The Realization of Markedness in Grade XI Students' Recount Texts in Binjai: Systemic Functional Perspective

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to report the findings of the types and the dominant type of markedness in Grade XI students' recount texts departing from textual function in systemic functional perspective. Qualitative content analysis was utilized as the research design in this study. Writing sheets were utilized as the instruments for collecting the data. The data were in the form of clauses taken from 25 recount texts written by grade XI senior high school student of SMA Negeri 1 Binjai. It was found that there were 1416 clauses appeared. Specifically, both marked theme (MT) and unmarked theme (UMT) were also discovered in the data with the occurrences of MT totaling to 210 (25.70%) and UMT had 607 occurrences (74.30%). It leads to the conclusion that there were 2 types of markedness namely marked theme (MT) and unmarked theme (UMT) found. Then, UMT was discoverd as the dominant type of markedness.

Keywords: Theme, unmarked, marked, writing

Introduction

Writing is regarded as one of productive skills. This skill should be mastered by students along with listening, speaking, and reading skills as it is attached in the syllabus of teaching English (Harmer, 2004). It is also one of the hardest skills that needs a lot of attention since writing needs good organization. This argument is supported by Hanafiah and Yusuf (2016) stating that it is urgently required for students to comprehend how to organize ideas and messages as well as the characteristics of specific genres.

There are some academic genres that should be well mastered by senior high school students. Every genre possesses its own characteristics which can be differentiated from its communicative purpose, schematic structure, and linguistic features (Zein, Sinar, & Nurlela, 2017). One of those genres is recount text.

Gerot and Wignell (1994) argue that recount text is used to retell events for the aims at giving information and entertaining. The schematic structure of this text is structured systematically namely orientation ^ events ^ re-orientation. Then, the significant linguistic features of this text are focus on specific participant, the use of material process, using

circumstances of time and place, use of past tense, and focus on temporal sequences. To sum up, this text is usable to retell past event with the purpose to entertain and inform the readers.

Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) has multi-perspective model and it can be utilize to analyze with complementary lenses as the interpretation of language in use (Martin and White, 2005). In observing language, SFL sees that language itself has three simultaneous meaning regarded as metafunction of language. Then, Sinar (2007) states that metafunction of language are inherent in every language use in social context. Metafunctions of language are divided into ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function which are simultaneously relevant at any level of the linguistic system.

Textual function is also comprehended as clause as message realized through the use of *Theme-Rheme*. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) describe that the **Theme** is defined as the point of departure for the message. It is the element the speaker selects for 'grounding' what he is going on to say. Thematic structure in a clause can be analyze in some forms (To, 2018). Simple Theme deals with topical Theme which also covers marked and unmarked Theme. Multiple Theme in a clause can possibly occur which comprises of interpersonal, and textual Theme. The last one is Theme in clause complexes. Once the Theme is identified, the Rheme is easy to be identified since it is everything else in a sentence which does not form part of the theme (Martin and Rose, 2008).

The theory of Theme-Rheme is applicable to analyze text. There are many studies departing from this theory. To exemplify, Mirahayuni (2002) in her research attempts to investigate the textual structure of research articles written by native and non-native English. Ahangari (2014) also presents his findings in relation to thematic organization in graduate TEFL graduate students. Another research conducted by Darani and Mansouri (2015) conducted a research dealing with system of Theme in English and Persian short stories. Those studies exemplified in advance utilized the texts as the objects of analysis.

In this study, the writer is interested in observing markedness which covers marked Theme (MT) and unmarked Theme (UMT). The analysis of markedness becomes urgent since it can give effect to readers' interpretation. The examples of clause analyzed by using MT and UMT are presented in the following:

Table 1. Example of unmarked Theme (UMT)

Mona	sent the draft yesterday
Theme: Topical	**Rheme**
UMT	

Table 2. Example of marked Theme (MT)

Yesterday,	Mona sent the draft
Theme: Topical	**Rheme**
MT	

The example in table 1 provides the example of unmarked Theme in which *Mona* becomes topical Theme: Unmarked theme. Then, another example provided in table 2 in which *topical Theme* is presented by the word 'yesterday'. The point which is going to be exposed more in the sentence in table 1 is *Mona.* Meanwhile, in table 2, the focus is in the temporal circumstance 'yesterday'. This study is an attempt to investigate theme markedness including the types and the dominant type of theme markedness in Grade XI Students' Recount Texts in Binjai.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Systemic Functional Linguistics and Metafunction

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is focused on the function of language (Saragih, 2016). Since language is inevitable in human's daily activities, SFL can be utilized as one of the frameworks to analyze and interpret language. This theory has close relationship to the context and utilized to construe human experiences (Naz, Alvi & Baseer 2012). Then, in SFL, meaning in language is constructed at three different regarded as metafunction of language.

