

THEME AND THEMATIC PROGRESSION OF UNDERGRADUATE THESIS: INVESTIGATING MEANING MAKING IN ACADEMIC WRITING

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First received: 28 February 2017

Final proof received: 27 September 2017

Abstract

This study attempts to investigate the choice of theme and thematic progression deployed in one of the considerably best undergraduate theses in a university in Indonesia. The choice of theme and thematic progression is constrained by the audience of a particular culture; therefore, the process of meaning making is culturally situated. The university, in effects, has its standard for grading academic writing, representing a culture that shapes meaning making processes. This study particularly focuses on how theme and thematic progression contributes to making meanings to meet the demands of the institution. This study employs a descriptive-qualitative research design embracing the characteristics of a case study approach. The data obtained from the best undergraduate student's thesis were analyzed from the perspective of Halliday's theme system and its progression. The analysis shows that the three types of theme: topical, interpersonal and textual themes, were realized in the thesis following the conventional features of good academic writings. The topical theme dominantly occupies the theme system chosen for the thesis. This study confirms that a good academic text shares its characteristics across cultures, suggesting that the teaching of academic writing in one culture could refer to the characteristics of good academic texts in other cultures.

Keywords: theme system; theme progression; textual cohesion; academic writing

Academic writing has been the most challenging skill to master (Alwasilah, 2007; Dalsky & Tajino, 2007; Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006). Some studies indicate that students have problems and difficulties in organizing ideas and arguments cohesively and critically, using appropriate styles of writing, and expressing their thoughts clearly in using English. For example, Dalsky and Tajino (2007) found that students experienced problems in using appropriate styles of writing and expressing their thoughts clearly in using English. In addition, Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) show that students experienced problems and difficulties in organizing the text cohesively and critically. On the other hand, the skill for writing academically is indispensable for the academic lives in higher education. It often serves as the skill to support the completion of a program (See Pecorari, 2006, Dalsky & Tajino, 2007). Further, Pecorari (2006) more specifically argues that success at the universities depends on the students' ability to access, evaluate, and synthesize the words, ideas, and opinions of others in order to develop their own academic voice.

The significance of writing has been the concerns of many researchers. For example, first, Bjork and Raisanen (1997, p. 34) argue "no one can deny that academic writing is of importance not

only to master English but also to be successful in learning other disciplines where English is the medium of instruction". They believe that the essence of writing lies on the fact that it is a thinking tool. It is a tool for language development, for critical thinking, and for learning in all disciplines. Second, Abdulkareem (2013) explores that academic writing has a fundamental impact on learners' progress in a second language. Learners' progress and attainment depend on their mastery of academic writing.

Especially in EFL contexts, students do not only experience problems in terms of understanding some procedures of writing, its schematic structures and content, but they also experience problems in the use of grammatical structures, particular expressions, and particular dictions (Emilia, 2012). In addition, Qaddumi (1995) conducted a case study on undergraduate students' problems in writing academic texts. The finding reveals that repetition, parallelism, sentence length, lack of variation and misuse of certain cohesive devices were major problems of making meaning in academic contexts.

Those problems have been the concern of educators, researchers, and other scholars. For example, firstly, McCabe (1999) analyzed students' writing with the emphasis on meaning, function and textual metafunction of text. His study provides an

effective framework for identifying cohesion in students' texts. Secondly, Wang (2007) focuses on developing students' theme and rheme and textual metafunction to frame effective ways of teaching in cohesive ways. Those studies indicate that paying attention to themes will be very useful in helping students communicate their ideas successfully. Those studies support what Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) specified in terms of listener/reader's network of meaning, where the meaning is accepted when it reaches the degree of cohesion.

The studies above signal how significant the system of cohesion is to support the degree of acceptance of an academic piece of writing. As the sense of appropriation is relatively contextualized and relativized (see Martin & Rose, 2008), this study attempts to reveal the system of cohesion which contributes to the degree of acceptedness of academic writings in a private university in Aceh, a province in north part of Indonesia. More specifically, this study focuses on revealing a portrait of theme system and thematic progression patterns which contribute to the cohesion of the student's academic text.

Theme Systems

The theme systems in this study refer to the conceptions of themes from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics. systemic functional linguistics treats language as a resource for meaning (see Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Any natural language can be systemic and functional (Emilia, 2014). Concerning systemic, Emilia (2014, p. 25) states:

“language is said to be systemic because it offers options or set of choices for making meaning. For example, the tense system offers choices for making meaning, and so do the systems of conjunction, of person, number, voice, or theme.”

A systemic grammar sees language as a choice potential, with choices operating in a particular context (O'Donnell, Griffin., & Norris, 1967). O'Donnell et al. (1967) further provide an example of a choice potential in a particular context. They highlight the choice of *fag* and *cigarette*, in which case the use of the latter is deemed meaningful since it indicates the speaker's socio-cultural background.

