THEMATIC PROGRESSION OF THE NARRATIVE GENRES WRITTEN BY THE ENGLISH THIRD SEMESTER STUDENTS OF UTM IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2009/2010

Farikah
Dosen FKIP Universitas Tidar Magelang

ABSTRACT

Writing adalah salah satu dari empat keterampilan berbahasa yang harus dikuasai oleh mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Sejalan dengan diberlakukannya kurikulum berbasis kompetensi yang pengajaryannya berbasis teks, maka mahasiswa harus memahami jenis-jenis teks dalam kurikulum Bahasa Inggris baik SMP maupun SMA. Untuk dapat menulis paragraph yang koheren, kita perlu memperkenalkan Theme-Rheme dan Thematic Progression Pattern kepada mahasiswa. Berdasarkan penelitian tentang analisis Thematic Progression Pattern pada narrative texts dapat dilihat bahwa 31.67% dari klausa yang ditulis mahasiswa mengikuti pola Reiteration, 35.30% Zig-zag, 4.07 Multiple Theme Pattern dan 28.96% tidak mengikuti ketiga pola tersebut di atas.

Key Words: Thematic Progression Patterns, Theme Rheme, Narrative Texts.
A. Background of the study

Writing as one of MKK subjects is taught in ten credits in English Department, faculty of Education and Teacher Training of Tidar University of Magelang. MKK subject (mata kuliah keilmuan dan keterampilan) provides students with basic knowledge and skill. Writing skill as one of MKK subjects must be mastered by English Department students of UTM since writing helps us to absorb and process information. When we write a topic, we learn it better. Writing enables us to solve the problems by putting the element of them into written form; we can examine and manipulate them.

Related to the implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum in SMP and SMA, English Department of Tidar University of Magelang always tries to adjust the curriculum and syllabus of writing.

Based on the above consideration, this department uses Text-Based Syllabus for writing subject. As stated by Feez (2002: 3), text-based syllabus is a response of changing views of language and language learning.

It incorporates an increasing understanding of how language is structured and how language is used in social context. The goal of the writing syllabus here is that by the end of the course, the students are expected to be able to write various texts; recount, report, narrative, procedure, etc.

Narrative is one of the text types. The term ‘narrative’ is one of literary texts. Literary texts explore and interpret human experience usually in such way as to evoke in the reader or listener a reflective, imaginative and/or emotional response. The texts can be in the form of written or spoken texts.

Conveying written message through Narrative text is not simple. The students still found difficulties especially in developing
a paragraph. It is based on my observation during my teaching writing class in second semester and third semester. Some students were confused in organizing the messages. In this case, some of the students could not develop the next clause from the preceding clause. They did not refer the subject of the next clause from the previous one. As a result, the students cannot write the paragraph coherently. Besides that, some students always wrote subject as the Theme of the clause. It makes the text/paragraph look monotonous.

A good organization of Theme and Rheme in a paragraph will make the paragraph coherent. The definition of Theme and Rheme as stated by Halliday (1994: 37) is as follows: Theme is the element which serves as point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned. The reminder of the message, the part in which Theme is developed is called Rheme. As a message structure, therefore, a clause consists of a Theme accompanied by a Rheme; and the structure is expressed by the order, whatever is chosen as a Theme is put first.

Being aware of the problem above, I want to know how the English students of UTM organize the messages in writing a paragraph in order that they write the paragraph coherently.

B. Research question

This research addresses the following question:
What are the Thematic Progression patterns the students employ in developing their narratives?
C. **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of the research is: to describe the Thematic Progression patterns of the students' narratives;

D. **Significance of the Research**

The research hopefully
1. gives benefits to the teaching of writing where students were given exercise to organize the messages in a paragraph;
2. overcomes problems faced by students in writing narrative texts;
3. contributes a little knowledge about how to develop a paragraph;
4. 1.4.4 helps the students of writing class in teaching-learning process.

E. **1.5 Review of Related Literature**

1. **Metafunctions- Three Strands of Meaning**
   Functional grammars view language as a resource for making meaning. This view attempts to describe language in actual use and so focus on texts and their contexts. In systemic functional grammar, the term ‘clause’ is preferred to ‘sentence’. A sentence is a unit of written language; it doesn’t apply to spoken language and a clause is the largest grammatical unit (Gerot and Wignell, 1994).
   It was also stated here that clauses simultaneously encode three strands of meaning; ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning.
2. **Theme-Rheme**

The system of Theme belongs to the textual meta function of language. It is related to the organization of information within individual clauses and through this, within the organization of larger text. In English, the Theme is indicated by position in the clause; the Thematic status is put in the first element of a clause and Rheme follows.

