

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Background of the Study

Robert Frost is one of the famous American poets. 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. His sentences had not only simplicity but also depth interpretation to the meaning. Overall, the sentences used are well.

Frost's poems are made almost all of them by using nature. He appreciated nature for its own sake, but he saw most of them in a relation to a man. It seems related to the quotations in *Robert Frost Collection of Critical Essays* which was written by Cox based on the ideas of Lyden below:

“The relationship between man and nature represents the whole problem raised by the opposition of mind and matter of man's actual experience with its feeling, and intuitions of value... (Cox, 1962: 177)

The existential satisfaction he felt was based partly on a sense that the natural world is beautiful and on the whole beneficial to man, but more largely on an enjoyment of human activity for its own sake and a confidence in human nature.

As a poet who explored and experimented with ideas and works, Frost certainly enjoyed the playing of mind partly for its own sake. Frost's appreciation of humanity went deeper than simply enjoying immediate experience. Most typically, it revealed itself as kind of humanism. Although he objected strongly by

considered a humanist in an aesthetic sense. Frost was in his poems intensely preoccupied with man, his problems, his potential, and his basic achievements, quite commonly in non-religious terms. It is true that Frost often represented man as persisting despite the odds against him in a fearful universe, but his faith led him often to a more cheerful, optimistic view of experience. He felt that man had it in him to enjoy his world and his life. Man may not be able to exercise complete control over his natural environment nor to solve the mysteries of the universe but he can maintain the basic values built into a man for a satisfactory way of life (Pardede, 2005).

The research takes the data from classical poems written by Robert Frost. Frost's poems consist of hundreds of poems. In this research, the selected poems of his will be analyzed. There are some reasons why the taken object is Frost's poems. First, his works contain 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.

Besides, his poems also contain many interpretations due to the readers. Some say that poems are quite difficult to understand. The language it uses is too abstract and cannot be understood well if it is just read once. There are other abilities for the readers that should be had to analyze them.

Frost's *The Road Not Taken* for example has various interpretations for the readers especially for those who love a poem. The use of natural element has been there in the third stanza: *In leaves no step had trodden black*. Leaves is the symbol of nature. It is only used for a plant. It is green, could be small or big, yellow when it gets old and falls down to the earth in autumn. It is useful to produce oxygen where it has photosynthesis process; and truly those are the real meaning of leaves. For frost, it could have another meaning. It could be to show the readers that it is about a fate of a person; who do not follow other men to choose the very common choice; or it could be meant for no one thinks about this choice at all.

Another natural element used in Frost's poems can be shown from *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, on the first line of the fourth stanza, *the woods are lovely, dark, and deep*. By saying woods, perhaps it represents the life. Frost loved to say the real meaning using the nature. When it seen wholly, woods is place which is huge, full of many things including trees, animals, and etc. the same case also happens to life, where life consists of living things, professions, intrigue, and many more. So, this is interesting when Frost dealt life into natural element. That is why he is also called naturalist, the poet who use nature to represent the meaning or could be a message through a poem (Pardede, 2005).

View it from theoretical perspective, poem genre has theme. Theme as the clause message, as Halliday said, is frequently marked off in speech by intonation, being spoken on a separate tone group; this is especially likely when the theme is either (1) an adverbial group or prepositional phrase or (2) a nominal group not

functioning as subject where the theme is anything other than that which most expected (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 67).

Furthermore, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) said that the theme is coded by three elements; ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The first element takes the transitivity system of ideational function. The second element takes the interpersonal and the third takes the textual function of the sentence.

The theme in a simple sentence may be simple or multiple. A simple theme is coded by one element of the clause which can be called topical theme since it covers a process, participant or circumstance while the multiple theme is coded by more than one element in the form of topical, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

The research will use SFL theory especially to the Theme and Rheme. There are some reasons why Frost's poems are analysed using Theme and Rheme. First, poems contain theme and rheme. If common sentences have themes in them, Frost also has them in his. Because they are structured into sentences, they have no different in taking lead the Themes in them.