A functional approach looks at how language enables us to do things - to share information, to enquire, to express attitudes, to entertain, to argue, to get our needs met, to reflect, to construct ideas, to order our experience and make sense of the world (Derewianka, 2011). A functional approach also describes how language varies from contexts to contexts (Derewianka & Jones, 2012). Additionally, Derewianka and Jones (2012) state that speakers may provide a discourse with certain expectations regarding the purpose of the interaction, the topic to

be discussed, the nature of the relationship, and the channel of communication. In this sense, a functional grammar is a grammar that respects speakers' rights to make up their own minds about how they choose to talk; at the same time, it makes speakers explicitly aware of the choices available, so they can make an informed decision about the options they choose (Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter, 1997). The grammar resource in SFL to project users' choice in organizing information is the theme system. The theme system is concerned with the organization of information within individual clauses, and through this, with the organization of a larger text (Martin et al., 1997). Further, Martin et al. (1997) explore that the theme system is realized through a structure in which the clause falls into just two main constituents: a theme and a rheme (see Table 1).

Table 1. The example of theme system

Fata	has finished his study
Theme	Rheme

A theme is the point of departure of the message (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), or the starting point for the message: what the clause is going to be about (Halliday, 1985; Eggins, 1994). It is the element which comes first in the clause. Meanwhile, rheme is part of the clause in which theme is developed or everything that is not theme is the rheme (Eggins, 1994). Eggins (1994, p. 275) then adds “rheme is the rest of the clause after the theme. That is rheme where the theme is developed and as the writer or speaker typically departs from the familiar to head towards the unfamiliar.” The rheme typically contains unfamiliar or *new* information (Eggins, 2004). Thus, the given information is the theme and new information is the rheme.

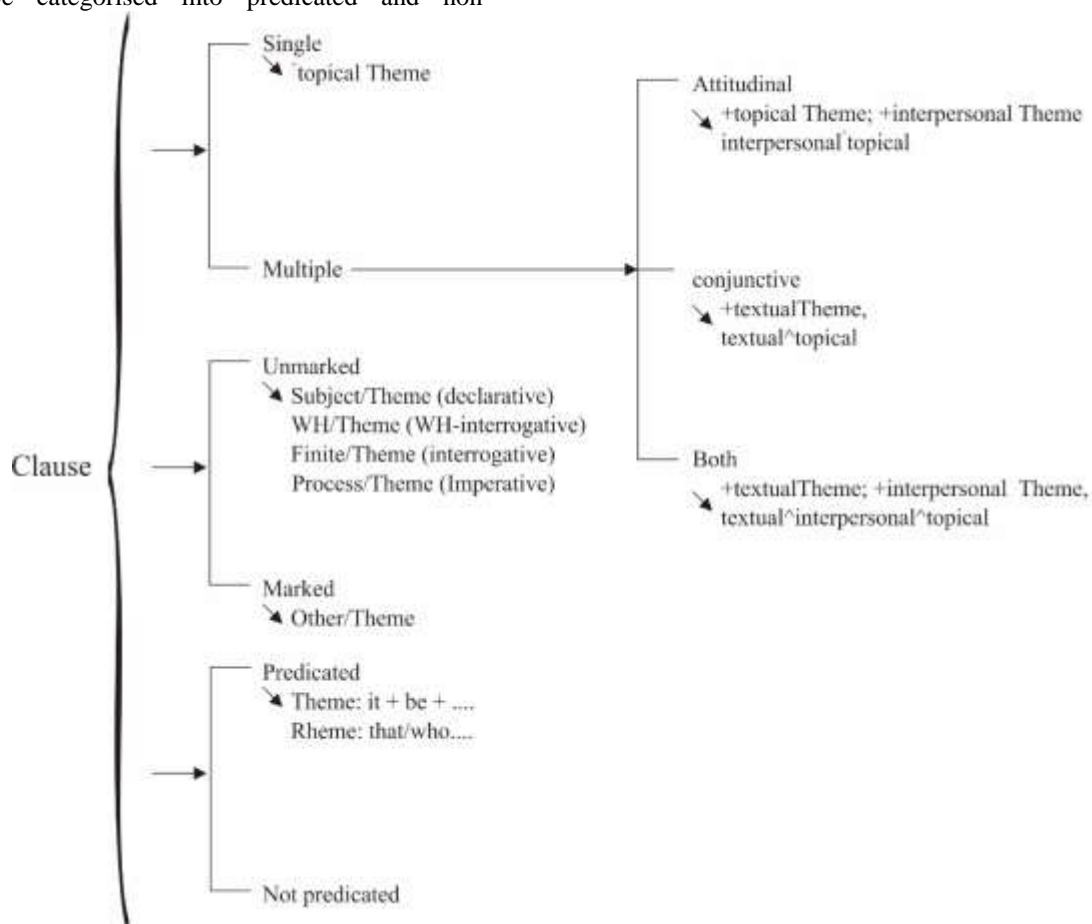
In learning to write, knowledge of the theme system is very useful for language learners. A good piece of writing can be identified from the use of the theme system (McCabe, 1999). Butt, Fahey, Feez, and Yallop (2000, p. 152) confirm the value of the theme system.

“When student writers struggling with basic clause structure write texts made of clauses which do not have an effective progression of Topical Themes, the reader is not given any orientation to what the text is about or any signposts to show where the information has come from and where it is going. When student writers introduce too many Topical Themes unrelated to the thematic progression of the text, the reader easily loses the thread. The quality of writing in workplace, business and academic English can be improved dramatically if attention is given to the thematic progression of information in texts.”

Under the theme system, several aspects will be addressed, including the types of theme relevant to the met functions of language, longer unit theme, thematic progression, and higher level theme.

