities for practice, which can improve their textual awareness and understanding.

The findings' congruence with previous research highlights the robustness of the observed patterns, giving EFL teachers a basis

for evidence-based teaching strategies. Teachers can use this insight to assess educational materials critically and choose those that correspond with the recognized language trends, ensuring that the materials selected facilitate language learning and subject-matter expertise. EFL teachers can choose, modify, and add to textbooks to better meet their students' varied language needs and preferences by taking into account the findings of the current study and the body of previous literature. Besides, the curricular decisions are primarily influenced by the instructional implications, which go beyond specific courses (Anggraeni et al., 2022; Harahap et al., 2022). EFL teachers can promote the inclusion of materials that adhere to SFL principles by working with curriculum developers and highlighting the need to balance disciplinary knowledge and language proficiency.

The SFL analysis of EFL textbooks yields pedagogical implications that offer teachers practical insights to improve language instruction. EFL teachers produce a more engaging and productive learning environment through subject-specific vocabulary, action-oriented, practical language, and subtle modal expressions (Morton, 2023; Sari et al., 2020). Furthermore, the results' consistency with previous research highlights the value of evidence-based teaching strategies. It motivates teachers to reassess and modify their methods in light of EFL students' changing requirements. Generally speaking, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) provides teachers with a valuable instrument for gaining pedagogical insights into language teaching through textbook examination. Teachers can match language teaching to the systemic character of language by methodically analyzing ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions found in textbooks. It will lead to more focused and efficient teaching methods. Because of this increased knowledge, teachers are more equipped to choose instructional resources that meet their students' varied linguistic requirements and preferences, resulting in a more purposeful and engaging language learning environment.

Moreover, SFL-based textbook analysis can benefit curriculum creation (Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021). Using SFL analysis to identify common linguistic patterns, teachers can carefully include curriculum-aligned

resources in their lessons. It guarantees a smooth development of language proficiency and improves the consistency and efficacy of language teaching. By highlighting linguistic features like material processes, nuanced modality, and nominal group types, teachers help develop comprehensive curricula supporting students' engagement with disciplinary knowledge and language ability. SFL-based textbook analysis gives teachers the resources to deliver knowledge-based, research-based instruction. A more captivating and immersive learning environment is produced by emphasizing subject-specific terminology, material process types, and narrative viewpoints in instruction. With a foundation in SFL principles, well-informed instruction fosters a more profound comprehension of language use and gives students the confidence to traverse language and material confidently. To sum up, SFL-based textbook analysis is an invaluable tool for teachers that can improve the caliber and efficacy of language teaching in various learning environments.

CONCLUSION

Examining English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks through the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) lens has yielded significant understandings of the ideational, interpersonal, and textual aspects that influence language learning. These instructional materials' intentional language choices are evident in the ubiquity of material process types, nuanced modality, narrative viewpoints, and particular nominal group types. By focusing on subject-specific vocabulary, subtle modal expressions, and pronoun and nominal group use, EFL teachers can use these insights to improve their teaching strategies and create a more engaging and productive learning environment for their students.

Even with the insightful results, there are certain restrictions on this study. First, the investigation ignored the possible effects of environmental and cultural factors instead of focusing only on linguistic elements found in EFL textbooks. Second, this study did not examine the impact of these linguistic patterns on learners' understanding and language learning. Third, the generalizability of the results may be limited by the textbook

selection, which might not adequately represent the diversity of materials utilized in diverse EFL contexts. Further studies should tackle these constraints by integrating more resources, considering cultural factors, and investigating the educational consequences for students. In addition, future research could investigate the efficacy of instructional tactics that align with the linguistic patterns seen in EFL textbooks to expand on this study's findings. It would be beneficial to look into how

students react to linguistic elements and pedagogical strategies to improve language training. Finally, studies comparing various EFL contexts and competence levels may provide a more nuanced picture of the identified trends' applicability. Examining how pedagogy, language choices, and student outcomes interact dynamically can help improve EFL teaching strategies continuously.

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