

An analysis of thematic progression patterns: Opinion section texts of *The Jakarta Post*

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Thematic progression is a salient aspect in the study of Systemic Functional Linguistics as it can function as a cohesive tie. The study of thematic progression has been vastly conducted for various purposes (including revealing the thematic progression in newspaper editorials and in translation texts) revealing the role of thematic progression in cultural (academic) writing system. This research focuses on investigating the pattern of thematic progression of the texts of the opinion section of *The Jakarta Post* in an attempt to reveal those patterns and to relate them to the patterns of argumentative texts. The findings of this investigation indicate that the most frequent type of themes and thematic progression patterns are topical theme and simple linear theme. The results of this study may be facilitative in composing coherent and cohesive texts.

Keywords: Theme; Rheme; Opinion Section; Thematic Progression; Thematic Progression Pattern; Argumentative Texts

1. Introduction

The study of ‘thematic progression’ has been widely conducted. This may be due to its crucial contribution to the focus and the flow of information in a text (Carter-Thomas, 1999; Paltridge, 2006; Sade, 2007), Thematic Progression is a term which refers to “the way in which the Theme of a clause may pick up, or repeat, a meaning from a preceding Theme or Rheme” (Paltridge, 2006, p. 148). It has been said that the study of this topic is interesting because it is one of the factors that “contribute to making a text a text, as it were” (Rørvik, 2003, p. 245). Besides being able to reveal the coherence level of a text (Astuti, Suryani, & Kurniati, 2010), the study on thematic progression also can be a parameter to determine the academic level of the text. Seeing the importance of thematic progression both in and outside academic setting, hence, more exploration and investigation of thematic progression will be interesting.

The texts of the Opinion Section of *The Jakarta Post*, as any newspaper text,

are written to transmit ideas and thoughts, which in this case are one's opinion or argument for or against an issue. The specific sentence position (i.e., the connection of Theme and Rheme) in the texts can be the strategy of the writer to prime the readers' language in which Hawes (2010) suggests the priming is likely to inculcate the writer's or newspaper's own preferred association. Thus, the selection of the texts of 'opinion section' of *The Jakarta Post* was made for purposes of revealing the structure and packaging of the information in those texts; we aim at revealing their Theme-Rheme and thematic progression patterns in those texts. In this case, the texts are more likely to be argumentative type of text as they are written for arguing a thing. Further, the study of thematic progression is worth researching since the results of the study can be beneficial to various fields of study including translation (Rorvik, 2003) and successful testing on Discourse Structure Test (DST) (Shieh & Lin, 2011). No less important than the previous studies, this research will also give good implication to the other field of knowledge—especially 'writing'. Specifically, the results of this study have implications for people to know how to write an argumentative article (such as in the case of 'opinion section' of a newspaper) through academic language conventions. Generally, the result of this study is also beneficial to ESL students by helping them to learn how to compose academic writing. Therefore, the study of the patterns of thematic progression in the texts of *The Jakarta Post* is necessarily done to enrich the linguistic landscape as well as learning.

Among the plethora of thematic progression studies (Astuti, Suryani & Kurniati, 2010; Hawes, 2010; Mulatsih, 2010; Rørvik, 2003; Shieh & Lin, 2011; Simpson, 2000; Soepriatmadji, 2009; Sopyan, 2011; Taboada & Lavid, 2003; Yang, 2008). Some focus on the contrastive analysis of thematic progression patterns (Simpson, 2000) which is further expanded to translation (Rørvik, 2003) and some others focus on examining the role of thematic progression in culturally-academic writing system (e.g., the background of Skripsi written by English Education Department Students of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Muria Kudus University, Christian written discourse in Nigeria, the official website of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, thesis abstracts written by English students of FBIB Unisbank Semarang) (See also Astuti et al., 2010; Soepriatmadji, 2009; Sopyan, 2011). Furthermore, there are also examinations of thematic progression related to rhetorical structure (Taboada & Lavid, 2003), and of the role of thematic progression in successful testing of Discourse Structure Test (DST) (Shieh & Lin, 2011), in composing coherently- and cohesively-academic writing (Mulatsih, 2010), and in successful teaching of explanatory types of writing (Yang, 2008). There is also an investigation of thematic progression of newspapers which focuses on editorials column (Hawes, 2010). Nevertheless, a study focusing on the patterns of thematic progression in the argumentative

texts of the 'opinion' column of online newspapers has not been conducted yet. Thus, this paper aims to fill the unexplored gap.

