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Thematic Progression in the Secondary Students' Hortatory Exposition Writing Tasks: a theme-rheme discourse analysis

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Abstract: The research was conducted to know how the students maintained thematic progression in their texts and how it affects their text coherence. The thematic progression of the eleventh grade students hortatory exposition texts were analyzed in terms of theme and rheme. Descriptive qualitative of discourse analysis was applied as the research design with sentence as the analysis unit. 18 hortatory exposition texts of the eleventh grade students of SMA Nurul Islam Jember were chosen purposively and collected using documentary method as the primary data, while interview and documents were used as supported data. Tables and discussion were used to represent the finding results in which it was found that the students were able to apply the thematic progression numerously in order to build the coherence within the text.

Key Words: Thematic Progression, theme, rheme, hortatory exposition.

1. Introduction

Writing is one of the four basic language skills which is regarded as the hardest skill even for native speaker (Aydogan and Akbarov, 2014: 674). It is pointed out as the hardest skill because of its complexity (Abdurahman: 2013:1) that requires the writers' ability to conduct grammatical sentences and their ability to generate and organize their ideas. It is an activity to develop a discussion and arrange different activity to develop a discussion and arrange different points to persuade the reader that the writer has something worthwhile to say (Widdowson, 1978: 62-63). Based on this definition, it is important that what has been written by the writer is understood and well-received by the readers. To make it understood and well-received by the readers, there should be coherence within the text.

Coherence is a fundamental element of text because it is the general overall interrelatedness in meaning and context of the text. The importance of coherence is presented by Witte and Faigley (1981:199) who state that by the existence of coherence (Mellos: 2011). within the text, it allows a text to be understood by the reader. When a text is constructed, it consists of not only an idea but ideas. The ideas within the text should be related to each other to make it understandable. Therefore, a text is called coherent when it can be understood by the readers as it has coherence underlying it.

For second or foreign language learners, writing is undoubtedly important. Regardless what grade the learners are, they will find writing is important whether for academic purpose or social purpose. Hortatory Exposition as one of text genre which should be accomplished by the eleventh grade students was chosen as students' product to be analyzed. In writing exposition text, the students should be able to persuade the readers with their statement. In this text type, reasoned and proved argument was also required in order to be accepted by the reader because the aim of the exposition text is to argue for a particular point of view on an issue (Horarik, 2002:22). Of all the purposes, coherence within the text including hortatory exposition text is very important, so that the readers can understand and accept the writers' arguments.

Coherence is definitely very important in the act of writing, but the concept of coherence is fuzzy because it is presented implicitly through the text, so that it is difficult to teach and learn (Lee, 1998:36). Although it is difficult to teach and learn, determining the coherence of a text has been researched for many years using various analytical tools, one of them is thematic progression (also see Cloran: 1995).

Eggins (2004: 324) states that thematic progression is how thematic elements succeed each other in a text. Thematic elements consist of theme and rheme, in which theme is old or given information, and rheme is new information. In thematic progression, the theme and rheme will relate to each other across the clause, sentence or paragraph to form a pattern. This pattern will show how the coherence within the text shows through the distribution of ideas or information. There are three types of thematic progression according to Eggins (2004) that are presented in this study as follow.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Theme Reiteration

Theme Reiteration occurs when the element of the theme of one clause is repeated on the theme of the next clause. In this progression the theme of each clause or sentence has the same or similar idea (Shieh and Lin: 2011). In this pattern, each theme of each clause looks all the same, but it does not mean that all of the element of the theme are the same. It only has the same idea which is used as the theme in the sequences of clauses or sentences. The example of the using of theme reiteration is presented as below.

Table1: Theme reiteration

Theme	Rheme
Fiction	is the name we use for stories that are make-believe such as the Harry Potter books or Alice's Adventures in the Wonderland.
But fiction	isn't always different from the way things usually are.
It	can also be so close to the truth that it seems as real as something that may have happened to you this morning

Eggins (2004: 324) states that to make a text focus is by doing a repetition, and this repetition is an effective way to make a cohesion (Halliday and Hasan: 1976) within

the text. The example of thematic progression theme reiteration above (McCabe:1999.) has 3 sentences, and each sentence theme has the same idea, that is *fiction'*. *'Fiction'* on the example above is being repeated on every clause in the paragraph, hence the thematic progression of the paragraph is theme reiteration or Theme Reiteration.

2.2. *Zig-Zag Pattern*

Zig-zag Pattern occurs when the element of the rheme of one clause is used as the theme of the next clause. In this pattern, the rheme of the first clause becomes the theme of the second clause, and the rheme of the second clause becomes the theme of the third clause.. It is called as Zig-zag Pattern (Eggins: 2004: 325) because the element of the rheme on the clause becomes the element of the theme on the next clause as follows;

Table 2: Zig-zag pattern

Theme	Rheme
Each medical team	was formed by ten doctors selected from the first rate hospitals across the country.
The expertise of all the doctors	was well known in China, and some was world famous.

The above example shows that the rheme of the first sentence is mentioned in the next sentence theme. The theme of the second sentence has the same idea with the rheme of the previous sentence. Wang (2007: 169) notes that "this thematic progression gives a reader orientation as to where the information has come from and where is it going and hence creates cohesion in a written text".