The Boundary of Theme: Types of Theme

As Figure 1 shows, theme is classified into three major systems: topical, interpersonal, textual. Regarding its markedness, theme can be unmarked or marked. Meanwhile with regard to predication, it can be categorised into predicated and non-



predicated theme (Egins, 2004). As elaborated in Halliday (1994), Egins (2004), Emilia (2010), and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), there are three different types of theme: first, topical theme which is relevant with the experiential metafunction; second, interpersonal theme which is relevant to the interpersonal metafunction; and third, textual theme which is relevant to the textual metafunction. Each of which will be elaborated below.

Topical Theme

Topical Theme of the clause is to which a transitivity function can be assigned or the first element of transitivity in the clause (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). According to Martin et al. (1997), topical theme can be recognized as the first element in the clause which expresses kinds of representational meaning that attaches a transitivity role such as actor, behavior, senser, carrier, or circumstance. However, Gerot and Wignell (1994) state that topical theme is not always the first nominal group in the clause. An important principle to remember is that every clause must contain only one topical theme (Egins, 2004).

The term *topical theme* attached to this theme is not because it always describes the ‘topic’ of the discourse (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). The themes used by the speaker may refer to place or time when the

speaker is about to express attitude or show an example, and also a theme may even begin with a rhetorical question (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). In other words, it can be said that “the topical theme always acts for a *participant, circumstance, or process*” (Martin et al., 1997, p 24; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 79; Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p. 72).

The topical theme which functions as the subject of the clause is called unmarked, while the topical theme which is not the subject is called marked topical theme (Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Emilia, 2014). The term *marked* is used because it stands out; it attracts attention because it is not what is normally expected to find (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). Thus, the choice of themes is meaningful. When marked themes are found, it can be said that there are at least two purposes behind the speaker’s/writer’s patterning of

the theme: (1) to draw the addressee's attention to a particular group or phrase, but more often it is (2) to build a coherent text that is easy to follow (Butt et

al., 2000). Concerning unmarked Topical Themes, some examples of it are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of unmarked Topical Themes

Participant as Theme	Unmarked (Subject Theme)	as a	Smoking It (smoking) It	is dangerous for our health. causes any disease is said
			Topical Theme	Rheme

Adopted from Emilia (2014)

Table 2 indicates that unmarked Topical Themes are identified by the use of participant as a theme. In addition to the unmarked themes, topical

theme also consists of the marked themes. Examples of marked topical theme are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Examples of marked Topical Themes

Circumstance as a Theme	Marked	as a	Yesterday	I went to the zoo with my family.
Process as a Theme	Marked	as a	Come	to the class on time!
			Topical Theme	Rheme

Adopted from Emilia (2014)

From the table above, it could be seen that marked Topical Themes are realized by the use of circumstance and process as a theme. The idea of *markedness* is a notion that is particularly useful in language education (Emilia, 2014). One effect of the use of marked theme, as stated by Eggins (1994, p. 302) is to allow "generic classes to be made theme without having to make the actors/subjects in the clause". In students' texts, marked themes help students to foreground points that they consider important to be put in the initial position of the clause, such as manner, time, or place. Marked themes can be in the form of circumstantial elements, such as places, times, or participants which are not the Subject of the clause (Martin & Rose, 2008).

In relation to the use of marked and unmarked themes, Thompson (2014, p. 19) states "the developing writer who has limited resources may be restricted to less marked option." Meanwhile, the use of more marked themes indicates the writer's ability to produce more dynamic text which is a typicality of an academic text (Wang, 2007). Marked Topical Themes can give an impact on the development of information in argumentation where arguments are arranged in a meaningful way to achieve its purpose (Nwogu & Bloor, 1991). Despite the markedness of the topical theme, the most important thing for the students in writing a text is to make sure that the selected theme is effective. Butt et al. (2000, p. 152) argue that "when student struggling with basic clause structure write texts made of clauses which do not have an effective progression of *Topical Themes*, the reader is not given any orientation to what the text is about nor any signposts to show where the information has come from and where it is going." This argument

implies that Topical Themes are dominant in the text are not what matters, but using the effective and thematic Topical Themes is the key to make good texts.

Interpersonal Theme

The interpersonal theme is often used to foreground the writer's position or view point (Droga & Humprey, 2003). A speaker or writer frequently begins a clause with an adjunct to commit to the truth, correctness, certainty or strength of the propositions (e.g. by using the words *honestly, really, probably, possibly, or presumably*), or to display their attitude to something or evaluate a situation (e.g. by using the words *happily, unfortunately, tragically, or clearly*) (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). Interpersonal theme deals with modal/comment, adjunct, finite/verbal operator in yes/no interrogative, mood, polarity or any combination of vocatives or personal names (Emilia, 2014). The constituents that function as interpersonal themes include:

- a. The finite/unfused, such as
Should they be doing that?
Are you coming today?
- b. Modal adjunct as in Mood Adjunct and Comment adjunct:
Mood adjunct:
Sometimes, we faced a technical problem.
Comment Adjunct:
Fortunately, before being closed, there was one child who registered himself as one of the students there.
- c. Vocative Adjuncts
Simon, isn't that Suzy's car?
- d. WH Elements or Polarity Adjunct

Why can't you come over tonight?
(adopted from Martin et al., 1997).

The occurrence of interpersonal themes in the texts may signal writers' effort to foreground their position, to share their point of view, or to express their own angle of judgment on the issue in the text (Emilia, 2010; 2014).

