

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This study aims at analyzing students' recount texts using the transitivity system of systemic functional linguistics, especially in terms of schematic structure and linguistic features. This chapter introduces the underlying principles of this study; these include background, statement of problems, purpose of the study, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing plays an important role for students who are in the process of learning a language, especially foreign language. It is important for students because it is used extensively in higher education and in the workplace to communicate with professors, employers, peers, or just about anyone else. (Walsh, 2010, para. 2). However, Homstad and Thorson (1996, p. 4) in their research found that foreign language instructors believed that writing in a foreign language may prove too frustrating and difficult for students. Nonetheless, students should have good writing skill because “writing is the primary basis upon which someone’s work, learning, and intellect will be judged— in college, in the workplace, and in the community” (Nowacek, 2011).

Writing at school is done for a number of different purposes and for different audiences. At school, students will have writing assignment or project in different forms such as recount which are often known as text types. However, according to the writer's experience during the teaching practicum at one public junior high school in Bandung, there were several problems encountered by the students in writing activities. The first problem was the students' writings were not comprehensible, because the content of the composition was not relevant to the topic; the ideas were not clearly stated and were not well-organized. The second problem was that there were many errors in vocabulary, grammar, and spelling.

In relation to this study, the need to investigate the students' text come up since it is important to know the students' writing ability and the difficulties faced

by the students in writing. Bloor and Bloor (2004, p. 7) stated that students' knowledge about English can be found by doing text analysis. One of the ways to analyze a text is by applying transitivity system derived from systemic functional linguistics which is developed by Halliday (1994). Transitivity analysis can be used to assess whether a text succeeds to achieve its purposes by analyzing the linguistic features and the function of the presence of different aspects of the transitivity system (Emilia, 2014, p. 181).

There are several studies regarding the transitivity system in the text development. The studies focused on the schematic structure, linguistic feature and process types used in the texts. The first one was a study conducted by Nurohmah (2013) who investigated university students' recount text. Her finding showed that most students seemed to be able to apply the schematic structure and they likely found problems in using the rule of tenses, phrases and verbs. The next one was a study conducted by Luardini and Asi (2014) who investigated narrative text written by English teacher. Their finding showed that although there were some mistakes in using the rules of tenses, overgeneralization, and missing some parts of clause elements, the texts still fulfilled the minimal criteria of a narrative text. The last one was a study conducted by Wathi, Seken and Suarnajaya (2014) who investigated expository paragraphs written by the eleventh grade students. Their finding showed that on average, each student utilized between three until five process types to realize the experiential meaning of their expository writing. Material process was predominantly employed in the students' expository writing.

Thus, based on the facts above this study investigated the linguistic features and schematic structure in the students' recount texts to assess the writers' knowledge and ability in writing text as suggested by Emilia (2014). The transitivity analysis of systemic functional linguistics developed by Halliday (1994), along with the linguistic features element of recount text generated by Anderson and Anderson (2003) and Gerot and Wignell (1995), are applied to identify the linguistic features of the texts. Meanwhile, the schematic structure of recount text suggested by Anderson and Anderson (2003), Corbett and Strong

(2011), Gerot and Wignell (1995), Stubbs (2000), and Whitfield (2001) is applied to analyze the schematic structure of the text.

1.2 Statement of Problems

Related to the explanation above, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How is the students' ability in writing recount text in terms of its purpose, schematic structure and linguistic features?
2. What difficulties are faced by the students in writing recount text?

1.3 Aim of the Study

Related to the statement of the problems, this study aimed at investigating:

1. The students' ability in writing recount text in terms of its purpose, schematic structure and linguistic features.
2. The students' difficulties in writing recount text.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focused on analyzing six final draft of recount texts written by six students of a public junior high school in Bandung.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study can enrich the reference of analysis in identifying students' writing on the schematic structure, linguistic features, and purpose through transitivity analysis. Practically, by analyzing the students' texts and investigating the students' difficulties in writing the texts, the result of this study can give in-depth information that can be used by the teacher to help the students improve their writing. Therefore, the students are more careful in writing and English teachers can help the students to solve the difficulties they face in the future.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, ambiguity and misinterpretation towards the concepts and the meaning presented in this study, here are the technical explanation of related terms used in this study.

1. Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (often abbreviated to SFL) is an approach to linguistics that considers language as a network of systems and interrelated sets of options for making meaning (Halliday, 1994).

2. Transitivity System

Transitivity system is a major system of grammatical choice involved in the way that people express experiential meaning, that is, the way the people express reality (Dong, 2008). Transitivity system involves process, participants and circumstances.

3. Recount Text

A recount is a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the order in which they happened (Anderson & Anderson, 2003).

4. Error

Error is a deviation from accepted rules of a language which resulted from the learner's lack of knowledge of correct rules of the target language. Students did not generally consider them as errors and it could not be self-corrected (M.Gass & Selinker, 2009).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

The paper is presented in five chapters as follows:

Chapter I Introduction:

This chapter elaborates the introduction of the study. It comprises the background of the study, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, clarification of related terms and paper organization.

Chapter II Literature Review:

This chapter discusses the literature review of the study to support and strengthen the background of the chapter one. This part comprises transitivity system in systemic functional linguistics, recount as a genre in systemic functional linguistics and problems in writing recount texts.

Chapter III Research Methodology:

This chapter presents a clear exposure about how the study is carried. This chapter explains the research method to answer the statements of problems proposed in this first chapter. This chapter comprises the research design, research site and subjects of the study, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter IV Findings and Discussions:

This chapter analyzes the findings and discussions of data analysis results. The discussions will focus in terms of the purpose, linguistic features, schematic structure, and students' difficulties in writing recount texts.

Chapter V Conclusions and Suggestions:

This chapter shows the conclusions and several suggestions of the study based on the analysis. The conclusions state the answer to the research questions about the students' ability in writing recount texts in terms of its criteria. There are also several suggestions for the teachers and future researchers related to transitivity analysis.

1.8 Concluding Remark

This chapter presented the underlying principles of this study; these include background, statement of problems, purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms and organization of the paper. The next section will present some theories relevant to the study.