CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the investigation of Theme and Rheme analysis of students’ Exposition texts in a Senior High School in Cimahi. The Theme and Rheme derived from the theory of Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL). This chapter introduces 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 key terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

Writing is a central element of language, any reading and language arts program must consider the multidimensional nature of writing in instructional practices, assessment procedures, and language development (Suleiman, 2000). Writing can be an art, but it is the task of the artist to create the masterpiece (Hosseini, Taghizadeh, Abedin & Naseri, 2013). Without the competency and practice of basic writing skills, neither proficient works of written art can be fictional nor can any lives be influenced (Currie, 2008). The ability to write well can have a profound impact on our lives.

Throughout its development, writing becomes an important aspect in many fields, including education. Writing is considered as a very powerful learning tool and plays a very crucial role in education. It helps to discover new information, ideas, evaluate our thoughts and opinions (Schleppegrell, 2004). In school, writing is taught to students from fiction to non-fiction text. When students learn to write, they learn how to convey information through written text and how to know what is on peoples’ mind, how to affect other people, and how to plan to achieve that (Bazerman, 2010). Students also learn new knowledge about linguistic features which is important to make the text communicative and informative.

In relation to this study, before students go to a higher level of education, they face the responsibility to develop their writing skills, specifically in the area of academic writing. One of the requirement is to create a text conveying their argument
or opinion toward an issue. According to King (1995, see also Park, 2003) argument shows students’ critical thinking. To him, “good thinkers are good questioners. Whatever they see, hear, read, or experience, they are constantly analyzing it, puzzling over its significance, searching for explanations, and speculating about relations between that experience and what they already know” (King, 1995, p. 13). One of the typical text that students learn in expressing their argument towards an issue is Exposition.

In addition, the need to investigate students’ texts come up since it is important to know how the text is organized textually. According to Halliday (1994, see also Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004) text analysis can reveal information flow or the organization of a message in a text. One of the way to analyze a text is by applying Theme-Rheme system and Thematic progression derived from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) analysis. Research done by Witt and Faigley (1981 in Wang, 2007, p.165) found that students write better papers when they develop an ability to use Theme and Rheme more effectively in their writings. By analyzing thematic structure of a text, we can identify the organizational approach and method of development used by the writer (Schleppegrell, in Wang, 2007).

However, there are few studies concerning the analysis of high school students’ exposition texts, maybe because many language teachers still focus their feedback on learners’ errors which occur below the clause level, such as lack of subject-verb agreement, incorrect use of verb tenses, and so on. They feel the lack of tools necessary to analyze their students’ texts at the discourse level (Wang, 2007, p. 165).

There are several research studies and cases regarding Theme choice and Theme progression in the text development. The research shows that, by analyzing Theme and Theme progression in a text, the students can learn to perform the same analysis in their own writing, and thus improve cohesion in their own work. The research was conducted in China by Yang (2007), who investigated Chinese college students’ expository essay written on a nationwide English examination in China. The research was focusing on the two aspects of theme in the textual metafunction: theme...
markedness and theme progression. Another research conducted by Wang (2007) in terms of teaching academic writing in University applied theme choice and theme progression to improve the cohesion in students writing.

So far, the analysis about thematic organization in students’ text conducted by some researcher like Wang (2007) and Yang (2007) only focused on university student. Thus, this study analyzed high school students’ exposition text in terms of its schematic structure and textual organization of the text using Theme-Rheme and Thematic progression derived from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

1.2 Statement of Problems
This study attempts to answer the following questions:
1. What are the ways in which the text are structured?
2. Which theme progression pattern occurs most dominantly in students’ exposition texts?

1.3 Purpose of the Study
Relevant to the statements of problems, this study is aimed to meet the following purposes:
1. To find out the structures of high school students’ exposition texts.
2. To investigate the theme progression pattern which occurs most dominantly in students’ exposition texts.

1.4 Scope of the Study
This study concerned to the analysis of Senior High School students’ texts in one High School in Cimahi in terms of its schematic structures and the theme progression pattern in students’ Exposition texts.

1.5 Significance of the Study
The findings of this study theoretically are expected to enrich the literature on teaching exposition text in school and practically are expected to give some solutions for the problems often encountered by teachers and students in writing.

Firstly, this study is expected to get an in-depth analysis of Theme-Rheme system and thematic progression by applying Systemic Functional Linguistics analysis in language teaching. Secondly, this study is expected to help the learner to organize ideas and arguments more effectively in writing a text especially exposition text. Aside from that, teachers can gain information of this study to expand their insight into schematic structures of exposition text so they can provide better information and materials in their teaching. In addition, the aftereffect of this study hopefully offers contribution for further researchers who are keen on exploring schematic structures by giving significant information.

1.6 Clarification of Terms
Theme system refers to the point of departure of a message. It focuses on the organization of information within individual clauses. It realizes through a structure in which the clause falls into Theme and Rheme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Theme Progression is the theme choice contributes to the development of the ideas presented in the text (Fries, 1995; Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004; Emilia; 2014).

Exposition text is a form of an essay or an argumentative text in which the writer argues for a particular point of view of an issue. It gives reasons and evidences to convince the readers that the writers’ opinion is correct with regard to an issue (Christie and Derewianka, 2008; Emilia, 2004; Gerrot and Wignell, 1995).

1.7 Organization of the Paper
This paper is divided into five chapters. Each chapter is provided with subtopics to give an insight into the topic investigated.

The first chapter is introduction. This chapter elaborates 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 the organization of the paper.

The second chapter is literature review. In this chapter, the paper elaborates the relevant literature which outlines some theories related to the present study.

The third chapter is research methodology. This chapter provides a detailed delineation of the methodological aspects of this study, which are the research design, research site and participant, data collection, and data analysis.

The fourth chapter is findings and discussions. This chapter focuses on the findings and discussions of students’ exposition texts in order to answer the research questions.

The last chapter is conclusions and recommendations. This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

1.8 Concluding Remark
This chapter has 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 the organization of the paper.