Textual Theme

Textual Theme is the constituent which relates clause to its context (Eggins, 2004). The purpose of the textual theme is to serve as the 'linking function' to highlight the unfolding or logical structure of a text in which it is particularly important in the light of the significance given to argument, insight, criticism, discussion, and analysis in the text (Emilia, 2014). The elements of the textual theme can be continuatives and/or conjunctive adjuncts and conjunctions. To differentiate the two, conjunctive adjuncts are freer to move in a clause whereas conjunctions are restricted to be at the beginning (Gerot & Wignell, 1994).

In particular, textual theme is important in structuring the texts because the theme operates at sentence or clause complex level (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). Textual themes are realized in several ways:

1. Structural conjunction links two clauses in a coordinating relation or marks one clause as dependent on another. For example:
But : But the important matter is the meaning.
What : He attempts to find out what strategies used in translating.
That : The interesting point is that some of books reflect the society.
Where : This situation is different from the past where film was very expensive to watch, even less to have it.
When : When electronic text and print resources are combined, they create powerful environment.
(Martin et al., p. 21)

In Eggins (2004), conjunctive adjuncts as theme are elements which serve to link sentences together. Structural conjunction in Eggins (2004) refers to tactic conjunction which is used to link clauses together within a clause complex and will necessarily occur in the first position in the clause. Meanwhile in Emilia, (2010) structural conjunction is known as coordination and subordination. For example;

- So : So the school could continue its program to educate children.
And : And he proposes marriage.

Because : Lintang is chosen because he is the central character.

How : It is easy to see how conflict may arise between ego strength.

While : A person with good ego is able to manage pressures while those with too much or too little ego strength can become disrupting.
(Emilia, 2010, p. 19).

2. Conjunctives provide a cohesive link back to previous discourse. In Eggins (2004), conjunctive adjuncts as Theme are cohesive conjunctions which link sentences to other sentences and may occur in other positions. For example:

Furthermore: Furthermore, Brown determines that "most EFL programs are additive.

However: However, even though there are two kinds of shifts, this study only focus on category shift.

Therefore: Therefore, the writer chose The Teaching of English for Science and Technology in the classroom.

Besides : Besides, the argument is not true
(Eggins, 2004, p. 306).

3. Continuative refers to continuity adjunct as theme and the commonest continuity items are *Oh, Well, Yea, and No*. Those items are used to indicate a relationship to previous discourse (Eggins, 2004). In addition, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) provide constituents of textual Theme, such as continuative *Yes, No, Well, Oh, and Conjunction*.

METHODS

The research was guided by a descriptive qualitative research design. Since the primary purpose of this study is to analyze, describe, and interpret data to recognize how textual organization of undergraduate thesis in a small scale, a descriptive qualitative research design was used to guide the research design to discover a meaningful description of a certain phenomenon through a textual analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2004). An undergraduate student's thesis was obtained from an undergraduate student of Jabal Ghafur University in Aceh Indonesia. The research site was selected by considering that the result of the study will give impact on the students in the university, especially in the process of writing academic texts cohesively responsive to the demands of academic culture in the university. The sample was purposively selected by considering that the thesis is relatively recent. In addition, documentation method was employed in this study since the data were taken from printed

media (Arikunto, 1998). Three steps were conducted in analyzing the data. First, the text was read carefully. Second, the text was broken down into clauses. Third, each clause was scrutinized by using theme and thematic progression analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings in Table 1 show that the three types of theme, i.e. topical, interpersonal, and textual themes,

are applied in the undergraduate thesis. The Topical Themes dominate the occupation of the themes. They have the share of 72.54 % of all themes. In opposition to the Topical Themes, the interpersonal themes are the rarest type of theme found in the text. They only happen 5 times or have the share of 0.56 % of all themes. Additionally, the textual themes are more frequently used than the interpersonal themes. They occur 241 times or occupy the percentage of 26.9% of the total.

Table 4. Types of Themes in Undergraduate Student’s Thesis

Types of Theme		Chapter										Total		
		I		II		III		IV		V		F	%	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
Topical	Single	Marked	13	8.23	13	3.04	4	4.82	7	3.78	5	5.56	42	4.45
	Constituent	Unmarked	85	53.80	252	59.02	42	50.60	104	56.22	47	52.22	530	56.20
	Longer	Marked	3	1.90	14	3.28	6	7.23	13	7.03	2	2.22	38	4.03
	Themes	Unmarked	9	5.70	34	7.96	3	3.61	7	3.78	9	10.00	62	6.57
Interpersonal			4	2.53	4	2.53	3	0.70	11	13.25	0	0.00	0	0.00
Textual			44	27.84	44	27.85	111	26.00	17	20.48	54	29.19	27	30.00
Total			158	100	158	100.00	427	100.00	83	100.00	185	100.00	90	100.00

The analysis shows that theme reiteration patterns dominate the occurrence of the three thematic progression patterns. They cover 60.90 % of the total. They occur merely 38 times or equal only to 8.20 % of all thematic progression patterns. The following are the details of discussion concerning theme structures and thematic progression patterns in the undergraduate thesis.

