CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Language not only reflects reality, but also shapes it. Language is essential in framing events, shaping public opinion, and positioning actors and responsibilities. The Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach allows for analysis of how meaning is constructed through lexical choices in discourse. One of the main components of SFL is transitivity analysis, which reveals how processes, participants, and circumstances are represented in clauses. In global issues such as climate change, researchers can evaluate how organizations convey their views, criticisms, and demands regarding global environmental problems.

One of the events that reflected the urgency of global environmental issues was the report on 2024 global climate reports, which was released on January 10th, 2025, where several global climate monitoring organizations confirmed that 2024 was the hottest year on record (Climate Copernicus, 2025; UN, 2025; World Meteorological Organization, 2025). This temperature increase surpasses the previous record from 2023 and marks the first time global temperatures have exceeded the 1.5°C threshold in an entire year (Rohde, 2025). The reports state that the global average temperature in 2024 reached 15.10°C, 1.60°C hotter than pre-industrial levels. This restriction is based on the Paris Agreement, which was agreed upon on December 12th, 2015, at COP21 in Paris (NASA, 2025). The Paris Agreement is an international treaty under the UNFCCC that seeks to mitigate climate change by limiting global warming to below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels and aims to reduce temperature increases to 1.5°C (The editors of

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025). The report is in the global spotlight due to its wide-ranging impacts on various sectors.

The report not only caught the attention of scientists but also triggered responses from various global environmental organizations and encouraged them to voice their responses and demands through public discourse. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Greenpeace were the two. They are international non-governmental organizations known as vocal actors in environmental issues due to their conservation and advocacy-focused positions. Both are important in raising awareness and pushing for more environmentally friendly global policies.

As part of their campaign, WWF International and Greenpeace International released press statements on January 10th, 2025, in response to the 2024 global climate report. They released their reactions on the same day, indicating that both view this issue as a priority and aim to shape public opinion quickly. In response to climate conditions, last year, WWF International released 39 climate-related articles out of 84 articles, while Greenpeace International published 49 climate-related articles out of 144 articles. Some articles highlighted climate change and reinforced the discourse that this is a global crisis. Besides that, the most frequently discussed themes are oceans and forests, which are heavily impacted by climate change. They regularly use “crisis” to indicate a discursive strategy emphasizing urgency.

In this context, transitivity is important in revealing how experiences and events are constructed in the text. Transitivity can show how these organizations convey ideas related to climate issues by looking at the elements of transitivity in their discourse. In their articles, we can understand whether NGOs emphasize action, policy, or emotional urgency. For example, WWF states, “We have to limit global temperatures,” which

represents a direct call to action to address the climate crisis. Using the process “limit” and the goal “global temperatures,” frames collective action as the way to prevent more severe environmental impacts.

On the other hand, Greenpeace asserts, “We must dismantle the dangerous corporate delusion,” which has a much more assertive and confrontational tone. The goal “dangerous corporate delusion” explicitly criticizes the narrative built by corporations, which is considered misleading and dangerous in the context of climate change. The " dismantle " process also shows that the action is symbolic and destructive to the existing system. When compared, the first statement emphasizes the urgency of impact control, while the second highlights the need for structural and ideological change. It reflects a difference in approach: one emphasizes collective responsibility for action, while the other focuses more on critiquing the dominant actors in the global climate crisis. We can explore how they interpret the climate crisis and position related parties - whether as perpetrators, responsible parties, or victims.

Based on this background, this research aims to analyze the press releases from WWF and Greenpeace. It uses transitivity analysis to examine the distribution of process types, participant functions, and circumstantial elements, and compare their similarities and differences. The data for this study consists of two press releases published on the same day as several climate monitoring organizations released the 2024 global climate report. Through transitivity analysis, this research explores how language shapes narratives and constructs the reality of the climate crisis as portrayed by environmental NGOs.

