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| The Application of Thematic Progression to Enhance Coherence in Students’ Analytical Exposition Texts  **Hariyadi Hariyadi 🖂**, **Sri Wuli Fitriati, Rahayu Puji Haryanti**  Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia | | | | |
| **Article Info**  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Article History:  Accepted 20 September 2022  Approved 11 January 2023  Published 15 March 2023  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Keywords:  Thematic progression,  coherence,  analytical exposition texts.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | **Abstract**  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Thematic progression is the way in which the theme of the clause repeats a meaning from the previous theme or rheme. It also refers to how the information flows in the text. This study aimed to analyze the application of thematic progression to enhance coherence in the analytical exposition texts written by the eleventh graders of SMA Kesatrian 2 Semarang in the academic year 2021/2022. This study used a mixed methods design which was embedded with a case study with the data from the result of students’ texts, observation sheet, and interviews. This study analysed 10 students’ analytical exposition texts. The findings showed that the most type of thematic progression applied was a linear theme reaching 22 times in occurrence, followed by 21 constant theme patterns, and 9 multiple theme patterns. These results showed that a linear theme occurred in the students’ analytical exposition text mostly because it elaborated the writers’ ideas or arguments. Further, thematic progression made the text organize well. This made the texts coherent, and the students’ scores improved from pre-test with mean of 74.50 to post-test with mean of 89.00. Then, the value of significance (2-tailed) was 0.000 which meant that the improvement was statistically significant. These results are expected to give a contribution to other researchers in conducting research in various text types. Furthermore, the results are useful for students to improve their writing and for teachers to improve the way they teach writing. | | |
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## INTRODUCTION

#### Writing is a crucial aspect of English language proficiency that students are required to acquire. According to Klimova (2013), writing holds significant importance among English skills as it incorporates various other language skills. Prior to engaging in writing practice, one must first develop a command over listening, reading, and even speaking abilities. Echoing Klimova's perspective, Javet et al. (2013) emphasize that writing is an essential skill in English that students need to attain. Writing provides several benefits to learners, as it allows them to express their thoughts through written means. In essence, writing serves as a medium for effectively communicating ideas and emotions through the use of words, sentences, and coherent paragraphs (Siddiq, 2013). Hence, writing can be viewed as a manifestation of the thinking process (Rukayah, 2014), enabling individuals to effectively convey their thoughts and facilitate clearer understanding among readers.

#### Writing in English is challenging for them, especially in constructing the ideas in the form of a text. In line with this, Emilia (2005) found that most students got difficulty in writing. The students’ ability in writing was inadequate and the teaching learning has not been solving this problem.

#### Some studies have been conducted dealing with Indonesian students’ difficulty in writing. Rahmatunisa (2014) found that Indonesian students got difficulty in writing argumentative essay. They had problems in cognitive and psychological aspects. In line with this, Hasan and Marzuki (2017) investigated the students’ problem in writing. The findings showed that the students had problems in grammar that were in the text. This made the students difficult to convey their thought through writing.

#### The difficulties of writing have been increasing as the students do not have adequate knowledge about how to arrange a good text. They focus on the correction of writing aspects such as parts of speech, capitalization and punctuation. They also really consider about the grammar aspect more than the organization of the text. In fact, the good text is comprehensible when it is organized so well that the readers can comprehend the text. Additionally, Nurhayati et al. (2023) agreed that students needed some help in delivering their ideas. Dealing with ideas, Aini et al. (2020) stated that theme patterns were important in texts. The understanding of these patterns enabled authors to create a sense of unity and purpose within their writing, ensuring that ideas were connected and presented in a logical order.

#### Considering to the topic of this study, some researchers have conducted the studies in terms of thematic progression in high school level, university level, and professional writing level.

#### In high school level, Rakhman (2013) conducted research about an analysis of thematic progression. The study showed that the students expressed their ideas in three ways of thematic progression including constant theme, zigzag theme and multiple theme patterns. However, he added that some students still needed guidance to create good written text. In line with that, Ruspita (2010) conducted a research about theme and rheme organization in the learners’ text. She took 15 students’ texts as the data. The result mentioned that three thematic progression were used by the students with the most use was constant theme. She assumed that it was because the constant theme pattern was the easiest among all. On the other hand, the split or multiple theme pattern was the least used because it was considered to be the most difficult thematic progression pattern among all.

#### In line with this, Dewi conducted research in 2019. The research aimed to find out the thematic progression patterns in the students’ descriptive texts. The data were the students’ texts to be analysed based on the thematic progression patterns. The findings showed that the constant theme was generally used by the students. It happened because the students focused on the participants that they described in their descriptive texts and this was suitable with the characteristics of descriptive text.

