



THEMATIC PROGRESSION ON STUDENTS' RECOUNT TEXTS

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Abstract

This paper is based on a study aimed to find out the types of thematic progression patterns the students mostly employ in their recount texts and to examine the coherence of fourth semester students' recount texts viewed from their thematic progression of the English Department, Universitas Negeri Semarang in the Academic Year of 2015/2016 who took Genre-Based Writing (GBW) class in Rombel 1. This study was a written discourse analysis which was used to figure out the realization of meanings. The findings showed that all of the students employed more than one pattern in their recount texts. They tended to use combination between reiteration (constant), zig-zag (linear), and multiple theme patterns. However, reiteration was the most dominant one. The second dominant pattern was zig-zag pattern. The third pattern found in the students' recount texts was multiple theme. The analysis also showed that the number of clauses and the thematic progression patterns produced by the students are not equivalent. It means that there are many clauses which are not related to one another. The students often introduced some new themes at the beginning of the clause without any relation with other clauses and they break the well signposted progression of the text. It can be concluded that most of the recount texts produced by the students are not coherent.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four skills in English from which students are supposed to master besides listening, speaking and reading. Those skills are classified into two main skills – receptive and productive skills (Priyatmojo, 2012). Writing is one of the four major language skills that is considered as the most difficult skill. It is because writing conveys a meaning from the thinking process to the readers. By writing, people can share ideas, feeling, and thought as well as persuade other people. Moreover, writing can be good reflection of the students' understanding of learning English. Since writing is an important skill in teaching and learning English, it needs a lot of practice, guidance and feedback to improve the students' writing ability.

Writing ability is not acquired naturally, it requires the learners to be taught and practiced. There are some factors that cause an ineffective teaching and learning of writing. First, it comes from the students themselves. They are lack of basic writing skill and also less confident in writing. In addition, they need a lot of practice as they do not have enough chance to practice writing. Most of the students do not know how to start their writing and do not have enough ideas to write. They cannot generate their ideas and cannot choose the right words. They also tend to write a paragraph without knowing about theme and rheme. This condition will make their writing not in a good order. That is why it needs a new strategy in teaching writing.

From the teacher's point of view, learning writing is training the students to write as many paragraphs as possible. The teacher just gives a few topics and then the students are asked to write a text that is appropriate to the topic. They do not have enough materials on how to develop their ideas into a written text. As the result, the students' orientations are on the products of writing, not from the process of writing, so their writing is not well organized. The way of teaching writing above does not use the appropriate method. A teacher only knows the result of writing, not from the process.

The definition of theme by Halliday as cited in Eggins (2004:299) is the element which serves as starting point for the message, so it talks about a clause is going to be about. The theme here typically contains familiar or "given" information. Meanwhile the definition of rheme by Eggins (2004:300) is the part of the clause in which the theme is developed. Therefore, the rheme typically contains unfamiliar or "new" information.

In writing skill, students have to be able to compose a text based on genre. Genre is a kind of text-type, as Gerot and Wignell (1994:17) stated "A genre can be defined as a culturally specific text-type which results from using language (written and spoken) to (help) accomplish something." They also stated that genre is culture specific, and has associated with them: particular purposes, particular stages, and particular linguistic features. Knowledge of genre is important for language teachers in order to help the students compose texts. There are some types of genre that are taught in school such as narrative, recount, report, procedure, discussion, explanation, exposition, spoof, anecdote, news item, description, and etc. A recount text is a text that retells someone's experience in the past. Students have to be able to compose recount texts, and they also have to be able to convey the meaning of the text based on social function, generic structure, and lexicogrammatical features of recount text.

Gerot and Wignell (1994:194) stated that the social function of recount text is to retell events for the purpose of informing or entertaining. The generic structures of recount text are

orientation that provides the setting and introduces participants; events which tell what happened, in what sequence; and re-orientation (optional—closure of events). The significant lexicogrammatical features focus on using specific participants, material processes, circumstances of time and place, past tense, and temporal sequence.

To make a coherent paragraph, the students should employ thematic progression patterns in their writing. According to Paltridge (2002:140), “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.” There are three kinds of thematic progression patterns, reiteration or constant theme pattern, zig zag or linear theme pattern, and multiple theme or split theme pattern.

In this study, the researcher intends to find out the types of thematic progression patterns the students mostly employ in their recount texts and to examine the coherence of the students’ recount texts viewed from their thematic progression.

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

This study was a written discourse analysis which was used to figure out the realization of the meaning. According to Creswell (2009:173), “Qualitative procedures demonstrates a different approach to scholarly inquiry than methods of quantitative research”. Qualitative inquiry employs different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiry; and methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Although the processes are similar, qualitative procedures rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse strategies of inquiry.

The object of the study was the recount texts of the fourth semester students of the English Department, Universitas Negeri Semarang in the academic year of 2015/2016 who took Genre-Based Writing (GBW) class in Rombel 1.

