

Thematic Progression Patterns in Indonesian Opinion Articles

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Abstract—Thematic progression plays a crucial role in the notion of cohesiveness and coherence in the text, particularly in opinion text. This study was intended to seek the theme and thematic progression patterns in the context of Indonesian opinion articles. To achieve the objective, Halliday theory was applied to identify the theme and thematic progression patterns. The method of this study is the combination between quantitative and qualitative method. The data was taken from Kompas.id, an online version newspaper. The findings revealed that topical theme is the most commonly used by the writer in the opinion articles. In terms of thematic progression (TP), the linear, theme pattern is dominantly found in Bahasa Indonesia opinion articles. As a result, this study might greatly contribute to the writing skill, particularly to those who wants to compose an opinion text cohesively in Bahasa Indonesia, not only for Indonesian but also for foreign learners who wants to learn Bahasa Indonesia.

Keywords—opinion text; thematic progression; theme; topical theme; linier theme

I. INTRODUCTION

Theme and rheme play an important role in writing argumentative text. Constructing idea in the argumentative essay is prominent as a way of giving persuasive strategies in the text. This can be seen from the clause of the text which consist of theme and rheme. According to Halliday and Matthiessen, theme is ‘the element of which serves as the point of departure of the message’ [1]. This, occasionally, comes in the first position of the clause. Moreover, rheme refers to ‘the part of the clause in which the Theme is developed’ which occasionally puts after the theme [2]. This is called by thematic progression (TP).

Studies on thematic progression have been conducted by many scholars. Rahmawati & Kurniawan investigated thematic progression on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, specifically in the thesis [3]. The findings revealed that most of Indonesian EFL students used constant theme in their thesis abstract. There is also the study of TP focusing on thesis abstract [3]. He reported that TP within rhetorical structure plays an essential role as a technique of writing opinion text. The research of thematic progression has been conducted dealing with opinion section in *The Jakarta Post* [4].

Further, Hawes generated the thematic progression analysis on writing of students and professionals [5]. The finding

suggested that the awareness of progression type used by students play an important role to make an argumentative essay. The study shown that students might face difficulties in writing abstract which must be dense and well-structured. Another focus of thematic progression was also used to analyze the rhetorical section in the online news in Iraqi English newspaper [6]. Moreover, Gunawan & Aziza also found that three-thematic progression patterns were used in undergraduate thesis as a way to investigate the meaning making in academic writing [7]. Besides, TP analysis can also be found in English advertorial [8]. Above all, the TP clearly contributes to the development of writing in the case of English text.

A. Statement of the Problem

It is clearly stated that the aforementioned studies focus merely on English language text [3-5,7]. Nonetheless, Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) text, which is important, is not investigated yet. A study of thematic progression in Indonesian opinion article might possibly provide new perspectives of system functional linguistics, particularly in writing opinion. Based on the reason above, this study seeks to investigate the thematic progression in the context of Bahasa Indonesia articles.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Halliday defines the language as a function [1]. It is recognized as metafunctions which are then divided into three, namely ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. Ideational has something to do with the theory of human experience (Ibid:29). Further, interpersonal means the relationship with others. The last, textual, is defined as the relationship among the discourses. Those metafunctions mentioned are prominent in constructing the message through language. Further paragraphs will describe merely the textual metafunction namely theme and thematic progression.

Theme, according to Halliday & Matthiessen, refers to the ‘element that serves as the point of departure of the message’ [1]. Moreover, Halliday also stated that ‘The Theme functions in the structure of the clause as a message’ [1]. Beside that, Paltridge defines theme as ‘information prominence’ into that clause [9]. It is usually put in the first position to bring the topic of the message in a clause. Further, there are three kinds classified as themes in the structure of clause, namely topical,

interpersonal and textual theme. Topical theme concerns with experiential element, interpersonal refers to ‘the writer’s or speaker’s personal judgment of the meaning, and textual theme deals with the relation of the clause in the context [2,10]. The combination of the kinds of themes aforementioned above might help writers to initiate the topic in the writing.

According to Halliday & Matthiessens, rheme means ‘the part in which Theme is developed’ which is typically located after the theme [1]. The term is originally from Prague School. This can be exemplified in the example below:

Jakarta	is the capital city of Indonesia
Theme	Rheme

As can be seen from the example above, Rheme always stands after theme. As cited in Eggins, Rheme consists of new information [2]. As shown in the example, *the capital of Indonesia* is the new information on *Jakarta*. In order to see of how the pattern of the topical theme, Theme and Rheme are further discussed in the thematic progression.

