



INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research

Volume 3 Nomor 6 Tahun 2023 Page 917-927

E-ISSN 2807-4238 and P-ISSN 2807-4246

Website: <https://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative>

Analysis Of Coherence Through Thematic Progression In The Undergraduate
Thesis Background Written By English Education Students Of HKBP
Nommensen Medan University

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Abstrak

This study focuses on understanding the kinds of theme progression and degree of coherence in the undergraduate thesis background of English Education students at HKBP Nommensen Medan University. The hypothesis Eggins (2004) developed was applied in this study's descriptive qualitative method. The data source was 10 manuscripts of undergraduate thesis background of English education students from the University of HKBP Nommensen Medan from 2021 - 2022. Meanwhile, the data of this research were the clauses that contain themes and rheme in the undergraduate thesis background. Data collection is done by documentation. The results of the study showed that there are three types of thematic progression: Reiteration/Constant Theme Pattern (68%), Zig-Zag / Linear Theme Pattern (30%), and Multiple Theme Pattern (2%). The level of coherence of the thesis background is 'fair'. These results conclude that thematic progression can be a device to measure students' writing coherence.

Kata Kunci: *Thematic Progression, Coherence, Thesis Background*

Abstract

This study focuses on understanding the sorts of theme progression and degree of coherence in the undergraduate thesis background of English Education students at HKBP Nommensen Medan University. The hypothesis Eggins (2004) developed was applied in this study's descriptive qualitative method. The data source was 10 manuscripts of undergraduate thesis background of English education students from the University of HKBP Nommensen Medan from 2021 - 2022. Meanwhile, the data of this research were the clauses that contain themes and rheme in the undergraduate thesis background. Data collection is done by documentation. The result of the study showed that there are three types of thematic progression: Reiteration/Constant Theme Pattern (68%), Zig-Zag / Linear Theme Pattern (30%), and Multiple Theme Pattern (2%). The level of coherence of thesis backgrounds is 'fair'. These results conclude that thematic progression can be a device to measure students' writing coherences.

Keyword: Thematic Progression, Coherence, Thesis Background

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a form of communication by creating visual marks on various surfaces or types of graphic expression (Rao, 2019). Writing is done to convey meaning to the intended reader. Writing is a crucial skill that employs cognitive processes such as conveying intention, transferring ideas into words on paper, solving problems, and exercising critical thinking. The writer must be able to brainstorm, organize ideas, evaluate, and edit in the writing process. Writing is also considered a difficult skill since it requires some aspects to consider, such as content, organization of ideas, vocabulary, grammar, language use, mechanics, and punctuation. Rehearsing, drafting, and revising are all steps in the writing process. Writing mastery needs conscious effort and practice to overcome difficulties. Writing has three primary purposes: informing, persuading, and entertaining (narrative purpose) the reader (Serevina et al., 2018).

Academic writing is a form of writing that focuses on utilizing logical reasoning and arguments strengthened by evidence to assist readers in understanding a specific issue. The writer can use this format to analyze, examine, and then deliver a theory, hypothesis, and conclusion. According to Murray (1987), cited in (Altunkaya & Ayranci, 2020), pre-writing, planning, drafting, reflection, peer and lecturer review, editing, further research, idea generating, final reading, and publication are the steps of the academic writing process. For scholarly publication, academic writing is used by researchers, lecturers, and students in a formal style. There are four primary academic writing styles: critical, analytical, persuasive, and descriptive. These writing styles differ in their linguistic features and intended purpose (Bulian & Jambi, 2018).

Scientific writing in education is essential for human life because a person with a good education will also be positive in their outlook and attitude. Although scientific writing does not immediately affect social change, breaking the culture of silence among students is a step toward transformation and empowerment through critical writing (Cristy et al., 2023). Critical writing encourages one to take two points of view, according to the experts, and then conclude with the writer. Critical writing examples are research, a thesis, or a journal article critique. The thesis is a research study written by a student typically submitted for a bachelor's degree or professional qualification. A student's undergraduate thesis is a significant representation of "teaching and learning" successes in university and a thorough evaluation of their academic level. A thesis consists of five chapters, including an introduction, literature review, research methodology, discussion, and findings, then closed with a conclusion.

The background of the study is a part of the introduction in chapter one of the thesis. It is the most significant section and functions like a human face that can draw attention (Viska et al., 2020). A background must be detailed, focused, but narrow. However, based on the researcher's preliminary observation of several student's theses, the biggest challenge is creating an adequate thesis background. Most students had issues creating a sharp problem analysis. The problem is too big; therefore, the formulation of the problem could not be focused adequately. The students also did not include the evidence that supported the problem and did not provide a solution or treatment for the issue (Napitupulu, 2021). Students specializing in English have additional difficulties because they must write in academic English, which is frequently not their mother tongue. Some students made inevitable mistakes, such as failing to choose the right words, being unable to relate to similar meanings or contrasts, being ineffective in connecting a single sentence to another in a paragraph, and being unaware of the cohesion and coherence rules. For lecturers, teachers, and language instructors, knowing the student's work is coherently written is a huge advantage (Saragi, 2018). This will also assist them in determining whether or not the students require some form of enrichment.