In this study, the types of data were written discourse analysis data that were described in the form of clauses. In collecting the data, the researcher took several steps. The first one was documentation. In this step, the researcher took the data from the recount texts of the fourth semester students of the English Department, Universitas Negeri Semarang in the academic year of 2015/2016 who took Genre-Based Writing (GBW) class in Rombel 1. The second one was listing. This step, the researcher listed all the clauses of the students’ recount texts. The third one was identifying. The researcher analyzed the students’ recount texts using thematic progression patterns.

In analysing the data, the researcher read all the students’ recount texts. The researcher should understand each of the students’ recount texts. Next, the researcher divided the students’ recount texts into clauses. Then, the researcher analyzed the students’ recount texts. Firstly, the clauses were analysed in terms of thematic structures in order to figure out the point of departure of each clause. Secondly, the researcher analyzed the students’ recount texts using thematic progression patterns to see the types of thematic progression patterns the students mostly employ in their recount texts and to examine the coherence of the students’ recount texts viewed from their thematic progression.

After analysing the students’ recount texts, the researcher calculated the thematic progression patterns of each of the students’ recount texts, and categorized them in the table below:

| Thematic Patterns | The Students' Writings | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Reiteration | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zig-zag | | | | | | | | | | |
| Multiple | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total of Clauses | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 2.1 Thematic Progression Patterns of the Students' Recount Texts

In reporting the data, the researcher presented two kinds of reporting data. The first one is presenting table and figure. In reporting the data, the researcher showed the tables and figures that were used to present the percentage of each item analysis which supported the thematic progressions analysis. The second one is discussion. The researcher interpreted the data descriptively.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are 20 students' recount texts as the data of this research. The writings are in the form of paragraphs with different topics. The students chose their own topic such as *unforgettable experience, impressive moment, unforgettable holiday, and etc.* In this part, the writer presents the thematic progression patterns of every students' writing to know the types of the thematic progression patterns the students mostly employ in their recount texts and the coherence of the students' recount texts viewed from their thematic progression. The table below illustrates the numbers and the writings flow produced by the students in their writings.

1. Thematic Progression Patterns in the Students' Recount Texts

| Students' Writing | Thematic Progression Pattern | | | Total of Clauses |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------|----------|------------------|
| | Reiteration | Zig-zag | Multiple | |
| 1 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 34 |
| 2 | 13 | 3 | 2 | 32 |
| 3 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 29 |
| 4 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 33 |
| 5 | 9 | 6 | - | 30 |
| 6 | 6 | 12 | - | 28 |
| 7 | 17 | 3 | - | 37 |
| 8 | 8 | 7 | - | 23 |
| 9 | 18 | 7 | 2 | 46 |
| 10 | 10 | 12 | - | 40 |
| 11 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 36 |
| 12 | 15 | 9 | 5 | 33 |
| 13 | 13 | 9 | 2 | 35 |
| 14 | 15 | 15 | 6 | 52 |
| 15 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 34 |

| | | | | |
|------------|--------|--------|-------|------|
| 16 | 18 | 5 | 3 | 37 |
| 17 | 9 | 6 | | 29 |
| 18 | 11 | 6 | 6 | 28 |
| 19 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 26 |
| 20 | 20 | 10 | 11 | 51 |
| Total | 245 | 143 | 67 | 693 |
| Percentage | 35.35% | 20.63% | 9.67% | 100% |

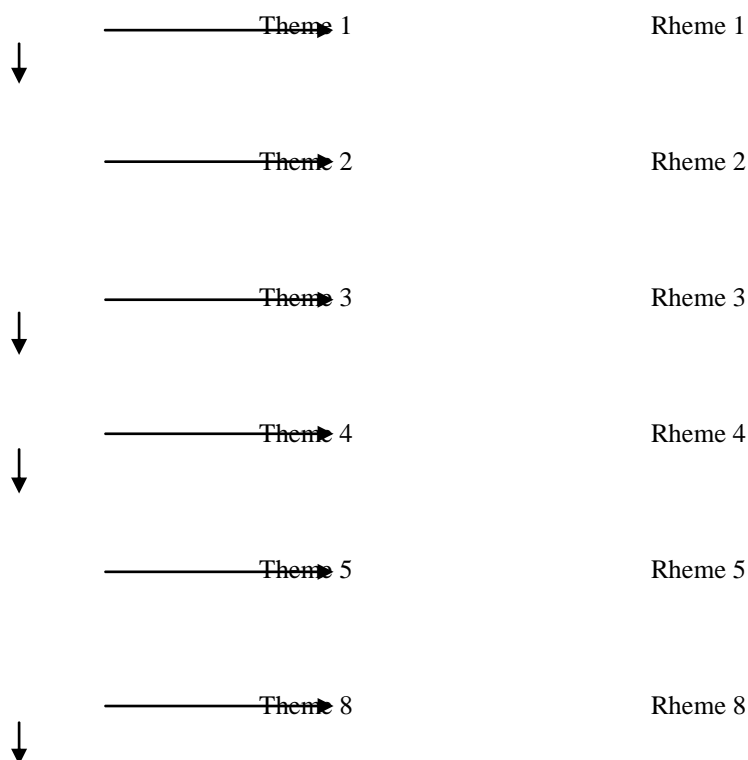
Table 2.2 : The Thematic Progression Pattern of the Students' Recount Texts

