THEMATIC PROGRESSION IN STUDENTS' RECOUNT TEXTS

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate how the students organize their ideas in the texts. This study employs a qualitative case study research design. The data were obtained by collecting students' writing products in the class. Six students' writing products were selected from three different levels of achievement—low-, mid-, and high- achiever based on the advice from the teacher. For the framework of the text analysis, this study draws on Systemic Functional Linguistic theory, especially of thematic progressions as suggested by Halliday & Mathiessen (2004). The results show that all students' texts from all levels had acquired the main purpose and the schematic structure of a recount text. Moreover, in terms of thematic progression consistency, the most occurrence of thematic progression pattern is the reiteration pattern, followed by the zigzag pattern. Meanwhile, no occurrence of multiple theme pattern in students' recount texts indicate that the texts are not cohesion and coherence. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the teachers pay more attention to advantages of employing thematic progressions analysis applied in English learning process to allow students to gain a better control of text organization and development. Besides, it is also suggested for further researchersto investigate the other texts or to analyze the cohesive devices beyond thematic progressions.

Keywords: Thematic Progressions, Cohesion and Coherence, Recount Text

Introduction

This study concerns on analyzing thematic progressions of students' recount texts in one public junior high school in Indramayu, West Java, Indonesia.

The need for analyzing the students' texts comes up since it is principal to understand how the text is organized textually. Textual meaning in English is expressedlargely through the ordering of constituents (Eggins, 2004, p. 298). Textual analysis offers many advantages. The advantages of employing the textual analysis are to support the students' literacy development, and to develop their professional capacity (Achugar, et.al., 2007).

Recount is one of the text types that have to be learned by EFL learners in Indonesia. The comprehension of writing recount text is supported by the Indonesian curriculum of junior high school delivered by BSNP 2006 (*Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan*) which states that one of basic competence and standard competence of this level are to comprehend and to create a recount text.

Research on students' text in learning this text type is important to investigate the success of the curriculum. It is to provide input for the teachers to understand how the students organize their ideas within the text. One way to assess the success of students' contributing in creating the text is analyzing thematic progressions based on the Theme system of Systemic Functional Linguistic (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004, p. 75).

As stated earlier this study focuses on analyzing thematic progressions of students' recount text. Recount is a text type that retells events or experiences in past time. Recount, commonly, is written based on the writer's experiences (Education Department of Western Australia, 1997a:45, as cited in Emilia, 2011).

Literature Review

- **Systemic Functional Linguistics**

Systemic functional linguistics a framework for viewing language as a strategic, meaning-making resource (Eggins, 2004, p.1). Coffin (2006) also states that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is concerned with how language makes meaning. In line with those experts, Bloor and Bloor (2004) further argue that for SFL, a language is a 'system of meanings'.

- **Textual Metafunction**

There are two basic functions of language in relation to our ecological and social environment: making sense of our experience, and acting out our social relationships (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 29). Language is also enacting: enacting our personal and social relationships with the other people around us. In other words, language offers a theory of human experience,

and certain of resources of the lexicogrammar of every language are dedicated to that function: the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction, and the textual metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 29-30).

- **The Theme System**

Theme system is the system to identify a clause which plays role as the subject of sentence (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

In line with Halliday & Matthiessen, Eggins (2004, p. 298) states that the Theme system is a Theme that is in the first part of the clause. Meanwhile, everything which is not the Theme is the Rheme. The Rheme typically contains unfamiliar, or 'new', information.

There are three different types of Themes: topical, interpersonal, and textual.

An example of topical theme is written by a student.

Last week	I went to Bromo	
Marked Topical Theme		
Theme	**Rheme**	

An example of interpersonal theme is written by a student.

Mood Adjunct	*I thought*	*it was really fun [[to have holiday like this]].*
	Interpersonal Theme	**Rheme**

An example of textual theme is written by a student.

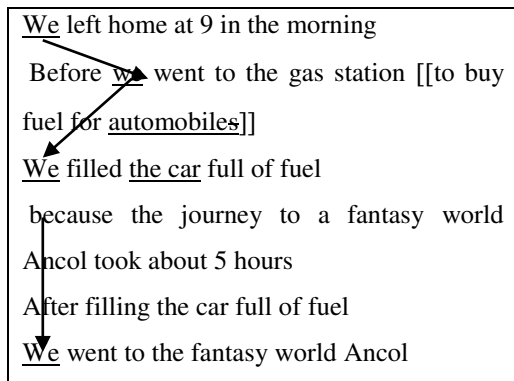| **Coordination**	We were very tired ***however*** I thought it was really fun to have holiday like this.