2. Background

The question of how information is structured in a clause is crucial to any study that adopts a functional grammar perspective (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). In any act of communication, organization is a major issue which must be solved in order to gain a successful communication (Belmonte & McCabe-Hidalgo, 1998). One reason for this is that the message of a clause is highly dependent on the organization of its elements. This, further, is called the textual function of the clause and takes the responsibility of constructing the message of the clause. Moreover, what counts as "the basic form of the organization of the clause as message" (Halliday, 1985, p. 53, cited in Belmonte & McCabe-Hidalgo, 1998) is the thematic structure of the clause.

Thematic structure is one of the various structures of clause, which "gives the clause its character as a message" (Halliday, 1994, p. 37; Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004). The thematic structure of the sentence is divided into two parts (Theme, and Rheme) (Li, 2011), or sometimes into three parts (Theme-transitional zone-Rheme) (Erdmann, 1990). The organizing of the Theme and the Rheme is a crucial aspect in determining whether a text is cohesively organized or not. Needless to say, text cohesion, part of which comes from the organizing of the theme and the rheme, affects text comprehension (Salmani Nodoushan, 2007).

Basically, there is no consensus on the definition of theme in a sentence (Erdmann, 1990). However, in general, the different uses of theme can be divided into four categories (McCabe, 1999). First, theme is considered as a topic. Related to this consideration, Halliday (1994, p. 38), cited in Yang (2008), defines theme as "what the message is concerned with: the point of departure from what the speaker is going to say" in a clause. Further, Halliday (1994, cited in McCabe, 1999) pointed out that "The label 'Topic' usually refers to only one particular type of theme". Second, theme is defined as "the sentence element or elements, carrying the lowest degree of Communicative Dynamism (CD) within the sentence (Firbas, 2004). Third, theme is "what is known or grasped from the context" (Salih, 2008) or "what is known or given in the text" (Erdmann, 1990). Moreover, theme is also defined as "the item with which we start a clause" (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Halliday, 1985 cited in Erdmann, 1990; Halliday, 1994), or a sentence. Apart from the four categorizations, there is one more definition of theme. Theme can also be considered as what Halliday and Hassan (1976) termed as *semantic resources* which are able to link a sentence to what has gone before. Nevertheless, in this paper, theme is considered as 'what the message is concerned with' as

Halliday says; theme in English is always realized in the first position of the clause (Eggins, 2004; Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004).

In spite of the contested nature of its definition, theme is divided into three types: (a) topical or ideational (Astuti et al. 2010), (b) textual, and (c) interpersonal (Paltridge, 2006). Topical theme is a constituent in a clause which can be a participant, circumstance or process (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004). A topical theme may be preceded by either interpersonal or textual theme or both. Interpersonal theme refers to vocative, modal adjunct, finite verbal operator and polarity adjunct (Eggins, 1994; Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004, p. 79) that exists before the topical theme and the theme indicating the point of view being taken in the clause (Paltridge, 2006, p. 147). Further, what count as textual theme are continuative, conjunction, and conjunctive adjunct which also come before the topical theme. Nevertheless, no less important than theme is the existence of rheme in a clause or sentence.

The definition of rheme is also varied. Halliday (2004, p. 64) defines rheme as the developed-part of theme, “the remainder of the message”, or what Bloor and Bloor (2004, p. 71) termed as “the rest of the message.” In line with this, Paltridge (2006, p. 146) defines rheme as “what the clause has to say about the theme”. Moreover, Mulatsih (2010) argues that the existence of rheme in a clause is considered as the most salient element of its nature of being the carrier of the clause message. Because theme is “what is known or given in the text,” Erdmann (1990) defines rheme as “the unknown or new.” However, it is worth noticing that the systems of information structure (Given-New) and thematic structure (Theme-Rheme) are detached structures, although they are still correlated (McCabe, 1999). One reason for this is that, “other things being equal, Theme will conflate with Given” (1999). In accordance with this, the speaker will “locate the focus, the climax of the New, somewhere within the Rheme” (Halliday 1994, p. 299; McCabe, 1999). Furthermore, the existence of both Thematic and Information structures in the language leads “a writer or speaker to choose to put New information in Theme position and Given information in Rheme position” although the intention of a text will be easily transferred if “the New information is presented in the Rheme position” (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). However, what is important is that once the theme is identified, then the rest of the clause is considered as the rheme (Thompson, 2006). The detaching nature of both structures is discussed in the organization of theme and rheme—thematic progression.