Analyzing the WWF and Greenpeace press releases concerning reports on 2024 as the hottest year is crucial because it reveals how these organizations frame climate

issues through their linguistic choices. This approach helps identify who is positioned as the perpetrator, victim, or agent of change, and what dominant processes are highlighted. Transitivity, by answering "who does what to whom," enables a deeper understanding of the differences or similarities in the communication styles of these two organizations.

Thus, this research contributes to linguistic studies and people's critical literacy on global issues. The transitivity analysis of WWF and Greenpeace press releases opens a space for reflection: how language plays a role in the struggle against the climate crisis and how we, as part of the global community, respond to it.

1.2 Research Questions

This research aims to discover the transitivity system distribution and identify the similarities and differences between two press releases released by WWF International and Greenpeace International in response to the 2024 global climate report. Regarding the topic discussed in this research, the researcher proposed two research questions below:

1. What are the transitivity systems of Greenpeace and WWF press releases on the 2024 global climate report?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the two press releases regarding using the transitivity system by looking at the interpretation from the most dominant process?

According to these research questions, the researcher expected to determine linguistics patterns in the lexical choices used by the two environmental NGOs: WWF and Greenpeace. The research examined how the two NGOs shape a particular narrative through the types of process, participants, and circumstances in their response to the 2024 global climate report 2024. This approach provided insight into how language is used to frame complex issues related to climate change.

1.3 The Objective of the Research

Related to the research questions above, the objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the transitivity system of Greenpeace and WWF's press release on the 2024 global climate report.
2. To determine the similarities and differences between the two press releases regarding using the transitivity system by looking at the interpretation from the most dominant process.

1.4 Focus of the Research

This research utilizes the Systemic Functional Linguistics framework and focuses on the transitivity systems. In this case, the researcher analysed two press releases published by WWF International and Greenpeace International on January 10th, 2025, in response to the release of the 2024 global climate report. The aim is to examine how each NGO constructs its stance on climate issues through process types, participants' function, and circumstances elements, and to compare the similarities and differences by looking at the interpretation from the most predominant process type.

1.5 Method of the Research

This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. This method was chosen because it is suitable for examining data in texts relevant to the research topic, particularly those that require in-depth interpretation of meaning and context.

The researcher employed descriptive-qualitative research using content analysis to obtain the data. Content analysis is an effective research method that may be utilized to derive reliable conclusions about the speaker's or writer's attitude from a message's content. Essentially, content analysis is based on the idea that examining language can

reveal meanings, priorities, understandings, and methods of organizing and seeing the world. The data are classified or categorized for content analysis, and their validity and reliability are examined. The content analysis process's phases concentrate on how frequently a term, subject, or problem appears and how meaning is given to that numerical data. The methods employed encompass an analysis of existing literature and a quantitative assessment of the frequency of nouns or frequently occurring words to estimate the likelihood of authorship. Thus, qualitative research seeks to describe the distinct complexity and capture the diversity of data. (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003)

In this context, a qualitative approach is employed as it focuses on understanding meaning, experience, and context. Unlike quantitative methods that rely on numerical data, qualitative methods use non-numerical data such as text and images. Analysis in qualitative research is in-depth and interpretative, exploring the meaning behind the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013).

1.5.1 Data Collection

The source of data in this research is two online press releases by WWF International and Greenpeace International in response to the 2024 global climate report by several global climate monitoring organizations. This report became a concern because, for the first time, the global temperature exceeded the 1.5°C threshold, prompting responses from various parties.

The reason for selecting these two articles was based on the consideration that they are the only press releases from environmental NGOs released on the same day as the launch of the 2024 Global Climate Report, January 10, 2025. Each came from the official press segment published directly by the relevant organizations, WWF and Greenpeace, which are known as leading environmental institutions.

