

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The introduction serves to introduce the present study. It concerns the background of the study, the research questions of the study, the objectives of the study, scope of the study, the significance of the study, definition of related terms, and organization of the thesis, all of which will be discussed below.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Writing is one of the language skills in English that should be mastered by undergraduate students. However, many students still have difficulties to write a text since they have to consider many things such as grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and cohesion among sentences and paragraphs. Beer (1991, p. 180) suggests that “writing is a highly complex process that most people, unfortunately, do not know enough about”. In line with that, in terms of fluency, Nunan (1999) elaborates that producing a coherence, fluent, extended writing piece is likely the most difficult thing in the language since the reader has to comprehend what has been written without asking for clarification or relying on the writer’s tone of voice or expression.

In writing a language, a text is something that we can see or read from books, newspaper or any other piece of writing. Derewianka (2011, p. 11) states that a text is constructed from several sentences; a clause or several clauses connected together can construct a sentence and clause is a unit of meaning that shows a message. In addition, Meyer (2009, p. 80) states that a text is a structure larger than a sentence. Moreover, people use language through a text. Language lies in the study of texts in order to convey meanings. With regard to this, Halliday (1985, p. 10) says that “the important thing about nature of a text is that, although when we write it down it looks it is made of words and sentences, it is really made of meanings”.

Undergraduate students actually are demanded to be able to write some genres because they have academic writing course in their college. At the university level, there are many genres of texts that should be mastered by the students. Some of them are narrative, recount, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion and review text. In the university, exposition text is one of the texts that need to be mastered by undergraduate students. The undergraduate students have learned this text from senior high school to the fourth semester. When the researcher interviewed them, they said that they were still confused about using the appropriate grammar, structure and also the use of language. It is supported by Crowhurst (in Schleppegrell, 2004, p. 89) states that “exposition or argument is a difficult task and it is clearly established that syntactic complexity is greater in argument than in narrative or descriptive writing”. The writer suggests that argument is more cognitively demanding in the location of relevant content, for example, and in the organization and logical use of that content. It characteristically uses linguistic forms not mastered early.

Exposition text is an important text to be master because it can improve students' academic skills and stimulate students' critical thinking. It can help students to develop their knowledge and way of thinking as undergraduate students (Beck & Jeffrey, 2009). Further, it belongs to a genre of arguing which is crucial in gaining students' critical thinking. As supported by Bizzel (1992), the ability to compose expositions will enhance students' critical thinking so that they are ready to compete in the real world. Exposition text becomes an influential text to prepare students to be able to deal with many aspects of life, such as the ability of reasoning, evaluating, and persuading. These abilities will enhance students' participation in social life (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). Derewianka and Jones (2013, p. 24) inform that there are two forms of exposition. They are analytical exposition text and hortatory exposition text.

Many studies found that Indonesian students are not accustomed to expressing their ideas or thought freely in spoken especially in written form. In addition, Brown (1994) states that “written products are often the result of

thinking, drafting, revising procedures that require specialized skills, the skill that not every speaker develops naturally". In other words, writing involves activities which usually cover generating ideas, organizing them coherently, using discourse markers and rhetorical convention to put the ideas cohesively in written text, revising and editing text for appropriate grammar and producing a final product. Accordingly, writing is often considered more difficult than other language skills. Besides, as widely known, English has different language structure and rules which are affected by the rules of time or tenses.

The ability to compose exposition text using a good theme is not easy for students because they should have an ability of reasoning, evaluating, and persuading when they write that text. This is supported by some relevant researches reviewed. A research on a theme and thematic progression in analytical exposition texts written by university students in the research site (Sianipar, 2015) has been conducted. She found that there are three types of Theme employed by the students, i.e. The Topical Themes, Interpersonal Themes, and Textual Themes. Regarding the thematic progression pattern, it is found that there are also three types of thematic progression pattern used by the students in composing their analytical exposition texts: the Theme Reiteration pattern, the Zig-Zag pattern, and the Multiple Theme pattern.

The other research was about the findings of the SFL-based genre analysis of a corpus of UNED students' essays (Arancon, 2013). This analysis has revealed the existence of certain types of lexico-grammatical errors which have been subsequently grouped into categories corresponding to the three macro-functions. The claim is that a genre-based approach within SFL can help to highlight the difficulties in writing for those learning Business English as an L2. Explicit modeling of the target genre, with a scaffolding of the generic structures, could help writers to produce more effective and accurate texts in the future. Thus, with better control of the canonical forms of the genre, they could start to be more unconventionally creative, but within the language system.