Topical Themes

The data in Table 5 show that topical theme is the most common theme in the thesis. The table shows that Topical Themes appear 672 times or occupy the percentage of 71.32 % of the total. The total number

of Topical Themes equals the total number of clauses (672 clauses) analyzed in the thesis. In addition, these findings show that the student is able to position elements (Subject, Predicator, and Object) in the text properly. The use of those elements properly indicates good mastery of the student’s skill in organizing the information. The high number of occurrences of Topical Themes in the text may indicate that the student effectively orients the readers to what her text is about (Eggsin, 2004). This case also shows that the author seems to focus on generalized participants, and the participants are realized by the Topical Themes.

Table 5. The Distribution of Topical Themes in Undergraduate Student’s Thesis

Chapter	Topical Themes in Each Chapter	Percentage	Total Number of Clauses	Percentage
I	110	16.36	110	16.36
II	313	46.57	313	46.57
III	55	8.18	55	8.18
IV	131	19.49	131	19.49
V	63	9.37	63	9.37
Total of Topical Themes	672	100.00	672	100.00

In addition, the Topical Themes are used to show the clarity of the subject matter being discussed. This is in line with Emilia’s (2005, p. 187) statement that “when unmarked Topical Themes are mostly employed by the student in the text, it means that she employed the theme to provide clear focus in the clause.” Again, Topical Themes can still be broken down into two, i.e. single constituent and longer unit Theme. Regarding single constituent, it is divided into unmarked Topical Themes (see Table 6) and marked Topical Themes (see Table 7). The same is true to the longer

unit theme. It is categorized into unmarked Topical Themes and marked Topical Themes as well.

Table 6 shows that from the two categories of topical theme (single clause constituent and longer unit), it is the unmarked themes (represented by a single clause constituent) that predominate the existence of theme in every chapter of the thesis. They are employed 530 times or cover the percentage of 56.26 %. Meanwhile, the unmarked Topical Themes which are represented by longer unit theme occur 62 times or with the percentage of 6.58 % of topical theme. Unmarked Topical Themes in each chapter are indicated by the use of nominal

group: common noun as Head, nominal group: personal pronoun as Head, impersonal “it” and “there”.

Unmarked Topical Themes which are single constituent are very crucial to give the clarity to the point of departure of the text. Eggins (2004) argued that unmarked themes help in understanding the starting point of the message. They also help students understand the way in which the message is organized, and it is a major device that helps them

understand a text as coherent. From the data presented in the previous section, it is seen that the use of unmarked Topical Themes is varied from one clause to other clauses and commonly serves as “the subject of the clause” (Emilia, 2005, p. 187). Regarding this, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) argued that unmarked Topical Themes are to show nominal group or nominalization that serves as the subject and fills the slot of participant.

Table 6. The distribution of Unmarked Topical Themes in Undergraduate Student’s Thesis

Chapter	Unmarked Topical Themes in Each Chapter				Total Number of Clauses	Percentage
	A Single Clause Constituent		Longer Unit Themes			
	Unmarked	Percentage	Unmarked	Percentage		
I	85	16.03	9	14.51	110	16.36
II	252	47.54	34	54.83	313	46.57
III	42	7.92	3	4.83	55	8.18
IV	104	19.62	7	11.29	131	19.49
V	47	8.86	9	14.51	63	9.37
Total of Topical Themes	530	100.00	62	100.00	672	100.00

The common use of unmarked Topical Themes which are a longer unit is identified in the text. WH-clause, finite and non-finite clauses function as marked themes instead of unmarked ones. They occur in hypotactic clause complexes, whose ordering of clauses is also marked, that is, the dependent clause comes before the main clause. The essence of employing longer unit themes in the text is that it highlights or thematises the relationship between the clauses (Droga & Humprey, 2003). In addition, it allows linking events and foregrounds

reasons, consequences and steps in a process (Emilia, 2014).

Furthermore, the presence of marked themes (both single constituent and longer unit) in the text can be recognized as a way of presenting a new topic or new beginning in the text as well as to scaffold the discontinuity in the text (Martin, 1992). This can be seen from the data presented where marked themes are often used to signal new phase in a discourse and function to scaffold discontinuity.

Table 7. The distribution of Marked Topical Themes in Undergraduate Student’s Thesis

Chapter	Marked Topical Themes in Each Chapter				Total Number of Clauses	Percentage
	A Single Clause Constituent		Longer Unit Themes			
	Marked	Percentage	Marked	Percentage		
I	13	30.95	3	7.89	110	16.36
II	13	30.95	14	36.84	313	46.57
III	4	9.52	6	15.78	55	8.18
IV	7	16.66	13	34.21	131	19.49
V	5	11.90	2	5.26	63	9.37
Total of Topical Themes	42	100.00	38	100.00	672	100.00

