

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the Study

The topic of this thesis is said to be interesting because of some reasons. Firstly, the research was useful for the new way of analysis transitivity system analysis as part of the systemic functional grammar/linguistics. Secondly, the contribution of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) especially transitivity system analysis to language education is centred predominantly on the theory's relevance to the explanation and interpretation of texts. It is therefore a general assumption of linguists/teachers working within this tradition that the primary 'learning outcome' of courses in SFL was an awareness of the role of lexicogrammar (the integrated system of grammar and lexis) in the production and negotiation of the social meanings that are realised in both spoken and written texts (Halliday, 1985).

Halliday conceptualized his approach to systemic functional linguistics during the 1950s and early 1960s. His work was influenced in particular by his teacher at the University of London, J. R. Firth. The popularity of Firth's ideas gave rise to what was known as the "London School" of linguistics (Butler, 1985). Firth's work differed substantially from the popular focus on Saussure's universal grammar at that time (Butler, 1985; Martin & Rothery, 1993). For Saussure (1995), exploring the infinite number of possible meanings produced by individual speakers was beyond the scope of linguistics.

Texts can be found in many kinds of media such as magazines, newspapers, books, letters, and brochures. According to the kinds of texts, we can group the various texts into genres such as narrative, recount, procedures, and other functional texts. Factually, the teaching of English texts implemented in schools have been known as traditional method: the reading texts for students are conducted the same steps from time to time, so the functional grammar introduced by M.A.K Halliday may, at least, bring new hope for the implementation of teaching English from different angle. The text that was analyzed in this thesis is taken from English for SMK 1 Textbook for Grade X. This textbook was chosen because the students used it for their learning process. By knowing the constructions of the clauses inside the texts, the students were rich of idea in recomposing and developing the clauses based on the transitivity systems.

In this occasion, it is not a matter of whether the texts in the textbook have problems, but more than the usefulness of the texts in the process of English teaching and learning. Many scholars indicate that textbooks seem to be the main teaching resources in EFL classrooms. Byrd (2001: 415) claims most teachers depend on textbooks - often as a required tool - because they provide content and activities that shape what happens in the classroom. González (2006: 104) says textbooks became an alternative for three main reasons: they are apparently eclectic alternatives to save time and money, they include pictures and graphic materials that may be more efficient than the teacher's descriptions, and they contain all kinds of objects that may be difficult to bring into the classroom. EFL textbooks are, indeed, a major necessity for most teachers, because the bulk of

them feature an eclectic approach based on the current theories proposed by communicative trends. For instance, Task-based approach engages learners in problem-solving tasks. Content based approach also offers opportunities to deal with interesting topics and subject matter, rather than coping with grammar-oriented lessons. Moreover, collaborative learning encourages students to work in groups, as an ideal way to exchange information socially and meaningfully. According to Richards and Rodgers (2006), textbooks are designed in such a way that their tables of contents suggest a gradual development of language forms and functions, going from the most basic to the most complex. All these approaches and features are intended to develop the use of communicative language. However, despite considerable effort on the part of text designers, editors, and publishing houses, a range of grammar-oriented activities and mechanical practice continues to prevail.

As a first step, it is crucial to differentiate the three main types of language practice found in most English instructional materials, according to Richards: (2005: 15): (1). mechanical practice refers to controlled activities that involve repetition and substitution drills. They are designed to practice the use of particular grammatical items (2005: 15). In many textbooks, this practice demands sentence completion (usually with grammar activities in isolation), but lacks authentic language negotiation; (2). meaningful practice refers to activities in which language still is controlled and “students are required to make meaningful choices when carrying out practice” (2005: 15); and (3). communicative practice embodies those activities in which language “is not totally predictable.” Language

production at this level is more spontaneous and authentic, because meaning negotiation takes place “within a real communicative context” and “real information is exchanged” (2005: 15).

These three types of language practice essentially define the kinds of activities often featured in communicative textbooks. All three are expected to be included in the methodological sequence of the various units that constitute English textbook, mainly because students need to go through a process of controlled-practice, by first working on easy-guided mechanical activities, before eventually reaching a degree of free language practice that embraces communicative interaction. Therefore, if textbooks are designed to develop language competence, one can assume they should contain a well-balanced number of activities pertaining to the three types of language practice described above. To confirm this assumption, it is determined if the EFL textbooks chosen for this analysis truly provided.