#### In the university level, research was conducted by Rahmawati and Kurniawan in 2015. This study focused on the students’ thesis abstract. It concluded that the students’ thesis abstracts mostly use a constant pattern of theme. This might happen due to confusing writing as to how to summarize their research into 200 words. In 2017, the other researchers also conducted a study about thematic progression. Gunawan and Aziza in their study about the theme and thematic progression of undergraduate thesis state that a good academic writing in one culture could refer to the characteristics of good academic texts in other cultures. In line with it, Islam et al. (2022), Susilowati et al. (2022), Saeed et al. (2021), and Tamunobelema (2018), in their research, found that thematic progression made the texts coherent. Thematic progression led the matters to be focused on the text so the readers could follow the texts.

#### Still, in the university level, Yang (2015) found that thematic progression made texts well organized. Thematic progression led the texts logically arranged so they were easier to be followed by the readers. Furthermore, Herdiawan (2017), Undayasari and Saleh (2018), Nicolas, and Hartono (2022) in their studies had the same findings that thematic progression should have been considered in making texts arranged logically. By considering the sequence and flow of ideas, the writers could enhance the overall effectiveness and readability of the texts.

#### In professional writing level, Rosa (2019) conducted a study about thematic progression shifts in the translation of student translators. She stated that the choice of certain types of thematic progression was particularly helpful in building the unity of the text. In line with that, Hawes conducted a research dealing with thematic progression in 2015. In his study, he recommended certain variations on Dane’s progression types, as well as the use of more non-participant themes to mark rhetorical transitions in the text. Thematic progression familiarization in text or media should provide an overview of range of progression from formal to informal that would raise awareness of what is available. Additionally, a research in professional writing was also conducted by Hawes in 2010. He analysed the application of thematic progression in Sun and Times editorials from 1991 to 2008. He found that there was movement of thematic progression patterns time by time. This happened because the editorials provided various kinds of writing style that led the topic with the new information flow smoothly. This would make the readers interested in reading because the texts were coherent and cohesive.

#### The other researchers also conducted a research dealing with coherent text too. Fitriati and Yonata in 2017 analysed mater degree students’ texts. The finding showed that the students had weakness in creating coherent texts. It was urgent as they were master degree students. Coherence is important in writing because it connects the whole sentences in the text.

#### While the other studies focus on thematic development analysis of text and the usefulness of thematic development in making the text coherent, Wei (2015) conducted a research focusing on theme and thematic progression in English writing teaching. This study provided theoretical advice for the teacher in teaching writing and for the students in writing coherently. A set of instructional package was designed to build the students’ knowledge about thematic progression to improve the coherence of their writing so that the readers would understand the text well.

#### The text should make sense to make the reader understand it. The capacity of a text to make sense is called coherence (Thornbury, 2005). Coherence is a quality that the readers achieve from the text. The text its self is the result of the writer’s writing to be delivered to the readers. By this, the text is a bridge between the writer and the reader in writing field so the writers, here the students, are expected to consider their writings well in order to make the writings well understood.

#### In making the text coherent and cohesive, theme and rheme are connected structurally in every clause. Eggins (2004) states that contribution that theme makes to the cohesion and coherent of a text has to do with how thematic elements succeed each other. This is called thematic development or progression. Paltridge (2012) explains that thematic development 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 types of thematic progression (Eggins, 2004). They are constant theme, linier theme, and multiple or split theme.

#### The pattern of constant theme shows up the theme of the first clause becomes the theme of the clauses that follow (Eggins, 2004). The dependence of the theme in the following clauses is the theme in the first clause.

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##### **Figure 1**. Constant Theme Pattern of Thematic Progression

#### The second pattern is linear theme. This pattern is also called zig-zag pattern 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 (Eggins, 2004). The rheme of one clause becomes the theme of the following clause.

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##### **Figure 2.** Linear Theme Pattern of Thematic Progression

#### The next is multiple or split theme. While a clause is realized to have only one thematic element, the element must be a topical theme (Eggins, 2004). However, it is common for clauses contain a sequence of themes, with often several textual and/or interpersonal themes occurring before the obligatory topical theme.

#### 

##### **Figure 3.** Multiple Theme Pattern of Thematic Progression

#### The system of theme and rheme supplies important ways in which textual meanings at the clause level may be built. Theme-rheme structure lets information to flow from one clause to another well. The logical flow makes the text coherent and cohesive. Thus, the text can be understood by the readers.

