



## How A Student Develops Paragraphs : A Thematic Progression Analysis of Student Works On Short Story

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### ABSTRACT

The issue of theme and rheme has attracted several researchers to do research on theme and thematic progressions especially writing skill in English Language Teaching. 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. This study aims at exploring how a student develops a short story. The writer selected entire paragraphs from the short narrative in order to demonstrate developmental technique. The short narrative was then studied using theme progression analysis to determine how it progressed throughout the story. This study was conducted in descriptive qualitative. The researcher used Coding the paragraph, Analyzing the type of thematic progression of each Paragraph and Classifying and calculating the percentage of each type of thematic progression. In analyzing the thematic progression, there are three kinds of thematic progression: theme reiteration, the zig-zag pattern, and the multiple- rheme patterns. The findings show that the multiple- rheme pattern as the most dominant organization used within the short story, realized in 16 times (66,67%), theme reiteration is the second realized in 5 times (20,83%), and the zig-zag pattern is realized in 3 times (12,50%). The conclusion was that all types of thematic progression were used in short story.

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing is the process of creating a written product that is done in a recursive manner (Rofiqoh et al., 2022). Moreover, writing in English is considered the most difficult skill in English by most students (Hang, 2021; Ilham, Musthafa, & Yusuf, 2020; Inayah & Putri Nanda, 2016; Sulistyono & Heriyawati, 2017). In the educational setting, the writers compose in a variety of formats, including articles, journals, magazines, essays, reports, and stories, among others (Sudirman et al, 2021). Furthermore, writing can be defined as the activity in which one conveys emotions, ideas, and opinions through the use of

written symbols (Mohzana, 2018; Rosyada & Sundari, 2021). Writing is regarded as one of the most important communicative skills in English language learning, and it is a significant requirement for EFL students (Nosratinia & Nikpanjeh, 2016).

However, in order to generate a decent piece of writing, the writer must first organize their own ideas. The cohesion and coherence of a piece of writing is one feature that is vital to consider (Wang, 2007). The students need to consider cohesion and coherence as the important devices in the writing quality (Leli, 2020). Coherence is the unity of the text in which each sentence or each paragraph in the text hangs together to form a discourse that the readers can perceive its meaning (Suwandi, 2016).

Dealing with coherence, many students find it difficult to produce a text because they lack vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, and punctuation (Styati & Rodliyah, 2021). Some researchers indicate that most errors and mistakes made by the students in their writing are the content of the writing, the organization, and the grammar (Karjono, 2020; RahmtAllah, 2020; Rosa, 2013). Rosa (2013) stated that coherence in a text as a non-verbal communication medium play a significant role in determining the outcome of the text's message delivery to the readers (Rosa, 2013). Hence, to produce good writing, it is necessary for the students to know how to organize Theme and Rheme in their writing (Nurdianingsih & Purnama, 2017b).

The thematic progression refers to the way themes continually pick up information which is already in the text and repeat it in some way so that the reader is always aware of what the key concepts and how the key concepts will be developed. By constantly produce an information in the preceding sentences as Themes of the next, writers are able to create very strong links between one sentence with the next sentence, and one paragraph with the next paragraph. Good text is an effective text in providing information. Using the theme of rheme on thematic progressions can make a text more effective.

Ventola and Mauranen (1991) stated that "thematic progression is important for the readability and clarity of a text. Eggins (2004) and Danes (1974) name three patterns as Theme Reiteration, The Zig-Zag Pattern and Multiple-rheme pattern. Reiteration pattern is shared by each of these clauses and themes according to the information provided. This pattern keeps the same theme focused along the order of the clause. Zig-zag pattern is one clause taken as the next clause theme. Meanwhile, Multiple-Rheme pattern is the rheme of the first clause is split into two parts, then each in turn being taken as the theme element of the subsequent clauses.

