Analysis of Theme and Rheme on University Students' Writing

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the types of themes and describe the most dominant themes used in students' writing. The data used were from 5 students who wrote on the subject of writing introductory paragraphs and the data were analyzed based on Halliday & Matthiessen's MA K Theory (2014). This research was conducted using a discourse analysis. Data collection is done by observation and document study. Data was collected from the writings of the first semester at Majalengka University. The research found various themes: topical, textual, interpersonal, marked and unsigned themes. And the most dominant type of theme is characterized by topical themes and themes. Patterns of theme realization were found in students writing texts namely topical themes, textual-topical themes and interpersonal-topical themes. Meanwhile,only a few topical-textual interpersonal. The students used most of the topic clauses as themes starting with a word or phrase that functions as a subject and addition. All types of themes are used in writing student texts, except interpersonal themes (addition of vocative, addition of modals and limited verbal operators) and some textual themes (addition continues and continues). Therefore, in the Theme-Rheme structure of a text clause by clause, to gain insight into its texture and how the writer clarifies the nature of the fixing that completes it.

Keywords: Students' Writing; Theme and Rheme.

INTRODUCTION

Brown (2015: 232) states that language learning has four skills, namely listening, writing, speaking, and reading. Among these skills, writing is the most difficult skill to learn because it requires hard thinking to produce ideas, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs all at once. Many students face many difficulties when they start writing, for example, students find it difficult to think about what they will write, and the words they should use to write, because they also cannot get ideas quickly so there are many errors or mistakes in their writing. That's because they rarely practice writing texts and don't carefully proofread their writing. Also, they may not be able to convey their ideas cohesively within a text and the people reading their writing. unable to follow thedevelopment of ideas from the text.

This study covers the system of themes-rhema in functional grammar through textual metafunctions from the point of view and representation of clauses as messages in sentences and organization of information in one of the introductory paragraphs writing texts in the first semester of Majalengka University.

Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) said that "Theme is the starting point of a message". It is the element chosen by the speaker or writer to "ground" what he will say. The theme is only indicated by its position in the sentence. A clause consists of Theme and followedby Rema So Rema is the rest of the message of a clause Both Theme and Rheme readers join together so they know what topic is being talked about and what is said Theme and Rema help readers to know the meaning of a clause by analyzing Theme and followed by Rema.

Emilia (2014: 226) theme as the starting point of speech or clause, rhyme is not part of the rhyme, meaning that once the theme is determined, there are rhymes. In addition, the researcher analyzed thematic developments in the book, then the researcher tried to find thematic developments related to the theme and rhyme method. Understanding Themes given by Halliday (1985, p.38) are themes that are given information that function as a starting point for a message. The information provided is information that has been mentioned somewhere in the text, or knowledge shared or shared from the immediate context. In other words, Themes usually contain familiar, old, or given information. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014: 83), "There are three metafunctions of language, namely (1) Experiential Functions, (2) Interpersonal Functions, and (3) Textual Functions." Based on the three main functional componentsin the metafunction of language, this research discusses the textual function of students' writing. Therefore, research will be conducted to analyze the themes and rhymes in student writing based on the facts and theories above.

Theoretically, this research can be used as a tool to analyze the theme of the system and how the writer builds clauses through the rheme system. In addition, this research canbe used to determine which theme is grammatically a system that regulates clauses, readers can easily remember the position of the theme. Practically, readers can find or identify new information (theme) and information provided (rheme) that the information is already available in the text, practically the reader is able to divide into several clauses labeled as rheme of the system. As states (2005: 67) states that "grammatically, theme is a category that is useful in helping students organize information at the sentence level which is thematically related to the message as a whole. In addition, this research is useful for readers who read the research.

Writing

Brown (2015:335) elaborates the upshot of the nature of writing that has produced writing pedagogies that focus the students on how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently, how to use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions to put them cohesively into writing text, how to revise text for clearer meaning, how to edit text for appropriate grammar, and how to produce a final product. The point of writing is about what in the mind is making the readers understand what has been done in writing and clear to express and organize them. Writing should be organized effectively and include aspects such as ideas, word choice, grammar, and coherent; it is not as easy as we imagine. Writing is a complex subject involving generating and organizing ideas.