#### Regarding to the importance of writing, deep research about the application of thematic progression is needed to be conducted to solve the problems in the learning of writing faced by teachers and students. Some previous studies discussed about thematic progression analysis on the writing products. They mostly focused on the types of thematic progression used by university students and in professional writing. This research focuses on not only the application of thematic progression in students’ texts but also the process of thematic progression in teaching writing.

#### As one of the alternative ways to make writing easier to be achieved and coherent, the use of thematic progression is essentially considered in writing. The thematic progression will help the students in creating and arranging good written text. Yang (2008) stated that thematic progression makes the text organized well. He added that the thematic progression makes the text more cohesive and coherence so that it is more understandable. Thematic progression patterns let the topic as theme and the new information as the rheme flow with special patterns in written text. When the text is coherent and cohesive, the readers will be easy to catch the ideas that the writers want to convey. Furthermore, the analytical exposition text is chosen as kind of text to be analyzed. This text should be suitable for constant, linear, and multiple themes to be applied as students need to elaborate their ideas in paragraphs. Then, this study is expected to give consideration to the students about how a text is well organized and to the teacher to consider teaching thematic progression to the students to produce organized texts.

## METHOD

#### Considering the data and the aims of the study, mixed methods design was applied (Creswell, 2012). Mixed methods design was used, which was determined by the specific study aims and the data that are now accessible. With the use of this method, which integrates quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, the research issue can be fully and intricately understood. The qualitative data were collected through observation and interview, while the quantitative data were taken from the students’ texts. Then, this study was intended to analyse, describe, categorize, and interpret the data to find out the application of teaching thematic progression in writing coherent analytical exposition text. In short, this research design answered the question research about how the application of thematic progression to enhance the students’ writing coherence in analytical exposition text. Besides, this research is embedded a case study research as suggested by Hancock (2006). A case study research design was employed, allowing for an in-depth exploration of a specific case or phenomenon. This study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies and complexities associated with the chosen subject. Based on the case that was explored, this study embedded case study research.

#### The objects of the study were the students’ products of writing at SMA Kesatrian 2 Semarang. It was chosen as the site to observe the application of teaching thematic progression in writing analytical exposition text. As a senior high school, it was expected to be an appropriate level in introducing the students to thematic progression. Next, the eleventh-grade students were chosen as the sample of the research. They were chosen as purposive sampling in order to give as much as information to the research. Then, 10 students’ texts were analyzed based on thematic progression patterns.

#### To validate the findings and interpretation, the researcher applied triangulation. Triangulation is an important factor to be established in qualitative research. Creswell (2012) states that triangulation is used to validate findings. The data of the research result about a specific part or in its entirety can be tested and judged. In this study, the data were discussed with the advisors to get the expert judgment.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### This part elaborates the result of data analysis to support the research questions. It includes the application of thematic progression to enhance coherence in the analytical exposition texts written by the eleventh graders of SMA Kesatrian 2 Semarang in the academic year of 2021/2022.

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### The Application of Constant Theme in the Analytical Exposition Texts

#### The application of a constant theme becomes the first focus of this study. The application of constant theme in the analytical exposition texts is shown in the following table.

##### **Table 1.** The Application of Constant Theme in the Students’ Texts

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Student | Number of Constant Theme (times) | |
| Pre-test text | Post-test text |
| 1 | 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 1 | 4 |
| 3 | - | 3 |
| 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 5 | 1 | 2 |
| 6 | - | - |
| 7 | - | 1 |
| 8 | 1 | 1 |
| 9 | 1 | 3 |
| 10 | - | 4 |
| Total | 10 | 21 |

#### The table above shows the occurrence of constant theme in 20 texts that consist of 10 students’ texts in pre-test and 10 students’ texts in post-test. In pre-test texts, the occurrence of constant theme reached 10 times, while in post-test texts, the occurrence of constant theme reached 21 times. The findings showed that 6 students’ texts increased in constant theme use in their post-test. They were the second student’s text, the third student’s text, the fifth student's text, the seventh student's text, the nineth student's text, and the tenth student's text. Next, two students had the equal use of constant theme patterns. They were the sixth student’s text and the eighth student’s text. The other two students’ texts decreased in the use of constant theme patterns. They were the first student’s text and the fourth student’s text. This happened because they used the other theme patterns.