Thematic progression (TP) as a theory was first propounded by Frantisek Danes in 1974, who argued that ‘the paragraph is a content unit delimited by its boundaries and its inner coherence’ (Pípalová, 2005). He used his own concept *thematic progression* in elaborating Mathesius’ typology of

paragraphs (Pípalová, 2005). Eggins (1994) referred TP to the exchange of information between successive theme and rheme pairings in a text. Paltridge (2006, p. 148) pointed out that thematic progression refer to “the way in which the Theme of a clause may pick up, or repeat, a meaning from a preceding Theme or Rheme.” Furthermore, thematic progression is a crucial aspect for us in tracing the global flow of information throughout the text (Carter-Thomas, 1999). Daneš in 1974 divided Thematic Progression (TP) into three main types: (1) simple linear theme, (2) constant theme, and (3) multiple theme or split rheme (Rørvik, 2003; Paltridge, 2006). Simple linear Theme which is “the most elementary, or basic TP,” is where the rheme of each sentence becomes the theme of the following sentences (Daneš 1974, cited in McCabe, 1999). In line with this, Paltridge (2006, p. 149) defines linear theme as “. . . when the subject matter in the Rheme of one clause is taken up in the Theme of a following clause.”

Paltridge also defined constant theme, which he also referred to as theme reiteration. “In this (Theme reiteration or constant Rheme) pattern, ‘Theme 1’ is picked up and repeated at the beginning of next clause, signaling that each clause will have something to say about the Theme” (Paltridge 2006, p. 148). “In ‘multiple Theme’/‘split Rheme’ progression, a Rheme may include a number of different pieces of information, each of which may be taken up as the Theme in a number of subsequent clauses” (Paltridge 2006, p. 150).

In addition, McCabe (1999) added a new pattern of thematic progression: split theme. Split theme refers to when a theme may contain more than one idea, and these ideas are developed in different subsequent clauses. Another pattern of thematic progression which is called derived theme: “the topics of each sentence are individually different, but are all derived from the same overriding Theme, or hyper theme or overall Theme of a paragraph or text” (Daneš, 1974, cited in McCabe, 1999, p. 171). Further, different from the division of thematic progression aforementioned, Lan (2008) suggested the existence of rheme reiteration and zigzag pattern. Lan referred rheme reiteration to a situation in which “Rheme or part of the Rheme keeps the same while Theme changes” and zigzag pattern to a situation wherein the “Theme of last sentence become the Rheme of the present sentence” (Lan, 2008, p. 5). These patterns of thematic progression are useful in the study of the coherence and cohesiveness of texts.

3. Method

This research is both quantitative and qualitative—in the sense defined by Dornyei (2007). The quantitative part of the research deals with the frequency of occurrence of themes while the qualitative aspect addresses the qualitative explanation of themes in specific contexts including the

interpretation of the types of theme, the thematic progression pattern, and the coherence and academic level of the texts. This is in line with what Sandelowski (2000) says about description—that “all inquiries entail description, and all description entails interpretation” (p. 335).

This research, further, is the kind of discourse grammar analysis as it tries to analyze the texts of the opinion section in *The Jakarta Post* from a discourse-based perspective, rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) (See Eggins, 2004; Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiesen 2004).

The data analyzed in this study were taken from the ‘opinion’ ssection of *The Jakarta Post*. The data taken were from five issues retrieved randomly from dates 11 to 13 May, 2013—from www.thejakartapost.com. Each of the five texts was broken down based on its T-Unit, with T-Unit being what Fries (1994) refers to as the “major clause with embedded dependent clause” (p. 229). In the process of theme-rheme identification, Halliday’s model was employed (See Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004).

Further, in this research, the level of coherence of the texts was also analyzed using Eggins’ parameter of coherence (2004) as exemplified in Table 1 below.

Table 1

The Parameter of Coherence Proposed by Eggins (2004)

| No | Level of coherence | Explanation |
|----|--------------------|--|
| 1 | Good | If the type of thematic progression is constant in one type each paragraph. |
| 2 | Fair | If the type of thematic progression is inconstant or change from one type to others type each paragraph. |
| 3 | Less | If new theme(s) is/are created in the middle of paragraph. |
| 4 | Poor | If there is no thematic progression used. |

4. Results

After the identification of the theme-rheme of the texts of the opinion section of The Jakarta Post using Halliday’s model (i.e., the theme is realized in the first position in the clause), it was found that the type of theme used in those texts included the following:

1. Text 1 consists of thirty seven (37) T-Units. Each T-Unit has topical theme. Hence, text 1 is predominantly structured by topical theme. Following the first position of topical theme is textual theme (7) in the second position and interpersonal theme (4) in the third place.

2. Text 2 consists of forty two (42) T-Units. All of the forty two T-Units have topical theme. Beside the topical theme, ten (10) textual themes and five (5) interpersonal themes are revealed.
3. Text 3 consists of thirty three (33) T-Units in which topical theme is found in each T-Unit. Further, eight (8) occurrences of textual theme and five (5) occurrences of interpersonal theme are found.
4. Text 4 consists of forty eight (48) T-Units. All of the T-Units in the text have topical theme. Following the topical theme, ten (10) instances of textual theme were found and there were only two (2) occurrences of interpersonal theme.
5. Similar to text 2, text 5 also consists of forty two (42) T-Units in which each T-Unit has topical theme. Beside the topical theme, fourteen (14) textual themes and nine (9) interpersonal themes are found.