- **Thematic Progressions**

Thematic progressions are the way to identify how the texts enlarge the ideas they present (Emilia, 2014). Besides, thematic progressions made the cohesion and coherence of a text (Eggins, 2004, p.324).

Three basic types of thematic progressions are identified: the zigzag pattern, the theme reiteration pattern, and the multiple theme pattern.

An example of the zigzag pattern is written by a student.

And (we) went to ~~on~~ "the Scenic Railway"   It was scary railway   It was scary

An example of the reiteration pattern is written by a student.

We left home at 9 in the morning

Before we went to the gas station [[to buy fuel for automobiles]]

We filled the car full of fuel

because the journey to a fantasy world

Ancol took about 5 hours

After filling the car full of fuel

We went to the fantasy world Ancol

- **Cohesion and Coherence**

Cohesion deals with devices that give a text *texture*. Cohesion gives a sequence of sentences a coherent texture. Cohesion shows how semantic relationships are set up by lexical and syntactic features. (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, as cited in Chen, p. 94-95).

Meanwhile, coherence is regarded as the link in a text that connects ideas and makes the flow of thoughts meaningful and clear for readers (Castro, 2004, as cited in Chen, p. 94).

- **Relationship between Cohesion and Coherence and Thematic Progressions**

Cohesion, coherence and thematic progressions are related each other. According to Emilia (2011, p. 247), the importance of the application of higher level Themes is that it helps to enhance the cohesion and coherence of the text. She also states that the use of Thematic progressions allow the text and each stage of a longer text to develop efficiently. It also allows the reader to predict what is going to be discussed in each element of clauses. Thematic progressions from Theme to Rheme are a structural expression of cohesion (Butt, et.al, p. 143).

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 (Butt et al., 2000, p. 152; as cited in Emilia, 2011, p. 248). In line with Butt et al., Joyce and Feez (2012, p. 8; as cited in Emilia, 2011, p. 250) say that the predictability of Themes makes it easier for listeners and readers because they connect new information to information already presented in the text. A text requires telling properly about its composition. It needs to provide an obvious information what the text is about. Cohesion does not ensure that the text can be read well. To organize any text to be coherent, the writers

need to keep their readers well informed about what they are and where they are going (Butt et al. 1995, p. 90; as cited in Priyatmojo, 2011).

- **Recount**

Recount is one of text types that have to be learned by eight grader junior high school. Recount is a text type that retells events or experiences in past time in temporal sequence. Recount, commonly, is written based on the writer's experiences (Education Department of Western Australia, 1997a, p. 45, as cited in Emilia, 2011).

Recount genre typically consists of an obligatory orientation, which provides information about the situation of the participants, followed by a record of events, which tells about what happened to these participants. At the end of the recount there is an optional reorientation stage, which brings the listener/reader back into the present.

Recount has linguistics features as follows (Droga & Humprey, 2003; Emilia, 2011; Johns, 2002):

a. It tells the specific participants: *I, my big family*;

b. It is written in simple past tense form;

c. It applies verbs action such as *celebrated, went, got, and said*;

d. It employs conjunctions or connectives such as *soon after, then, and when*;

e. It applies the first speaker such as *I, We*;

f. It elucidates about the events specifically to construct interesting text;

g. It occasionally is enclosed personal impression, except factual recount;

h. It utilize s descriptive words to offer detail information that deal with *who, what, and how;*

i. It employs proper noun to identify the characters in recount text.

An example of recount text in this study can be seen in the following table.

Orientation

1. Last week <u>I</u> went to Bromo
2. <u>I</u> stayed at <u>my friend's house</u> in Probolinggo, East Java
3. <u>The house</u> had a big garden with colorful flowers
4. and a small pool

Record of Events

5. In the morning, my friend and I saw <u>mount Batok</u>
6. <u>The scenery</u> was very beautiful
7. We <u>rode on the back of horse</u>
8. <u>It</u> was scary
9. but it was fun
10. Then we went to get closer (to) look <u>at the mountain</u>
11. We took pictures of <u>the beautiful scenery there</u>
12. After that <u>we</u> took a rest
13. Before <u>we</u> got home
14. <u>we</u> went to the zoo at Wonokromo
15. <u>We</u> went home in the afternoon
16. <u>We</u> were very tired
17. However <u>I</u> thought it was really fun [[to have holiday like this]]

Reorientation

18. <u>I</u> hope my next holiday will be more interesting

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative case study research design in order to gain more information on thematic progressions in students' recount texts.

