



The Realization of Thematic Progression in *Background of Study Section* Written by Undergraduate Students at Tidar University

Akhmad Zamroni[✉], Sri Wuli Fitriati, Widhiyanto Widhiyanto

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Article Info

Article History:
Accepted 30 January
2023
Approved 8 March
2023
Published 20 June
2023

Keywords:
Thematic Progression,
Background of The
Study Section,
Cohesion and
Coherence.

Abstract

This study aimed to find out the realization of thematic progression pattern applied in *background of the study section* in final projects written by undergraduate students and evaluate the quality of thematic progression used by the students. The objective of this study were to explain the realization of thematic progression pattern used and to explain the quality of thematic progression used by the students. The design of this study used qualitative approach descriptive study especially in discourse studies. This research used fifteen background of the study section as the source of the data. The researcher used documentation and interview as the instrument by using the theory proposed by Bloor & Bloor (2024). This study revealed that the students primarily used linear theme pattern to organized their writing with 310 times. They also applied linear theme pattern with 202 times. While, split rheme pattern applied by students with 32 times. The last is derived theme pattern applied by students with 15 times. In addition, the result of the quality of *background of the study section* are almost students applied thematic progression in fair level. To sum up the realization and the quality of thematic progression used by the students, they have practically applied the various thematic progression and made their background of the study section are coherence.

[✉]Correspondence Address:

Kampus Universitas Negeri Semarang, Kelud, Semarang, 50233,
Indonesia
E-mail: akhmad.zamroni675@gmail.com

p-ISSN 2087-0108

e-ISSN 2502-4566

INTRODUCTION

The final project/thesis is a piece of academic writing produced written by students that they must complete in order to complete their studies. Since the final project is academic writing, and hence, it needs appropriate cohesion and coherence in order to be accepted as academic writing (Amperawaty 2019). In other words, the final project should be effective in terms of quantity and quality of writing. One part of final project is background of the study section. The background section exposes the reason the researchers do the research and the theories that corroborate his or her research, becomes the fundamental information concerning the research in broader fields, and also signs concisely the expansion of the research problem (McMillan & James, 2008). Therefore, the background of the study section is the most important part to consider when writing the final project with the aim of explaining why the problem was raised.

However, based on the preliminary study of some background of the study section of Tidar University's English department undergraduate students' final project, I found that students' had an obvious problem when they wrote the background of the study section. The students still found difficulties, especially in developing a paragraph. They commit errors such as writing paragraphs that are not cohesive and coherent. Coherence is very essential to make the writing consistent and understandable in relation to every idea in a text and helps readers understand the idea of the paragraph easily (Briesmaster 2017). For this reason, it is very important for writers to pay attention to their writing so that it remains coherent. On the other hand, Fitriati

(2017) states that cohesion and coherence are inextricable because cohesion is the prerequisite of coherence, whereas coherence is an attempt to make the entire text understandable. Therefore, in order to be easily understood by the reader, it is essential to pay attention to the writing of the background of the study section in the final project.

Theme and rheme can assist the reader in comprehending the information in the clause. Meanwhile, to maintain the continuity and information flow of the text, thematic progression is essential in writing due to its role in maintaining the continuity and information flow of the text. In other words, thematic progression highly contributes to the cohesion and coherence of a text (Fitriati 2021). Additionally, thematic progression is required to assist in the development of cohesive texts and to maintain the continuity and flow of text information in order to produce coherent texts.

Dealing with thematic progression, several studies figured out that linear theme pattern or zig-zag pattern first dominated employed in the texts (Al-Bazzaz & Al-Shajlawi, 2018; Dong, T., Shao, P., & Jia, J., 2016; Fatmawati, D., Sinar, T. S., Ganie, R., & Yusuf, M., 2019; Gunawan, W., & Aziza, F., 2017; Herdiawan, R. D., 2017; Kuswoyo, H., & Susardi, S., 2016; Mubarak, H. Z., 2021). While, the constant theme pattern or reiteration pattern found as second dominated employed in texts (Lestari, S. H. P., Mujiyanto, J., & Saleh, M., 2019; Nicolas, E., & Hartono, R., 2022; Noviyanti, 2015; Nursanti, E., & Tou, A. B., 2014; Pangestu, G., Dwita Harvian, E. & Suprijadi, D., 2019. The split rheme pattern found as third dominated employed in texts (Pasaribu, A. N., Pasaribu, T. K., & Panggabean, S., 2019; Purba, G., &

Pasaribu, A. N., 2021; Rahman, K., & Arsyad Arrafi', M., 2017; Rahmawati, R. V., & Kurniawan, E., 2015; Safitri, I., & Bahri, S., 2017. The last dominated employed in the texts is derived theme pattern found by Sujanta, E. T. S., Pamungkas, K., Heriyanto, H., 2018; and Syharizal, T., Fitriani, L., & Anggraeni, N., 2018).