A. Thematic Progression

The understanding of Thematic Progression (TP) is initially formulated by Daněš [11]. It refers to ‘the way in which the theme of a clause may pick up, or repeat, a meaning from a preceding theme or rheme’ [9]. The patterns of TP are posited into three types that are *Theme reiteration*, *Zig-zag pattern*, and *multiple-Rheme pattern* [2]. Reiteration focuses on how to keep the text focused by simply reiterating the elements (Ibid). The zig-zag patterns means the element of rheme enters to the other themes. Then, multiple-rheme pattern is ‘the theme one of the clause introduces a number of different pieces of information, each of them is then picked up and made Theme in subsequent clauses’ (ibid:325). The notions above are beneficial to develop the writing system; cohesion and coherence.

According to the background mentioned above, this paper is, then, intended to answer these research questions. (1) What themes are commonly found in Indonesian opinion articles? (2) What are the thematic progression pattern in opinion texts in Indonesian opinion articles?.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the theme in Indonesian opinion articles. Then, it also beneficial to help the Indonesian students or even further for Indonesian Language for Foreign Speaker (ILSF) students to write argumentative or opinion essay in Bahasa Indonesia.

III. METHOD

This study elaborates both quantitative and qualitative methods [12]. Quantitative method is used to identify the number of themes and also TP found in the articles. Further, the qualitative method is applied to describe the thematic progression in the context. The articles analyzed in this study consist of five selected articles years 2018 downloaded from Kompas.id, an online version of the reputable Indonesian newspaper, which daily provides an opinion section. Each article was, then, broken down into clauses in order to know

the theme and rheme used. Then, Halliday’s framework was used [1]. After that, the TP patterns were identified based on the framework.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings

After identifying four opinion texts of Indonesian Language clauses based on the theme and rheme using Halliday’s framework, the following findings were presented in the table and detailed description based on the research questions [1]; finding the common used of theme and the use of thematic progression patterns. The below table shows the number of theme type occurrences in all texts. Then, it is followed by the description of each of texts.

TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF THE THEME TYPES

Text	Textual Theme	Inter-personal Theme	Topical Theme		Total of T-Units
			Marked	Unmarked	
Text 1	3 (16.67%)	3 (42.9%)	9 (20.9%)	19 (18.45%)	49
Text 2	4 (22.22%)	5 (62.5%)	5 (11.6%)	33 (32%)	50
Text 3	7 (38.89%)	0	2 (4.6%)	42 (40.8%)	50
Text 4	3 (16.67%)	0	27 (62.8%)	8 (7.8%)	50
Total	17 (8.54%)	8 (4.02%)	43 (21.6%)	103 (51.7%)	199

A detailed findings of themes are described below,

- Text 1 is comprised of forty nine (49) T-Units. Then, textual and interpersonal theme have the similar number of occurrences (3). Topical theme is the most dominant theme in the text which is divided into marked and unmarked, (9) and (19) respectively.
- Text 2 consists of fifty (50) T-Units. Topical theme placed in the first place, followed by textual theme as well as (4) occurrences and interpersonal (5) occurrences, it is followed by the textual theme (5) occurrences. Further, interpersonal theme is the least theme (4) found in the text.
- Text 3 is comprised of fifty (50) T-units. Like the previous text, this text is dominated by topical theme (44) occurrences. While the second place is textual theme (3). However, there is no interpersonal theme in the text.
- Text 4 consists of fifty (50) T-Units. Topical theme, especially in marked theme, is mostly used rather than unmarked theme. Then, it has no interpersonal theme in this text. Nevertheless, only three (3) textual themes are available.

