

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the introduction to the research. It consists of six sub-chapters. The sub chapters are the background of the study, research questions, aims of the research, significance of the research, classification of key terms and organization of the research.

1.1. Background of the Study

Recognizing the significance of English subjects (Dong, Alharbi, & Ahmad, 2022; Mustafawi et al., 2022; Kang & Wu, 2022), the Indonesian government has made English a mandatory subject in schools, and it plays a crucial role in serving as a significant determining factor in their academic evaluation (Syakur, Zainuddin, & Hasan, 2020; Arrafii, 2020; Hidayat, Lee, & Mason, 2022; Gayatri, et al, 2023), as well as a determining factor for a country's success in navigating the era of globalization (Clayton, 2022; Mackenzie, 2022; Akther, 2022; Pham, 2022; Virtue, Ellerbrock, & Main 2023). English is taught from primary to senior high schools, encompassing four language skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. According to the Merdeka Curriculum, the aim of English education in senior high schools is to foster the skills and capabilities of students and to make them able to comprehend and produce both written and spoken texts through integrated instruction in these four skills, with the aim of achieving functional literacy.

Reading as one of four main English skills serves as a primary means for Indonesians to expand their knowledge and enhance their English proficiency. It provides access to up-to-date information in various fields such as science and technology, often available in English (Kasneci, et al., 2023; Ayu, 2020; Mardiah, 2020). Additionally, reading enables individuals to enhance their vocabulary by learning new words, phrases, expressions, and references, which in turn support the development of their writing, listening, and speaking skills (Yaday, 2021; Nambiar, et al., 2020).

As Hidayat and Ervina (2021) state, reading skills are the integral part of the process of English learning and teaching in schools (see Brevik, 2019; Namaziandost, et al., 2019; Gustanti & Ayu, 2021). The ultimate goal for students in this process is to develop micro skills for reading comprehension. According to Brown (2001), these microskills include understanding grammatical word classes such as nouns and verbs, as well as systems like tenses, pluralization, subject-verb agreement, and rules, patterns, elliptical forms, and rules, which are traditionally emphasized in grammar instruction based on 'part of speech'. Furthermore, according to Brown (2001), micro skills for reading comprehension encompass the ability to identify the communicative functions of written texts, taking into consideration their form and intended purpose. This suggests that Functional grammar is a linguistic approach that emphasizes the categorization of language elements based on their functional roles, use, and intended purpose. Both functional and traditional grammars are crucial for equipping students with linguistic competence, which encompasses grammatical proficiency.

In the process of learning and teaching writing and reading, teachers at most schools commonly utilize various sources of materials. It is almost inevitable to not come across the term 'language-learning material' (see Purwaningrum & Yusuf, 2019; Long, 2020; Bowen & Hopper, 2022). These materials are considered a crucial component that teachers need to prepare before delivering their lessons. According to Tomlinson (1998: 2), 'language-learning material' refers to anything used by both students and teachers to facilitate language learning. Nunan (1991) categorizes materials into two types: teacher-developed materials and commercially-produced materials. Some examples of commercially-produced materials include general English course books, global course books, and learning textbooks. It is important for teachers to carefully select appropriate commercial materials that align with the goals and objectives of the learning and teaching process (Tarrayo & Anudin, 2023; Haas, et al., 2021; Rice & Ortiz, 2021).

Due to the frequent use of textbooks as a teaching and learning resource in education, many schools prioritize selecting the best textbooks for their students

due to the advantages they offer. For instance, considering that English is a global language, several Indonesian schools opt for textbooks published by national and international education providers (Rao, 2019; Ayu, 2020; Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Richards & Pun, 2023; Atmowardoyo, Weda & Sakkir, 2020). For example, at number of private schools in Indonesia, the school's management stated that the use of international textbooks has helped students improve their bilingual skills in English and Indonesian, achieve success in English language learning, and prepare them to tackle contemporary challenges that demand proficient English language performance (Davidson & Liu, 2020; Ayu, 2020; Zein, et al., 2020; Sah, 2022; Verdiansyah, et al., 2020). On the other hand, there are schools that still use the nationally-published textbooks as the source of learning materials. A textbook serves as a provider of learning materials and a guide for the teaching and learning process to achieve learning objectives. However, comprehending the learning materials, especially from both international and national textbook, can be challenging. International textbooks are seen to contain more advanced learning materials than the national textbooks, and genres or types of texts are frequently incorporated into language learning materials, and these are typically found within reading components. This is because developing such skills related to students' comprehension is one of the main goals of the teaching and learning process and it becomes the foundation for learning how to write especially in the current Merdeka Curriculum.

After the adoption of the Merdeka Curriculum in 2022, which places a strong emphasis on the teaching of genres in all language skills (See Appendix 2), students are required to possess the capacity to comprehend different types of genres or texts. These may include descriptive, exposition, news items, recount, reports, narratives, and even anecdotes. In order to effectively understand these kinds of text in textbook, both students and teachers need to have a strong grasp of linguistic concepts (Yu, et al., 2020; Khashimova, et al., 2021). Additionally, the curriculum also adopts a language model that views “language as communication or a social semiotic system”, as proposed by Halliday in 1978. According to this perspective,

language encompasses three crucial aspects: context, text, and linguistic features, which should be considered when studying language.

