

**THEME AND RHEME IN THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT
OF STUDENTS' NARRATIVE WRITING
AT STATE POLYTECHNIC OF CILACAP**

Eka Dyah Puspita Sari

State Polytechnic of Cilacap (PNC), Cilacap, Central Java
Indonesia

ekadyah.mail@gmail.com

Abstract

Many students face difficulties in writing narrative texts because of their lack of cohesion and less of connectedness. They usually cannot express their idea well because they cannot develop the old and new information in their writings. The thematic progression in forms of theme reiteration, zig zag pattern and multiple-rheme pattern of the second semester students of State Polytechnic of Cilacap (PNC) is the main concern of this study. The data were 10 narrative texts written by the second semester students of Information Technology study program at State Polytechnic of Cilacap (PNC). The analysis was done by identifying the occurrence of theme-rheme relation in thematic development of the texts. The result of the study showed that 133 clauses (70%) implemented theme reiterations, 51 clauses (26,84%) applied cross-referential thematic developments of zig-zag pattern, and 6 clauses (3,16%) showed cross-referential thematic developments of multiple-rheme pattern.

Keywords: Narrative Text, Rheme, Theme

Introduction

In order to produce good writing in English, one should not only be able to arrange words into grammatical sentences in the perspective of the existence of subject, verb, object and adverb in each sentence, but also be able to create cohesiveness among sentences and to bind the sentences with the appropriate genre so the sentences create special purpose in context. The communicative purpose of a text is considered to be the most important feature related to genre. Halliday (1989: 49) tends to use the word context to mention context of situation. However, in other parts of his book, he also uses the term "context" to refer to context of culture, inter-textual context, and intra-textual context. From the contexts suggested by Halliday, the writer has a deep concern on the last context, i.e. intra-textual context. Halliday (1989: 49) describes intra-textual context is coherence within text, including the linguistics cohesion that embodies the internal semantic relationship. This concept relates to the aim of this study,

i.e. to analyze the connectedness aspect of students' writings. Related to the concept of connectedness, Lyons (1995: 263-264) states two kinds of connectedness, namely cohesion and coherence. He also points out that cohesion has to do with the form of a text, while coherence deals with the content of a text.

Thus, in an effort to help students produce good writing, it is important for English teachers or lecturers to socialize intensively the importance of paying attention to the cohesiveness aspect in writing articles, short stories, novels, essays, or paragraphs. It is in order to make the sentences of the students' writing hang together so that understandable writing can be created. A text is not considered to be a good one if it is not cohesive, yet a text is considered to be a good text if it fulfills two properties, cohesion and coherence. Cohesion is an internal property, while coherence is contextual properties of paragraph. So, cohesive text is a text to which a paragraph in the text ties together, and

coherence means that a group of sentences relates to the context.

Regarding the reason above, the writer proposes a question related to the topic as follows: What are the thematic progressions in narrative texts of the second semester students of State Polytechnic of Cilacap (PNC)? And, the objective of the study is to describe and to analyze the thematic progressions in narrative texts of the second semester students of State Polytechnic of Cilacap (PNC).

Methodology

This study is a descriptive qualitative study. Bogdan and Thailor (in Moleong, 2003: 3) define qualitative method as a research procedure that is in forms of descriptive data through written words or oral data from the speaker and speakers’ behavior that can be observed. The characteristics of qualitative research are 1) natural setting: showing factual data that match the socio cultural reality; 2) human as the instrument; 3) qualitative method is easier to apply if it faces the double facts and presents live data; 4) the analysis of the data is conducted inductively; 5) the submission of the data is in forms of words, graphs, and not numbers; 6) there is limitation of the study regarding the focus of the problem.

The subject of this study was the 2nd semester students of Information Technology Study Program of State Polytechnic of Cilacap (PNC). The data were taken from the students’ narrative texts. Then, the data were analyzed based on the concept of cohesion of using theme and theme relations and thematic development.

Discussion

The flow of information in a sentence from theme to rheme is fundamental in achieving communicative effectiveness in a message. Eggins (1994: 303) states “the thematic progression is the exchange of information between successive theme and rheme pairing

in a text.” He also explains three main patterns of thematic development. They are theme reiteration, the zig-zag pattern, and the multiple-theme pattern.

The analysis was done by identifying the occurrence of theme-rheme relation in thematic development of the texts. From the analysis, the total clause number of all narrative texts were 190 clauses. Those clauses were divided into different structures as follows:

Thematic Progression	No. of Clause
Theme Reiteration	133
Zig-zag Pattern	51
Multiple-rheme Pattern	6
Total	190

Table 1. The Thematic Progression of Students’ Narrative Writing

From table 1, it could be concluded that the clauses on the students’ writing used various thematic progression. The first thematic progression is theme reiteration. Theme reiteration is one basic way to keep a text focused. Theme reiteration usually appeared as repetition. Repetition can be regarded as an effective way to create cohesion of writing. There were 133 clauses (70%) which used theme reiteration. They appeared as repetition on the writings.