According to Halliday (1985), a text is a semantic unit and therefore its overall meaning is possible only when the whole text is taken as a single unit of analysis. And because, at text level, the basic unit of meaning lies not in a word but a clause, it follows that one hallmark of good writing skills is a learner's ability to construct clauses that seek to fulfil the meaning potential of a text for readers. The type of clause and its construction is pivotal to help writers set out the logical relations between ideas and entities in a text and readers to process those relationships logically. And yet, language teachers, particularly in ESL classrooms, do not spend sufficient time or utilise adequate methods to teaching

the clause patterns and their constructions. As a result, clause construction remains one of the more challenging areas in ESL teaching and learning.

This thesis is aimed at presenting some reflections on the application of SFL in the language teaching area. Two starting points trigger this discussion. Firstly, a suggestion by Halliday (1985: xxix) to make use of linguistics in order to help mother and foreign language teaching was considered. Secondly, and associated with this suggestion, is the SFL view of language based on the indivisible relation between the grammatical structures users select when using language and the context of culture and context of situation variables in which they are inserted when language is put to use.

SFL is the language theory to underlie any language teaching and learning method or technique to develop students' communicative competence and critical thinking. The results of this study was significant to language teachers in their acts of making decisions or choices on which language-teaching methodology to use in helping their students develop their critical thinking and language proficiency. In addition, this study will also find itself timely and relevant to the present set up of the world in which people, in general, deal with all kinds of characters,, products, knowledge, services, technology, and so on. To make people evaluate or judge the genuineness, essence, appropriateness or quality of diverse people or things in their environment is another significance of this study.

Validating the impact of the SFL theory on critical thinking for developing excellent communicators and reasonable or logical thinkers for the progress of not only local but also international community is the contribution of this paper to the

field of language teaching and learning. A language, then, is a system for making meanings: a semantic system, with other systems for encoding the meanings it produces. The term 'semantics' does not simply refer to the meaning of words; it is the entire system of meanings of a language, expressed by grammar as well as by vocabulary. (M.A.K Halliday, 1994).

### **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

Based on the description in the background of study, the problems of the study can be formulated as the following:

1. What are the transitivity systems elements that characterize English for SMK 1 Textbook for Grade X?
2. Why are the transitivity elements (Process and Circumstance) used in the way they are?

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

Referring to the formulation of the problems of the study, the objectives to be achieved in this research are:

1. To analyse the transitivity systems (process, participants, and circumstances types found in students English for SMK 1 for grade X, and
2. To investigate reasons or the contents where the process and circumstance occur.

This research is focused on the learning materials, especially the reading texts found in the English for SMK 1 for grade X. The implimentation of the traditional grammar in the previous curriculum (2006 curriculum of Indonesia)

eventually adjusted to change into the new curriculum of 2013 with the stress on the functional text.

#### **1.4 The Scope of the study**

As it is mentioned in the objectives of this study, there were three concentrations of the research dealing with lexicogrammatical analysis of English for SMK 1 for grade X and its relevance to English teaching at SMK grade X. The scope of the analysis is related to the research problems mentioned in 1.2 and the source of data including taken from the textbook. The aspects of transitivity analyses are restricted to process and circumstance. Participants are not covered since they are pertinent to the process.

#### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study both theoretically and practically hopefully can be put into practice by the teaching and learning professional all over the world. In short, the significances of the research are as follow.

1. Theoretically, the findings of this study was very useful to enrich the study and give another alternative in studying English clauses based on SFL point of view (studying the clauses not only the form but also the meaning (lexico-grammar).
2. Practically, the results of the analysis about transitivity systems of a text can be guides for the students in developing English clauses. This study also motivates teachers especially English teachers at Grade X to enhance their ability at English teaching, and more specifically focus on the transitivity

system analysis in English. For the researchers, they was inspired to do the same research (about textbooks) with different aspects related to SFL theory.



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