Coherence describes how a text's ideas flow logically and give it semantic meaning. The ability of a text's elements (such as its words, phrases, clauses, and sentences) to work harmoniously as a whole is known as cohesion (Ampa & Basri, 2019). Cohesion links different grammatical or lexical structures used in a discourse. One sign of a good text is coherence, which reveals how the sentences are put together for an effective paragraph, which requires a main sentence, supporting sentences, and a closing sentence. The stable and consistent relationship between each notion in a paragraph can make the reader understand the

meaning of the text easily. Due to their limited comprehension of cohesive devices and how to use them in writing, many higher-education students struggle to write effectively. Students should regard cohesion and coherence as essential writing quality strategies (Tarigan & Stevani, 2022).

Thematic progression refers to how a theme and rheme are arranged across a text (Mustofa & Kurniawan, 2023). The theme is a component that acts as a message's primary topic, point of departure, or grounds what the writer will say, while the rheme is the remainder or rest of the message in a clause (Rahmawati et al., 2022). Themes, which are part of metafunction that fall under the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) umbrella, can be categorized into three groups, namely: topical theme (to deal with the subject of the sentence), interpersonal theme (to enable the author's thoughts), and textual theme (to establish the coherence and cohesion of the text). The theme and rheme of the previous sentence may have schematic linkages to the following sentence, creating a seamless flow of information (Feifei, 2019). A text's coherence can be evaluated by examining how the themes develop. A constant theme, zig-zag theme, and multiple themes are three types of thematic progression, according to Eggins (2004) cited in (Amperawaty & Warsono, 2019).

According to Bloor & Bloor (2013), cited in (Dewi et al., 2019), a constant theme is realized if the theme of the previous clause is repeated at the beginning of the subsequent clause. Meanwhile, a zig-zag theme occurs when an essential reminder of the theme is continued as the theme of the subsequent clause. It is also regarded as the ties that bind the first rheme to the subsequent theme (Sakamoto, 2021). On the other hand, split rheme occurs when the variation of rheme that has numerous significant details is used as the theme in the following clauses. If a new theme has no correlation or relevance between the sentences, it is categorized as a less coherent paragraph. Also, if no thematic progression pattern is realized in a paragraph, it is identified as a poor paragraph. Therefore, students must know those thematic progression patterns while writing to produce a coherent text (Rajagukguk, 2019).

The researcher was interested in how someone who had never taken a systemic functional class applied the theme progression. The researcher used a theory by Eggins (2004) about thematic progression. It can be a device to explore the level of coherence and cohesiveness. It is essential for the clarity and readability of a text. Based on the background of the study above, the researcher conducted research titled: "Analysis of Coherence Through Thematic Progression in The Undergraduate Thesis Background Written by English Education Students of HKBP Nommensen Medan University".

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The research design in this study is a descriptive qualitative method within the framework of theme-rheme under the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) umbrella. Then, these findings determined the level of text coherence by identifying and analyzing the thematic progression in the undergraduate thesis background of English education students of HKBP Nommensen Medan University (Lin et al., 2022). Instead of using numbers and statistical analysis, it deals with data presented as images or words. Analysis of events, occurrences, or social phenomena was the main objective of qualitative methods (Tampubolon et al., 2021). In a descriptive qualitative study, the findings were explicated qualitatively in detail. Data must be gathered and adequately chosen, structured, analyzed, and assessed for the research to produce meaningful statements about a particular element of reality.

The Source of Data and Data

The data source in this research was the undergraduate thesis background of English education students from the University of HKBP Nommensen Medan. Meanwhile, the data of this research were the clauses that contain themes and rheme in the undergraduate thesis background. The researcher selected and took 10 thesis manuscripts from one website, Repository UHN Medan. The researcher only chose an English education primary in the period year of 2021 until 2022. The researcher did not examine the thesis background from all majors and all periods of years.

The Instrument of Collecting Data

Documentation was the tool used as the instrument for collecting data. Creswell (2014:239), cited in (Cropley, 2019), identified observation, interviews, documentation, and visual materials as frequent qualitative research tools. As a result, the researcher will conduct this research using observation and documentation. The documentation in this research is taken from the undergraduate thesis background of English education students from the University of HKBP Nommensen Medan.

The Technique of Collecting Data

A documentary technique was used to get the data. It was a technique for gathering data in written form. Selecting, assembling, labelling, and swapping out various observed behavioural processes and the surroundings that are connected to a specific

organization were all part of the observation process (Simaremare et al., 2021). As a result, it means that the information was gathered through an observational method that involves reading, assessing, and examining the sources used for the study. Written materials can also be used in qualitative research to understand the topic better. The researcher used the following steps to collect data:

1. Searching and reading the thesis background from the repository UHN.
2. Select ten thesis background randomly, underline them, and makes a mark for finding the theme and theme in every clause.
3. Identifying the types of thematic progression patterns.
4. Investigating the relevance between thematic progression towards its coherence level.
- 5.