The second thematic progression is the zig zag pattern. This pattern promotes the rheme in previous clause into the theme in the next clause. Some students had applied it in their writings. There were 51 clauses (26,84%) which applied the zig zag pattern. Some students applied this pattern because they promoted the rheme in their clauses into the theme for the next or couple next clauses.

The last thematic progression is the multiple-theme pattern. This pattern uses the theme of a clause to be the introduction of different pieces of information. Each of which

is then picked up and made theme in subsequent clauses. There were only 6 clauses (3,16%) that implemented this kind of pattern. It might show that the students were lack of writing practice so they could not develop their theme as the introduction of different pieces of information. The example details of the analysis were shown as follows:

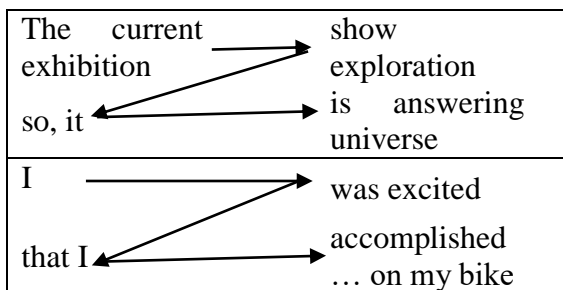


Figure 2. The analysis of zig zag pattern

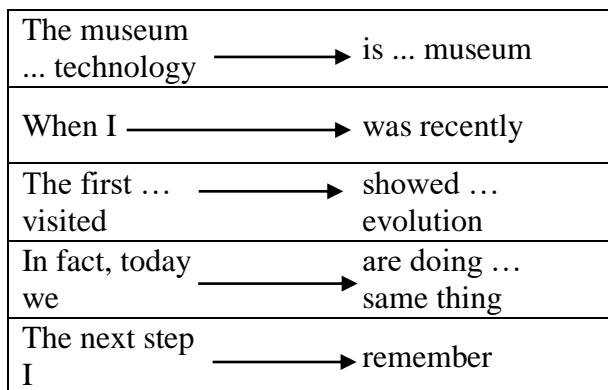


Figure 1. The analysis of theme reiteration

Figure 1 above gave detail view of the analysis of theme reiteration. Students tended to reiterate their writings by repeating the theme over again. This pattern appeared in almost all clauses of the students' writings. It happened because the students might find it a lot easier to just repeat the theme in their writings. This practice could make the writing more cohesive. There were 133 clauses (70%) that implemented this reiteration.

Figure 2 explained the analysis of zig zag pattern in details. It could be seen that the students tended to apply this pattern by using the conjunction or relative pronoun, such as so, and, who, etc. Students might generalize the practice of zig zag pattern was by combining clauses using conjunction or relative pronoun. There were 51 clauses (26,84%) that applied the zig zag pattern.

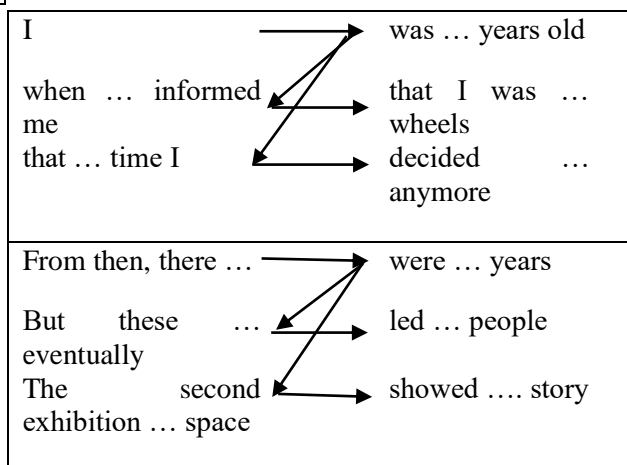
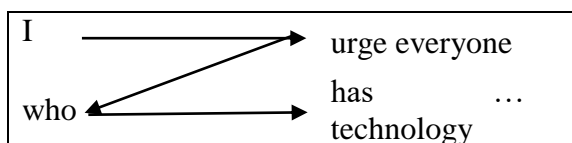


Figure 3. The analysis of multiple-rheme pattern

Figure 3 above drew the analysis of multiple-rheme pattern. This pattern appeared in only some of students' writings. The students might find some difficulties in practicing this pattern. It might happen because the students needed to think more of the rheme. Indeed, the multiple-rheme pattern can be utilized to develop their writing, while keeping it cohesive. Students needed to practice more in developing writing by utilizing this pattern. There were only 6



clauses (3,16%) that implemented the multiple-rheme pattern.

Conclusion(s)

Regarding the result of the study, the writer comes into conclusion that almost all students have reiterated their writings well. The subjection mean of students' narrative texts uses theme reiteration in order to keep the clauses connect each other and to make the texts cohesive. It can also be concluded that almost all students can write narrative texts well, but they still need more practice and support from their peers and teacher to make their writings better. Teacher can give support to the students by explaining more about the steps to arrange paragraph cohesively. Students also need to consider the theme and rheme in their writings to make the writings cohesive and connected each other.

References

- Eggin, S. (1994). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistic*. London: Printer Publisher Ltd.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold
- Lyons, J. (1995). *Linguistics Semantics: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Moleong, J. Lexi. (2003). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya