

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1.The Background of the Study

Language is central to the ways of thinking, feeling, and interacting with others. It is the main medium to form and maintain relationship with one another and the medium through experiences are shaped and exchanged. The investigation of languages always come to the conclusion that the function of language is to combine human ideas into verbal expression so that they can convey meaning to another and can create ‘communication’. As a device for communication, language is an effective means of expressing ideas and feelings in both of spoken and written form. When people speak or write, they produce text, the term ‘text’ refers to any instance of language (Halliday and Mathiessen 2004:3).

When the people produce a text, language is a means of representing and defining real and imaginary events. Transitivity as a fundamental property of language that it enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them (Halliday, 1985:101). It is a means of interpreting all the “goings-on” – happening, doing, sensing, meaning and being and becoming around us.

Literature introduces us to new world of experience. Furthermore, literature represents “life” and “life” is in large measure of social reality. According to Marsh (1995: 11), literature is about ordinary life. In literature there are some literary works that include: novel, short story, drama, and poetry. Poetry

is one of creative form in literature. It is expression of heart voice and strong feeling that written in beautiful stanza form and expressed with style and motion suitable with the contain, so that it is performed and listened beautifully. Poetry is the imaginative expression of strong feeling, usually rhythmical and the spontaneous over flow of powerful feelings. Poetry usually represents about condition of author's soul expressed through writing. The poem that usually poet use to communicate his or her experiences of life, emotions, imaginations, and senses.

One of the popular American poets who is capable of communicating his sense through poem is Robert Frost. Frederik (1988: 164) stated that Robert Frost is one of the most popular poets of all time. Frost's image was of the celebrator of American virtues, the man who builds poems as well wrought and solid as a New England farmhouse. He has created many literary works especially poems. As a poet, Robert Frost used words compiled into beautiful sentences. He always used nature as his inspiration to represent his emotions and intentions through the poems. Frost was in his poems intensely preoccupied with man, his problems, his potentials, and his basic achievements. There are some reasons why the taken object of research is Robert Frost's poems. First, his works contain of beauty. The beauty represents emotions. Emotions themselves represent the essential part of literary works and they are written in an artistic way. His works are also said to be a genre of literature which reveals mystery, beauty, and loveliness of human life and nature, and in which imaginations, passions, and feelings' predominate.

Halliday (1994: 106) stated that the transitivity refers to a system that construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types. It means that it is possible to analyze text in order to find out the process types representing the experiences. Transitivity is defined as the manner in which a verb is related to the noun phrases in the clause structure. Traditional grammarians adopt purely syntactic description, in that whether the subject takes one or more objects. Within Systemic Functional Linguistics, the notion of transitivity has been greatly extended and generalized. Here, the terms is understood as denoting the kind of activity or process expressed by a sentence, the number of participants involved and the manner in which they are involved.

Angela (2006) stated that most processes are accompanied by one or more inherent participants; the nature of the process determines how many and what kind of participants are involved. Human participants occupy a prime place among the semantic roles, but the term participant does not refer exclusively to persons or animal, but includes things and abstractions. A participant can be the one who carries out the action or the one who is affected by it; it can be the one who experiences something by seeing or feeling; it can be a person or thing that simply exists. These processes and inherent participants is categorized in the form of transitivity.

By putting transitivity into action, one can encode her/his experience of processing as being important in the transmission of information (ideational). The importance of the analysis of sentence meanings lies in the fact that agency, state, and the process seem to be basic categories in terms of which human beings

present the world to themselves through language (Fowler 1996: 74). Therefore language as the representation of experiences which can be poured into a text. It is the same as the written form text as well is as an alternative means of expressing ideas.

A genre of literature, poem constructed in lines and stanzas as well is a medium of expressing ideas. Moreover, sometimes poets try to hide the intended meaning and monopolize the words in order to build up a nice structure of a poem. According to Arp (2005) poem contains ideas unifying thought and feeling, it shapes how people perceive the world and excites people with image of beauty. Thus, poets as the composer try to convey the real world by occupying the words.