Based on the findings above, it can be seen that the theme is predominantly topical theme with 146 occurrences which is consisting of marked (43) and unmarked (103) themes. The second position is then followed by textual theme (18). Afterwards, interpersonal theme (7) is in the last position. The thematic progression of the texts can be seen in the table below,

TABLE II. THE NUMBER OF THEMATIC PROGRESSION BASED ON PALTRIDGE [9]

Text	Constant Theme	Linear Theme	Split Theme
Text 1	4	14	2
Text 2	3	11	1
Text 3	6	15	-
Text 4	4	5	-
Total	17	45	3

A detailed findings of Thematic Progression (TP) are described below:

- The most dominant TP in the text 1 is linear theme (11). It is then followed by four (4) patterns of constant theme. However, there are only two (2) split theme patterns found in the text.
- There are eleven (11) linear theme in the text 2. Following the linear theme is constant theme (2). Then, there are only one (1) theme which is categorized as split theme.
- In the text three, there are fifteen (15) patterns referred to linear theme. It is then followed by six patterns of constant theme. However, there is no split theme available in the text.
- There are only five patterns of linear theme found in the text 4. Further, only four patterns of constant theme identified. Similar to the text three (3), there is no split theme identified in the text.

Based on the detailed description above, it can be summarized that four opinion texts are dominated by linear theme patterns by forty five (45) patterns. In addition, there are seventeen (17) constant theme patterns in the analyzed text. However, there are merely three split theme patterns found in the texts.

B. Discussion

This section will focus on further explanation of two research questions mentioned earlier, namely the theme used in the texts and the thematic progression patterns.

It is noted that there are four Indonesian language opinion articles which have (199) T-Units or clauses. As seen in the table 1.1, most of the themes used in this texts is topical theme (51.7%). Then, it is followed by textual (8.54%) and interpersonal theme (4.02%), second and third position respectively. The findings are similar to the previous studies on TP. Marfuaty & Wahyudi, for example, found that topical theme was ‘the most dominant’ used in the English opinion articles in the Jakarta post [4]. Each of the themes is exemplified in the following tables.

TABLE III. THE EXAMPLE OF TOPICAL THEME

Textual	Theme		Rheme	
	Inter-personal	Topical		
		Marked		Unmarked
			<i>Kasus minuman keras (miras) oplosan belakangan ini</i>	<i>menjadi perbincangan masyarakat karena kembali memakan korban yang tidak sedikit.</i>

TABLE IV. THE EXAMPLE OF TEXTUAL THEME

Textual	Theme		Rheme	
	Inter-personal	Topical		
		Marked		Unmarked
<i>Selain itu,</i>			<i>orang juga</i>	<i>didorong untuk bersimpati dan berempati terhadap masalah sehari-hari melalui media sosial.</i>

TABLE V. THE EXAMPLE OF INTERPERSONAL THEME

Textual	Theme		Rheme	
	Inter-personal	Topical		
		Marked		Unmarked
	<i>Seperti kita ketahui,</i>			<i>SDM dibutuhkan pada tiga tahap proyek: saat pembangunan instalasi atau pabrik; saat operasional, termasuk perawatan; dan untuk kegiatan riset dan pengembangan.</i>

The use of topical theme in the texts are identified since the writers want to deliver the key point of the whole meaning by stating in the first clause. As stated by Halliday & Mathissen ‘This suggests that the speaker/writer is selecting the desired Theme’ [1]. The remaining is the information which is being stated. Further, Fries argued that clear theme might help readers understand the news conveyed by the writer [13]. Therefore, the above findings show the topical theme in which it brings ideas.

As previously stated that the textual theme pattern is the second position after topical theme which consists of seventeen (17) units. Halliday & Mathissen posits that since the aim of the interpersonal theme is to connect among the ideas through continuative, conjunction and conjunctive adjunct [1]. In addition, based on the findings above, it can be seen that there are seventeen (17) examples categorized as textual theme e.g. *Untuk itu, sementara, dengan demikian, namun, dengan kata lain, padahal, oleh karena itu,* and so forth. This is might be in line with what Emilia argues that o the textual theme could contribute to give texture of the text, in the case of opinion text [10].

The last theme which is important to consider is interpersonal. The table above shows that this theme is the least used by the writer. Referring to what Halliday's theory that there are three main points categorized as interpersonal theme such as modal/comment adjunct [modal theme], vocative and finite verbal operator, this finding also show the mentioned categories as such *seperti kita ketahui, sebenarnya dan saat ini* [1]. The function of this theme is 'to indicate the writer's or speaker's personal judgment of the meaning [10].