As seen in Table 7, the use of marked themes is 80 times or covers the percentage of 8.48 % of Topical Themes. Those marked themes consist of 4.45 % of a single clause constituent and 4.03 % of longer unit theme. The use of marked single constituent is fewer than the use of marked longer unit theme. The thesis used marked Topical Themes to move the topic forward or to highlight particular field under discussion. Those marked themes are mostly in the form of prepositional phrases. Some examples can be seen in the clauses: [28a] *At the level of school, we find only a few students can communicate in English and give responses to their teacher’s questions*, [6a] *In Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language*. In addition to

marked Topical Themes with a single clause constituent, marked Topical Themes with longer unit themes are also found in the text. First, they are indicated in the student’s text through the use of non-finite clauses such as in the clauses [69a] *To overcome this bad feelings, it is better to keep the students’ security first*. [87a] *On attempting to give a tentative solution to the problem, the hypothesis would be stated as the following: The Community Language Learning Method can improve students’ speaking ability*. [43c] *After doing pre test and post test, the data were collected and translated into English*. [6c] *Before conducting the research, the writer had consulted with the headmaster and the English teacher*. [128b] *By practicing English*

inside and outside the classroom, the students are expected to be able to increase and improve their ability in English. [60b] Guided by knowledge that each learner is unique, the teacher creates an accepting atmosphere. Second, they are realized by the use of finite clauses, like in the clauses [54c] *If the result of the research is lower than limit score in the t-score measurement table, it means. [291b] If two groups were demonstrably alike took the test, the marking range would be the same.* Third, they are identified by the use of WH-clause such as in the clause [56a] *When students have an idea of what will happen in each activity, they often feel more secure.*

The data displayed also indicate that the thesis used marked themes to move the topic forward. This means that marked themes have an important role in moving the readers from one phase of the story to the next and are important in structuring the larger discourse (Martin et al., 1997). Marked themes are

very important to the success of the text. They are useful to guide the readers and function as “contextual frame” that stage in the progression of the written text (Emilia, 2005). In addition, the importance of marked themes is as part of extended theme, so that it can affect the organization of the text (Eggins, 2004). The use of marked themes also can avoid monotonous use of subject in the text and highlight particular points of circumstances (Butt et al., 2000).

Interpersonal Themes

The use of interpersonal themes in the text aims at presenting the author’s perspective in the text. The author needs to express her point of view and expresses comments in the text (Derewianka & Jones, 2012). As shown in Table 8, the occurrence of interpersonal themes in the thesis is 18 (1.91 % out of the total of themes).

Table 8. The distribution of Interpersonal Themes in Undergraduate Student’s Thesis

Chapter	Interpersonal Themes in Each Chapter	Percentage	Total Number of Clauses	Percentage
I	4	22.22	110	16.36
II	3	16.66	313	46.57
III	11	61.11	55	8.18
IV	0	0.00	131	19.49
V	0	0.00	63	9.37
Total of Interpersonal Theme	18	100.00	672	100.00

In this case, the author simply inserts the elements of interpersonal themes in her writing. For example, mood adjuncts as interpersonal theme are found in the clauses: [63a] *Actually, speaking as a skill needs much exercise and practice, [39b] Frequently a question and answer technique may be used (by the teacher), [66a] The writer believes that the students will have lack of achievement in speaking skill, [38c] According to Harris (2008:21) “The oral ability test divided into five elements; pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension”.* Limited occurrence of interpersonal themes is in line with the nature of academic text which avoids involving too much interaction between speakers or writer and the positions they are taking. This confirms Butt et al.’s (2000) statement arguing that the interpersonal themes are more often found in spoken texts since students join and sustain their interaction. Further, Butt et al. explain that learning how to manage interpersonal themes is important for those who are learning to manage spoken interaction.

Concerning the use of unmodulated clauses in the student’s text, Eggins (2004) proposed unmodulated clauses to be the writer’s attempt to present the message as a fact. In line with this, Emilia (2014) stated that statements realized in present tense indicate the writer is concerned with facts. Consequently, the readers of the text are convinced that these unmodulated clauses are true as

facts. Presenting facts is essential in building arguments since Derewianka and Jones (2012) believed that in constructing arguments, giving reasons and evidence is important. These reasons and evidences need to be factual.

The way in which the thesis used modal operators relates to what Emilia (2014) stated that modal operators are very useful to express the writer’s attitudes and judgments, including the writer’s belief in the reality of the issue explained. Butt et al. (2000) also argued that it indicates the writer’s openly persuasive. Moreover, mental process or mood adjunct ‘I believe’ emphasizes the writer’s personal voice to indicate a subjective opinion, which is considered to be appropriate (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). Regarding this, Butt et al. (2000) added that in mood adjunct ‘I believe’, the finite before the subject shows that the author demands an agreement and in this case she strengthens her opinion by using the word ‘believe’.

Overall, the result of study reveals that one of the best theses at Jabal Ghafur University could fulfil the typicality of a written text. The student is able to judge only when the student needs to. In other words, the student does not use excessive judgmental words.

Textual themes

Textual themes are more frequently employed than interpersonal themes in the thesis.

Table 9 shows that the author applies textual themes in a higher frequency in her text compared to the interpersonal themes. The number of occurrence of the textual themes is 252 (26.75 % out of 100 %). The thesis employed textual themes to correlate one idea to the other ones in an attempt to produce a cohesive text. The occurrence of textual themes in the text is realized by the use of subordination, conjunction, coordination, and relative. For example, [6a] *In Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language **since** it is not used in daily life of the people.* [8a] *Many people want to learn English, **even though** it is difficult for them.* [30c] *The pre-test was conducted **before** the writer taught in the class.* [35c] *The post-test was given **after** the writer taught the materials by using Community*