However, in practice, several issues arise in this regard. Exposition texts found in national or international textbooks show varying standards for being classified as exposition texts (Kinasih, 2014; Sari et.al, 2020). Moreover, students often face challenges in comprehending these texts, particularly in English textbooks, which can impede the learning process (Namaziandost et. Al, 2022; Vaughn, 2024). This difficulty sometimes stems from educators struggling to effectively teach the nuances of grammar and textual meaning, which are crucial for students to grasp in order to develop their own exposition writing skills.

For instance, in certain cases, students may only describe the steps involved in a lap procedure, while they are actually expected to analyze the causes and effects related to the procedure (Applebee, Durst, & Newell, 1984, as cited in Schleppegrell, 2004). Schleppegrell (2004) emphasizes that while it is important for students to acquire knowledge of various writing genres, the specific characteristics of each genre can differ based on the expectations set by teachers in diverse classrooms and contexts.

As a result of the aforementioned challenges, the skill of comprehending genres in learning materials becomes crucial. Difficulties in understanding text can hinder the learning process, particularly in relation to the field feature of register, which is an essential component of genre materials found in textbooks. In order to better comprehend the linguistic features of scientific language in the textbooks, it is beneficial to analyze the register features presented in more advanced genres as stated by Wei (2019). One of the advanced genres is exposition text since it is considered quite demanding from a cognitive perspective and According to Bizzel (1992), the capacity to craft argumentative texts, encompassing expositions, can promote the development of students' critical thinking skills, ultimately empowering them to become formidable and competitive individuals.

It is important for both teachers and students to be able to comprehend the register characteristics present within the exposition texts in the textbooks since

Halliday's description of register variation in terms of field (the topic being discussed), tenor (relationships between the speaker and listener or the writer and reader.), and mode (the expectation regarding the organization of a particular type of text) also highlights how the use of language can vary depending on the context of the situation (Schleppegrell, 2004) and one way to analyze it is by using transitivity. The analysis of transitivity process serves the purpose of identifying the linguistic attributes within a given text and discerning how these features contribute to the text's intended goals. Furthermore, it facilitates students in the exploration and construction of their understanding of grammatical patterns (Butt et al, 2003, p. 80; Eggins, 2004, p. 211; Emilia, 2014, p.171).

However, comparative studies analyzing exposition texts in national and international textbooks for 11th-grade students using transitivity are still limited, with most focusing on the genres within a single type of textbook. Therefore, this research aims to examine the aspects of exposition text materials provided in English textbooks, including the process types employed through transitivity analysis. The goals are to determine whether the texts effectively convey information and ideas, logically elaborate the writer's points, and assess the reliability and applicability of the reading sources for use in the learning process.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the background discussed earlier, the problems can be stated as follows:

1. How are stages of exposition text and its language features constructed to achieve the purpose of communication?
2. How is transitivity system employed to build the genre of exposition?

1.3. Objective of the Study

Aligned with the formulated research questions and problems, the objectives of this research are to:

1. To investigate how stages of exposition texts and its language features are constructed to achieve the purpose of communication.
2. To analyze how transitivity system is employed to build the genre of exposition.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The potential theoretical and practical implications of this study could be valuable for educators and learners worldwide, with the hope that it can be applied in teaching and learning contexts. To summarize, the significance of this research is outlined as follows.

1. Theoretically, the findings of this study have the potential to enhance the understanding of exposition text including its generic structures, social purposes, and linguistics features and also the understanding of English clauses based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach. This study offers an alternative perspective that goes beyond studying the form of clauses to also consider their meaning and lexico-grammar, thereby enriching the existing body of knowledge in this area.
2. In practical terms, the findings of this analysis can serve as a valuable guide for students in developing their understanding of English clauses. Furthermore, this study can also serve as a source of motivation for English teachers, especially those who are teaching Grade XI, to enhance their teaching abilities, widen their source of teaching, with a specific focus on genre analysis and transitivity system analysis in English. Additionally, this research can inspire other researchers to conduct similar studies on textbooks, exploring different aspects related to the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The present study has its scope based on the background, problem identification, and the researcher's time and knowledge constraints. Firstly, the

main material sources for this study are limited to the national and international English textbooks “Aim High” , “Solutions”, “Bahasa Inggris UMUM”, “Pathway to English”, and “Bahasa Inggris Kurikulum Merdeka”, as it is often used by English teachers at the chosen school for teaching the 11th grade students. These textbooks include various genres/text types, such as narrative, explanation, review, discussion, and activities that focus on writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills. Only one selected genre, namely exposition text, will be selected for analysis. This genre is chosen based on the curriculum guidelines provided by Merdeka Kurikulum, which specify that one of the focuses of reading materials in the eleventh grade should be on exposition text.