Numerous research on theme and rheme has been conducted by a number of Indonesian academics in recent years. Asri (2013) examined how high school students organize their thoughts in exposition texts, and how well they follow argumentative language elements in Thematic Progression. The study found that in terms of Thematic Progression consistency, some texts from middle and high achievers are consistent with the argumentative language features(Asri, 2013). Putri and Rosa (2020) discussed the theme dominantly used in the

students' discussion texts written by the second-year students of English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. They eventually come to the conclusion that the prevalent usage of an unmarked theme is prompted by the students' wish to draw attention to specific parts of the arguments that are indicated by the use of nominal groups in the arguments (Putri & Rosa, 2020). Meanwhile, Dewi et al (2021) find out types of thematic progression pattern used by students in writing descriptive text and to know the dominant thematic progression used in students' writing descriptive text. this research found that students used three types of Thematic Progression in students' writing descriptive text, they are Constant Theme, Linear Theme, Split Rheme. Furthermore, Constant Theme is the most frequent themes used in students' writing descriptive text.

Despite the fact that various studies have been conducted, thematic progression research on short stories has not gained traction in the debate over the topic of thematic progression. As a result, in order to close the gap, the purpose of this study is to examine thematic progression in the work of short story students. The objective of this research is to explore how a student develops a short story in terms of thematic progression.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was qualitative descriptive. In this type of research, the researcher collected, classified, analyzed, and drew conclusion based on the data analysis without making generalization. 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 find out and know why and how a social phenomenon happens.

The data was taken from the text short story in the form of paragraph. The source of data in this research is "2050" short story which is taken from Books entitled Assorted Literature from XII IBB 2020/2021. The data were analyzed based on Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) with three phases of data analysis consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. In order to manage the data analyzing, the researcher provides some steps of analyzing the data, such as: Coding the paragraph, Analyzing the type of thematic progression of each Paragraph and Classifying and calculating the percentage of each type of thematic progression.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

At least 24 paragraphs of a short narrative by Serena Wung were analyzed by researchers, and the work was then divided into three of thematic progression, namely theme reiteration, the zig-zag pattern and the multiple-rheme pattern. The following points will provide the analysis of the types of thematic progression found in the data. The following table indicates the number of thematic progressions in each paragraph of the short story.

**Table 1.**  
**The Data of Realization**

| No | Types of Thematic Progression | Frequency | Percentages |
|----|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1  | Theme Reiteration             | 5         | 20,83       |
| 2  | The Zig-Zag Pattern           | 3         | 12,50       |
| 3  | Multiple-rheme pattern        | 16        | 66,67       |

The table above indicates the number of types of thematic progression in each paragraph. The percentages indicate the use of *multiple-rheme progression* patterning (66,67%) over other types. *reiteration thematic progression* (20,83). The lower percentage is found in *Zig-Zag thematic progression* patterning with 12,50% in only 3 founds of the total number of thematic progressions. The multiple-rheme progressions are used in explanation details in every paragraph. The following figures will show the total number of thematic progressions exist in these twenty four paragraph.

**Theme Reiteration**

The first type of thematic progression patterns is constant theme or theme reiteration Theme reiteration is one basic way to keep a text focused to simply reiterate element. Belmonte and McCabe states that constant theme is set up by the theme of the first clause that is selected as the following theme at next clauses(Belmonte & McCabe-Hidalgo, 1998). Additionally, Bloor and Bloor (2004) states that constant theme shows the first theme that is carried on and used in the beginning of next clause which means that the clauses repeat the first theme as its main topic. Paltridge (2006) also defines that constant theme is used when the theme appears in a series of utterances.

As we saw with lexical cohesion, repetition is an effective means of creating cohesion. A text in which the Theme never varied would not only be boring to read or listen to but would also indicate a text which is going nowhere. There was one occurrence of Theme reiteration found in the data as in the following data.

**Data 1**

When you wake up, maybe what you will see will not be like usual (T1). Once you leave the house, you will realize something amazingHouses with a modern design, (is) not as usual. The dark sky was full of stars, the footing that wasn't made of earth, the body that felt light, and many other oddities. How come? You are no longer on earth. You are on mars!

From the text above, the realization of thematic progression is appeared clearly. It can be proven from the word '2050' – the title become the theme for the whole discourse. What you will see will not be like usual – being the theme clause (clause as the theme) for the 1st paragraph).

**The Zig-Zag Pattern**

In this pattern, the zig-zag pattern achieves cohesion in the text by building on newly introduced information. This gives the text a sense of

cumulative development which may be absent in the repeated Thematic pattern. The following data is the realization of Zig-zag pattern which was done by the students in composing the short story.

**Data 3**

*Then, what about the economic situation? (T1)*

It can be said that business competition in 2050 will be even tighter because business competitors can do anything. Advances in technology cause humans to do whatever they want, including cheating.

