

## Talking and Writing about Literature: Some Observations based on Systemic Functional Linguistics

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper is concerned with literature as a phenomenon that people talk and write about for various purposes, e.g. for the purpose of sharing opinions with friends or of giving a piece of literature positive or negative value in a community. First I will briefly explore how literature has been characterized, suggesting that it needs to be viewed holistically from different vantage point. To*

*Develop the characterization from the point of view of the context in which works of literature operate, I will introduce a typology of fields of activity within context – specifications of what is going on in a given context, interpreting literature as text operating in contexts where the activity is one of “recreating” aspects of life.*

*Then, using the typology of fields of activity, I will turn to the main concern of the paper – discourse about literature, or the nature of what people say and write about literature. I will examine examples of histories, interviews with writers, admission interviews and reviews. Before concluding, I will briefly explore the nature of an analytic, descriptive and explanatory approach to literature interpreted as verbal art, i.e. art made out of language.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION: LITERATURE AS VERBAL ART

The term “literature” has been defined in many different ways; as an illustration, let me just cite some dictionary glosses: