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## The Use of Thematic Progression in the Journal Article of “U-JET”

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### Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate thematic progressions pattern in students' journal article written by undergraduate students. This study employed qualitative research in the form of written discourse analysis. The documentation observation sheet is used to analyze the patterns appeared in the article written by students. Out of 10 students chosen as the sample. The results of this study revealed that from the three patterns, zigzag pattern is the most frequently used by the students. The second is re-iteration pattern and the last one is multiple theme pattern. It showed that the students can employ the patterns though they never learn about systemic functional linguistics before. But, the results of their writing is not really coherence. Because the lack of thematic progression pattern used. For the consistency, there are several students who already consistent in their writing, though the rest is still not consistent. However, they never learn about this. Therefore, it can be said that understanding the thematic progression is important because it can make the writing effective and coherence.

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing is a skill needed by English learners. Because writing will be needed to convey lessons, opinions, plans, news and so on. Besides that, writing can also be used as a communication tool. Many important things can be done by mastering writing skills. Even so, writing is generally recognized as a difficult task by ESL and EFL students (Rosa, 2007). The reason is because writing requires the students to write in a good form. Students must write with attention to grammar, choice of words, sentence structure and unity.

One aspect that plays an important role in writing is the coherence (Wang, 2007). As Halliday (1994: 309) stated, coherence is “the internal (resource) for structuring the clause as a message”, including the notions of Theme and information. However, maintaining the coherence in students’ writing becomes the main problem faced by the students when they are asked to write. Research has found that in ESL/EFL students’ writing, the students focus mostly on the word and sentence levels rather than the level of the whole discourse, that is, textual coherence.

Actually, the thematic organization of the text is closely connected with discourse coherence or text convexity (Ren et al, 2009). Nonetheless, in Indonesian university context, thematic organization is not paid attention to by both teachers and students in the teaching and learning activity, especially in writing skill, though it is important since it can show the ability of students in organizing their ideas and making their sentence coherent (Wang, 2007). This causes the low quality in students’ writing. Moreover, they are expected to write a good text in an academic writing like journal article. It will not be easy for them if they do not pay attention to the thematic progression. Where they have to decide the way they want their text developed. They have to put their idea together and consider how to write their journal article so that their text will become coherent and have a good quality. According to Sutopo (2014), the students should have a better idea of what text

is, how to categorize and describe in terms of their genre, function organization and style. The teacher or lecturer need to encourage their students to cope with texts and make sense of them as well as produce them. They have to make their students understand about the Theme and Rheme first then the thematic progression pattern.

Eggins (2004) states that Thematic Progression contributes to the cohesive development of a text and it can strengthen the text’s coherence and cohesion (Emilia, 2005). Moreover, Eggins (2004) and Danes (1974) name three patterns of TP as follows:

1. Re-iteration pattern or Constant Thematic Progression (CTP), which appears when Topical Theme has relation to the one in the following clause.
2. Zig-zag pattern or Simple Linear Thematic Progression (SLP), which has a Theme that derives from an element in the Rheme of the preceding clause.
3. Multiple-Theme pattern or Derived Theme Progression (DTP), which mostly occurs in the longer text, has one or some elements in a clause which are then distributed in Themes.

The purpose of thematic progression is to create a well-structured text. It is indicated through the unity and connectedness between individual sentences that relate to each other. Therefore, this present study primarily examines thematic progression pattern in journal article especially background of study section written by English students in Lampung University by employing the thematic progression theory proposed by Eggins (2004) to explore how their ideas are organized and constructed in writing their introduction seen from Thematic Progression and to explore the extent to which the students’ journal articles are consistent with the language features in terms of Thematic Progression.

Studies on thematic progression have been conducted by some researchers in several genre such as in journal article (Farrokhi, Asarin & Khalili, 2016), in recout text (Noviyanti, 2015), in exposition text (Rakhman, 2013), in

argumentative text (Yang, 2015). In addition, on the field of teaching writing, some of researcher have also been conducted the research about thematic progression such as (Farikah, 2012; Jing, 2015 and Nurdianingsih & Purnama, 2017). Then there are also previous studies on the different field such as in news (Hawes, 2010), in discourse (Shi, 2013), in translation (Jalilifar, 2009), in children's storybooks (Guijarro & Zamorano, 2009).

The previous studies mentioned above only focus on analyzing the thematic progression on students who have background knowledge about Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). There is still no research conducted in evaluating the thematic progression on the students who have never learn about SFL before. Besides, the students in college must have learn about how to write journal article. Therefore this study aimed to analyze the thematic progressions pattern occurred on students' journal article who never get SFL class. The last, this research paper hopefully could give new insight for the future research on the thematic progression.