Poetry, as a literary genre, encompasses various language rules. As a result, the linguistic approach, particularly the SFL, is applicable to poetry especially in Robert Frost's poem. The writer will use the SFL theory because the focus is on the linguistic features of the poems. The linguistic approach can go beyond the sentence level where many choices as the clause rank are manifested. The SFL can display the relationship of the participant character or persona in the poem. For the purpose of this research, the experiential metafunction of the ideational metafunction, realized through the system of transitivity will be employed as it construes experience known as the on-going (events) which include these modes: happening, doing, sensing, meaning and being and becoming. Halliday's transitivity can expose the basic linguistic characteristics of texts, especially literary materials such as poems because of their rich linguistic features.

A study about transitivity system used in poetry has been conducted by Khalid and Mushatq (2015) on Transitivity as a means of communication, a stylistic study of Langston Hughes's selected early poems. This paper examined the functions of different processes of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory in creating the poetic voice in Langston Hughes's poems. Transitivity analysis gives more detailed information to the readers while analyzing Hughes's poems. It also provides linguistic evidence to support the interpretation of the poems through showing what/who does what to whom/ what in the main character's world to decide on their meanings. The finding of this research conclude that material and mental process was higher than the other processes. The example below is taken to give a clear idea:

- Transitivity System in Langston Hughes's poems

<i>I</i>	<i>bathed</i>	<i>in the Euphrates</i>	
		<i>when dawns were</i>	
		<i>young</i>	
<i>Actor</i>	<i>Process: material</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>	

<i>I</i>	<i>built</i>	<i>my hut</i>	<i>near the Congo</i>
<i>Actor</i>	<i>Process: material</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>

<i>I</i>	<i>raised</i>	<i>the pyramids</i>	<i>above it</i>
<i>Actor</i>	<i>Process: material</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>

<i>They</i>	<i>"ll see</i>	<i>how beautiful i am</i>	
<i>Senser</i>	<i>Process: mental</i>	<i>Phenomenon</i>	

These data used material process, "bathed" "built", and "raised". This material processes can be categorized as the process of action that involve physically and it is done by actor "I". The mental process "ll see" showed

process of sensing and the senser “they” also showed that it is the participant who involved in the process. From this clauses, it was found that the transitivity system in Langston Hughes poems interpreted as a system to organize the outer and inner experiences.

The same research has been conducted by Afrianto (2014) “transitivity analysis on Shakespeare’s Sonnets”. It discussed the poetry based on the linguistic point of view; thus this research did occupying linguistics on analyzing poetry, especially systemic functional grammar i.e. transitivity system. This research focused on which types of process usually appearing in the poetry. This research finally is able to posit that there are four process types of six types appearing; they are material process, mental process, relational process and existential process. This research found that material process appeared more often than others. The example below is taken to give a clear idea:

- Transitivity System in Shakespeare’s Sonnets

<i>Black wires</i>	<i>grow</i>	<i>on her had</i>		
<i>Participant</i>	<i>Process: material</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>		
<i>I</i>	<i>never</i>	<i>saw</i>	<i>a goddess</i>	<i>go</i>
<i>Participant</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>	<i>Process: mental</i>	<i>Participant</i>	<i>Process: material</i>
<i>My mistress</i>	<i>treads</i>	<i>on the ground</i>		
<i>Participant</i>	<i>Process: material</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>		

These data used material process, “grow” “go”, and “treads” showed the process of doing or action. The participants in this data are “back wires“, “i”, “a goddess” and “My mistress”. Then, “saw” as the mental process is indicated by the participant “1” In this clauses, Shakespeare showed and expressed the word

by the material process. This material process appeared in his poetry because he want to represent the word by using the action verb.