Thus, from the findings of theme types above, it can be seen that the most dominant theme type is topical theme (202 in total) as can be found in every T-Unit of the five texts. Following the position of topical theme is textual theme (49) in the second place and interpersonal theme (25) in the last position.

It is perhaps possible to extend Salmani Nodoushan's (2012) descriptions of obligatory, conventional and optional moves into the current study. According to Salmani Nodoushan (2012), in the structural-move analysis of a text, if a move is observed in 100% of the texts analyzed, it can be classified as obligatory, if observed in 66% to 99% of the analyzed texts it can be classified as conventional, and if found in less than 66% of the texts, as optional (See also Salmani Nodoushan, 2011; Salmani Nodoushan and Khakbaz, 2011; Salmani Nodoushan and Montazeran, 2012). By the same token, the same labels can be used for themes (although their percentages are not at stake here, and we use the terms based on theme frequency. As such, topical themes can be considered as obligatory themes in opinion columns; by the same token, textual themes can be called conventional and interpersonal themes can be called optional.

Further, the types of thematic progression that can be spotted in the texts are as shown below:

1. Out of seven types of Thematic Progression (TP), only 4 can be seen in text 1. They are simple linear progression (11), constant theme (9), rheme reiteration (9), and zigzag pattern (2). There is no occurrence of split rheme, split theme, or derived theme. Out of thirty seven T-Units, 7 unconnected theme are also found in the text.

2. Similar to text 1, only four types of TP are found in text 2—i.e., 12 Simple linear themes, 8 constant themes, 10 rheme reiterations, and 4 zigzag patterns. Out of forty two T-Units, it is only found that six unconnected themes existed in the text.
3. Similar to texts 1 and 2, four types of TP are found in text 3. They are simple linear theme (12), constant theme (6), rheme reiteration (10), and zigzag pattern (3). Further, out of forty three (43) T-Units, only one unconnected theme was found in the text.
4. In text 4, all of the seven types of TP were found—i.e., 11 simple linear themes, 12 constant themes, 3 split rhemes, 1 split theme, 4 rheme reiterations, and 4 zigzag patterns. Similar to text 2, six occurrences of unconnected theme were also found in text 4.
5. Out of the seven patterns of TP, five types are found in text 5. They are simple linear theme (11), constant theme (9), split theme (1), rheme reiteration (5), and zigzag pattern (4). Similar to text 1, seven (7) unconnected themes were also in the text.

The findings reported above show that the highest occurrences of TP pattern is simple linear progression (57 in total). Following simple linear progression, constant theme (with a frequency of 44) falls in the second place, rheme reiteration (38) in the third place, zig-zag pattern (17) in the fourth place, split rheme (3) in the fifth place, and split theme (1) in the last place. While derived theme does not feature at all in any of the texts analyzed.

Further, the result of coherence level of the texts based on Eggins' level of coherence parameter (2004) can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2
The Coherence Level of the Texts of The Jakarta Post

| | Level of coherence | | | |
|--------|--------------------|------|------|------|
| | Good | Fair | Less | Poor |
| Text 1 | - | √ | - | - |
| Text 2 | - | √ | - | - |
| Text 3 | - | √ | - | - |
| Text 4 | - | √ | - | - |
| Text 5 | - | √ | - | - |

From the table, it can be seen that all the texts analyzed are at the 'fair' level of coherence.

5. Discussion

Based on the results presented above, three points will be discussed in this

section: (1) the types of theme, (2) the types of Thematic Progression, and (3) the coherence level of the text.

The results in the previous section indicate that the highest occurrence of the type of themes often used in the texts of the opinion section of *The Jakarta Post* is topical theme (202). All of the T-Units of the texts have topical theme. This may be in line with what Ho (2011, p. 22) says about topical theme: "it is an obligatory constituent while interpersonal and textual themes are optional and precede the topical theme" (See also Salmani Nodoushan, 2011, 2012; Salmani Nodoushan and Khakbaz, 2011; Salmani Nodoushan and Montazeran, 2012).

The three types of topical theme (i.e., participant, circumstance, and process) are all found in the texts of *The Jakarta Post*. Tables 3 through 5 show this.