The Technique of Analyzing Data

The following techniques were applied to examine the research data and solve the issue. The researcher employed the steps for assessing qualitative data that Miles and Huberman (2014:31) had suggested.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data

Descriptive qualitative research was used to collect this data. Ten theses produced by English Education students at HKBP Nommensen Medan University were the study's background data sources and observations. According to Eggins (2004), the data consisted of all the clauses that had already been separated into theme and rheme and had themes that progressed in a continuous, zig-zag, or split-rheme pattern.

In addition to analyzing the patterns of thematic progression, the researcher assessed each paragraph's pattern and the theme of each phrase to evaluate the degree of paragraph coherence, which helped her answer the second study question. Please refer to the table in the section below:

Table 1. Location of Coherence Level

Thesis Background	Location of Coherence Level		
	Good	Fair	Poor
1.		P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8	P7,
2.	P4, P5	P1, P2, P3, P6	
3.	P1, P3, P4, P5	P2	P6, P7
4.	P1	P2, P4, P5, P6	P3

5.		P3, P4, P5	P1, P2, P6
6.		P1, P2, P3, P4	P5
7.		P1, P2, P3, P7, P8	P4, P5, P6, P9
8.	P3	P1, P2, P4	
9.	P4	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7	
10.		P1, P3, P4, P5	P2, P6
64 Paragraph	9	41	14

There are three levels of coherence, as shown in the table above. The grades are excellent, fair, and subpar. The level found at its highest was fair. Because 41 paragraphs contained the level finding. The second-highest level was then identified as insufficient, which has nine paragraphs. Besides that, nine paragraphs were of a reasonable level. The poor quality of multiple students results in paragraphs lacking any theme progression pattern. Additionally, they did not make an entire paragraph. In conclusion, by looking through 64 thesis-related paragraphs from students.

Findings

The researcher found that there are three types of thematic progression patterns: reiteration or constant thematic progression (175 or 68%), zig-zag or linear thematic progression pattern (78 or 30%), and split rheme thematic progression pattern (4 or 2%). The data were taken from clauses of undergraduate theses written by English Education students at HKBP Nommensen Medan University. The researcher discovered from the table that repetition or continuous thematic progression was most prevalent. Nevertheless, Split-rheme thematic development patterns were seldom used when writing the background for their argument. The majority of HKBP Nommensen Medan University's English Education students write with a fair level of coherence (64%).

Table 1. Percentages Types of Thematic Progression

No	Types of Thematic Progression	Amount	Percentage
1.	Reiteration or Constant Pattern	175	68 %
2.	Zig – Zag or Linear Pattern	78	30 %
3.	Split Rheme Pattern	4	2 %
	Total	257	100%

Table 2. Level of Coherence Percentages

No	Level of Coherence	Amount	Percentage
1.	Good	9	14 %
2.	Fair	41	64 %
3.	Poor	14	22 %
	Total	64	100%

Research Discussion

The three types of thematic progression are continuous, zig-zag, and split rheme, according to Eggins's theory. Viska et al. (2020) showed that the zig-zag or linear pattern is the most common thematic development, although the current study's constant theme or repetition (175 or 68%) is the most common pattern. A qualitative case study was employed as the research approach in another study by Zahra et al. in 2021. This study mainly focused on six texts that portrayed students with high, average, and low academic achievement. It utilized Gerot Wignell's (1994) hypothesis. According to the results, high achiever students used patterns more frequently and on a broader variety of patterns than medium achievers and low achievers, resulting in more cohesive texts than those students. This research and the article use qualitative methods, where the parallels end. Conversely, this research analyzes the thesis background produced by English Education students of HKBP Nommensen Medan University. First, the previous research examined the descriptive text of junior high school students (Bui, 2021).

This researcher applied the hypothesis of Eggins (2004). According to the research's findings, there were three patterns of thematic progression: reiteration or steady thematic progression (175 or 68%), zig-zag or linear thematic progression (78 or 30%), and divided rheme thematic progression (4 or 2%). Researchers discovered that the most prevalent pattern is repetition or steady theme advancement (Lismayanti & Pratama, 2019). This indicates that the University of HKBP Nommensen Medan English Education students' undergraduate theses frequently develop on a solid idea or topic and concentrate on a single, more in-depth major issue. The reader can profit from the study's findings by understanding different sorts of theme progression when writing English text to produce a coherent final product or output.

CONCLUSION

The researcher came to the following conclusions as a result of the research findings:

1. The students' thesis backgrounds showed three different sorts of thematic growth. They were Zig-Zag or Linear Thematic Progression Pattern 78 (30%), Split Rheme Thematic Progression Pattern 4, and Reiteration or Constant Thematic Progression Pattern 175 (68%).
2. Reiteration or Constant theme development Pattern 175 (68% of the total) was the most prevalent pattern of theme development in the thesis background.
3. Different themes were realized in a thematic progression in the context of the students' theses. They were intertextual, topical, and interpersonal themes. 4. Each paragraph's thematic progression judges the degree of cohesion. Nearly all of the thesis backgrounds were at the 'fair' level, according to the results (64%).
4. Thematic progression's appearances in the students' thesis background were meant to help them develop the study's underlying messages. As a result, the reader will find it simpler to read and comprehend the background of the thesis.

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