#### The occurrence of constant theme pattern was functional to make the readers focus on the idea that the writer wanted to highlight. Then, this discussion correlates with the research done by Rahmawati and Kurniawan (2015), Gunawan and Aziza (2017), and Rosa (2019) found that thematic progression is particularly helpful in building the unity of the text. Here, constant theme leads the writers to explore the topic more and makes the readers focus on the topic discussed.

### The Application of Linier Theme in the Analytical Exposition Texts

#### The application of linier theme is the second focus of this study. Linier theme was applied almost in all texts written by students. It also showed the following finding to answer the second research question. The application of linier theme in the analytical exposition texts is shown in the following table.

##### **Table 2.** The Application of Constant Theme in the Students’ Texts

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Student | Number of Linear Theme (times) | |
| Pre-test text | Post-test text |
| 1 | - | 3 |
| 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 3 | - | 3 |
| 4 | 1 | 2 |
| 5 | - | 1 |
| 6 | - | 3 |
| 7 | 2 | 1 |
| 8 | 2 | 2 |
| 9 | 1 | 1 |
| 10 | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 10 | 22 |

#### The table above shows the occurrence of linier theme in 20 students’ texts that consist of 10 students’ texts in pre-test and 10 students’ texts in post-test. In pre-test texts, the occurrence of linier theme reached 10 times, while in post-test texts, the occurrence of linier theme reached 22 times. The findings showed that 6 students’ texts increased in linier theme use in their post-test. They were the first student’s text, the second student's text, the third student's text, the fourth student's text, and the sixth student's text. Next, three students had equal use in linier theme in pre-test and post-test. They were the eight student’s text, the nineth student’s text and the tenth student's text. Then, the seventh student’s text decreased in the use of linier theme.

#### Linear theme pattern makes it easier for readers to understand since it related one clause to another one and gave the readers a sense of direction and purpose as they read. This study found that linier theme patterns were mostly applied to students’ texts reaching 22 occurrences that were more than constant theme that occurred 21 times. Linier theme patterns were applied more because the students needed to elaborate their arguments in the following clauses that were suitable with the generic structures of analytical exposition texts. However, the findings in this research were contrary to the previous studies conducted by Dewi (2019) and Ruspita (2010) about theme and rheme organization in the learners’ text. She found in her research that constant theme patterns were mostly applied in the texts.

##### **Table 3.** The Application of Multiple Theme in the Analytical Exposition Texts

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Student | Number of Multiple Theme (times) | |
| Pre-test text | Post-test text |
| 1 | - | 1 |
| 2 | - | 1 |
| 3 | - | - |
| 4 | - | 1 |
| 5 | - | 1 |
| 6 | - | 1 |
| 7 | - | 1 |
| 8 | - | 1 |
| 9 | - | 1 |
| 10 | - | 1 |
| Total | 0 | 9 |

#### The table above shows the occurrence of multiple theme in the students’ texts. The occurrence of multiple theme reached 9 times in post-test texts and only 1 text that did not have multiple theme in it. Multiple theme related one clause to the other clauses that made the clauses connected each other.

#### Strengthening the research conducted by Hawes in 2010, the finding of this study in the application of multiple theme in students’ texts is suitable choice for writing. Hawes found that there was movement of thematic progression patterns and the constant theme patterns were not always used most but multiple theme patters were used recently. This writing style led the topic with the new information flow smoothly so the readers could read and comprehend the texts interestingly.

### The Application of Thematic Progression to Enhance Coherence in the Analytical Exposition Texts

#### In order to support data in the application of thematic progression to enhance coherence in the analytical exposition texts written by students, the researcher took notes in observation sheet during teaching and learning process. This included 5 observations in teaching and learning process. Here is the elaboration of observation sheet result.

#### There were 5 meetings that were done by the teacher and students. In the first meeting, the students were given pre-test by the teacher. The second meeting, the students were given materials about analytical exposition text and thematic progression especially constant theme patterns. Then, the students were asked to write a paragraph and consider constant theme patterns. The following meeting, the students studied about linier theme patterns given by the teacher. They continued writing the second paragraph and considered linier theme patterns. The next meeting was about multiple theme patterns. The students were asked to keep writing the third paragraph and consider multiple theme pattern. The last meeting was post-test. The students were asked to write an analytical exposition text based on the topic given and consider the materials that they studied in the previous meetings.

#### This application of teaching thematic progression was in line with the research conducted by Wei in 2015 focusing on theme and thematic progression in English writing teaching. The research gave theoretical advice for the teacher in teaching writing and for the students in writing coherently. Then, the teacher observed in this study applied thematic progression to improve the coherence of students’ writing so that the readers understood the text well.