Second, themes lead readers to understand the sentences to create meaning. Themes will illuminate the whole structures of sentence. Themes will be gotten if the readers can get the main point of the sentence. The first gotten idea is called the themes. Themes are always there in every single sentence, especially in poems.

Third, there may be similarity of constructing Theme and Rheme between common sentences and poems' sentences. If in a common sentence, Theme is the main idea to be conveyed while the Rheme is the rest of the main idea, so is the sentences in poems. The sentences in Frost's may have the same construction or it could have different ways of constructing to be found later.

The forming of a poem could be dealt with the forming of a sentence commonly. Frost's *The Road Not Taken* can show the similarity of the starting point in a clause such as shown from the following table.

Table 1.1 Unmarked Theme

I	shall be telling this with a sigh
Topical	
Theme (US)	Rheme

I in the clause taken from stanza four can be coded as the theme; since it is normally located in the starting point called unmarked theme, furthermore it is kind of topical theme, while the rest is the rheme.

When it relates to common sentence, it can be seen from *Tommy ate banana yesterday*; *Tommy* will be the theme and the rest is the rheme. Since *Tommy* is commonly located as the starting point, so it can be called unmarked theme.

Another clause also shows the similarity of theme and rheme between poems and common sentence. The last line of the first stanza of *The Road Not*

Taken shows the use of Marked theme. The table explains the theme as follow.

Table 1.2 Marked Theme

To where	It bent in the undergrowth;
Prepo wh-	
interpersonal	
THEME (MM)	RHEME

The words *To where* shows the different starting point of a clause since it begins with something unusual one; that is why it is called Marked theme. Besides, the presence of *wh-* senses the clause as interpersonal theme. The number of the clause is only one; however, since it begins with the *wh-* as the element of multiple theme, the clause is called multiple theme.

Dealing with the same reason can be shown from the example *Yesterday Tommy ate banana*. Now the word *Yesterday* is the starting point and it is unusual to be the theme while another is coded by the element of the transitivity system.

Relate to this study, the researcher analyses Frost's poems to observe the serve language development at best due to the systemic especially by considering Theme. In conclusion, the researcher wants to see the process of the analysis of *Theme and Rheme in Robert Frost's Poems*. This is the difference of poem analysis literaturally and linguistically. Literature sees the poem as the language to convey the idea of the author without considering the structure of the whole sentence while linguistic sees the poem through the structural perspective in the term of theme and rheme.

1.2. The Problems of the Study

The problems of the study of the research are formulated operationally as in the following.

1. What various patterns of Theme are used in Robert Frost poems?
2. How does Nature realize through Theme in Robert Frost poems?
3. Why are the structures of Themes used in Robert Frost poems constructed as they are?

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

In relation to the problems, the objectives of the study are:

- 1) to find out various patterns of Theme used in Robert Frost Poems,
- 2) to identify Nature realization through Theme in Robert Frost Poems,
- 3) to find out the reason of the structures of Theme used Robert Frost Poems due to aesthetics perspective.

1.4. The Scopes of the Study

This study is restricted to cover three points. They are; 1) Themes as the analysis of message in Frost poems, 2) various patterns by considering Theme in Frost poems, 3) reasons why the pattern used while reference to aesthetics perspective in Frost poems.

1.5. The Significances of the Study

It is expected that findings of the study are relevant and useful theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings of the study are expected to justify the use of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theories, Theme, are applicable to texts which are used in to other disciplines such as Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Practically, the study are expected to be useful for.

1. The students themselves to improve their ability to understand and to comprehend a poem which is effective in getting the message through the sentences,
2. The teachers who teach poems. The teachers should be more concerned not only in analyzing the meaning of the poems but also the content of the poems based on the pattern of language development in order that its contents are rely related to the needs of the students, and
3. All researchers who want to use the result of this research become the comparison of their research later on.