

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter intends to give an introductory part of the study by delivering background of the study, research question, purposes of the study, limitation of the study and previous related studies.

1.1. Background of the Study

Poem is one of the literary works that is expressed by the poets through their feeling, imagination and experience. Poem sometimes reflects the feeling of the poets. It can express the feeling of happiness, sadness, sorrow, loneliness, pain, excitement, and many more. Moreover, poem sometimes tells about the poets' problem related to themselves or it can be another problem or discourse in their life, such as political issue, religion issue, social issue that happened in their era. By reading poem, we can get some pleasure or inspiration. Poem also can make its readers become wiser by getting its message or get nothing. On the contrary, for some people who enjoy reading the poem, it can give them meaning for their lives. Because, basically some poets while writing the poem, they might had some message whether implicitly or explicitly hidden in the poem.

Poem, if we see as a whole text, is the same as another text in newspaper, book, article, essay, that tells some discourse such as politic, religion, social, etc.

The difference between poem from another texts is that its pattern of language. In poem, the way poets deliver the message of the text is aesthetic and has a particular structural form that makes it different from other messages of the text and clarifies it as poetic. As Jacobson said, the essence of the poetry lies precisely in the poetic transformation of verbal material and in the coupling of its phonetic and semantic aspects, (Jacobson and Rudy, 1980:97). In analyzing the discourse, we not only can analyze the articles, newspapers, but also can analyze literary works. A literary work can also be seen as a whole text that contains discourse. Jacobson argues that the function of literay work is poetic, but if we focus on the message it has to be understood in terms of itself, because literay text draws attention to itself as poetic in the sense that its included message that is not understood in terms of context. Accordingly, the meaning of the message in literature is not determined by situation, rather, it is determined by the poetic code in language (Birrch, 1989:120).

Poem or another literary works are commonly studied in literature field. They are rarely studied from a linguistic or discourse field, and so did Robert Frost poem. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the Register variation in the poems of Robert Frost.. This study, however, will adopt M.A.K Halliday's systemic functional linguistics as the theoretical model, in view of its emphasis on the correlation between form and function, particularly in relation to the three 'metafunctions' of language. Analyzing a text based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) needs an understanding of the framework of SFL tradition. SFL believes that language is a set of semions or symbols, which, within the context of

situation and the context of culture, realizes a particular meaning or a particular social goal. In this framework, the relation between the symbols and the meaning is not arbitrary, but rather the symbols realize meaning (Halliday, 1985; Martin, 1992; Martin and Rose, 2003; Hewings and Hewings, 2005). Therefore, this study tries to reveal the register variations, which are field, tenor and mode in the poetry of Robert Frost as this approach is rarely used.

Robert Frost holds a unique and almost isolated position among American poets. He stands at the crossroads of nineteenth-century American poetry and modernism. The poet Randall Jarrell stated, "Robert Frost, along with Stevens and Eliot, seems to me the greatest of the American poets of this century. Frost's virtues are extraordinary. No other living poet has written so well about the actions of ordinary men; his wonderful dramatic monologues or dramatic scenes come out of a knowledge of people that few poets have had, and they are written in a verse that uses, sometimes with absolute mastery, the rhythms of actual speech." He also said that Frost was particularly skilled at representing human experience in his poems. Robert Frost's poems show a man's struggle. Through his poems we can see his self-display as a man who seeks to keep the battle internal. As many critics note, Frost developed an original, modern idiom and a sense of directness and economy that reflect the imagism of Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell. Leonard Unger and William Van O'Connor point out in *Poems for Study*, "Frost's poetry, unlike that of such contemporaries as Eliot, Stevens, and the later Yeats, shows no marked departure from the poetic practices of the

nineteenth century.” If we see in his poems, Frost avoids traditional verse forms and only uses rhyme erratically.

Robert Frost receives the Pulitzer for Poetry four times. In 1924, his collection of poems entitled *New Hampshire*. In 1931, *Collected Poems*; 1937 –*A Further Range*; and 1943 – *A Witness Tree*. Besides as a poet, he was also a lecturer and a teacher. Millions of readers over the world have found comfort and profound meaning in his poetry and he has influenced numerous authors, poets, musicians, and playwrights into the 21st century. At the Inauguration of American President John F. Kennedy on 20 January 1961, Frost recited his poem “The Gift Outgrift” (1942). Frost died on the 29th of January 1963 in Boston, Massachusetts. Nine months after Frost’s death, Kennedy gave a speech at Amherst College, singing Frost’s praises and speaking on the importance of the Arts in America.

1.2. Research Question

The research question in this study is:

- How are the register variations (field, tenor and mode) used in Robert Frost’s poems?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to analyze how the register variations used in the poem of Robert Frost through the aid of M.A.K Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics, based on the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The study focuses on lexicogrammatical features: processes, theme and mood in the five poems of Robert Frost based on the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings and only analyze the clauses. The five poems are taken randomly from all Robert Frost's poems.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study will be significant for the writer and the readers to have a better understanding about register analysis in the poem, discourse analysis in the poem and enrich their knowledge about it. Moreover, this study expands the study of poem, not only by interpretation of literary criticism, but also using Systemic Functional Linguistic. Hopefully, this study also will give a great contribution to English Department students and can be a reference for those who want to conduct the research in analyzing the poem or another literary works by using Systemic Functional Linguistics. In addition, this study can be a reference to study further about Robert Frost and his poems.

1.6. Previous Related Study

Ebi Yeibo from Niger Delta University has conducted thesis entitled *A Discourse-Stylistic Analysis of Mood Structures in Selected Poems of J.P. Clark-Bekederemo*. In that study, Ebi Yeibo examined mood structures (i.e. a grammatical category that pertains to the clause) in the poetry, in order to determine how language is used to express the manner of speaking of interlocutors, and their roles, judgments and attitudes in specific discourse contexts. The study used Halliday's systemic functional linguistics and highlighted the nature of dialogue (i.e. mood structure) between interactants in the poetry, in relation to social contexts. The approach which was adopted in the study was discourse-stylistic approach. It enabled the analyst to examine what is communicated (i.e. discourse) and how it is communicated (i.e. stylistics).