Theme can be defined as point of departure and the rest of the message of the clause; after the point of departure is called Rheme (Halliday, 1994). It is the point of departure of a message with which the clause is concerned, not so much constituent as a movement from the beginning of the clause. Further, he characterizes Theme as 'what the message is concerned with; the point of departure for what speaker is going to say'. It functions as a starting point.

Gerot and Wignell (1994) classify Theme into three types. They are Ideational (Topical), Interpersonal and Textual Theme.

(a) **Ideational Theme**

Ideational or Topical Theme can be recognized as the first element in the clause that expresses some kinds of ‘representational’ meaning. It means that when an element of the clause to which transitivity function can be assigned occurs in first position in a clause, it is regarded as a topical Theme.

Topical Theme may be nominal group, nominal group complexes, adverbial groups, prepositional phrases or embedded clause.

(b) **Interpersonal Theme**

Interpersonal elements occurring before the topical Theme are also thematic. An interpersonal Theme may be (i) vocative (ii) modal adjunct (iii) finite or wh-
elements (mood marking) (Gerot and Wignell, 1994).

(c) Textual Theme
Textual Themes relate the clause and its context. They almost always constitute the first part of the Theme, coming before any interpersonal Theme. Textual Theme can include a continuative (yes, no, well, oh, etc.– discourse particles), a conjunction (Structural Theme; paratactic; and, but, either, then, yet, or, etc.,) hypotactic: when, because, since, while, although, if, etc.), and/ or a conjunctive adjunct (that is, also, in addition, nevertheless, on the other hand, etc.).

3. Thematic Progression
Thematic Progression or method of development of a text refers to the way in which the Theme of the clause may pick up, or repeat a meaning from a preceding Theme or Rheme (Paltridge, 2000: 140). Related to Thematic Progression, Eggins (1994) says that method of development is very significant contribution that Theme makes to the cohesion and coherence of a text has to do with how Thematic element succeed each other.

Related to Thematic Progression Danes in Gil (2001) states that ‘Thematic Progression’ refers to the choice and ordering of utterance Themes in a given passage.

However, Gil (2001) explains that thematic progression only indicates the connections between the different textual segments without clarifying their nature. Further, he states that there are several ways in labeling this item. Halliday (1985) uses the term ‘Thematic Structure’, Danes and Paltridge use the term ‘Thematic Progression’, Fries and Martin use the term ‘Method of Development’. Based on Paltridge, there are three main patterns of Thematic Progression. They are as follows.

(a) The Theme Re-iteration/ Constant Theme Pattern
In this pattern, the element of the preceding clause is the same as the subsequent clause.

This pattern is as follows.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Theme1} & \rightarrow \text{RHEME1} \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Theme1} & \rightarrow \text{RHEME2} \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Theme1} & \rightarrow \text{RHEME3} \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Theme1} & \rightarrow \text{RHEME4} \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Theme1} & \rightarrow \text{RHEME5} \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Theme1} & \rightarrow \text{RHEME6}
\end{align*}
\]

(b) The Zig-Zag Pattern

In this pattern, the Rheme of the preceding clause contains an element which becomes the Theme of subsequent clause. The pattern is as follows.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Theme1} & \rightarrow \text{RHEME1} \\
\text{Theme2} & \rightarrow \text{RHEME2}
\end{align*}
\]

(c) The Multiple Theme Pattern

In this pattern, the Theme of one clause introduces a number of different pieces of information, each of which is then picked up and made in subsequent clause.
4. Narrative
1. The Social Function of Narrative Text

Narrative is a kind of text that is used to amuse, entertain and to deal with actual/vicarious experience in different ways (Gerot & Wignell, Making Sense of Functional Grammar). That is why most of the narrative story are in the form of fable, detective story, science fiction, and so on.

2. The Generic Structure of Narrative Text

In a Traditional Narrative the focus of the text is on a series of actions:
1) Orientation: (introduction) in which the characters; setting and time of the story are established. Usually answers who? when? where? e.g. Mr. Wolf went out hunting in the forest one dark gloomy night.
2) Complication or problem: The complication usually involves the main character(s) (often mirroring the complications in real life).

