

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the problems of the study. It starts with research background, research questions, research objectives, and research significance.

1.1 Research Background

People interact each other by using language. Language is a system and arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication in a social context (Ferdinand de Saussure (1959: 8-10) as cited in Valova (2006:3). In using the language, people tend to construct meaning. This was a basis of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by M. A. K. Halliday and his fellows in 1960s. Systemic Functional Linguistics, often called Systemic Functional Grammar which is a language approach that focuses on how people use language with their community to actualize the meaning (Gerot & Wignell, 1994:6; Halliday, 1994; Eggins, 2004:3). In SFL, language performs three metafunctions, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual that represent meaning (Bloor & Bloor, 2004:10; Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks, & Yallop, 2000:5). Ideational metafunction is revealed in language content representing relevant actions, feelings, situations, conditions, people, and circumstances. Interpersonal metafunction expresses the relationship between speaker and hearer in a communication. Meanwhile, the use of language to associate what is said or

written to a text or other linguistics elements comes under the textual metafunction. In this study, interpersonal and textual meanings are not examined since the focus of the study is on ideational metafunction actualized by transitivity.

Transitivity analysis being a sub-network under the ideational metafunction is employed to probe content or experiential meaning in certain text. It is a term for one aspect of grammar which sorts verb meanings based on process types. Transitivity refers to the representation of a process consisting of doing, sensing, being, saying activities that happen in social life (Halliday, 1985). Language is used to express ideas about particular persons, objects, qualities, and interrelation of the world around us. Transitivity is the basis of representation in which it is the way the clause analyzes events and situations as being of certain types. According to Eggins (2004: 249) transitivity analysis offers an interpretation of one of the structural strands of the clause. In simple terms, transitivity refers to the representation of a process consisting of doing, sensing, being, saying activities that happen in social life (Halliday, 1985). It can reveal the action performed, by whom, and on what. There are process types used to analyze the clause in transitivity, namely material, mental, behavioral, verbal, existential, and relational processes. These process types investigate sentence structure represented by processes, the participants, and the circumstances involved in these processes. By analyzing transitivity system, people can construe how the field of the situation is being constructed.

This study focused on ideational metafunction particularly experiential meaning actualized by transitivity. The analysis of the clauses were taken from students' writings at the eleventh-grade students of SMK Wira Harapan. Writing is one of the four skills that are learned in English (Handayani, 2018; Putra & Sulaiman, 2016). Alterman (2005:17) states that writing is a means of communication to convey messages to others through lettering. By writing, students can express and share their feeling or imagination into some pieces of paper to the readers. The process of writing is more complicated than other English skills since there is a set of competencies that they need to master to make a single piece of writing (Brown, 2001:335). Therefore, they need to know the right spelling, punctuation, word choice, and grammar in writing a text.

The teachers should give special attention when teaching writing. It is because writing is a form of communication in which the students can express their ideas, feelings, and experiences. There are two reasons why teaching writing is considered important (Klimova, 2013). First, writing enhances students' critical thinking skills. When students write, they use their critical thinking because they gather information, analyze, observe, or reflect to create a piece of writing. Second, writing helps the students in developing language at all levels. In writing, the students require to learn grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and story structure, which all help the students in performing English skills effectively.

Based on curriculum 2013, recount text is a text genre that requires to be learned by the eleventh-grade vocational high school students. A text which recites an event or experience in the past is called recount text (Stubbs, 2000:8, as

cited in Senjawati, 2016). Recount text has five types (Stubbs, 2000:8, as cited in Senjawati, 2016). First, a factual recount which informs of a particular incident accurately. This can be found in accident reports and historical recounts. Second, a procedural recount which registers the steps in exploration as a basis of reported results. For example, science experiment and cooking experience. Third, a biographical recount that delineates a person's story, such as Raden Ajeng Kartini's biography, known as the pioneer of the revival of indigenous women. Fourth, literary recount that retells a series of events of an imaginary world as they are real in order to entertain the reader. This type of recount text can be seen in novels, myths, legends, and fables. Fifth, a personal recount that refers to writers' or speakers' personal experiences, such as diary journal and personal letter.