Table 3

The Evidence of Topical Theme: Participant

| | Topical theme | Rheme |
|---------|---------------------|--|
| Perhaps | <u>media bosses</u> | will just say this is what the audience wants. |
| Maybe | <u>people</u> | just need to switch off the set more often and face up to our simultaneous problems of mindless intolerance and a mindless penchant for, in the words of a critic of the American media, "amusing ourselves to death". |

Table 4

The Evidence of Topical Theme: Circumstance

| Topical Theme | Rheme |
|-----------------|--|
| On Tuesday, | demonstrating residents in Sampang, demanding that the Shiites who had to seek refuge at a stadium be evicted rather than be permitted to return to their homes. |
| In August 2012, | an attack occurred on the Shiite community, leaving three dead including two Shiites. |

Table 5

The Evidence of Topical Theme: Process

| | Topical Theme | Rheme |
|-----|---|----------------------------|
| But | forever blaming politicians and authoritarian leaders | doesn't make sense either. |

Further, following the first position of topical theme is textual theme (49) in the second place and the interpersonal theme (25) in the third position. All the texts analyzed have textual theme which outnumbers the interpersonal theme. Needless to say, the high occurrence of textual theme attests to the nature of argumentative text.

In relation to interpersonal theme, Ho's research result (2011, p. 115) exhibits that "the deployment of interpersonal Theme' is a representation of 'personal style.'" Further, this means that the greater use of interpersonal Theme reflects non-expert writers of English who use interpersonal theme to create "a less authoritarian tone" in their texts (Ho, 2011). Yet our finding exhibits the reverse: the frequency of interpersonal theme is outnumbered by that of the textual theme. Thus, it can be said that the texts analyzed are likely to be written by expert writers. Further, this finding can also mean that "the writers are not much concerned to negotiate interpersonal relationships with the reader" and thus "the focus is on the transmission of information" (Thompson, 2006, p. 662).

The findings of the types of Thematic Progression pattern presented above exhibit that the commonest type of themes used in the texts of the opinion section of *The Jakarta Post* is the simple linear theme (57). Following the position of the simple linear theme is constant theme (44) in the second position, rheme reiteration (38) in the third position, zigzag pattern (17) in the fourth position, split rheme (3) in the fifth position, and split theme (2) in the last position, but derived theme does not feature at all.

The high percentage of simple linear theme found in the texts may be equal to what Daneš (1974), cited in McCabe (1999), argues about the simple linear theme—that it is the most elementary or basic type of thematic progression. In order to be considered as an academic text, a text is necessarily structured by simple linear theme. In relation to this, Eggins (2004, cited in Abed 2010, p. 80) asserts that it is necessary that an academic text have "a high incidence of cross-referential links from the Rheme of one clause to the Theme of the next clause." Moreover, Belmonte and McCabe-Hidalgo (1998) also argue that this type of progression is one of the characteristics of argumentative texts.

The second highest TP pattern found in the texts is constant theme. This is worth noticing as the high number of constant progression in a text could possibly indicate the "techniques of simple explanation and description" in writing strategy (Abed, 2010, p. 91). Moreover, it seems that by using greater constant progression the writer wants to "hammer their audiences over and over with the same word or phrase" (Hawes & Thomas, 1996, p. 165). However, overusing this type of progression may lead to the lack of deep explanation of the ideas introduced as the writer does not expand the information contained in the rheme (Belmonte & McCabe-Hidalgo, 1998, p.

22).

One more type of thematic progression propounded by Daneš (1974), cited in McCabe (1999), is derived theme. In those texts, however, derived Theme is difficult to judge. The reason for this is that there is still a debate on whether derived theme is one type of thematic progression or not (McCabe, 1999). Another reason is that, as Daneš defines derived theme to be a situation wherein “the topics of each sentence are individually different, but are all derived from the same overriding Theme, or hyper theme or overall Theme of a paragraph or text” (Daneš 1974, cited in McCabe, 1999, p. 171), there is an implication that the hypertheme—unifying the different themes—works only at the level of paragraph and text. This, further means that the hypertheme does not work at the level of ‘a part of paragraph’ which in fact is found in the texts being analyzed. The examples of hypertheme merely unifying a part of a paragraph can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6

The Examples of Hypertheme merely Unifying a Part of a Paragraph

| Topical Theme | Rheme |
|---|--|
| On Tuesday, | demonstrating residents in Sampang, demanding that the Shiites who had to seek refuge at a stadium be evicted rather than be permitted to return to their homes. |
| In August 2012 | an attack occurred on the Shiite community, leaving three dead including two Shiites. |
| A personal squabble involving a Shiite leader | became a call to action to drive the Shiites out of Sampang. |

The three sentences were not correlated had it not been for a hypertheme tying the three Themes. The hypertheme of the sentences is ‘the reasons toughening the demands for Shiite to be out of Sampang’. For the sake of ease in analyzing the data, however, Daneš’ definition of derived theme is used. The hypertheme tying a part of a paragraph, then, is not considered as derived theme. However, the lack of derived theme, McCabe (1999) argues, is attributed to the spoken nature of a text. Following this argumentation, hence, the investigation of thematic progression patterns of the texts may result in non-academic types of texts from a Western perspective as there is a lack of derived theme.