2.3. *Multiple-Rheme Pattern*

Multiple-Rheme Pattern occurs when the rheme of one clause has some elements, and each elements take turn to be the theme of subsequent clauses (Eggins: 2004: 325). The rheme of the first clause contains some ideas. Each of the ideas becomes

the element of the second, the third and the forth clause's theme in turns. Therefore it is called as Multiple-rheme pattern. The example is presented as follows.

Table 3: Multiple-rheme pattern

Theme	Rheme
All substances	can be divided into two classes: elementary substances and compounds.
An elementary substance	is a substance which consist of atoms of only one kind…
A compound	is a substance which consist of atoms of two or more different kinds…

The rheme of the first sentence in the above multiple-rheme pattern paragraph contains two elements: *elementary substances and compounds*. In the second sentence, *elementary substances* which is mentioned in the previous rheme becomes the theme of the second sentence, and *compounds* which is also mentioned in the first clause rheme becomes the theme of the third sentence. In this pattern, the whole passage concerns with a general idea, but are not identical to one another (Xu, 2000:35).

Those three patterns of thematic progression were identified by analyzing the eleventh grade students' hortatory exposition text, to know how the students conducted a coherent hortatory exposition text in the sense of delivering their ideas within the text. Each type of thematic progression was feasible in the text coherence.

Theme Reiteration occured when the same element was used as a theme in a sequence of clause. Repetition which occured in this pattern is an effective way to create text coherence, because it keeps the text focus maintained (Eggins, 2004: 324). In zig-zag pattern, an element of the rheme in a clause, will be reintroduced as the theme of the next clause. This process shows the development of the

information within the text, because it involves the development of information in the rheme of one clause to be more advance in the following theme.

The last pattern which is multiple-rheme pattern occurs when elements in a rheme take turn to be the theme in a sequence of clause. Eggins (2004: 326) states that multiple-rheme pattern often provides the organizing principle for a text, because its pattern are the combination of theme reiteration and zig-zag pattern. Furthermore, the combination of those patterns is being used for elaborating each of the main thematic points. Therefore, this research was expected to give contribution significantly to the teacher and the students. By analyzing the the thematic progression in the eleventh grade students' hortatory exposition text, the teachers will know how the students deliver their ideas within the text in order to make the text to be understood and well-received by the readers.

2.4. Previous studies on thematic progression

A recent study by Rakhman (2013) about analyzing high school students' exposition text coherence using thematic progression shows that high, middle, and low achievers employ different thematic progression. His research findings show that most of his research participants generally applied theme reiteration and zig zag pattern.

3. The study

3.1. *Research context*

The research was conducted at a private senior high school in Jember where the students speak the languages other than English as the target language. They were from different communities with non English speaking backgrounds.

3.2. Research design

The research design was descriptive and qualitative method of discourse analysis (Creswell: 2013 or Brown and Yule: 1983) because it was intended to describe the use of theme and rheme, and thematic progression (Giora: 1983 and 1985). in hortatory exposition text written by the eleventh grade students. This was done to know how both groups applied thematic progression in their texts based on their score.

3.3. Research participants

The research participants were 18 students of the eleventh grade with the age range between 16- 17 years old. They were divided into two groups based on their score levels of high-scored achievers and low-scored achievers.

3.4. Data collection and analysis

Documentary studies and interview were conducted through studying students' documents of doing assignments to get the data about students' hortatory exposition texts and to get the data about whether the teacher and students discussed hortatory texts. The collected data of documents and that of interview were analyzed by labeling and categorizing the hortatory texts written by the students.

18 texts were analyzed using three thematic progression types proposed by Eggins (2004). The texts were coded and counted, and the identified types were presented in percentage. The result of data analysis showed that the thematic progression was applied in the students' texts 68 times or 45.94 % of 148 identified types in the students' texts. Meanwhile Zig-Zag pattern occurred 71 times or 47.97% of 148 identified types of thematic progression. In this case, the demonstrative and singular pronouns were feasibly identified as inter sentential link in sentences with Zig Zag pattern.

4. Findings and discussion

The application of thematic progression in the eleventh grade students' hortatory exposition was already analyzed and discussed. The result showed that both high-scored achievers and low-scored achievers were able to distribute the information within the text they wrote in order to build the interrelatedness within their text. The distribution of the information here, also called as thematic progression which is one of the analytical tool of text coherence or the interrelatedness within the text.

As there are three thematic progression which was used as the analytical tool of this research, it was found that both achievers' group applied a numerous pattern of the first two thematic progression those are theme reiteration and zig-zag pattern. Multiple-rheme pattern, as the last thematic progression was found only in high-scored achievers group, while low-scored achievers group didn't apply any pattern in their hortatory exposition text.

Although both achievers groups applied theme reiteration and zig-zag patterns so many times, it was analyzed that high-scored achievers used it more with a slightly different numbers. Furthermore, high-scored achievers was also analyzed to use more nominalization (Schleppegrell (2004: 71) to reintroduce the theme in contagious sentences than low-scored achievers text. Despite the frequent use of nominalization, high-scored achievers as well as low-scored achievers preferred to use exact theme or simple pronoun in reintroducing the theme because it easier to apply.

5. Conclusion

Despite their choice in using exact theme and simple pronoun more, it cannot be ignored that they still applied a numerous number of thematic progression which leads in helping them to build a coherent text. Based on the finding result of the

application of thematic progression and the effect of it in students' hortatory exposition text, the researcher states that high-scored achievers have more coherent hortatory exposition text than low-scored achievers text.

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