A recount text was selected randomly in order to be analyzed for transitivity. The recount texts written by the eleventh-grade vocational high school students were used as the source of the data in this study. This study intended to uncover the meaning contained in the students' recount texts. Furthermore, the recount text type used in this study was a personal recount since the topics of the students' recount texts were about the students' last vacations and their best experiences. Hence, the students told their personal activities so that the reader could obtain information and be entertained from the recount texts created.

This study used Systemic Functional Grammar as its theoretical framework, especially transitivity theories of Halliday (1994:107) and Eggins (2004:214) in order to conduct transitivity analysis of the students' recount texts. There are 26

students' recount texts employed as the sources of data in this research. This study analyzed the students' recount texts which are in the form of sentences and clauses based on transitivity system. Transitivity system was used because the pattern could represent events or activities done by the students. Besides, the students must conceive the schematic structure of recount text including orientation, record of events, and reorientation (Anderson & Anderson, 2003:50, as cited in Nurohmah, 2013). Besides, recount text's linguistics features should be employed by the students in their texts, consisting of particular participants, circumstance of time and place, additive conjunction, material process, first person, and past tense (Gerot & Wignell, 1994:194). In order to make this research feasible, the research focused on the use of process types, the process types which are dominantly used in the students' recount texts, and circumstantial elements in vocational high school students' recount texts.

Many researchers conducted transitivity analysis for two rationales. First, the notion of Halliday's transitivity theory represents its strength in which it is a grammatical system that is an effective tool for analyzing meanings conveyed in clauses (Suryatini, 2014). As stated by Isti'annah (2015), in literary text, transitivity is usually used to portray particular characters and problems contained in certain texts. On the other hand, in non-literary text, transitivity is used to figure out how language is used which can influence people's perceptions. Second, empirically, many text genres can be analyzed by using transitivity. There are eight studies found that used transitivity system perspectives on newspapers, speeches, debates, songs, and students' compositions that were proven to reveal their meanings in

various contexts (Ong'Onda, 2016; Yuqiong & Fengjie, 2018; Zhang, 2017; Zahoor & Janjua, 2016; Rohmat, Nurhaeni, & Anggraeni, 2018; Sayukti & Kurniawan, 2018; Senjawati, 2016; Jelimun, Suarnajaya, & Adnyani, 2020).

Despite transitivity tends to be effective in expressing the meaning of a text, there are two controversial issues of transitivity system (Bartley, 2018). First, transitivity system is somewhat confusing when classifying verbs into transitivity process types (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999:542, as cited in Bartley, 2018). This difficulty is usually experienced by those who do discourse analysis and need to categorize their data. In this case, they have trouble analyzing because a number of verbs have ambiguous meanings, especially in behavioral process. Behavioral process is defined as physical and psychological behaviors (Egins, 2004:233). This process is part of action, but the action has to be encountered by a conscious being. For example, the word 'see' is mental process, but the words 'look at' is behavioral process. Researchers require to comprehend the verbs that are included in mental or behavioral processes, and find a variety of reliable sources to strengthen the transitivity analysis results to overcome this difficulty.

Furthermore, the second issue in transitivity analysis process is there is only one predicator in a clause when analyzing texts for transitivity patterns (Bartley, 2018). If there is one verb in a sentence, the analysis becomes simple; however, when more than one verb appears in a sentence, the sentence needs to be divided into clauses. Thus, before conducting transitivity analysis, the texts analyzed are divided into sentence and clause modifications. Each clause needs to be analyzed

for its transitivity structure. As a result, the analysis result of each clause can uncover the meaning contained in particular texts

There have been several studies of transitivity system perspectives on newspapers, speeches, debates, and songs. These researches investigated the application of Halliday's theory of transitivity, and the distributions, functions of the transitivity processes and the main participants. Among them, the relational process and material process were the most frequently occurring process types which indicated that the whole processes were concerned with actions and events (Ong'Onda, 2016; Yuqiong & Fengjie, 2018; Zhang, 2017; Zahoor & Janjua, 2016).