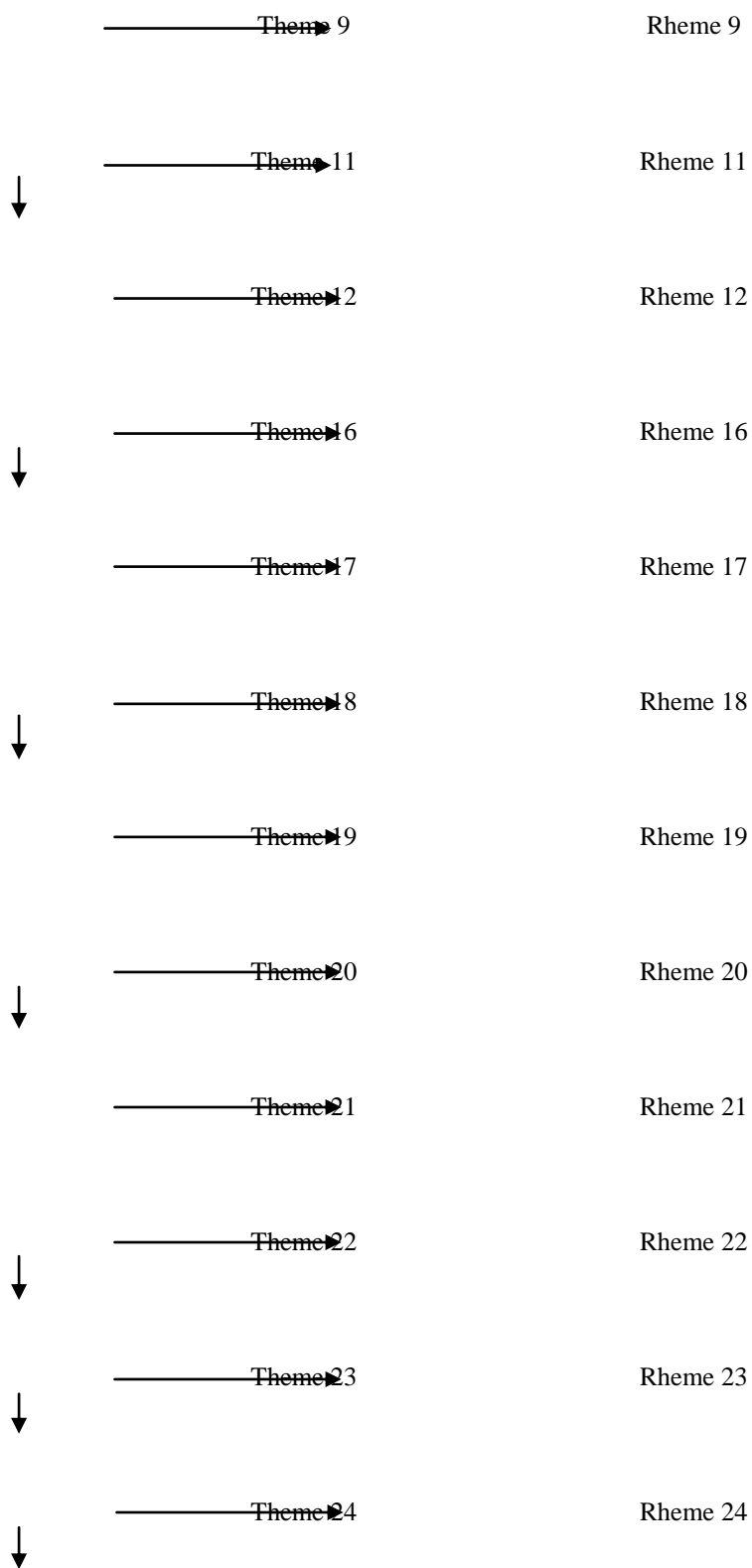
The table shows that there are three types of the thematic progression patterns found in the students' recount texts. They are reiteration/constant theme pattern, zig-zag/linear theme pattern, and multiple theme. It can be seen from the table that the most dominant thematic progression pattern found in the students' writings is reiteration/constant theme pattern with 35.35%. The second dominant is zig-zag pattern with 20.63%. The third pattern found in the students' writing is multiple theme with 9.67%.