Some researchers have conducted studies on Theme and Thematic progression in different areas of knowledge, such as translation (Wang, 2014),

McCabe (1999) conducted a comparative study on Spanish and English history texts. Research on Theme and Thematic progression also have been done in various genre of texts, such as argumentative (Banks, 2008; Al Bakaa, 2014), explanatory (Yang, 2008), narrative (Safitra, 2013), and report (Ikaningrum, 2009). Some studies concerning the analysis of Theme and Thematic progression in exposition texts written by EFL and ESL students in some countries have been conducted, including China (Xu, 2000), Sweden (Herriman, 2011), Thailand (Arunsiroit, 2013) and Indonesia (Rakhman, 2013).

A research on Theme and Thematic progression in exposition texts written by English Education Program studies in the research site (Bangga, 2013) has been conducted as well. However, studies dealing with the analysis of theme and thematic progression in English education program students' exposition texts are hardly discovered. As the students majoring this program are expected to be teachers in the future, they are expected to be able to write good analytical exposition texts as well as to teach their students how to make good analytical exposition texts. To help teachers write good texts and teach the students how to make good writings, the knowledge of theme and thematic progression is required. Theme and thematic progression in texts are important to be investigated as for their existence in text become one of the characteristics of good texts.

Related to the issues above, it is very important to fulfil the gap in analysing the undergraduate students' exposition text in the theme system and thematic progression. Several studies found that the study of theme system and thematic progression analysis on undergraduate students' exposition text especially hortatory exposition text has not been conducted in Indonesia. Thus, this study intends to fill the gap by analysing the theme system and thematic progression of undergraduate students' analytical exposition text and hortatory exposition text. In this study, the theme system and thematic progression are used as an instrument to analyse the texts written by undergraduate students.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Under the aforementioned circumstances, two research questions are addressed, as follows :

1. What theme system is exhibited in the undergraduate students' analytical and hortatory exposition text?
2. What patterns of thematic progression are realized in their analytical and hortatory exposition text?

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

Following up on the research questions above, the researcher intends:

1. To reveal the exhibition of the theme system in undergraduate students' analytical and hortatory exposition text.
2. To identify the realization of thematic progression in their analytical and hortatory exposition texts.

## **1.4 Scope of the study**

The research was conducted at one of a public university in Bandung. An analysis of undergraduate students' analytical exposition text and hortatory exposition text in Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) Perspectives in terms of theme system and thematic progression became the focus of the study.

## **1.5 Significances of the study**

There are some contributions that the study can offer. The result of this study is expected to: The reader especially lecturer about analysis of students' exposition text writing in Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) Perspectives can be beneficial for their teaching-learning process and the teacher can improve the students' writing skill in expressing the Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) in exposition text and provide additional information input for other researchers who intend to carry on research in the same with certain interest.

## 1.6 Definition of Related Terms

To avoid misinterpretation and ambiguity regarding several theoretical terms, below are the explanation of the terms used in the study:

### 1. Systemic functional linguistics

SFL is one approach that recognizes the meaning and used as central features of language (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). SFL can also be defined as a theory of linguistics which concerns language of a source of a making-meaning process rather than a set of grammatical rules (Halliday & Mathhiensen, 2004; Eggins, 2004; Bloor & Bloor, 2004). The name of a theory of (SFL) reflects its cornerstone: it is a semiotic theory in which language is fundamentally viewed as a meaning potential, i.e. as a repository of meanings from which language users choose when communicating (Hills - Madsen, 2014).

### 2. The Theme System

Theme system is concerned with the organization of information within individual clauses, and through this, with the organization of a larger text (Martin, Mathhiesen, & Painter, 1997).

### 3. Thematic progression

Thematic progression is Theme Rheme development employed in the text to organize ideas through the Theme which is employed in the clause (Butt, et al., 2000)

### 4. Exposition text

Exposition text is a text arguing a certain point of view of an issue providing reasons to support and elaborate thesis using evidence (Gerot and Wignell, 1994: Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2008). There are two types of exposition texts; analytical exposition and hortatory exposition which are different slightly in the way they deliver the last stage of generic structure.

## 1.7 Organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. In the first chapter presents the introduction which includes a background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, scope of the study, the significance of the study, and definition of related terms. Meanwhile, the second chapter discusses the review of the literature. It comprises an exposition text overview, systemic functional linguistics, the three metafunctions of exposition text, the theme system, thematic progression and previous related studies. The third chapter concerns the methodology of the study. It explains the research design, data collection, and data analysis. The fourth chapter is data analysis which chapter presents the findings and discussion of this study. The last chapter is a conclusion which concludes this study and closes it with some recommendations for the readers and for English lecturers in Indonesia.