Meanwhile, this study is only concerned with assessing the quality of cohesion and coherence from the perspective of thematic progression patterns. As stated by Amperawaty (2019), thematic progression can be used as a device of coherence. Thematic progression is the process by which a theme of a clause repeats the meaning of the previous theme or rheme in order to connect the theme and rheme. It also serves as a coherence device. Furthermore, Paltridge (2006) stated that thematic progression refers to "the way in which the theme of a clause may pick up, or repeat, a meaning from a preceding theme or rheme".

According to Bloor et al. (2004), the patterns of thematic progression are the constant theme pattern, the linear theme pattern, the split rheme pattern, and the derived theme pattern. This pattern will be used to determine the level of cohesion and coherence of the text. As a result, in order to determine whether the background of the study section in the final project is cohesive and coherent, the writer will be assessing the realization of cohesion and coherence in the background of the study section of the final project written by the English department undergraduate students' at Tidar University from a thematic progression perspective.

METHOD

This research is typically designed as a descriptive qualitative study that employed

discourse studies. Creswell (2009: 4) states that qualitative research is a study to investigate and understand the meaning individuals or groups assume to be a social or a human problem. It is used to determine the causes of social phenomena and how they occur. This study investigated the realization and evaluation of thematic progression in *the background of the study section* using theory proposed by Bloor & Bloor (2004).

While, the data source of this research were *the background of the study section* of the English department undergraduate students' thesis at Tidar University which were analyzed how is the cohesion and coherence quality in thematic progression view.

Furthermore, there are three roles in conducting this research, which include the following: (1) the writer would download fifteen data of the background of the study section randomly who will access through <https://repositori.untidar.ac.id/>. (2) The writer would collect the data as material for research. (3) The writer would analyze the data that has been collected based on the thematic progression point of view to assess the quality of the background of the study written by students. (4) The writer would present the results of the research regarding the quality of the background of the study section and then evaluate the background of the study section from the point of view of thematic progression. (5) The writer would conclude the last process in this research.

While, the purpose of analyzing data are; (1) locate the clause in the table by focusing in identified theme and rheme. (2) Identify the theme and thematic progression of each clause. (3) Analyze the data by selecting every clause related to types of thematic progression. (4) Count the number and percentages of thematic progression in both texts to find the realization of thematic

progression used in the background of the study section in the data-sheet. (5) Draws and verifies conclusions to know the result of the research. Here, the study concludes after completely identifying the thematic progression and finding out the realization of thematic progression used in *the background of the study section* written by students of Tidar University.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study highlight four main findings based on the formulated research questions. They are the use of thematic progression in *the background of the study section* in achieving the texts' coherence. The analysis of thematic progression allows us to identify Theme/Rheme patterns over longer stretches of discourse. How thematic elements succeed each other can contribute or detract from the coherence of a text given their purpose and context. Table 1 shows the results of the analysis of the four patterns in thematic progression among *the background of the study section* write by students at Tidar University.

Table 1. The summerized of TP analysis

Text	Total of Clause	CTP	LTP	SRP	DTP
1	61	24	12	3	0
2	55	10	15	3	2
3	55	10	19	2	2
4	53	9	17	2	1
5	39	3	18	1	1
6	67	12	30	2	1
7	55	9	25	1	2
8	57	17	23	1	0
9	49	11	21	2	0
10	66	10	26	5	0
11	66	24	26	0	0
12	55	14	14	3	1
13	59	14	16	4	2
14	47	6	22	2	1
15	80	29	26	1	2

Total	864	202	310	32	15
-------	-----	-----	-----	----	----

From table 1, it could be seen that trend of Thematic Progression in *the background of the study section* indicated that the students tended to used linear theme pattern. There were 310 times of linear theme found in the texts. After that, constant theme pattern was the second dominant pattern used by them. There were 202 times of this pattern. Then, Split theme pattern was in the third position used by the students with 32 times of Split rheme pattern. While, the last level is derived theme pattern with only 15 times of this pattern found in the final project. This result of this finding then discussed in the discussion section.

The Constant Theme Pattern

The constant Theme pattern is common in short passages to descriptive thing, sometimes in narratives which focus on behaviour of one person. It is also frequently found in textbooks and description of factual information focusing on a particular thing or concept (Bloor & Bloor, 2004: 88). In this pattern, the thematic progression is made through reiterating Theme particular Theme. Theme of the first clause is selected as Theme of the following clauses (Bloor & Bloor, 2004: 88). Theme Reiteration is another term referring to this pattern. The example of this pattern is as follows:

Table 2. The analysis of Constant Theme Pattern

C	Theme	Patter	Rheme
n			
c1	English	→	is a language that plays an important role in the global community, especially for communication
c2	because English	→	is an international language
c3	where this language	→	is used by people to communicate with people from different countries and languages.