Halliday & Matthiessen (2014:361) divide and develop a theory of the fundamental function of language, in which he analyzes lexicogrammar into three broad meta functions: Ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Each of the three meta functions is talking about a different aspect of the world, and they are concerned with a different mode of the meaning of clauses. The

ideational meta function tells about the natural world in the broadest sense, including our consciousness, and also deals with clauses as representations. The interpersonal meta function is about the social world, especially the relationship between speaker and hearer, and is concerned with clauses as exchanges. Textual meta function tells about the verbal world, especially the flow of information in atext, and the meta function concerned with the clause as the message.

Ideational Function

The ideational function of language is concerned with the communication and interlinking of ideas and may itself be broken down into the experiential and logical function. The ideational function is a way of a speaker expressing proportional content elements of his/her utterance, in other words, communicates their ideas. In operating this function, the speaker refers to people, objects, and abstractions, actions, events, and states, features and qualities, and relationships of location, time, manner, reason, etc.

Interpersonal Function

Language is simultaneously used as representation, exchange, and organization of experience (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:85). As social beings, humans cannot live isolated; they need to interact with others to fulfill their needs so the use of language to interact is said to perform the interpersonal function. The interpersonal function means as a form of action; the speaker is doing something to the listener through language. To establish the relationship between the interesting interaction, we take on the different slogan function in the exchange. The Interpersonal function enables us to develop social relationships to interact with others. The Interpersonal function represents the speaker's meaning potential that takes into account the nature of the relation between the addresser (speaker) and the addressee (listener). Interpersonal meanings are embodied in the person system, both as a pronoun (person as things, e.g she, you) and as possessive (person as dietic, e.g. Her, your) in the attitudinal type of epithet, in connotative meanings of lexical items functioning in the group, and in prosodic features such as swear words or a voice quality (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:192). The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the interaction between participants. The interpersonal relationship of interaction is realized through modality. Giving modal to a sentence isnot making a categorical assertion, but is rather modifying their commitment to some degree by expressing a judgment or assessment of the truth of the situation.

Textual Function

A textual function has a close relation to the thematic structure. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014:89) say that thematic structure is one of the various structures which when mapped on to each other, make up a clause and will be considered the first one which gives the clause character as a message. It means that the element of a clause indicates from which the clause is developed. The theme is the element that serves as the point of the departure of the message. It is the clause that is concerned (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:89). It organizes the clause as a message. The theme is followed by rheme. So rhemeis the rest of the messages of the clause after the theme. Thus, the rheme is where the clause moves after the point of departure.

Theme and Rheme

Halliday & Matthiessen (2014:89) state that theme is the element that serves as the point of departure of the message and locates and orients the clause within its context. Martin, et.al (1997:21) say that every clause is organized as a message related to an unfolding test. The system of theme arranges the clause to show what its local context about, the general context of the

text it serves in. The system deals with the current point of departure about what has come before; it is clear where the clause is located in the text, and how its contribution fits in. This point of beginning of the clause or local context is called a theme. The remainder of the message of the clause tells what is presented against the background of the local context; it is where the clause moves after the pointof the beginning of the clause. This is called a rheme. The clause is organized as a message by having a distinct status assigned to one part of it. One part of the clause is called as the theme; this then combines the remainder so that the two parts together constitute a message. In other languages, of which English is one, the theme is indicated by the position in the clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:87). The function of theme in the structure of the clause is as a message which has meaning, a quantum of information.The theme is the point of the beginning of the message. It is the element the speaker selects for 'grounding' what he is going on to say (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:83)

Types of Theme

Topical Theme

Topical Theme is the theme of a clause that ends with the first constituent that is either participants, circumstances, or processes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:105). This type of theme is presented by a nominal group (e.g., everyone), a prepositional phrase (e.g., on Saturday night), or an adverbial group (e.g., merrily), as it can be seen in the example below:

Theme	Rheme
I	Have been in Bali three times
In London	My colleagues and I spent our holiday

Table 1.1 Topical theme analysis

According to the example above, a first clause is a nominal group "I". It is placed at the beginning of the clause; it is called as a Theme in the clause. The second clause has the adverbial group "In London". Halliday & Matthiessen (2014:93) add that Topical Themeis divided into subtypes: simple and multiple themes.

Interpersonal Theme

Interpersonal Theme refers to an item that comes before Rheme which indicates the relation between the participants in the text, or the position or point of view that is being taken in the clause. This may include vocative, modal/comment adjuncts, and finite verbal operators (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014:108).