## METHOD

This study belongs to qualitative study. This research will focus on evaluating students journal article which already published in U-JET (Unila Journal of English Teaching). The subject of this study were 10 undergraduate students at Universitas Lampung. They are majoring in English education.

There are several steps conducted to gather the data. There will be ten journal articles to analyze by taking the introduction section only and then divide it into clauses for analyzing the thematic progression. The researcher first took the introduction part only from the journal article. Second, the researcher will close-reading the downloaded introduction. Third, breaking the introduction section into clauses and placing it into table format to make the process of the analysis easier and clearer. The next step is classifying the thematic progression pattern, whether it is constant, linear, or multiple-theme.

After that is calculating the occurrence of each type of thematic progression patterns found in the introduction. Then, evaluating the development of each theme progression patterns occurred and identifying the contribution of coherence in the text.

In this study, the researcher needs the triangulation to minimize the subjectivity. So the researcher used interview to know the reason why students write their articles the way they do. Then the researcher used investigator triangulation by asking one lecturer in a state university, Semarang, Indonesia.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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 three patterns in thematic progression among students' journal article.

**Table 1.** The Result of Re-iteration, ZigZag and Multiple-Theme Pattern Analysis

Text No	Number of Clauses	Re-iteration Pattern	ZigZag Pattern	Multiple-Theme Pattern
1	39	13	10	4
2	30	6	10	5
3	34	8	9	0
4	38	5	11	0
5	29	9	13	0
6	23	5	7	0
7	14	4	3	0
8	30	4	10	3
9	17	4	6	0
10	21	6	6	0
Total	275	64	85	12

From the table, It can be seen that the most pattern employed by the students is zigzag pattern/simple linear thematic progression which occurred 85 times out of 275 clause. Followed by re-iteration pattern/constant

thematic progression which appeared 64 times. Then the last one is multiple-theme pattern/derived theme progression with only 12 times emerged in students' journal article. Dou & Zhao (2019) stated that from their previous research on the Thematic Progressions of scientific papers published in the international journals also show that the most popular patterns employed by scholars are "Simple Linear Thematic Progression" and "Thematic Progression with A Constant Theme". The deeper explanation will be discuss below:

### Re-iteration Pattern Analysis

Re-iteration pattern is a pattern in which Theme of preceding clause is picked up or repeated at the beginning of the next clause. In other words, theme re-iteration happens when the same theme is re-iterated regularly. It contributes to text cohesion and coherence because a clear focus is maintained (Egins, 1994). My findings showed that the students are able to use the constant theme and re-iterated their text. This is showed that the students capable when they picked up the word in the previous Theme to be the topic in a new clause. Bloor and Bloor (2004) states that constant theme pattern occurs when "a common Theme is shared by each clause". The example of re-iteration pattern occured in text 9.

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>
<u>Writing</u> is one of the productive skills that students of SHS need to master well.	
In other words, <u>writing</u> is considered as an important activity for students to express their ideas, thoughts, feelings, and judgments about everything.	

From this example, we can see that the student is picking up the word "writing" as the topic for a new clause. According to Syharizal, Fitriani and Anggraeni (2018) the constant theme patterns are widely used because they are quite easy to use by repeating themes in the previous clause. It is in line with Undayasari & Saleh (2018) who found that students used more zigzag pattern in their Indonesian texts. Despite of that, from the interview, the subject reveals that she actually wrote the article by

adjusting it to the topic that she had and she only focus on the grammar. She did not know about any patterns or deliberately using this pattern. It leads to the fact that UNILA students never had any SFL class. So that it is understandable that she did not use this strategy on purpose.

### Zigzag Pattern Analysis

The ZigZag/Simple Linear Theme pattern (SLP) is one of the thematic progression patterns in which the subject matter in the Rheme of one clause is taken up in the Theme of a following clause. According to Egins (1994) zig-zag pattern happened where the rheme of the first clause becomes the theme in the second sentence; the rheme of the second sentence becomes the theme of the third clause, and so forth. My findings showed that this is the most pattern that occurred in students' text. It means, the students are able to make a new clause by picking up one or more elements from the previous rheme. Here is one of the examples in text 8.

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>
Therefore, it is important for students or English learners to learn <u>how to write well in English</u> .	
In order to write <u>well in English</u> , the students must pay attention to five aspects of writing.	