The word “English” as the theme of C1 that repeated as the theme in C2 using the word “because English”. Then, it is continued to C3 use “where this language”. Here, the students picked up the word

“English” in C1 as the topic for C2 and C3 that become constant themes form.

The Linear Theme Pattern

The linear Theme pattern or what Eggins (2004: 324) calls as zigzag pattern is the second type of thematic progression. In this pattern, the element which is introduced in the Rheme of the first clause gets promoted to be the Theme of the second clause (Bloor & Bloor, 2004: 89). In this pattern the writer or speaker develops what she or he introduces in Rheme in the following clause. In addition, create a new theme by using old information into the new one has common used to connect the ideas together. The example of this pattern is as follow:

Table 3. The analysis of Lilear Theme Pattern

C	Theme	Pattern	Rheme
c10	In 2020, the world	→	was faced with covid-19 pandemic
c11	That	←	makes all people do their stuff from home, especially school.
c12	Students in this pandemic	←	are more active with their gadgets to conduct the learning process.

The rheme of C10, “faced with covid-19 pandemic” which restated as a new theme “that” in C11 to completed the information. The linear theme continued in C12 which gave specific information about pandemic which theme in C11 “Students in this pandemic” picked up from rheme “especially school” in C12. It is indicated that each ideas was connected each other to unify the message.

The Split Rheme Pattern

The third common type of thematic progression is the split Theme pattern. This pattern occurs when the Rheme of a clause

has two components, each of which is taken in turn as the Theme of a subsequent clause (Bloor & Bloor, 2004: 89). It could be described that one rheme could explain into some new message/theme in some clauses. Another term to refer to this pattern is the Multiple-Rheme pattern (Eggins, 2004: 85). The example is as follows:

Table 4. The Analysis of Split Rheme Pattern

C	Theme	Pattern	Rheme
c25	Thus, several academic writing types at the university level	→	are studied to increase writing knowledge, such as academic essays, research proposals, and a thesis.
c26	An academic essay	←	is learned during the fifth semester, where students provide their arguments for a problem.
c27	While writing a research proposal	←	is given to students before starting to write a thesis.
c28	Then, the thesis	←	is one of the final examinations to determine student graduation.

Rheme message in C25 “studied to increase writing knowledge” was explained toward some subsequent new theme in C26 “An academic essay”, theme in C27 “writing a research proposal”, and theme in C28 “the thesis”. In this case, the students tried to enhance the ideas to several number of themes which it was functioned to grab the unity. It is represented how the idea in the first rheme was develop into numerous spots of themes.

The Derived Theme Pattern

The last type of thematic progression is Derived Themes. It commonly occurs in longer texts. Typically, the topic introduced by the writer in the first clause is then discussed in the following clauses, taking the Theme of the first clause as the Themes of each clause (Bloor & Bloor, 2004: 91). In derived Themes pattern, there is no concrete grammatical form relationship of Themes derived. The only one connection is their semantic relationship. This pattern is different with the constant Theme pattern. In the constant Theme, the Theme is reiterated while in derived Themes, the Theme is derived meaning that there is no grammatical relation. The example is as follow;

Table 5. The Analysis of Derived Theme Pattern

C	Theme	Patterns	Rheme
c33	Some issues		caused difficulties for students in writing a recount text.
c34	First, the lack of vocabulary in English		becomes one of the issues
c39	Second, the students		could not find the most thoughts or keywords of the content.

The theme in C33 was spread into theme in C34, and C39. It is proven from the finding in text 12 that theme “Some issues” in C33 was discussed in subsequent new theme C34, and C35. The students wanted to lengthen the theme into a number of spots (theme). This function helped both students and readers to give the detailed explanation of the messages.

The Evaluation of Thematic Progression Used

The researcher measure the quality of thematic progression used in background of the study section by using Eggin’s parameter of

coherence (2004). The table 6, are the result of the analysis;

Table 6. The Quality of Thematic Progression Used by Students

Text	Score	Level of Coherence
1	3	Fair
2	3	Fair
3	3	Fair
4	3	Fair
5	4	Good
6	2	Less
7	4	Good
8	3	Fair
9	3	Fair
10	3	Fair
11	4	Good
12	3	Fair
13	2	Less
14	2	Less
15	3	Fair

The result of the evaluation of thematic progression used in background of the study section showed that there were three students who were classified into good quality. Meanwhile, there were nine students who were closely qualified. the levels of them were fair. The rest, there were three students who were categorized in less level. there were none of students qualified in poor level. the result of the analysis also showed that the patterns were widely used in paragraphs that were constant theme pattern, linear theme pattern, split rheme pattern, and derived theme pattern. It is mean that the background of the study section written by students undergraduate students are quite coherence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings,I concluded that the realization of the Thematic Progression used by Undergraduate Students in their Background of The Study Section of Final