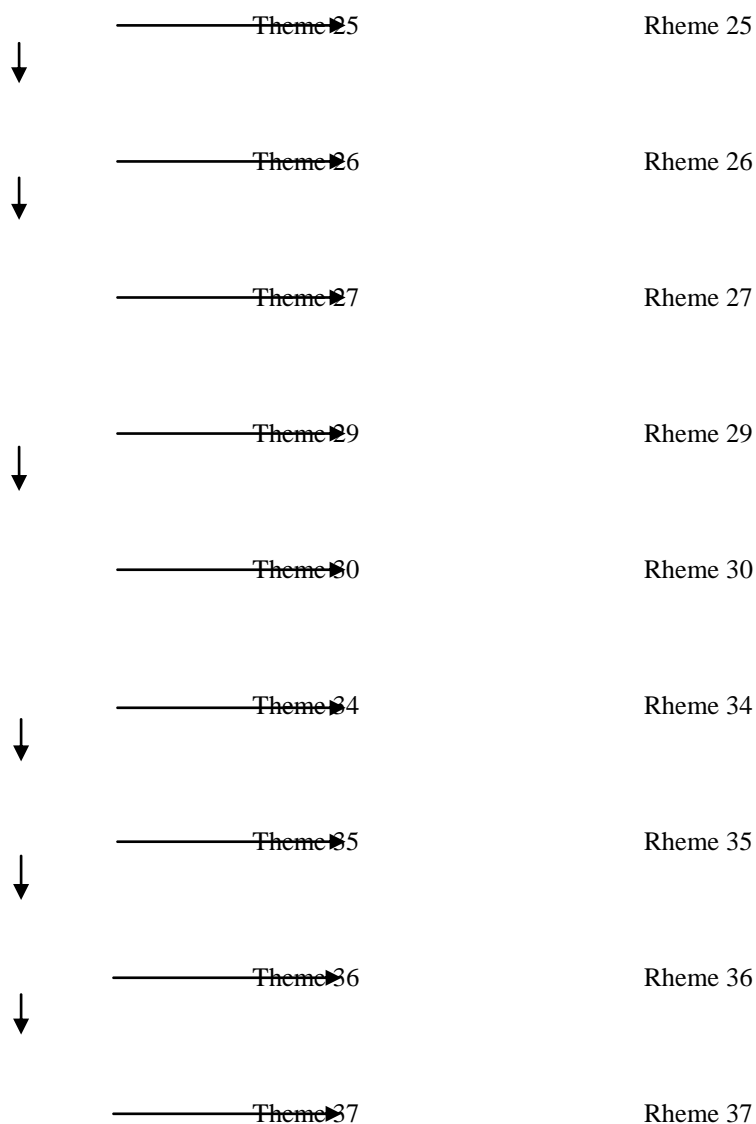
1.1 Reiteration/Constant Theme Pattern

As shown in the Table 2, the most dominant thematic progression pattern found in the students' writings is reiteration/constant theme pattern. In this case, the students tend to use personal pronouns such as *I, you, we, they, she, he, and it* in their writings. The students think that it is easier for them by repeating theme of one clause to another at the beginning of a clause. It can be seen from the example taken from the student's text.