Language Learning Method in improving students' speaking ability. [44a] *They are also not confident, shy or uncomfortable if they made mistakes and they were afraid of making mistakes in class **because** they will be laughed at by their friends.* [24a] *In reality, however, most students are not able to speak fluently and accurately **when** (they are) doing conversation orally.* . [3a] ***In addition**, learning a language also helps students to express their ideas and opinions through the language.* [74a] ***Besides**, Freeman (1986:89) discovered that adults are threatened by the change inherent in learning and by the fear.* [7c] ***Then** she asked to the English teacher who teaches at class II₁ some information and some data needed.*

Table 9. The distribution of Textual Themes in Undergraduate Student's Thesis

Chapter	Textual Themes in Each Chapter	Percentage	Total Number of Clauses	Percentage
I	44	17.46	110	16.36
II	111	44.04	313	46.57
III	17	6.74	55	8.18
IV	53	21.03	131	19.49
V	27	10.71	63	9.37
Total of Textual Themes	252	100.00	672	100.00

The results of analysis meet Martin et al. (1997) theory arguing that textual elements in the text were realized in structural conjunctions such as coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, relative pronoun, and conjunctive. The use of different kinds of cohesive ties indicates the student's attempt to provide various kinds of textual themes which can be helpful to create a cohesive text (Eggsins, 2004). The results of analysis also show that textual themes always appear in the first part of the theme. When textual themes mostly appeared in the initial clause, it means that the

student gives the linking functions from the previous element to the following elements (Martin et al., 1997). Providing textual themes in the initial position suggests that the student is able to provide connection between previous and following clauses so that the information between clauses appeared to be more cohesive.

Theme reiteration patterns

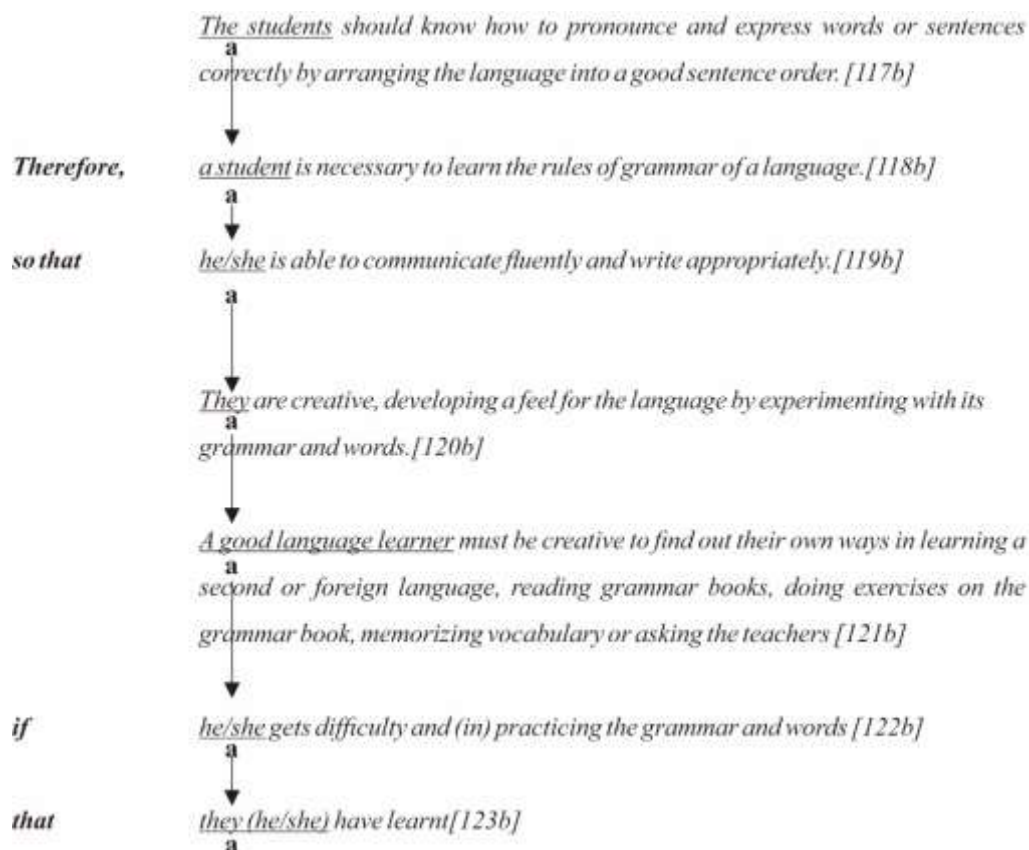
The theme reiteration patterns are the most frequent method for developing semantic wave in the thesis.

Table 10. The distribution of Theme reiteration patterns in the Undergraduate Student's Thesis

Chapter	Theme Reiteration in Each Chapter	Percentage	Total Number of Clauses	Percentage
I	44	19.04	110	16.36
II	96	41.55	313	46.57
III	18	7.79	55	8.18
IV	54	23.37	131	19.49
V	19	8.22	63	9.37
Total of Theme Reiteration	231	100.00	672	100.00