Furthermore, there were four studies of transitivity system perspectives on students' writing analysis at junior high school, senior high school, and university levels. These researches investigated the use of transitivity process in students' writing in accordance with its criteria and students' problems in writing the texts and to find out the most dominant process types being used. The results of those studies showed that the majority of the students' writings consisted of social function and language features. There were still several errors in terms of language features such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. In terms of interpersonal metafunction, errors generally emerged in the finite as there was an overlap of past tense and present tense.

In addition, the results of the researches in analyzing the texts showed that all of the texts consisted of material process, mental process, relational process, existential process, behavioral and verbal process. The most dominant process

found was relational process. It signified that students were realized of how the texts should be written since one of the language features in all of the text genres was the employment of the clauses with relational process (Rohmat, Nurhaeni, & Anggraeni, 2018; Sayukti & Kurniawan, 2018; Senjawati, 2016). Moreover, Jelimun, Suarnajaya, & Adnyani (2020) investigated transitivity process in students' compositions and found out that six transitivity processes were employed in the students' writings, namely material, mental, verbal, behavioral, relational, and existential processes.

The previous studies analyzed various different texts; however, the technique used in analyzing was similar, that was transitivity analysis. Previous studies were mostly concerned with the analysis of the application of Halliday's theory of transitivity in the representation of text in newspaper, speech, debate, descriptive text, recount text, and song at junior high school, senior high school, university level, and social life. Nowadays, there is no study of transitivity analysis of students' recount texts at vocational high school level. Students' knowledge and abilities at junior high school, senior high school, vocational high school, and university level are heterogeneous in writing recount texts. Besides, research subjects in this study were the eleventh-grade students majoring in Travel and Tourism Industry. These are the rationales of this study to uncover the meaning contained in recount texts that were created by vocational high school students. Moreover, this study aimed to understand the use of transitivity process types, the process types which are dominantly used in the students' recount texts, and circumstantial elements in vocational high school students' recount texts.

The research results are expected to advance students' knowledge in writing with the result that they are able to write in English properly. Furthermore, it is expected to provide development of writing teaching for teachers. Therefore, the information in this study can be used as a reference for future researches on similar topic.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the research background, the problems are formulated as follows:

1. What are the process types that characterize the students' recount texts?
2. What are the process types which are dominantly used in the students' recount texts?
3. What are the circumstantial elements that characterize the students' recount texts?

1.3 Research Objectives

In line with the research questions, the research objectives could be divided into two, general objective and specific objective. Therefore, the research objectives could be briefly formulated as follows:

1.3.1 General Objective

Generally, this study aims to analyze students' recount texts by using transitivity system in the eleventh grade students of SMK Wira Harapan.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1.3.2.1 Understanding the process types and outcomes that characterize the students' recount texts.

1.3.2.2 Understanding the process types which are dominantly used in the students' recount texts.

1.3.2.3 Understanding the circumstantial elements that characterize the students' recount texts.

1.4 Research Significance

This study concerns on transitivity analysis of students' recount texts. Hence, it is expected to indicate significant theoretical and practical information on the importance of implementing transitivity system in students' writings.

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, the study findings are expected to be able to strengthen the theories found, particularly in analyzing students' recount texts by using transitivity system. Thus, these results are acceptable to be the reference to extend the theory in analyzing students' recount texts by using transitivity system.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

Practically, the findings of this study have benefit for the teachers and students. For the teachers, the result of this study can give informative feedback for them to know how successful they are in teaching writing and as a reflection concerning the achievement of their teaching. For the students, the findings of the

study hopefully can increase the students' motivations to learn, explore and develop their ideas to create recount texts which have appropriate sentence structure (Rohmat, Nurhaeni, and Anggraeni, 2018). Moreover, it is expected to have significance for the development of social functions, linguistic features, and language elements in the students' recount texts.