3) Resolution: There needs to be a resolution of the complication. The complication may be resolved for better or worse/happily or unhappily. Sometimes there are a number of complications that have to be resolved. These add and sustain interest and suspense for the reader.

5. The Language Feature of Narrative Text
1) Action
2) Usually past tense.
3) Connectives, linking words to do with time.
4) Specific nouns
5) Active nouns:
6) Careful use of adjectives and adverbs
7) Simile:
8) Metaphor.
9) Onomatopoeia
10) Personification:
11) Rhetorical Questions
12) Variety in sentence beginnings. There are several ways to do this e.g. by using:
   a) Participles: "Jumping with joy I ran home to tell mum my good news."
   b) Adverbs: "Silently the cat crept toward the bird"
   c) Adjectives: "Brilliant sunlight shone through the window"
   d) Nouns: "Thunder claps filled the air"
   e) Adverbial Phrases: "Along the street walked the girl as if she had not a care in the world."
f) Conversations/Dialogue: these may be used as an opener. This may be done through a series of short or one-word sentences or as one long complex sentence.

g) Personal voice: It may be described as writing which is honest and convincing. The author is able to 'put the reader there'. The writer invests something of him/her self in the writing. The writing makes an impact on the reader. It reaches out and touches the reader. A connection is made.

6. Method

1. Research Design

In this research, I applied qualitative approach to unfold types of the Thematic Progression Patterns of the students’ written narratives.

I also employed simple quantification in order to show some tendencies in Thematic Progression Patterns realized in students’ written narratives.

2. Object of the Research

Since the study was devoted to investigate the types of Thematic Progression of written narratives, Students’ written narratives are the objects of this research.

3. Unit of Analysis

In analyzing the types of the Thematic Progression of students’ written narratives, the unit that I worked with was the clause complex.

4. Data Analysis

To analyze the Thematic Progression patterns used by the students in their written narrative paragraphs, I used Paltridge’s theory (2000). In analyzing this, I read the paragraph, described the Thematic Progression, and then
drew the Thematic Progression patterns of each clause in each paragraph.

7. Findings

The data used in this study are written data in the form of narrative texts which were taken from the students’ assignment of writing II class in English Department of Tidar University of Magelang in 2009/2010 academic year.

From Thematic Progression patterns analysis, we can see that the Thematic Progression patterns applied by the students in their narratives are various. In this research, I based the analysis on Paltridge’s theory. There are three patterns used in this research; Re-iteration/ constant, zig-zag and multiple Theme pattern. Based on the data, I found that some of the students write the clauses without applying the patterns mentioned above. There are 64 clauses out of 221 or 28.96 % that do not employ the above patterns.

Related to the application of the three types of Thematic Progression patterns mentioned above, it can be seen that the first type of Thematic Progression pattern applied by the students is Zig-zag pattern. There are 78 clauses out of 221 or 35.30%. In this pattern, the Rheme of preceding clause contains an element which becomes the Theme of subsequent clause.

The second type of Thematic Progression pattern used by the students is Re-iteration. In this case, the element of preceding clause is the same as the subsequent clause. In this research, I found there are 70 clauses out of 221 or 31.67%.

The last type of Thematic Progression pattern applied by the students in this research is Multiple Theme pattern. In this pattern, the Theme of one clause introduces a number of different pieces of information, each of which is then picked up and made in subsequent clause. In this research, there are only 9 clauses out of
221 or 4.07%. The summary of the Thematic Progression pattern analysis is shown in the following table.

**Table 1 The Summary of Thematic Progression Pattern**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Number of Clauses</th>
<th>Thematic Progression Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Re-iteration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>31.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

8. Conclusions

Based on the finding of the research data, the conclusions are formulated as follows: The Thematic progression patterns found in the students' narrative texts are constant/re-iteration Theme, zig-zag and multiple Theme patterns. Besides the above patterns, the students also use patterns which are out of 3 patterns above. It shows that some of the students do not write the paragraphs coherently. In this case, the clauses are not developed from the preceding Theme or Rheme.

9. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the research findings, it is suggested that the lecturers of writing class should introduce Theme-Rheme negotiation and Thematic Progression patterns to the students in order that they can write the paragraph coherently and artistically. In this case, the lecturers should introduce various sentence beginnings as Themes of the clause to the students in order that the students' paragraphs/texts will be more interesting; not monotonous.

REFERENCES


Dirjendikti. 2005. *Kurikulum Program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*