From the example above, the writer is picked up some elements in the previous Rheme "how to write well in English". Then it is form a new topic "In order to write well, ...". It showed that the writer try to make her writing connected and flowing naturally. The writer herself said that she repeated the topic because she wanted to have connectivity in her writing because she needed to adjust with the topic in the first place.

### Multiple-Theme Pattern Analysis

According to Egins (2004: 326), the DTP provides the underlying organizing principle for a text which differs from the other types of thematic progression (CTP & SLP) which are used for elaborating on each of the main thematic points. Derived themes is a type of

thematic progression where several different themes “alternate within the text”. From the findings, it is shown that there is only a little use of DTP compared to another two. Out of 275 clauses, this pattern only occurred in 12 clauses. From all of the participants in this study, there are only 3 who capable in employing this strategy. Below is the example in text 2:

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>
<i>There are</i>	<i>some important vocabularies</i>
<i>according to Putra (2011).</i>	
<i>First, Vocabulary</i>	<i>can increase students' knowledge.</i>
<i>Second, the word</i>	<i>is known help to organize the learning.</i>
<i>Third, the creation of labels (words)</i>	<i>is a tool for increasing learning.</i>

The example above showed the distribution from the Rheme “some important vocabularies according to Putra (2011)”. The word “some important vocabularies” then described into three Themes in the following clauses. It is talked about the three importance of vocabularies. Rosa (2007) stated that this pattern highlights the one general theme from which other themes are derived. This result almost in line with Muroda, Madjid and Jati (2017) who found that there is no subject who used DTP patterns. They thought that multiple pattern is needed to be applied and taught to the students in order to make their writing does not look not monotonous.

**Thematic Progression Consistency**

In relation to thematic progression consistency, it is analyzed by picturing the trend of thematic progression in students’ texts.

**Table 2.** Summary of Thematic Progression Trends

No.	Thematic Progression Type	Number of Occurrence
1.	Re-iteration Pattern	64
2.	ZigZag Pattern	82
3.	Multiple Theme Pattern	12
4.	Empty Progression Pattern	117
	Total	275

From the table above, it can be seen that the trend of Thematic Progression in students’ journal article indicated that the students tended to use ZigZag Pattern in their clauses. There were 85 clauses of this type out of 161 clauses. After that, Re-iteration Pattern was the second dominant pattern used by them. there were 64 clauses of this type out of 161 clauses. The last type that students used was Multiple Theme Pattern. There were only 12 clauses of this type out of 161 clauses. That table showed that the students quiet consistent in using zigzag pattern as the most pattern type used by the students. The same goes for re-iteration pattern as the second type that is employed by them. Unfortunately, the multiple theme pattern appeared too little compared to the former pattern. Moreover, there are 117 clauses that is not employed the pattern at all. As for empty progression, it stops the succession of progression chains. Therefore, the progression of the texts had a rather big effect in lessening the coherence level of a text. As a result, the paragraphs lacked coherence.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the findings and discussion of the research data, the conclusions can be drawn as follows:

Firstly, all of the participants employed the re-iteration pattern and it becomes the second most pattern that is used by them. There were 64 clauses out of 275 clauses. Secondly, all of the participants employed the zigzag pattern and it becomes the most pattern that is used by them. There were 85 clauses out of 275 clauses. Thirdly, there are only 3 participants that employed the multiple theme pattern and it becomes the third most pattern that is used. There were only 12 clauses out of 275 clauses. Fourthly, the consistency of the patterns in each text is different from one another. But three of them is quiet consistent in employing the pattern because they used all of the patterns in thematic progression. Unfortunately, most of the students still applied empty progression pattern. It means that the clauses in their text is not developed

from the previous Theme or Rheme. In the end, the paragraphs lacked coherence. Furthermore, it was found from the interview that even though some of the students capable in employing the pattern, they did not understand about it. Inasmuch, most of them only write by using their feelings or intuition. Hence, there are many empty progression pattern appeared. So that the text lack of coherence.

The conclusions explained above lead the researcher to provide some suggestions. The teacher needs to pay attention to the students' writing skill. They have to understand about SFL and thematic progression so that they can teach the students how to write a text by using the patterns. By giving the material, students can improve their writing to be more coherence. Beside that, the students also need to learn and understand about thematic progression. They have to learn and practice more in writing so that they can write a text coherently. This present study still has weaknesses because it only focuses in evaluating the three patterns of thematic progression. Moreover, it only has a little sample to explore. Therefore, future studies can try to investigate the more patterns in thematic progression and compare it with the thematic selection. In addition, the future researcher can try to explore the problems in thematic progression and get more sample to make it better.

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