In addition, this research also has similar characteristics to a case study. In a case study, a researcher is permitted to study in small and single case through case study (Stake, 1994, p. 278, as cited in Emilia, 2005, p. 74).

The primary data of this study were six pieces of students' recount text under the theme of "My Holiday". The students had to write their own personal experience toward the theme and had to include where and when they had the best holiday ever in their life and with whom they experienced it (if necessary). They had to explain what they did and how they felt about the experiences.

After all the recount texts were collected, they were analyzed by using a qualitative case study research design on the documents analysis. The texts from the students were analyzed by employing thematic progressions.

From those students, the researcher got the general picture of its students' English abilities. The students' English abilities were relatively good and in general they could write in English somewhat well. They also could follow proper schematic structures of a recount text type when asked to write. The findings were that the researcher found that the thematic progressions pattern which less occurs across three achievement levels of six

students' recount texts is zigzag pattern. It indicates that students achieve cohesion in organizing their idea by building on newly introduced information (Eggins, 2004; as cited in Emilia, 2014).

The second thematic progressions pattern which occurs frequently across three achievement levels of six students' recount texts is reiteration pattern. The use of reiteration pattern indicates that student provides the text with clear focus in order to help maintaining a strong topical theme (Eggins, 2004; as cited in Emilia, 2014). This pattern allows the reader to find information being focused easily.

The last, no occurrence of thematic progressions pattern is multiple theme pattern. None use of this pattern indicates that students have not mastered and understood the way of organizing ideas. In addition, the unemployment of multiple Theme pattern shows that the students' recount texts are not well-planned or well-written.

Results and Discussions

The data of six pieces of students' recount texts were analyzed in terms of the schematic structure and the linguistic features of recount text. In regard to the schematic structure, the results are presented below.

Table 1
The schematic structure of high achiever's text (text 1)

Orientation
19. Last week I went to Bromo
20. I stayed at my friend's house in Probolinggo, East Java
21. The house had a big garden with colorful flowers
22. and a small pool

Record of Events
23. In the morning, my friend and I saw mount Batok
24. The scenery was very beautiful
25. We rode on the back of horse
26. It was scary
27. but it was fun
28. Then we went to get closer (to) look at the mountain
29. We took pictures of the beautiful scenery there
30. After that we took a rest
31. Before we got home
32. we went to the zoo at Wonokromo
33. We went home in the afternoon
34. We were very tired
35. However I thought it was really fun [[to have holiday like this]]

Reorientation

36. I hope my next holiday will be more interesting

Table 2

The schematic structure of middle achiever's text (text 3)

Orientation

1. On Friday we went to Jakarta
2. We stayed at David and Della's house
3. It had a big garden with lots of colorful flowers

Record of Events

4. On Saturday, we saw "the Three Sisters"
5. And (we) went to ~~on~~ "the Scenic Railway"
6. It was scary railway
7. It was scary
8. Then, my mommy(,) (Della) and I went to shopping ~~with Della~~
9. We went to some antique shops
10. And I tried ~~on~~ some old hats
11. On Sunday, we went to the scenic MONAS
12. We saw cockatoos having a shower
13. In the afternoon we went home

Reorientation

14. That was (a) very pleasant moment for my family and I
15. that we ever got

Table 3

The schematic structure of low achiever's text (text 6)

Orientation

1. Last year, (I) was on Holiday in Yogyakarta

Record of Events

2. I thought Yogyakarta was very interesting
3. I visited ~~sawis~~ Prambanan
4. When (I was) in Prambanan
5. I saw a lot of ~~the~~ great temple's (temples)
6. At that time I was thirsty
7. And I drank something
8. After (we) go (went) to Bantul
9. Then we went to Parangtritis beach

Reorientation

10. In summary my holiday was very happy

From the tables above, they show all students organized their recount texts based on the schematic structure as suggested by Emilia (2011).