Text 7





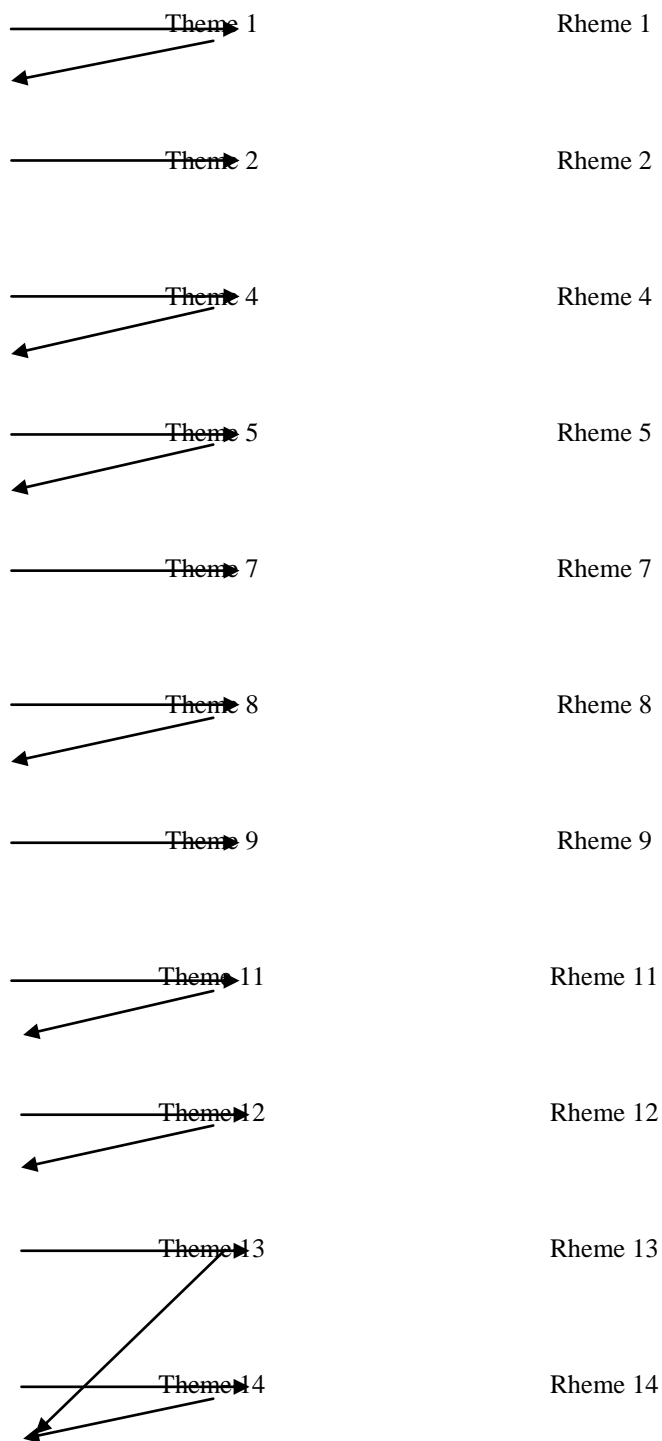


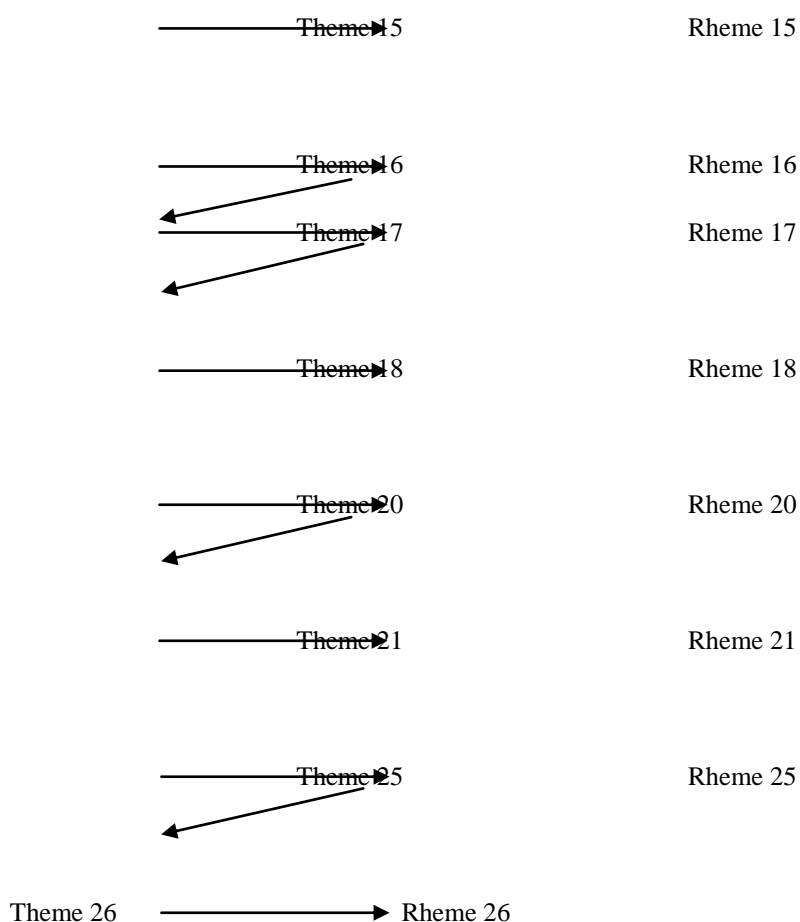
It can be seen from the figure above that the theme of the first clause ‘One of my unforgettable experiences’ becomes the theme in the second clause. Then, the theme in the third clause ‘when I’ is repeated in the theme of the fourth and the fifth clauses. Also, the theme in the eighth clause ‘where we’ becomes the theme in the ninth clause ‘then we’. The theme in the eleventh clause ‘I’ becomes the theme in the twelfth clause ‘because finally I’, too. Next, the theme in sixteenth clause ‘Many kinds of animals’ becomes the theme in the seventeenth clause ‘There’. Then, the theme in the twentieth clause ‘My mom’ becomes the theme in the twenty first clause ‘that she’. Besides, the theme in the twenty second clause ‘then we’ is picked up and repeated in the theme of the twenty third, twenty fourth, twenty fifth, twenty sixth, and twenty seventh clauses. The theme in the twenty ninth clause ‘we’ also becomes the theme in the thirtieth clause ‘then we’. The last, the theme in the thirty fourth clause ‘that I’ is also repeated in the theme of the thirty fifth, thirty sixth, and thirty seventh clauses.

1.2 Zig-zag/Linear Theme Pattern

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the second dominant pattern found in the students' writings is zig-zag/linear theme pattern. In this pattern, the rheme of one clause is taken up in the theme of a following clause. The examples are taken from the students' writing and can be seen in the figure below.