The texts analyzed also revealed instances of unconnected theme. Tables 7 through 9 present examples of unconnected theme which were observed in the analyzed texts from the opinion column of *The Jakarta Post*.

Table 7

The Evidence of Unconnected Theme 1

| Topical Theme | Rheme |
|--|--|
| In 2010-2011, for example, The fuel subsidy | 8.7 million additional vehicles took to the streets. is important mainly to keep the price goods and services stable. |

Table 8

The Evidence of Unconnected Theme 2

| Topical Theme | Rheme |
|---|--|
| The lessons viewers may take from films based on non-fiction stories The fact that Indonesia is a multicultural nation | appear stronger than those from fictitious accounts. is one of the country's most significant features. |

Table 9

The Evidence of Unconnected Theme 3

| Topical Theme | Rheme |
|--|---|
| If it The United States—like any country involved in a trade agreement— | is about “sharing the pain”—and about keeping in mind that it's a short-term pain aimed at a long-term gain i.e. future competitiveness. has its own interests to protect. |

In Tables 7 through 9, there is no relation between each theme of the T-Unit. In Table 6, the theme ‘In 2010-2011, for example,’ has no relation to ‘the fuel subsidy’; even they do not share the same hyper theme. Similar to Table 7, the theme of Table 8 ‘The fact that Indonesia is a multicultural nation’ is a completely new theme different from the preceding theme ‘The lessons viewers may take from films based on non-fiction stories’. In Table 9, too, ‘if it’ and ‘The United States— like any country involved in a trade agreement’ are detached themes.

Further, as evidenced in Table 2 above, it can be said that all the texts analyzed (text 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) fall within the ‘fair’ level of coherence. One reason for this is that the types of thematic progression found in the texts is not consistence: it changes from one type to other types within the texts. The Appendix displays schematic representation of the patterns of thematic progression in the five texts Another reason is that the frequency of new

themes found in the texts is low (27 occurrences) compared to the texts which employed thematic progression (161).

As the texts of the 'opinion' section of newspapers are closely related to how one argues for/against a thing, it can be asserted that the observed patterns of thematic progression in the texts of the opinion section of *The Jakarta Post* are in line with the pattern of thematic progression in argumentative text types in that the commonest type of theme used is topical theme and the commonest type of thematic progression pattern is simple linear theme. These do not deviate from what has been formulated by previous researchers—that topical theme is an obligatory (Ho, 2011), and that simple linear theme is the most basic type of thematic progression (Daneš, 1974, cited in McCabe, 1999). However, it should be noted that the pattern of the type of a text is culture-bound. It differs across cultures. Native writers of English, for instance, may compose less or even no unrelated themes within paragraphs or texts than Indonesian natives do in time of writing English texts. This may be because logic which is the basis of argumentation is "evolved out of culture" (Kaplan, 1966). Another reason may be that 'organizing words and sentences into a unified coherent discourse bears cultural significance' (Tannen, 1984, cited in Almaden, 2006). Therefore, the pattern of thematic progression found in the texts of the opinion section of *The Jakarta Post* is distinct from the pattern of thematic progression of argumentative texts in other cultures.

Knowing and comprehending the thematic progression patterns—as the ones used in the opinion Section of *the Jakarta Post*—may be facilitative in learning to write coherently and cohesively. Knowing that the topical and simple linear themes are the common pattern of theme and thematic progression employed in an argumentative text, for instance, can serve as a reference in writing an English argumentative text. However, it should also be noted that the unconnected themes found should not necessarily be followed, but it is necessary to be aware of such 'errors'. By doing so, writing coherently and cohesively may be enhanced.

6. Conclusion

The Theme-Rheme relationship and thematic progression are crucial in the study of the coherence and cohesion of texts as it serves as cohesion ties unifying the global flows of themes in the texts. Further, the findings of the investigation of the types of themes and thematic progression pattern used in typically English argumentative texts (e.g., the text of the opinion section of *The Jakarta Post*) are that (a) the commonest type of themes is topical theme, and (b) the commonest type of thematic progression pattern is simple linear theme. These findings are in line with what previous researchers have formulated—that topical theme is obligatory (Ho, 2011), and that simple

linear theme is the most basic type of thematic progression (Daneš, 1974, cited in McCabe, 1999). However, it is worth noticing that the pattern of the type of a text is cultural-bound. Further, native writers of English, for instance, may employ less or even no unrelated themes within paragraphs or texts than Indonesian native speaker do in time of writing English texts. These patterns may be highly influenced by cultural patterns of thought—as Kaplan (1966) suggests; oriental writing tends to be indirect. In sum, the pattern of thematic progression found in the texts of the opinion section of *The Jakarta Post* is distinct from the pattern of thematic progression of argumentative texts in other cultures.