With regard to the thematic progression patterns in this text, it is shown that most of TP used is linear theme or zig-zag pattern. As mentioned by Paltridge that linear or zig-zag pattern refers to 'when the subject matter in the rheme of one clause is taken up in the theme of a following clause' [9]. The present study shows that there are forty five (45) linear patterns. The example is as follows,

TABLE VI. THE EXAMPLE OF LINEAR THEME

Theme	Rheme
Media sosial	telah memberikan dampak signifikan terhadap terbentuknya pola pikir konspiratif terhadap masyarakat.
Hal tersebut	bisa terindikasi dari segala bentuk pola pikir berlebihan bagi warganet Indonesia dalam melihat dan menanggapi isu dan topik tertentu.
Tentu tidak salah	memiliki pola pikir itu karena menunjukkan kadar intelektualitas.
Namun, kasus warganet Indonesia	mengatakan bahwa banalitas itu adalah kunci.

Based on the example above, the function of linear or zig-zag, according to Eggins [2,9], is to 'achieve cohesion in the text by building on newly information'. In this case, the writer wants to develop the idea by expanding the ideas into new themes. Therefore, the reader could understand the ideas of the clause in the text.

TABLE VII. THE EXAMPLE OF CONSTANT THEME

Theme	Rheme
Investasi bidang pendidikan	tak terlihat perubahannya secara instan, perlu waktu cukup lama untuk mengetahui hasilnya, sedangkan dana investasi berasal dari rakyat dan rakyat akan menuntut bahwa hasil pendidikan harus bermanfaat bagi rakyat.
Dengan kata lain investasi pendidikan harus	akuntabel.
Akuntabilitas publik investasi pendidikan	dapat dicapai melalui proses akreditasi yang berbasis dampak (outcome) yang dilakukan entitas independen non-pemerintah, yang secara universal sudah diterapkan.

In addition, there are seventeen (17) constant theme patterns in the analyzed text. To Eggins, the use of constant theme is to 'keep the text focused' [2]. In addition, by applying this theme, it can create the cohesion which is important in the text. With regard to this text, the writer tends to repeat the ideas by repeating the lexical item such as *investasi pendidikan*.

TABLE VIII. THE EXAMPLE OF SPLIT THEME

Theme	Rheme
Berdasarkan kajian KPPIP, untuk memenuhi kebutuhan Proyek Strategis Nasional (PSN) pada saat seluruh proyek selesai dan mulai beroperasi,	diperlukan sekitar 350.000 lulusan program politeknik dan 250.000 program lulusan sarjana .
Saat ini, untuk ketersediaan calon lulusan program diploma, yang sedang menempuh pendidikan di politeknik	berjumlah sekitar 113.000.
Sementara untuk program sarjana	tersedia calon lulusan 102.000 orang.

An example above exhibits the split or multiple theme used in Bahasa Indonesia. In split rheme progression, rheme is allowed to bring several ideas which develop in the following theme. It can be seen that the example above consists of two main points namely *lulusan program diploma politeknik* and *lulusan program sarjana*. Each of them is explained more in the subsequent theme [2].

The use of thematic progression in the opinion article might bring new perspective on how to apply the theory into Bahasa Indonesia. Further, this application can be a suggestion to those who wants to compose opinion articles in Bahasa Indonesia by considering the theme and rheme as well as the patterns. As a result, the information or ideas in the texts are well-delivered.

V. CONCLUSION

As shown the results above, it can be concluded that the result of the study has similar findings of the previous studies that the theme and rheme are possibly found in Indonesian language. Out of four opinion articles taken from *Kompas.id*, topical theme is mostly used by the writer as to show the flow of information in the text. Besides, the linear theme pattern is dominantly used rather than constant theme and even split rheme. This is due to the fact that linear theme is an effective way to create cohesion in the text. The results have similarity to the other previous studies conducted. Marfuaty & Wahyudi, for example, stated that topical theme is frequently identified [4].

In terms of thematic progression, as presented above, linear theme is commonly used. This is in line with previous research examined by Shakeh that linear and constant theme are also

found in Iraqi opinion article [6]. In relation to the writing skill, the thematic progression in the Indonesian context might contribute to help Indonesian students and also foreign students studying Bahasa Indonesia to write a Bahasa Indonesia article cohesively. For the following research, it is suggested that to investigate and develop more in analyzing TP in Bahasa Indonesia since it is rarely conducted.

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