Secondly, the analysis of exposition texts based on the transitivity system is the exclusive emphasis of this study, with particular attention paid to process types in the selected texts only. Another focus of this study is on the genre analysis to examine the stages of exposition texts and their linguistic features as well as their social functions. These concepts serve as the framework for this study, and other process types and linguistic features, such as metaphors or metadiscourse, were not examined in detail, which could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the texts and it is due to limitations in time and knowledge.

1.6. Clarification of Key Terms

The researcher provides explanations for key terms used in the title of the research, which are rephrased as follows:

1. Reading

Reading as one of four main English skills serves as a primary means for Indonesians to expand their knowledge and enhance their English proficiency. It provides access to up-to-date information in various fields such as science and technology, often available in English (Kasneci, et al., 2023; Ayu, 2020; Mardiah, 2020). Additionally, reading enables individuals to enhance their vocabulary by learning new words, phrases, expressions, and references, which in turn support the

development of their writing, listening, and speaking skills (Yaday, 2021; Nambiar, et al., 2020). As Hidayat and Ervina (2021) state, reading skills are the integral part of the process of English learning and teaching in schools (see Brevik, 2019; Namaziandost, et al., 2019; Gustanti & Ayu, 2021). The ultimate goal for students in this process is to develop micro skills for reading comprehension. According to Brown (2001), these microskills include understanding grammatical word classes such as nouns and verbs, as well as systems like tenses, pluralization, subject-verb agreement, and rules, patterns, elliptical forms, and rules, which are traditionally emphasized in grammar instruction based on 'part of speech'. Furthermore, according to Brown (2001), micro skills for reading comprehension encompass the ability to identify the communicative functions of written texts, taking into consideration their form and intended purpose. This suggests that Functional grammar is a linguistic approach that emphasizes the categorization of language elements based on their functional roles, use, and intended purpose. Both functional and traditional grammars are crucial for equipping students with linguistic competence, which encompasses grammatical proficiency.

2. Genre

According to Nunan (2008), genre is an intentional, socially produced oral or written text with its own generic structure and lexicogrammatical features. Furthermore, genres are viewed as discursive frameworks that meet broader social context needs (Derewianka, 2015, 2019; Chan, 2019). This study mainly focuses on written genres that are exemplified by English reading materials.

3. Exposition Text

An exposition text is one of the genres that aims to present and explain a specific topic or subject. It typically provides an objective analysis, offering information, arguments, and evidence to inform or persuade the

reader. Exposition texts are structured to present a clear and logical presentation of ideas or concepts (Derewianka, 2012; Derewianka & Jones, 2012; Emilia, 2014).

4. Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) aims to illustrate how people's language choices, including the selection of vocabulary and grammar, are influenced by the context of culture and the context of situation during communication (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Emilia, 2014, 2016, 2022; Emilia, Sujatna, & Kurniasih, 2022). SFL views language as a social semiotic tool used by people to express, construct, and interpret meanings, as well as to establish and maintain social and interpersonal relationships (Halliday, 2004, 2009; Kramsch, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). One of the key components of SFL is the analysis of transitivity, which refers to how actions, events, and states are expressed in language through the use of different types of processes. This framework is particularly useful for analyzing exposition texts, which are designed to explain, inform, or describe a particular subject to persuade the readers to take actions regarding the issues.

5. Transitivity

According to Halliday (2004), transitivity is a grammatical system that organizes different types of processes that can be arranged to express a reflection of reality as it is experienced and described in writing. In this study, transitivity will categorize different types of experiences into various processes that can be sequenced.

6. National and International English Textbooks

National and international English textbook refer to a textbook designed for teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language in both national and international context (Smith, 2019). It is typically published by an international or national education organization or a reputable

publisher with a global reach and is widely used in various countries and educational settings around the world. In this research, these textbooks are used only as the sources of the data, which are the exposition texts as the main data analyzed.

1.7. Thesis Organization

Chapter I serves as the foundational section of this paper, laying out the groundwork for the study. It encompasses the background of the research, research questions, study objectives, the significance of the research, the study's scope, elucidation of key terms, and the structure of the paper. Chapter II expands on this foundation by presenting a comprehensive review of relevant theories and literature. Topics covered include Systemic Functional Linguistics, the concept of genre, transitivity processes, and the context of international English textbooks. Chapter III delves into the research methodology, providing a detailed account of the research method, design, study site, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. These components will be further elucidated in Chapter IV, where the research findings will be presented and discussed. The study will then culminate in Chapter V, the conclusion, which will summarize the key findings and their implications for English teaching and learning in Indonesian Senior High Schools.

1.8. Concluding Remarks

This section has covered fundamental elements of the research, such as the study's background, problem statements, objectives, significance, definition of the key terms, and the thesis organization. Following this, the subsequent part will delve into pertinent theories essential for this study's context. Understanding these theories will provide a more comprehensive insight into the research's framework and its implications.