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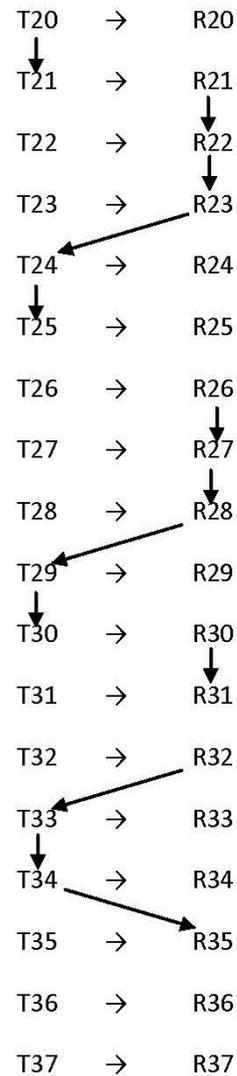
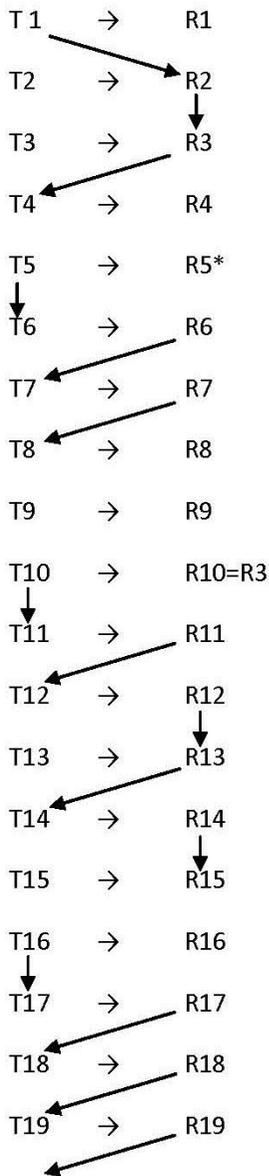
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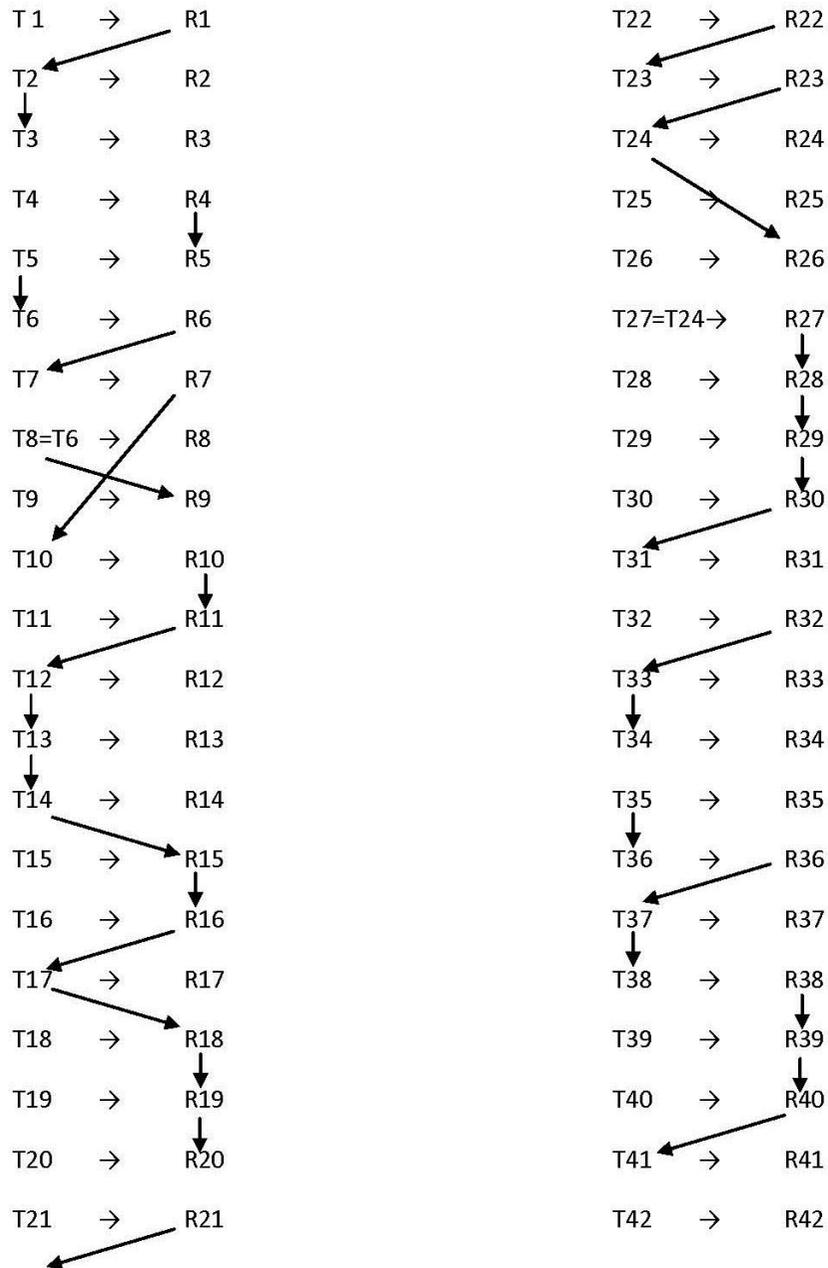
Appendix