For this reason, both articles were chosen as the object of analysis because they represent the official stance of the organizations and have similar time contexts and sources. These online articles are entitled:

1. *2024 is officially the warmest year on record*, published by *WWF International*
2. *'Hell of a year': Greenpeace comments on hottest year on record*, published by *Greenpeace International*

In data collection, several procedures were followed to get accurate data. The first step was capturing and copying the article from WWF and Greenpeace, pasting it into Microsoft Word, and compiling it into a single document. Then, WWF's press release was divided into sentences and then clauses. Each clause was put in the table to be identified and labeled according to the transitivity theory using the probe question. Each clause was also coded sequentially with WWF/01, WWF/02, and so on, to indicate the data from the WWF text and the order of the clauses to keep the analysis focused and organized. The breaking down section was important because the transitivity element was used later in the analysis stage. After finishing, the following analysis is carried out on Greenpeace's press release, using the same steps. After categorizing the data was completed, the data were reviewed to ensure the accuracy and orderliness of the text content.

Source	Word Count	Sentence Count	Clause Count
WWF	444	24	59
Greenpeace	516	22	58

Table 1. Information Data Source

1.5.2 Data Analysis

Two press releases from WWF and Greenpeace were analyzed using a transitivity system proposed by Halliday (2014). The researcher used several stages to analyze the

data. After dividing both articles into clauses, they were identified and labelled based on their process type, participant function, and circumstances element. The researcher used a probe test to determine the kind of process in a clause by matching the appropriate question with each process in the transitivity system. Afterward, the clauses were arranged in a table, and their frequencies and percentages were calculated based on the transitivity elements. The frequency of each transitivity element was divided to find the percentage of each process, participant, and circumstance from the press release. The formula to find the percentage is as follows:

Part / Whole x 100 = %

The following illustration serves as an example of the formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of each type of process}}{\text{Total number of all process}} \times 100 = \%$$

$$\frac{\text{Existential process (7)}}{\text{Total process (63)}} \times 100 = 11.11\%$$

Additionally, the data calculated based on the frequency and percentage of each transitivity element is used to interpret and compare the similarities and differences by looking at the interpretation from the most dominant process types. In the analysis, the researcher presented the distribution process type, participant function, and circumstantial elements in descriptive form. In the comparison section, the analysis is not only taken from the percentage of each transitivity element, but also from the interpretation results.

The analysis was done by categorizing and calculating the percentage of process types based on the transitivity theory. After the clause analysis, the researcher described the result and gave an overview of the differences and similarities of transitivity processes in the press release. Then, the researcher can see how WWF and Greenpeace react to

climate issues and compare them. In addition, the analysis results were presented in tables and descriptive form.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Systemic Functional Linguistics (Henceforward SFL)	The functional linguistic approach proposed by Halliday that views language as a semiotic system that humans use to form and convey meaning in various social contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Eggins, 2004).
Transitivity	The system that explains how experience, as well as who is involved in it, is encoded in language through three main elements: process (the type of experience expressed by the verb), participant (the person or entity involved in the process), and circumstance (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Thompson, 1996).
NGO (Non-governmental Organization)	NGOs are independent organizations that are important in addressing social, humanitarian, and environmental issues, outside of government and business structures (Lewis, 2010).
WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature)	Global environmental NGO, founded in 1961 in Switzerland, that works in the field of wilderness preservation and the reduction of human impact on the environment, with national affiliates that function with considerable autonomy at the local level under the world-

	famous panda flag as "World Wildlife Fund" (Luke, 1997).
Greenpeace	International environmental NGO, founded in 1971 in Canada by a group of environmental activists, with a hierarchical structure and a centrally managed campaign approach, different from other environmental organizations that tend to be national and more participatory in their membership structure (Eden, 2004).
Press Release	A press release is a popular form of communication utilised by corporate institutions to maintain sound public relations (Ling, 2017).
Global Climate Reports	Annual reports of the Earth's climate system are released by credible climate monitoring organizations, which present data based on satellite monitoring, climate models, and analysis of trends in temperature, sea ice, and extreme weather (World Meteorological Organization, 2021).