Meanwhile, in regard to linguistics features, the result is presented below.

Table 4
The linguistics features of a middle achiever's text (text 4)

Structure Organization	Recount Text: Ied Mubarak Holiday	Linguistics Features
Orientation	Four weeks ago, I celebrated Ied Mubarak with my big family. It was nice to celebrated with everyone.	• It tells the specific participants such as I; • It is written in simple past tense form such as I celebrated …; • It applies verbs action such as celebrated; • It applies the first speaker such as I; • It utilizes descriptive words to offer detail information that deal with who, what, and how; • It employs proper noun to identify the characters in recount text such I, and my big family.
Record of Events	Soon after Ied prayer, my family and I changed clothes. Then, we went to my aunt's and my grandmother's house. Then, we went to Parean village to meet the others. When we got there we shaked our hand to each other and said sorry to everyone.	• It employs conjunctions or connectives such as soon after, then, and when; • It applies the first speaker such as I, We; • It elucidates about the events specifically to construct interesting text;
Reorientation	Finally, we went to our home again and rest together till the rest of the day.	• It occasionally is enclosed personal impression, except Factual Recount;

Table 4 shows the student's recount text has been success in applying linguistics features of recount in his text (Droga & Humprey, 2003; Emilia, 2011; Johns, 2002). The thematic progression trends found in students' recount text. To see the comparison between the occurrences of thematic progressions in those texts can be seen below.

Table 5

Thematic progression trends in clause levels in students' recount texts

Thematic Progression Types	Low Achiever		Middle Achiever		High Achiever		Total
	Text 6	Text 5	Text 4	Text 3	Text 2	Text 1	
The Reiteration Pattern	6	8	5	5	10	9	43
The Zigzag Pattern	-	2	3	5	3	4	17

Table 5 shows that the reiteration pattern is the pattern that mostly occurs (43 times), followed by the zigzag pattern (17 times). The use of the reiteration pattern in those texts indicates that the students intend to make the text focused by repeating the same element–through identical wordings, synonymous expression, paraphrase, or semantic interfere with the previous Theme (Danes, 1974 cf. Nwogu and Bloor, 1991). It also indicates that aside of giving cohesion by reiterating the same element (Bloor & Bloor, 2005; Emilia, 2005; Eggins, 2004; Fries, 1995a; Ravelli, 2000). These patterns also maintain the cohesion of the text (Bloor & Bloor, 2005; Eggins, 2004). This pattern allows the reader to find information being focused easily.

Besides, the use of the zigzag pattern in students' recount texts indicates that the students tend to give the text a 'sense of cumulative development' (Eggins, 2004). It also indicates that the students can introduce much new information in order to keep the logical relation of the text (Bloor & Bloor, 2005; Emilia, 2005; Eggins, 2004; Fries, 1995a; Ravelli, 2000).

Preferably, in recount text, each message should relate logically to the previous message (Fries, 1995a). It means that in the flows of the information the writer has to choose the textual resources (Thematic progression) that enable smooth progression when she/he is presenting the information to maintain the logical relation of the text (Schleppegrell, 2001; 2006). As seen in the text analysis, even though the texts applied more the reiteration pattern, the logical relation was still maintained.

Conclusions

This study concerns analyzing thematic progressions of students' recount texts. It was conducted in one public junior high school in Indramayu, West Java, Indonesia. A qualitative case study was employed in order to find the answer of the research question.

The results show that all students' levels of achievement had acquired the main purpose and the schematic structure of a recount text: orientation, record of events, and reorientation (Johns, 2002; Emilia, 2011). In addition, in terms of recount's linguistics features, all students' levels of achievement have different ability in employing the linguistics features in their recount text.

This study found out that only two types of thematic progression patterns are presented in the students' recount texts, those were the reiteration pattern and the zigzag pattern. The students mostly used the reiteration pattern to keep the text focus by repeating the same element as a Theme. This pattern allows the readers to find information easily in the text. In addition, by employing the zigzag pattern, the students attempt to make a sense of cumulative development of a text. This pattern indicates that the students introduce newly information by promoting the Rheme in a clause to the Theme in the subsequent clause. No occurrence of multiple theme pattern indicates that students have not mastered and understood the way of organizing ideas. In addition, the unemployment of multiple Theme pattern shows that the students' recount texts are not well-planned or well-written.

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