Based on the prior observations, some studies have reported significant differences in the opposite direction. There was a gap between fact and the theory. Based on the observation in the media of internet (poemhunter.com/i/ebooks/pdf/robert\_frost\_2004\_9.pdf), it was found that the transitivity system is different. Halliday and Mathiessen (2004: 176) stated that the process is the most central element in the configuration. Participants are close to the centre; they are directly involved in the process, bringing about its occurrence or being affected by it in some way. However, in Robert Frost's poems, some of the clauses is indicated that the inherent participants did not involve directly in the process. Some of the lines in Robert Frost's poems titled "A servant to Servant", "Design", and "Devotion", can be seen below:

**"A Servant to Servant"**

*There in the upper chamber in the ell,  
A sort of catch-all full of attic clutter.  
I often think of the smooth hickory bars.*

**"Design"**

*Like the ingredients of a witches' broth  
A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth.*

**"Devotion"**

*The hearth can think of no devotion  
Greater than being shore to ocean.*

- Transitivity System in Robert Frost's poems

<i>I</i>	<i>often think</i>	<i>of the smooth hickory bars.</i>
<i>Senser</i>	<i>Process: mental: cognition</i>	<i>Phenomenon</i>
<i>A snow</i>	<i>drop</i>	<i>spider</i>

<i>Actor</i>	<i>Process: material</i>	<i>Goal</i>
<i>The heart</i>	<i>can think</i>	<i>of no devotion</i>
<i>Senser</i>	<i>Process: mental: cognition</i>	<i>Phenomenon</i>

These data used mental process, “*often think*” showed the process of sensing and it is done by senser. In this data, “I” as the human participant can be categorized as the participant who involve in the process and the object “of the smooth hickory bars” is called phenomenon is impacted of the process of sensing. Meanwhile, in the material process, “*drop*” showed the abstract doing or action. But, the actor “a snow “ is categorized as the non-human participant that did not involve in the process of doing. Then, in mental process, “*can think*” showed the process of sensing which is cognition. But, the senser “the heart “ also did not involve in the process of sensing because “the heart” as non-human participant does not have the ability to think.

In Robert Frost’s poems, it was found that it is not all of the inherent participants are the participants that involve in the process. He also used the non-human participant to represent his experience. Leech (1998: 4) said that poetry is about the choice of words that will be used and the arrangement of words which can catch the reader’s and the listener’s attention. The language in poetry showed the image of beauty. Therefore, the researcher wants to analyze the transitivity system in Robert Frost’s poems. The writer can give the different interpretation beyond the poetry and it can enrich the study of SFL especially for the transitivity system. Because the language of poetry showed the sense of beauty in the form of transitivity system itself. So, it is important to study the transitivity system in the poetry. Therefore, the researcher conduct a study of transitivity system in Robert

Frost's poem to deeper the language understanding on SFL from the poetry point of view.

### **1.2.The Problem of the Study**

Based on the background that has been mentioned before, there are three questions to be responded in this research:

1. What kinds of process are used in Robert Frost's poems?
2. How the inherent participants are used in Robert Frost's poems?
3. Why the processes and inherent participants are realized in the way they are?

### **1.3.The Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study in this research as in the following:

1. To find out the kinds of process that are used in Robert Frost's poems.
2. To describe the inherent participants that are used in Robert Frost's poems.
3. To find out the reason of the processes and inherent participants that are realized in the way they are.

### **1.4. The Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is limited into the transitivity system in Robert Frost's poems. The poems is taken from Classic Poetry Series of Robert Frost Poems published by Poemhunter.com- The World Poetry Archive which published on 2004. There are 25 poems in this study. It consisted of 207 clauses.

### 1.5. The Significance of the Study

The finding of this study hoped will be useful for those who are interested in analyzing the poetry based on the transitivity system. There are two kinds of significance in this study namely theoretically and practically. It can be seen below:

1. Theoretically:

- The findings of the study will increase the development of linguistic especially to the transitivity system based on poetry point of view.
- This research can enrich the literature as well linguistics, and become the inspiration for other researcher who is interested in cultivating literary works by applying linguistic approach.

2. Practically:

- It will be a frame of literary study to the people who study and use a language in poetry. They can make meaning build up and be understood through choice of words in the poetry
- This study can help the reader to construct the meaning of poetry based on linguistic point of view especially transitivity system.