Text 6





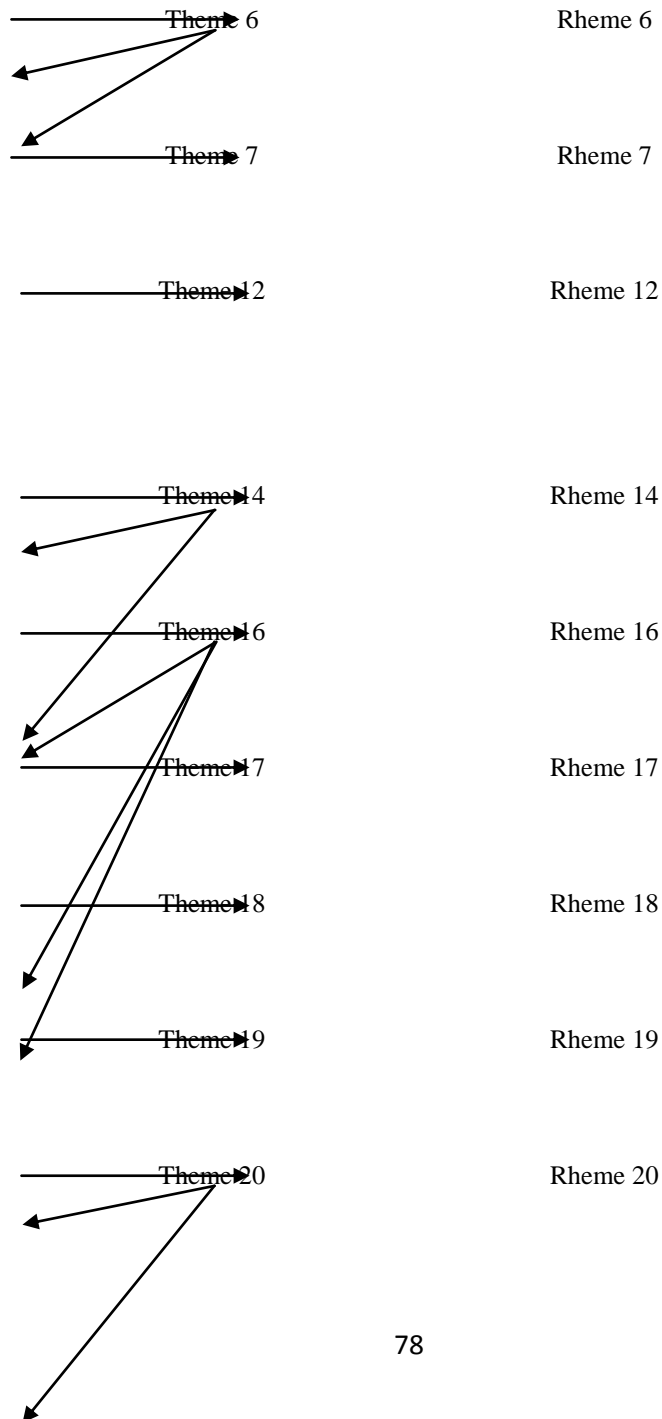
It can be seen in the figure above that the rheme in the first clause ‘my grandmother said to my mother’ changes to ‘that she’ and becomes the theme in the second clause. Then, the rheme in the fifth clause ‘prepared a lot of thing’ also becomes the theme in the seventh clause ‘After all the preparation’. The rheme of the eighth clause ‘went to Purbalingga at 6 a.m.’ also changes to ‘It’ and becomes the theme in the ninth clause. Next, the rheme in the eleventh clause ‘decided to visit Purbayasa, one of the favorite tourism places’ becomes the theme in the twelfth clause ‘In Purbayasa’. The rheme of the twelfth clause ‘there is a giant aquarium’ becomes the theme in the thirteenth clause ‘This giant aquarium’, too. Also, the theme of the thirteenth clause ‘has a wide variety of fish and sea animals from Asia, Australia, Europe, America and Africa’ becomes the theme in the sixteenth clause ‘In addition to a wide variety of fish, in this Purbayasa’. Besides, the rheme of the sixteenth clause ‘there are also many kinds of birds and various species of flora’ becomes the theme in the seventeenth clause ‘My most favorite bird’. Then, the rheme of the seventeenth clause ‘is peacock’ becomes the theme in the eighteenth clause ‘The wings of peacock’. The other is the rheme of the twentieth clause ‘we decided to take a rest’ becomes the theme in the twenty first

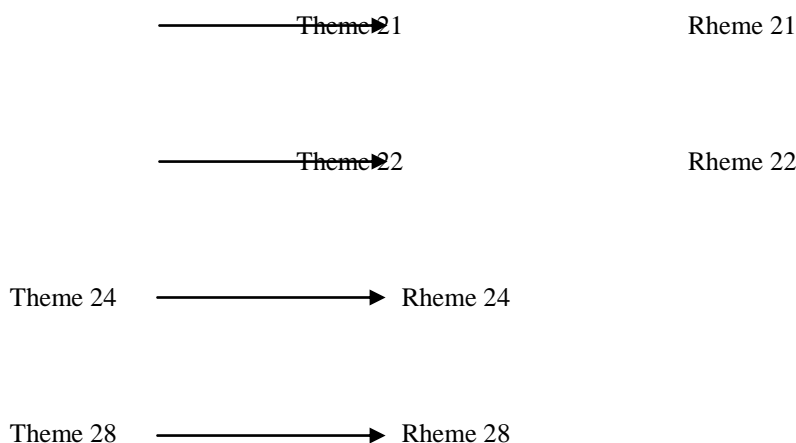
clause 'and (we)'. The last, the rheme of the twenty fifth clause 'all of us felt tired' changes to 'so we' and becomes the theme in the twenty sixth clause.