**Data 4**

This cheating (T1) can be done by hacking into the accounts of business competitors via the internet (because by 2050, people buy anything via the internet or online shopping apps) Or, by lowering the reputation of a company through social media by vilifying it.

From the text above, the realization of thematic progression is appeared clearly. It can be proven from the clause in the paragraph, it was repeated as the Theme in the previous paragraph. As the example above suggests, the pattern in which taken from the last clause of the end of paragraph. That is why it is considered as the zig-zag pattern.

**Multiple-Rheme Pattern**

According to Eggins (2004), the Theme of one clause introduces a number of different pieces of information, each of which is then picked up and made Theme in subsequent clause. The following data is the realization of Multiple-Rheme Pattern which was done by the students in composing the short story.

**Data 5**

*Here it is, 2050 (T1), thirty years from now. This is the year 2050, which is full of sophistication (s) (T1). how about we start exploring this year?*

*How will the technology be in 2050? (T1)*

The technology here is very advanced. Even technology in 2020 is considered useless. Cars that are equipped with uniforms of advanced features, for example, cars with the self-driving cars or autopilot systems. It could even be that by 2050, driving a car will be considered old because of the emergence of this technology?

From the text above, the realization of thematic progression is appeared clearly. It can be proven from the second paragraph. It is 2050 - being a theme clause for paragraph 2. The second sentence (This is the year 2050, which is full of sophistication) is being the theme which will be discussed as the theme clauses in the next paragraph.

The results can confirm that students' writing skills have met the elements of coherence and cohesion. Although, the application and exercise of the ability in writing needs to be improved. In Theme Reiteration, Syharizal, Fitriani and Anggraeni (2018) employed the writings of English A2 / 2014 students in IKIP

Siliwangi to be analyzed and found that the constant theme patterns are widely used because they are quite easy to use by repeating themes in the previous clause (Syharizal, Fitriani, & Anggraeni, 2018). In the line with this, reiteration or constant themes mostly used in students works in descriptive text (Purba & Nahum Pasaribu, 2021). Although the results of other studies mentioned that the use of zig-zag theme more in descriptive text (Pangestu, Harvian, & Suprijadi, 2019). In the Hortatory Exposition, the constant theme also dominates compared to zigzags and multi-rheme patterns (Asri, 2013).

Meanwhile, in academic writing, constant themes are also found to be the most widely used (Al-Bazzaz & Al-Shajlawi, 2018; Gunawan & Aziza, 2017; Kuswoyo, Sujatna, Rido, & Indrayani, 2020; Rahmawati & Kurniawan, 2017). Although, research conducted by Lestari et al comprehensively in the abstract of the journal shows the use of zig-zag patterns is more widely used (Hati Puji Lestari, Mujiyanto, & Saleh, 2019; Viska, Yelfiza, & Siska, 2020).

The implications of Theme Progression in teaching writing have been studied by numerous previous research. Linda et al (2017) for instance, discussed that the effectiveness of thematic progression patterns as writing strategy give some advantages (Ebrahimi & Khedri, 2012; Fitriati & Gayatri, 2021; Jing-hua, 2012). The first is students could write in good organization (Linda, Maisa, & Mulatsih, 2017; Nurdianingsih & Purnama, 2017). Moreover, learners will have a better understanding of their own writing along with its generic processes (Na-on & Jaturapitakkul, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

After exploring the text, the conclusion could be drawn there are three types of thematic progression from the short story entitled "2050". The writer found 24 paragraphs in the short story with three different types of thematic progression as suggested by Paltridge (2006). They were theme reiteration, the zig-zag pattern and the multiple rheme pattern. From all paragraphs exist, there was consisting of clause information in the form of question. Moreover, they had different frequencies which were reiteration theme (20,83%), Zig-zag pattern (12,50%), and Multiple-theme (66,67%). As the data showed, Multiple-theme progression was being the most dominant.

The use of Thematic Progression can also improve students' writing skills. This can be seen from the use of cohesion and coherence in the text products made. Therefore, researchers suggest that thematic progression be used as a method of teaching writing at junior, senior and university levels. For the further research, the researcher can focus on the procedure of highlighting

correlations between Theme choice and thematic progression patterns of other kinds of text.

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