Schematic representation of the patterns of thematic progression in the five texts analyzed

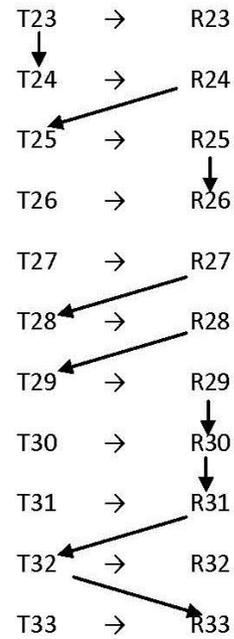
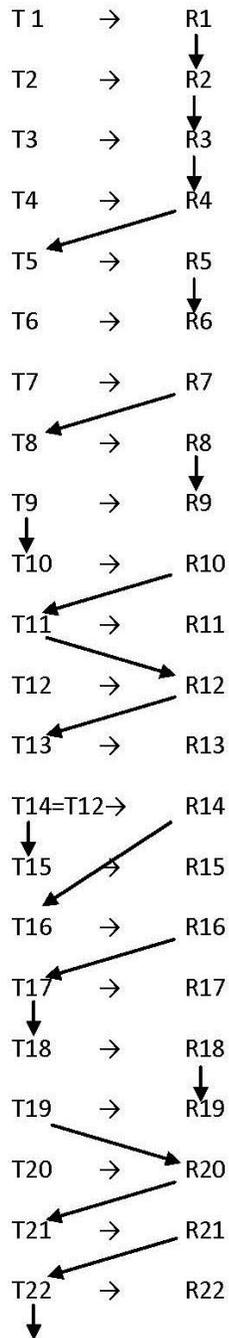
Text 1. Thematic Progression Pattern



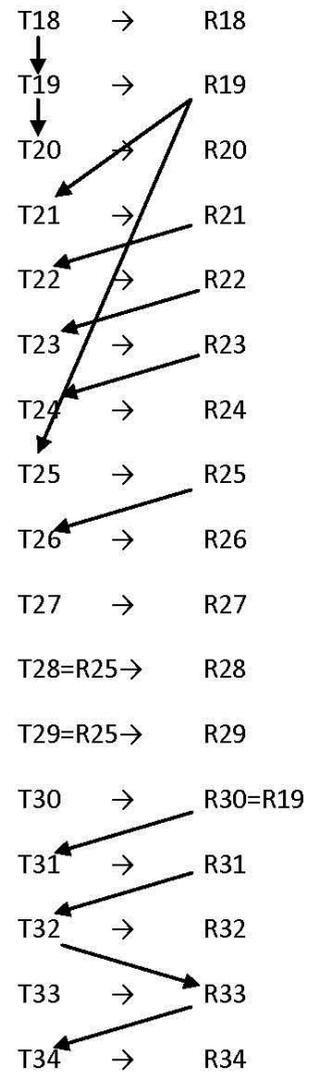
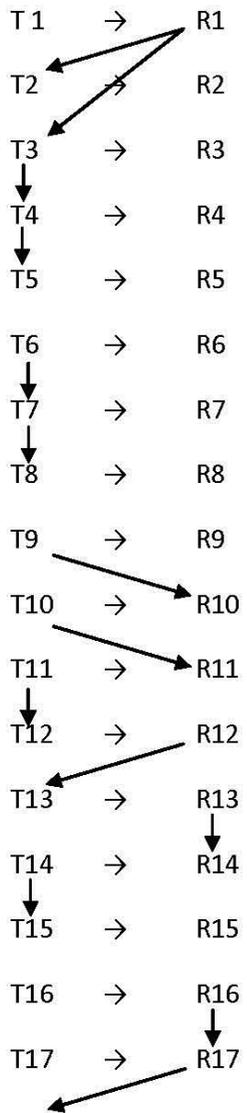
Text 2 Thematic Progression Pattern



Text 3 Thematic Progression Pattern



Text 4 Thematic Progression Pattern



Text 5 Thematic Progression Pattern

