CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the 2006 English curriculum of Indonesia, which is called KTSP (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan/ Curriculum of Educational Unit), students of secondary schools are supposed to develop their English in four language skills including speaking, listening, reading and writing (Depdiknas, 2006). Thus, if we look at the curriculum, writing is one of the four skills in English that the students have to master. However, writing is generally recognized as a difficult task for the students in almost of ESL and EFL students (Thonus, 1993; Rosa, 2007; Wang, 2007). The reason for this is that writing requires the students to encounter some conditions by which they can write well. Moreover, one condition that the students have to master is maintaining the coherence in their text.

Nevertheless, maintaining the coherence in students' writing becomes the main problem faced by the students when they are asked to write. Research has found that in ESL/EFL students' writing, the students focus almost entirely on the word and sentence levels rather than the level of the whole discourse, that is, textual coherence (Bamberg, 1984; Ferris and Hedgecock 1998 as cited in Lee, 1998). Priyatmojo (2007) confirms that grammar is not the only thing that has to be accounted to make the sentences coherent. In other words, grammatical

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sentences alone will not ensure that the text itself makes sense. He states that we have to know how the sentences relate to each other.

Thus, one of the ways that can be used to assess the students' improvement in writing is by analyzing the Thematic Progression on their writing. Thematic Progression can be seen from the pattern of Theme and Rheme used in their writing. Danes (1974) as cited in Downing (2001) asserts that the organization of information in text is determined by the progression in the ordering of utterance Themes and their Rhemes. As Wang (2007) suggested, in order to help the students communicate their ideas successfully and systematically, the sentence should be started by the Theme. Theme is the element of the clause structure which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is with which the clause is concerned (Halliday, 1985:38). The Theme provides the environment for the remainder of the message; which is known as the Rheme, in Theme-Rheme organization (*ibid*) that becomes the most significant factor of the development of the text (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

Recent studies such as Nwogu and Bloor (1991), Downing (2001), Li and Liu (2005), Jalilifar (2009), Wang (2007), Li (2009), Thomas and Hawes (2010), Emilia (2005, 2010), and Fries (1994, 1995), Crompton (2003) are related to Systemic Functional Linguistics and focus on Thematic Progression. Those studies analyzed the Thematic Progression in some genres, including the argumentative text which becomes the main data of this study. Additionally, those

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studies describe and explain why and how certain Thematic Progression exists in the text, and also interprets how the writer of the text organizes their ideas.

However, in Indonesian secondary school context, Theme-Rheme organization is not paid attention to by both teachers and students in the teaching and learning activity, especially in writing skill, though it is important since it can show the ability of students in organizing their ideas and making their sentence coherent (Wang, 2007), and also it can enhance language skill development (Huda, 1999). This can be proved by picturing the students texts analyzed in this study, which are some of them lack of coherence. Therefore, this study will focus on analyzing Thematic Progression on students' texts, with the specific focus; it is on students' Exposition text, to reveal how the students organize their ideas seen from Thematic Progression in their Exposition texts, and to explore the extent to which the students' Exposition texts are consistent with the argumentative language features in terms of Thematic Progression in high school students.

Concerning the text type investigated, students' Exposition text becomes the main concern of this study for several reasons. First, Exposition text is one of the genres in the curriculum that is taught to the students in senior high school (see 2006 Indonesia Curriculum) where the students have been able to give or to write a critical point of view. Second, this genre is an important and influential text, which shows the students' ability language process for dealing with many aspects of school knowledge and effective social participation. It is a process that involves reasoning, evaluation and persuasion (Knapp and Watkins, 2005).

1.2 Research Question

This study attempts to answer the research questions formulated as follows:

1. How do the students organize their ideas in Exposition text, seen from Thematic Progression?

2. To what extent are the students' Exposition texts consistent with argumentative language features in terms of Thematic Progression?

1.3 Aims of Study

Based on the description in the background, the study aims to:

1. Reveal how the students organize their ideas seen from Thematic Progression (TP) in students' Exposition text.

2. Explore the extent to which the students' Exposition texts are consistent with the argumentative language features in terms of Thematic Progression.

1.4 Scope of the Study

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This study focuses on analyzing Thematic Progression and Thematic Progression Consistency with argumentative language features in senior high school students' Exposition texts. Some underlying frameworks such as Halliday (1985, 1994), Eggins (2004), Martin (1992), Emilia (2010), Fries (1981, 1994, 1995) are used to analyze the Theme-Rheme and Thematic Progression. In addition, the consistency of argumentative language features in term of Thematic Progression will be seen by comparing the result of Enkvist (1978), Dubois (1987), Francis (1990), Gomez (1994), and Fries' (1995) studies, as cited by Crompton (2003), toward argumentative text. The analysis of Thematic Progression focuses on Exposition text written by nine high school students in one of public school in Bandung. The analysis focuses on Theme selection and Thematic Progression in Exposition text.

1.5   Significance of the Study

This study is expected to offer some theoretical and practical contributions. In terms of theory, this study can enrich the literature on Thematic Progression analysis in students' texts. Practically, the result of this study is expected to give information on how to analyze students' text based on Thematic Progression.

1.6   Clarification of Related Terms

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This section presents the technical terms that occur in the study in order to avoid the ambiguity, misunderstanding, and misinterpretation toward the concept presented. Those are:

1. **Thematic Progression** is the exchange of information between Theme and Rheme pairings in a text (Eggins, 1994 as cited in Wang, 2007) and it is regarded as a structural device to measure the cohesion of the text (Halliday, 1994). This is supported by Danes (1987) as cited in Downing (2001) who claims that the organization of information in texts is determined by the progression in the ordering of utterance Themes and their Rhemes. is called Thematic Progression

2. **Exposition text** is a text type which clearly focuses on the purpose of argument; that is, putting forward a viewpoint and providing evidence to support it (Knapp and Watkins, 2005). In this study, students' Exposition text refers to Exposition text written by second grade of senior high school students in public school in Bandung

1.7 Paper Organization

This paper will be presented into five chapters, as follow:

1. Chapter I: Introduction

In this chapter, the paper elaborates the background of the study. It will discuss writing becomes the focus of this study and why analyzing student's writing is very important. The chapter also states the research questions, aims of the study,

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scope of the study, significance of the study, research method, clarification of related terms, and Paper Organization.

2. Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter discusses some theories about Systemic Functional Grammar, Thematic Progression, Thematic Progression Consistency and also Genre taken for the study.

3. Chapter III: Reasearch Methodology

This chapter gives clear Exposition about how the study is conducted and analyzed. It clarifies why the study needs to use students' Exposition text. The data collection and analysis will also be briefly explained.

4. Chapter VI: Findings and Discussions

This chapter analyzes and discusses the findings of the study clearly. It shows the elaboration of the result of the students' writing of Exposition text as analyzed by Thematic Progression and see whether it will be consistent to the pattern of previous result.

5. Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestion

This chapter presents the conclusion and several suggestions of the study based on the analysis in chapter four. The conclusion states the answer to the research questions about the Thematic Progression in students' Exposition text. There are

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also several suggestions for further research related to the Thematic Progression

analysis.