Language possesses three kinds of simultaneous meaning called as ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). It is also in line with Sinar (2007:56) stating that metafunction of language are inherent in every language use in social contexts. In conclusion, there are three metafunctions of language i.e. ideational, interpersonal, and textual function which have the same status and used in social context.

2.2. Textual Meaning

Textual function is well-known as clause as message which is realized by *Theme-Rheme*. The *Theme* is the point of departure for the message. It is the element the speaker selects for 'grounding' what he is going on to say (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). McCabe and Heilman (2007) argue that in organizing the text, the Theme is very paramount thing because it is the departure of the message. The Theme often presents given information while the Rheme often presents new information (De Oliveira, 2015). Theme comprises of three categories i.e. topical, interpersonal, and textual.

2.3. Theme and Rheme

When producing a text, writer or speaker should decide their departure point of the message and it is realized in Theme. Theme is the element which comes first in the message, while Rheme is the one which provides additional information to the starting point and is available for subsequent development in the text (To, 2018).

There are three kinds of theme namely simple theme (topical Theme), multiple Theme (textual and interpersonal Theme), and Theme in clause complex. Textual Theme makes explicit the way the clause related to the surrounding discourse. It covers four elements of Theme, they are: conjunction, relative, conjunctives and continuatives. Interpersonal Theme is used when the speaker or writer wants to projects his or her angle on the value of what the clause is saying. It covers one or more of the element of finite, WH-element, vocative and modal adjunct. Then, topical theme is coded by the first element of the transitivity system. It can be participant, process or circumstances. When the Topical Theme places at the first part in a clause; it means that the Theme is simple Theme. But the if the Theme is doing not place at the first element of a clause, it means that the clause combine with the other kind of Theme and it's mean that this kind of Theme is the complex Theme (Hanafiah, Yusuf, and Aswani, 2018).

Markedness in topical theme has two types i.e. marked theme (MT) and unmarked theme (UMT). Eggins (2004) assert that "Theme markedness has to do with the relationship between the Mood and Theme Structures of the clause: how the functional roles assigned to constituents in a Theme analysis conflate with the functional roles assigned to those same constituents in the Mood structure.

2.3.1. Unmarked Theme (UMT) and Marked Theme (UMT)

Eggins (2004) defines that unmarked theme (UMT) has the constituent that is *Theme* which is also playing one of the following roles:

a. Subject (in a declarative clause)

b. Finite (in an interogative clause)

c. Predictator (in an imperative clause)

d. WH element (in a WH-interogative clause)

In other words, UMT appears when *Theme* conflates with the Mood Structure constituent that typically occurs in first position in clauses of that Mood class. The examples of UMT are presented in the following tables.

Table 3. The examples of unmarked Theme (UMT)

Example	Role Conflation	Mood Class
She's cooking.	Theme/Subject	Declarative
Did you do it to me?	Theme/Finite	polar interogative
When will the event be held?	Theme/WH element	WH- interrogative
Keep off the grass!	Theme/Predicator	Imperative

Marked Theme (MT) is the Theme in a clause which the function in a clause is not as the subject. It can be as verb, adverb, etc. When marked choice is made, the speaker or writer is signaling that all things are not equal, that something in the context requires an atypical meaning to be made (Eggins, 2004). The example of MT is presented as the following:

Table 4. The examples of marked Theme (MT)

Tomorrow,	We will have a very awesome performance
Theme: Topical	Rheme
Marked Theme (MT)	

2.5. Writing

Martin and White (2005) clarify that writing is concerned with graphology and has to deal with the organization of letters into sentences, alongside punctuation, layout, and formatting. Then, it is a complex activity happening at the same time and has some steps (Harmer, 2004). It is not as simple as putting the words together, but, it elaborates the process which is related each other. The sentences arranged into paragraph and texts should be coherent so that the ideas are organized and the messages can be conveyed clearly. To summarize, writing is the way to convey the idea, message, and thought in written form involving complicated process.

2.6. Recount Text

Dirgeyasa (2014) defines that recount text is to retell personal stories which can be either factual or imaginative with the objective of informing and amusing readers (or both). The generic structure of recount text is orientation ^ sequence of events ^ re-orientation. And the significant lexicogrammatical features of recount text are focus on specific participant, using material process, using circumstances of time and place, use of past tense, and focus on temporal sequences.

3. Research Method

Qualitative content analysis approach was utilized in this study. Ezzy (2002) states that content analysis can be useful as a stage of data analysis asit allows the relevance of preexisting theory to be tested, and itcan be used as a way of assessing the applicability of a theorythat emerges during thematic or content analysis. The instruments of this research were the researcher themselves and writing sheets. The data were in the form of clauses taken from 25 recount texts written by students of grade XI of SMA Negeri 1 Binjai. The students are instructed to write a recount text comprising about 250-350 words in 75 minutes.