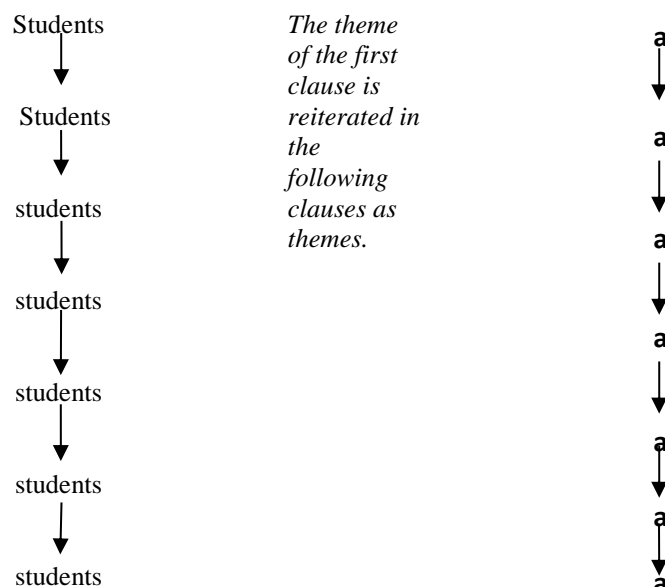
Table 10 indicates that they have a number of occurrences of 231 times in the whole chapters or with percentage 53.97 % out of the two other

patterns. The following is representative examples from the text to illustrate a way of constructing cohesion in the text.



The sample of text above shows that the theme of one clause (*Students*) is repeated and becomes the theme of the next clauses. In other words, it could be stated that the flow of information in the theme reiteration pattern is iterative. The theme reiteration

patterns in the text are used when discussing about the description of *a successful language learner*. In this case, the focus of information is on the language learners themselves. The thematic progression patterns above can be mapped in the following way:

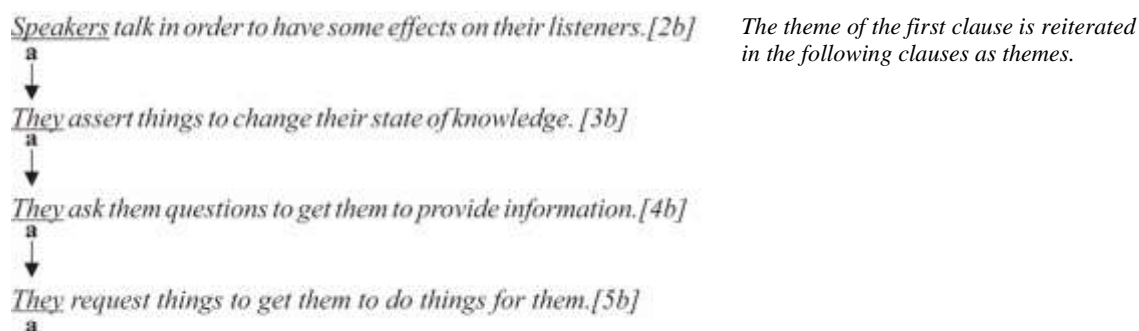


In addition, the thesis employed personal reference in the text in an attempt to avoid repetition. The author of the thesis uses reiteration pattern for some reasons. First, she uses theme

reiteration pattern to make a consistent focus of her message. Second, she makes the point discussed in the text as the central attention. The trend of thematic progression in the student's text is in line

with most English texts in general which present theme reiteration patterns as the most dominant thematic shifts (Nwogu & Bloor, 1991). This means that the author seems to have attempted to make her

text well-organized to be therefore understandable. According to Nwogu and Bloor (1991), a theme reiteration or constant theme pattern is the basic pattern of themes in general.



Additionally, in accordance with the results of analysis, the author used theme reiteration patterns in the text in order to make a strong focus of her information. It is in line with Eggins' (2004) statement that the theme reiteration patterns are used to emphasize the focus of the topic. Thus, it can be concluded that the student succeeded in maintaining the texts' focus by repeating its thematic elements (Eggins, 2004), and that the thesis is successful in providing the clear focus of the text.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of theme and thematic progression analysis, several conclusions could be drawn from this study. In terms of the theme system, it is found that three types of theme are employed in the thesis, i.e. the Topical Themes, interpersonal themes, and textual themes. The Topical Themes include the marked and unmarked themes. The interpersonal themes involve the use of unmodulated clause, modal operators, mood adjuncts, and comment adjuncts, while the textual themes employed in the thesis consist of conjunctive adjunct, subordination, coordination, and relative pronoun. From the analysis of the thematic progression pattern, it is found that the three types of thematic progression pattern used in the thesis are the theme reiteration pattern which is more dominant than other patterns such as zig zag pattern, and the multiple theme pattern. In brief, it could be stated that the thesis shows some commonality with other academic pieces regarding the use of cohesion system in which theme reiteration is dominant to produce a sense of cohesiveness in the text. This pattern provides a clear focus to help maintain a strong topical theme, and grasp the point of discussion in an academic context. Lexical cohesion serves as a means of creating cohesion. The theme system helps build the organization of information within individual clauses to contribute to the construct of the organization of a larger text. The

text employed macro-theme (introductory sentence which predicts the overall development of the text) and hyper-theme (introductory sentence of the paragraph which predicts what the paragraph is going to be about) (see Coffin, 2006).

This study highlights other studies on native versus non-native speakers' academic writing, especially, which argue that EFL/ESL students deviate from English native speakers for they overuse certain themes, mainly interpersonal, textual, and marked themes, and underuse certain themes. The analysis of theme and thematic progression in this study provides a case that the system of cohesion applies for making meanings across cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Readers regardless of different cultural and linguistic background will be able to recognize an academic writing as a good piece if it is written in a proper way by attending to the deployment of cohesive devices such as theme system to establish its genre and discourse such as thesis in academic discourse as indicated in this study.

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