1) The Vocative is any item, typically (but not necessary) a personal name, used to address. Example of Vocative

Theme		Rheme
Vocative	topical	
Laura	You	Should read sabtu Bersama bapak novel

Table 1.2 Interpersonal analysis

Textual Theme

Halliday & Matthiessen (2014:107-108) state that Textual Theme is any combination of Contituative, Conjunction, and Conjunctive Adjunct.

1) Continuative is one of a small set of words that signal a move in the discourse: a response, in dialogue, or a new move to the next point. If the same speaker is continuing. Example of Continuative:

Theme		Rheme
Continuative	Topical	
Well,	will	Say something for you

Table 2.1 Continuative analysis

2.) A Conjunction is a word or group that either link (paratactic) or binds (hypotactic) the clause in which it occurs structurally to another clause. Example of conjunction:

Theme		Rheme
Conjunction	topical	
And	He	Came to me

Table 2.1 Continuative analysis

3.) Conjunctive Adjunct is adverbial groups or prepositional phrases that relate the clause to the preceding text. Example of Conjunctive: "Moreover Mr. Harry Edward the problem a self is simply to complex to solve now"

Theme		Rheme
Conjunctive	Topical	
Moreover	Mr. Harry	the problem a self is simply

Table 2.3 Conjunctive analysis

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive qualitative research was used in conducting this research. The subjects of this research were first semester students at the university. The author chose semester 1 in the introduction to paragraph writing class. The unit of analysis of this study is the clause. The technique used is documentation.

The following is the procedure for analyzing data:

1. The writer collects texts from five semester 1 students.

2. After collecting the data, the writer groups the text into clauses for each sentence.

3. Then, the writer analyzes the theme and rheme as well as the types of themes in the text
4. The next step is to calculate the frequency and percentage of data to draw conclusions.So, here we go
   formula:

N = X

Y

x100%

N = percentage of theme types.
X = Number of theme types.
Y = Total number of clauses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

The Application of Theme and Rheme

a. Topical Theme
1) Marked Topical Theme
By book, we can know the purpose of life.

By book	We can know the purpose of life
Marked topical theme	**Rheme**

2) Unmarked topical theme
They lived in Jakarta for a long time

They	Live in Jakarta for a long time
Unmarked topical theme	**Rheme**

b. Interpersonal Theme
Interpersonal theme shows the theme as the writer's judgment in constructing a sentence, for example*: Let's eat the food that we like*

Let's	Eat the food that we like
Interpersonal theme	**Rheme**

c. Textual Theme
So, they love everything I use

So	They love everything I use
theme	**Rheme**

From the examples above, textual themes were followed by the other theme and then the rhemes will follow them.

The findings show that the theory of Theme and Rheme as one of the realizationsof Thematic structure in Functional Grammar was applied in the students' Introduction to paragraph writing class. The finding also showed two types of Theme used in the texts. The dominant type of Theme used in that students' writing was Topical Theme, (71%). The second one was Textual Theme, (26%). There was no interpersonal theme in students' writing. This means that the students used many declarative clauses and most of the clauses as a topical theme were started by word or phrase functioning as a subject and adjunct. Types of Theme in

students' writing could be presented that nominal group (71%). Preposition Phrase (13%), and Adverbial Group (16 %) so the dominant of Topical Theme was The nominal Groups(71%). Textual Theme consists of continuative(0%), conjunction(100%), conjunctive adjunct(0%). The students used many nominal Groups, it was because most of the clauses as Topical Theme were started by word or phrase had functioned as a subject; the students presented some adverbs and prepositions in the first positions, and they alsoused some conjunctions to link one clause to another clause.

In the process of analysis, the researcher also finds the Marked and Unmarked Theme. There were 30% Marked theme, while Unmarked was 71 %. This meant there were more unmarked Theme used in whole students' writings because the students' writings were presented by word or phrase as a subject.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the types of Theme in students' writing, the researcher finds some conclusions as follows: There are two types of Theme realized in Students' writing. Topical and textual. The most dominant types of theme are Topical Theme and the most dominant of Topical Theme is nominal Theme, and there are more unmarked themes in Students' writing than the marked theme and almost various elements of the theme are used in students' writing recount text, except interpersonal and the two elements in Textual Theme, continuative, and conjunctive adjunct.

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