The procedures of content analysis used in this study are:

a. Data making: It consists of unitizing, sampling, and documenting

b. Data reduction: statistically and simply omission of irrelevant data

c. The analysis: concerning with the more conventional process of identification and representation of patterns that are statistically significant namely writing down the frequency of each typeof theme markedness: unmarked theme (UMT) and marked theme (MT).

d. Inferences making: The direct evidence about the inferred phenomena is characterized by the results of analysis and validation efforts.

4. Data Analysis, Findings and Discussion

4.1. Data Analysis

Based on the analysis from 25 recount texts written by 25 recount texts written by students of grade XI of SMA Negeri 1 Binjai, it was found that there are1416 clauses in the data. The clauses then were analyzed by using textual function (theme and rheme) to find out the types and the dominant frequency of theme markedness in the data. Both of the types of theme markedness (UMT, and MT) are discovered in the text. The distribution of the theme and its markedness can be seen as the following.

Table 4. Thematic Distribution in Text

No	Thematic Categories				Total
	Textual	Interpersonal	Topical		
			Marked	Unmarked	
1	17	4	9	24	54
2	23	5	9	29	66
3	13	4	6	23	46
4	8	4	8	12	32
5	13	3	8	8	32

No	Textual	Interpersonal	Topical Marked	Topical Unmarked	Total
			Thematic Categories		**Total**
6	34	6	12	43	95
7	21	2	6	27	56
8	13	6	6	32	57
9	16	1	9	13	39
10	20	2	9	14	45
11	23	4	9	41	77
12	24	1	15	16	56
13	20	1	9	16	46
14	18	3	2	22	45
15	15	1	21	12	49
16	24	6	5	29	64
17	29	10	5	35	79
18	23	10	6	36	75
19	25	5	6	46	82
20	19	0	12	17	48
21	31	1	4	28	64
22	17	1	8	8	34
23	15	4	5	17	41
24	22	2	7	27	58
25	29	1	14	32	76
Tot	**512**	**87**	**210**	**607**	**1416**
			817		
%	**36.16**	**6.14**	**57.70**		**100.00**
			25.70	**74.30**	

4.1.1. Unmarked Theme (UMT)

Having been analyzed, the data illustrates that unmarked theme (UMT) has 607 occurrences or 74.30% from the total number of occurrences. The examples of the clauses containing UMT are presented in the following:

Table 5. Unmarked Theme (Taken from Text 25)

Kami	*juga makan di perjalanan*
We	also have a meal during the trip
Theme: Topical	**Rheme**
UMT	

The previous example illustrates that subject is functioned as topical theme. In the data, the occurrences of UMT are very dominant. It has 46 occurrences as the highest

occurrence in text 16 and only 8 occurrences as the lowest in text 8 and 22. Then, the data also presents that UMT dominantly appears in the form of subject functioned as theme.

4.1.2. Marked Theme (MT)

In terms of marked theme (UMT), it is found that there are 210 occurrences or 74.30% from the total number of occurrences.

Table 6. Marked Theme (Taken from Text 17)

Pada sore hari, In the afternoon, **Theme: Topical MT**	*Saya pergi ke tanah lapang bola* I went to soccer field **Rheme**

In the example above, the clause contains marked theme because subject is not functioned as the topical theme, but circumstantial adjunct. MT appears in every text and has the highest occurrence in text 15 totaling to 15 times and in text 14, it occurs only 2 times.

4.2. Discussion

From the findings, it can be observed that there are only 607 occurrences or 74.30% of UMT. It means that UMT is the dominant type of markedness and MT is the least used in students' recount texts of Grade XI SMA Negeri 1 Binjai. It also supports the previous research by Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2012) in their study which explains that the reason of the utilization of small number of marked theme is that these students prefer to place theme in the subject position of the clause. From the data, it is also found that students in this study tend to write a clause by using UMT. Nurlela (2010) also provides argument that the MT utilization is dominantly used in spoken discourse rather than in written discourse and that is why UMT is more dominant in written text. Additionally, the dominant use of UMT in the data reveals that simple theme is also used dominantly and subject typically occurs in first position in clauses.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

The conclusion can be drawn that there are 2 types of markedness namely marked theme (MT) and unmarked theme (UMT), and the dominant type of theme markedness is unmarked theme (UMT). It means that the students dominantly used unmarked theme in their recount texts. The suggestion is formulated based on the findings that the teacher can give extra material about the function of Theme-Rheme in writing a text.

Acknowledgement

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