Project in English Department of Tidar University has been used in this research. In general, this research has five main findings. The most pattern that employed by the students is linear theme pattern. Then, the second most pattern that mostly applied by the students is constant theme pattern. In the other hand, the analyzed of split rheme pattern became the third most common type of thematic progression in this research. The last pattern applied by the students is derived theme pattern who became the fourth most common type of thematic progression applied. Meanwhile, the quality of thematic progression used by the students were fair and quite coherence. It showed from the result of research were two students who were classified into good quality. Meanwhile, there were ten students who were closely qualified. The levels of them were fair. The rest, there were three students who were categorized in less level. There were none of students qualified in poor level. The researcher suggestion for the students in order to produce coherent language, students who wrote final projects need to pay more attention to what they are writing and try to apply thematic progression as a tool for make writing more coherence.

REFERENCES

- Al-Bazzaz, M. A., & Al-Shajlawi, A. N. (2018). Thematic progression in Iraqi scientific articles. *International Journal of Language & Linguistics*, 5(2), 126-131.
- Babaii, E., Atai, M. R., & Shoja, L. (2016). A comparison of thematic choices and thematic progression patterns in the research articles of well-established and emerging disciplines. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 19(2), 33–60.
- Bloor, Thomas and Meriel Bloor. 2004. *The Functional Analysis of English*. London: Arnold.
- Butt, D., Fahey, R., Feez, S., Spinks, S., & Yallop, C. (2000). *Using Functional Grammar*. National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University.
- Eggins, Suzanne. (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London: Continuum.
- Fitriati, S. W., & Gayatri, N. M. (2021). Thematic Progression in EFL Learners' Writing: A Literature Review. *Lingua Cultura*, 15(2).
- Gerot, Linda & Peter Wignell. (1994). *Making Sense of Functional Grammar*. Sydney: Antipodean Educational Enterprise.
- Hawes, T. (2015). Thematic progression in the writing of students and professionals. *Ampersand*, 2(2), 93–100.
- Halliday, M.A.K. and Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen. (2014). *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar Fourth Edition*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Herdiawan, R. D. (2017). Thematic structure and thematic progression in background of the study section of students' skripsi. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 8(12), 974-983.
- Kuswoyo, H., & Susardi, S. (2016). Thematic progression in EFL students' academic writings: A systemic functional grammar study. *Teknosastik*, 14(2), 39-45.
- Mubarak, H. Z. (2021). Theme and thematic progression of undergraduate theses. *EEAL Journal (English Education and Applied Linguistics Journal)*, 4(1), 11-19.
- Nicolas, E., & Hartono, R. (2022). Realization of Thematic Progression to Achieve Grammatical Cohesion in Students' Final Project Backgrounds. *English Education Journal*, 161-169.
- Paltridge, Brian., Starfield, Sue. (2007). *Thesis and Dissertation Writing in a Second Language: a handbook for supervisors*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York
- Pasaribu, A. N., Pasaribu, T. K., & Panggabean, S. (2019). Thematic progression of

- students' narrative writing. *Jurnal Ilmiah SIMANTEK*, 3(2), 155-163.
- Purba, G., & Pasaribu, A. N. (2021). Thematic progression in students' descriptive text. *International Journal of Educational Research & Social Sciences*, 2(3), 503–507.
- Rahman, K., & Arsyad Arrafi', M. (2017). Thematic progression patterns in ELT journal abstracts. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 4(2), 72-79.
- Susilowati, E., Faridi, A., & Sakhiyya, Z. (2022). Thematic Structure and Thematic Progression in Research Articles Published in Scopus-Indexed International Journals. *English Education Journal*, 12(1), 54-65.
- Syharizal, T., Fitriani, L., & Anggraeni, N. (2018). Thematic progression analysis of students writing. *Jurnal Siliwangi: Seri Pendidikan*, 4(1), 41–53.
- Wang, Z. (2015). Study on Teaching of English Reading: Under Thematic Progression Model. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 5(01), 73–78.
- Wei, J. (2014). Theme and thematic progression in learner English: A literature review. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 16(1), 67-80.
- Yang, X. (2008). English Language Teaching Thematic Progression Analysis in Teaching Explanation Writing. *CCSE Journal*, 1(10), 29-33.
- Yani, N. A., Suwarno, B., & Mutiara, G. (2018). An analysis of thematic progression in the background section of English department undergraduate students" Thesis of Bengkulu university in period 2017. *Journal of English Education and Teaching*, 2(4), 9-14.
- Yin, HE., & Tian, J. (2018). A comparative study of thematic progression in abstracts of scientific papers: a case study of science and science bulletin. *International Journal of Arts and Commerce*, 7(7), 1-7.
- Yunita, S. (2018). Theme and thematic progression in students' recount texts. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(3), 524–530.