1.3 Multiple Theme

It can be seen from Table 2 that the third theme pattern found in the students' writings is multiple theme. In this pattern, the students try to develop their paragraphs by picking the rheme which may include a number of different pieces of information. Each of which may be taken up as the theme in a number of subsequent clauses. The examples below are taken from the students' writings on and can be seen in the following figure.

Text 15





It can be seen from the figure above that the rheme of the sixth clause ‘we went to Kuta beach’ is taken up as the theme in the seventh and the twelfth clauses. The rheme of the fourteenth clause ‘passed the night at the backyard of my cousins’ house’ is also taken up as the theme in the sixteenth and the nineteenth clauses. Besides, the rheme of the sixteenth clause ‘I really felt’ is taken up as the theme in the eighteenth, twenty second, and twenty fourth clauses. The last, the rheme of the twentieth clause ‘we went to Tanjung Bena’ is taken up as the theme in the twenty first and the twenty eighth clauses.

2. Coherence of the Students’ Recount Texts Viewed from their Thematic Progression

The ability to make a coherent paragraph in writing is a very important skill the students need to master. This skill is considered very helpful in their studies, when writing in their native language as well as in foreign language. Coherence means to hold together. It means that the texts have the right order with the clear process. Coherence plays an important role in writing activities. Coherence, that is usually used in many reading texts should have well-organized paragraphs, where in the text, they have clear main ideas which are supported by relevant sentences.

To organise any text into a coherent whole, the writers need to keep their readers well informed about where they are and where they are going (Butt *et al*, 2000:134). Based on Using Functional Grammar, there are grammatical resources to signpost the way through clauses, clause complexes and paragraphs, from the beginning to the end of a text. According to Butt *et al*. (2000:134), the first signpost must be at the beginning of a text, paragraph or clause. It tells the readers what the writer has in mind as a starting point. The signposts realise the textual meanings. The writers use the first position in the clause to signal to their readers what the message is about. The first position in a clause contains textual meanings because it signposts the development of a text. To analyse textual meanings, we need a simple and distinct metalanguage. We call the first element theme and the rest of the clause rheme.

Based on the finding in Table 2, the number of clauses and the thematic progression patterns produced by the students is not balanced. It means that there are many clauses which are not related to one another. The students often introduced some new themes at the beginning of the clause without any relation with other clauses and they break the well signposted progression of the text. For brief explanation, it can be seen in the example below.

Text 1

Text 1 is talking about Impressive Moment and it is found that the Theme of the first clause 'I' becomes the Theme in the second clause 'when I'. Then, the Rheme of the first clause 'would like to share you about my impressive experience' changes to 'It' and becomes the Theme of the third clause. However, the Theme of the third clause has no relation with the Theme of the fourth clause, which breaks the well signposted progression of the text. The student introduces the new theme in the third clause. It talks about when the impressive experience happened, meanwhile the Theme of the fourth clause refers to the previous theme of clause 1 'I', so the Theme of the third clause is not related to the Theme of the fourth clause because there is no logical connection between them. Next, the Theme of the fourth clause 'I' becomes the Theme in the fifth clause 'because I'. The other is the Rheme of the fifth clause 'joined an extracurricular "Pecinta Alam"' changes to 'Well, in that moment' and becomes the Theme of the sixth clause. Then, the Rheme of the sixth clause 'my friends and I had to take a long march' is taken up in the Theme of the seventh and the tenth clauses. Besides, the Theme of the seventh clause 'It' is repeated in the Theme of the eighth and the ninth clauses.

It is the same with the Theme of the third and the fourth clauses, the Theme of the tenth clause has no relation with the Theme of the eleventh clause. The Theme of the tenth clause refers to the previous theme of clause 6, but in the Theme of the eleventh clause the student introduces the new theme. The student used an adverb of time 'On the next day' which breaks the well signposted progression of the text, so the Theme of the tenth clause is not related to the Theme of the eleventh clause because the logical connection between them is weak. Next, the Rheme in the eleventh clause 'we had to continue our activity' becomes the Theme in the twelfth clause 'Survival, getting closer with a snake, SAR, rappelling and other activity'. Then, the Rheme of the twelfth clause 'we spent in Serang' becomes the Theme of the fourteenth clause 'when we'. Also, the Theme of the fourteenth clause 'when we' becomes the Theme in the fifteenth clause 'We'. However, the Theme of the fifteenth clause is not related to the Theme of the sixteenth clause. The student used the different theme in the eleventh clause, which breaks the well signposted progression of the text. The Theme of the fifteenth clause refers to the previous theme of clause 14, which talks about the student's friends and herself, but the Theme of the sixteenth clause talks about herself only, so the Theme of the fifteenth clause has no relation with the Theme of the sixteenth clause because the logical connection between them is weak.