#### Similarly, researches done by Cartis and Cozma (2013), as well as Fitriati and Yonata (2017) found that coherence is important in writing because it connects the whole sentences in the text. In addition, this study is in line with Krause (2018) that suggested the approach be applied in teaching writing in order to make the students more coherent.

### The Results of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Students’ Texts

#### Dealing with the scores that the students got, descriptive statistic, normality test and T-test were done. Here are the results.

##### **Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Pre-test | 10 | 60 | 85 | 74.50 | 8.644 |
| Post-test | 10 | 85 | 95 | 89.00 | 3.944 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 10 |  |  |  |  |

#### For the Pre-test, the minimum value is 60, indicating the lowest score obtained, while the maximum value is 85, representing the highest score. The mean (average) score is 74.50.

#### Regarding the Post-test, the minimum value is 85, suggesting the lowest score obtained after the intervention or treatment. The maximum value is 95, representing the highest score achieved. The mean score for the post-test is 89.00.

#### Overall, these descriptive statistics provide mean of the scores for the pre-test and post-test, offering insights into the performance or changes observed in the participants' test scores before and after the intervention.

#### **Table 5**. Normality test of Pre-test and Post-test

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov | | | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
| Test | | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig |
| Students’ score | Pre-test | .238 | 10 | .115 | .907 | 10 | .260 |
| Post-test | .245 | 10 | .091 | .820 | 10 | .025 |

#### Next is test of normality. For the Pre-test, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results a test statistic of 0.238, with 10 degrees of freedom. The associated significance level (Sig.) is 0.115. Similarly, the Shapiro-Wilk test produces a test statistic of 0.907, with 10 degrees of freedom, and a significance level of 0.260. These results indicate that, based on both tests, the distribution of scores for the pre-test variable does not significantly deviate from a normal distribution.

#### Turning to the Post-test, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test reports a test statistic of 0.245, with 10 degrees of freedom, and a significance level of 0.091. Additionally, the Shapiro-Wilk test yields a test statistic of 0.820, with 10 degrees of freedom, and a significance level of 0.025. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the distribution of scores for the post-test variable does not significantly deviate from a normal distribution.

#### Overall, these tests of normality indicate that the data for both the pre-test and post-test variables are reasonably close to a normal distribution.

##### **Table 6**. Paired Samples Test

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Paired Differences | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |  | | |
| Mean | | | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | Lower | Upper | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Pair1 | Pre-test – Post-test | -14.5000 | 5.503 | 1.740 | -18.436 | -10.564 | -8.333 | 9 | 0.000 |

#### Furthermore, the figure explains the significance of the increasing scores in the students’ text in the form of paired samples test. The test value of significance is 0.000. If the value of significance (2-tailed) is lower than 0.05, Ho is rejected, and Ha is accepted. This means that the application of thematic progression that was exposed to the students in teaching learning process enhance the students’ writing scores.

### The Result of Interview

#### The next supportive data is interview. It was given to 10 students. It was done in the fifth meeting by gathering the students and giving them four main questions. The questions were about the difficulties in writing, the solution of the difficulties, the advantages of knowing thematic progression, and future plan in writing. 10 students agreed that they had difficulty in writing dealing with exploring ideas, grammar, and vocabulary. Students 1, for example, said that she had difficulty in developing her ideas. Then, after being given materials about thematic progression, she could improve her writing and arranged sentences well. She added that she would apply knowledge in her future writing. Other students also found it hard to arrange paragraph. They added that solution for their problems were keeping writing, paying attention to structure of analytical exposition text. Furthermore, the students stated that thematic progression materials given by students helped them develop paragraphs. They would use thematic progression to their writing next.

## CONCLUSION

#### To summarize, the application of thematic progression to enhance coherence in the analytical exposition texts written by the eleventh graders of SMA Kesatrian 2 Semarang in the academic year of 2021/2022 was essential in enhancing the logical flow of their writing. From the three themes, linier theme mostly occurred in the students’ texts as the writers elaborated their arguments more in the next sentences. Thematic progression allowed for the systematic development and organization of themes throughout the texts, resulting in clear introductions, well-structured arguments, and supporting evidence. Then, improvement of the students’ scores could be seen in the result of t-test. The test value of significance (2-tailed) is 0.000 which means that the improvement is statistically significant. The improvement indicated that the structured teaching and learning process, along with the students' recognition of its benefits, contributed to their continuous improvement in writing proficiency. Furthermore, these results of study can give insight for the future research in various text types.

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