The other is the Theme of the sixteenth clause 'I' is repeated in the Theme of the seventeenth, the eighteenth, the nineteenth, the twentieth, and the twenty first clauses. Then, the Theme of the twenty first clause is not related to the Theme of the twenty second and the twenty third clauses. The Theme of the twenty first clause refers to the previous themes, but unexpectedly the student introduces the new themes in the twenty second and the twenty third clauses. The Theme of twenty second and the twenty third clauses talk about the activity that the student did when joining an extracurricular 'Pecinta Alam', which has no relation with the theme in the twenty first clause that talks about herself, so it breaks the well signposted progression of the text. Next, the Theme in the twenty third clause 'in which we' becomes the Theme of the twenty fourth clause 'and(we)'. Besides, the Rheme of the twenty fourth clause 'catch a snake' changes to 'It' and becomes the Theme in the twenty fifth clause. However, the Theme of the twenty fifth clause has no relation with the Theme of the twenty sixth clause because the student introduces the new theme in the twenty sixth clause. The twenty fifth clause talks about catching a snake meanwhile the twenty sixth clause talks about the student's friends, so it breaks the well signposted progression of the text because there is no logical

connection between them. The logical connection between the Theme of the twenty fifth and the twenty sixth clauses is weak.

Then, the Theme of the twenty sixth clause 'because almost all of my friends' changes to 'and they' in the Theme of the twenty seventh clause. The logical connection between the Theme of the twenty seventh and the twenty eighth clause is also weak because they have no relation. The Theme of the twenty seventh clause refers to the previous theme of clause 26, but the Theme of the twenty eighth clause is a new theme. It talks about the survival stage which has no relation with the Theme of the twenty seventh clause that talks about the student's friends, so it breaks the well signposted progression of the text. Next, the Theme of the twenty ninth clause 'all of us' also changes to 'because we' and becomes the Theme of the thirtieth clause. There are still five clauses that do not employ any pattern. The Theme of the thirtieth clause is not related to the Theme of the thirty first, thirty second, thirty third, and thirty fourth clauses because they are new themes. They used different themes in each clause. In the Theme of the thirty first clause, the student used an adverb of time, which has no relation with the Theme of the thirtieth clause. In the Theme of the thirty second clause, it talks about the student's senior, which has no relation with the Theme of the thirty first clause. In the Theme of the thirty third clause, the student introduces a new theme 'I', which has no relation with the Theme of the thirty second clause. The last, the Theme of the thirty third clause talks about the most impressive moment of her life, which has no relation with the Theme of the thirty third clause, so the Theme of the thirty first, thirty second, thirty third, and thirty fourth break the well signposted progression of the text.

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that text 1 is not coherent because there are many clauses which are not related to one another. The student often introduces some new themes at the beginning of the clause without any relation with other clauses and they break the well signposted progression of the text

CONCLUSIONS

The objectives of this study are to find out the types of thematic progression patterns the students mostly employ in their recount texts and to examine the coherence of the fourth semester students' recount texts viewed from their thematic progression of the English Department, Universitas Negeri Semarang in the academic year of 2015/2016 who took Genre-Based Writing Class in Rombel 1. Based on the data analysis and the results of the study in the previous chapter, the conclusions can be drawn as follows.

The findings showed that all of the students employed more than one pattern in their recount texts. They tended to use combination between reiteration (constant), zig-zag (linear), and multiple theme patterns. However, reiteration was the most dominant one. It can be said that it is easier for the students by repeating theme of one clause to another at the beginning of the clause. This pattern allowed the readers to easily find the information in the text. The second dominant pattern was zig-zag pattern. Most of zig-zag patterns occurred in the relative clauses which functioned to replace the subject. This pattern indicated that the students tried to introduce newly information by promoting the rheme in the previous clause as the theme in the following clause. The third pattern found in the students' recount texts was multiple theme. In this pattern, the students tried to develop their writings by picking the rheme which may include a number of different pieces of information, each of which may be taken up as the theme in a number of subsequent clauses.

The ability to make a coherent paragraph in writing is very important skill the students need to master. This skill is considered very helpful in their studies, when writing in their native language as well as in foreign language. Coherence plays an important role in writing activities. Coherence,

that is usually used in many reading texts should have well-organized paragraphs, where in the text, they have clear main ideas which are supported by relevant sentences.

The analysis also showed that the numbers of clauses and the thematic progression patterns produced by the students are not equivalent. It means that there are many clauses which are not related to one another. The students often introduced some new themes at the beginning of the clause without any relation with other clauses and they break the well signposted progression of the text. It can be concluded that most of the recount texts produced by the students are not coherent.

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