THEMATIC PROGRESSION IN BUSINESS LETTERS WRITTEN BY AIESEC

A JOURNAL ARTICLE

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by
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C11.2012.01310

ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
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THEMATIC PROGRESSION IN BUSINESS LETTER WRITTEN BY AIESEC

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ABSTRACT

The title of this thesis is "Thematic Progression in Business Letters Written By AIESEC". The objectives of the study are to identify the theme and rheme in the letters and to describe thematic progression pattern in the letters.

The researcher took some business letters of AIESEC as the source of data. The data were analyzed by using descriptive research design. The steps to analyze the data in this study are: identifying every clause in the letters, identifying the Theme and Rheme of every clause of the letters, describing the thematic development of the letters, figuring the Thematic Progression pattern of the letters, interpreting the data, and drawing the conclusion.

As the result, there are 119 clauses found in 6 letters and there are three types of Thematic Progression pattern found in the letters. Those are constant Patterns, zig–zag pattern, and multiple patterns. Constant pattern dominates among the other patterns, that is 50 (44,24%). Then, it is followed by 29 (25,66%) of Zig-zag pattern and 1 (0,88%) of multiple patterns. It was found that the highest frequency of Thematic Progression patterns is constant pattern.

An unexpected theme which makes paragraph in the letters less coheren were found. They are thirty times (29,22%). It is more than 25 %. This result indicates that not all of the member of AIESEC have deep understanding about the thematic progression pattern. This happens because the recruitment of AIESEC member is from all of students who have good proficiency in English but they are still learning.

Key words: *business letter, clause, theme, thematic progression, rheme*

INTRODUCTION

Human can never live alone without other's helps to survive and fulfill their needs because they are social creatures. To ask help from other people, they use language as a bridge to mingle in social life. It is not just as a media communication but also as the persuading media among people. It can share something about their needs or just comment something around them as the communication topic. Gerot and Wignell (1994:5) state that,

> "Language is functional, so study of language from alone cannot fully explain systemic language use. Language use, though unique, can be explored and linguistic elements and specific language events can be systematically examined from a functional point of view. In short we make meaning through our choice and use of words and systemic study of language in use is how we make sense of our meaning."

Language itself can be divided into different modes such as written and spoken. Gerot and Wignell (1994:158) identify that spoken and written languages differ in a number of ways. Written language is almost used because it is more effective and documented.

One example of written language is a letter. Blake and Bly (1993:125) discuss that a letter is a written message containing information from one person to another. Letter can be written in personally and generally. Personal letter is written by someone who wants sharing his or her own purposes. Meanwhile, general letter is written by a company or an organization. It is called business letters.

Business letters is published by an organization or a company. These are the written communications which are not only for intern but also extern communication. In line with the company or organization purposes, business letter must be written in a good composition so that becoming easy understanding.

In writing letters, people need textual metafunction to make a good thematic progression. It refers to the way in which the theme of a clause may pick up or repeat a meaning from a preceding theme and rheme.

Based on the potential clause, in sentences there are two parts of clause, such as theme and rheme. Halliday (1994:37) argues that the definition of theme and rheme is as follows: theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned. The remainder of the message, the part in which theme is developed is called rheme.

The data focused on the letters of an educational organization named AIESEC. Based on the official AIESEC website (http://www.aiesec.org/), explains that AIESEC is the world's largest youth-run organization. AIESEC was English acronym for *International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences.* It focuses on providing a platform for youth leadership development, AIESEC offers young people's opportunity to participate in international internships, experience leadership and global learning environment. This organization is abroad in many countries around the world, so they use English as the official language included in written and spoken.

AIESEC uses business letter for its written language. In making this letter, AIESEC must pay attention to the contents of the business letter itself. This must consist of some sentences which must be hanging together. A sentence which can

consist of some clauses must support each other to make a solid paragraph. To make it, it must pay attention to the theme and rheme progression.

Both theme and rheme are so important in a written text, so does it in writing the business letters. For making a good letter, people should pay attention to the thematic progression.

The notions of theme and rheme are also employed in the examination of thematic progression, or method of development of texts (Fries 2002). Thematic progression refers to the way in which the theme of a clause may pick up or repeat, a meaning from a preceding theme or rheme. They are three kinds of pattern, 1) constant pattern is picking up 'Theme 1' and repeating at the beginning of next clause, signalling that each clause will have something to say about the theme. 2)linear pattern is when the subject matter in the rheme of one clause is taken up in the theme of a following clause. 3)multiple pattern is a rheme in a clause 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.

METHOD

In writing this study, the researcher uses the descriptive research design. This consideration leads the researcher to support the study by providing a qualitative description on the clauses in the business letters written by AIESEC name the endorsment letters.

The researcher took six letters from the official website of AIESEC (http://www.aiesec.org) by downloading these via internet in September 2013. Researcher just focused on the endoresement letters written by AIESEC Local Committe in Indonesia, because the members are taken from various university which has various English background. There are just six letters that have got the permission from the writers. Then these are enough for supporting the thematic progression analysis.

Unit of analysis in this research is every clause in the business letters written by AIESEC'S members named endoresement letters.

This research analyzes the qualitative data. In collecting the data, the researcher used some steps. First, collecting business letters written by AIESEC'S members from the official website (http://www.aiesec.org). Second, reading many kinds of the business letters which founded in the website. Third, choosing the endoresement letter which choosen as the data in this research. Next, asking permission from the writer of endoresement letters by email or mobile phone. The last one, asking these endoresement letters as data for supporting the analysis.

In analyzing the data, the researcher uses the framework of Paltridge (2006: 147) and trough some steps in analyzing the data. The first by taking one of business letter. Then, dividing into some paragraphs. After that each paragraph will divide into some clauses and analyze which one to be theme and which one to be rheme . Next step is describing the thematic development of the letters. Go on by figuring the thematic progression pattern of the letters. After that interpreting the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher has analyzed the data and in this chapter the result of data analysis is provided by following the answers of the research of the problems. Problems are found to know the theme and rheme and also the thematic progression itself of the business letters. The researcher analyzes 6 letters which are the endorsements letters are taken from some local committees of AIESEC Indonesia

Thematic Progression is the way of a writer to make a paragraph becoming hang together by picking up the theme or rheme in the previous sentences to be the theme in the following sentences with some kinds of progression styles. There are three kinds of thematic progression: they are theme reiteration / constant theme pattern, zig-zag / linear rheme pattern, and multiple theme / split rheme pattern.

Types of Thematic Progression found in "Endorsement Letters" can be shown in the following table:

Table 1. Types of Thematic Progression found in

"AIESEC Endoresement Letters"

No	Type of Thematic Progression	LETTERS						Total Theme	Frequency (%)
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
1	Constant Pattern	13	8	6	9	7	7	50	44.24
2	Zig-zag Pattern	8	7	3	4	3	4	29	25.66
3	Multiple Pattern	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.88
4	Unexpected Pattern	8	10	1	5	6	3	33	29.22
	CLAUSE	31	26	11	19	17	15	113	100

Table 4.2 shows the frequency of types of thematic progression found in the letters. Constant pattern are the dominant ones among the other patterns. That is 50 (44.24%). Then, they are followed by 29 (25.66 %) of zig-zag patterns and 1 (0.88%) of multiple pattern. From 119 clauses found in letters, there are many unexpected pattern found in the letters 33 (29.22%).

The detailed discussion of type of thematic progression is explained in the following section. The researcher analyzes 6 letters. Then each letter divided into some clauses. Each clause of the letters is analyzed by the researcher in order to give clear description of type of thematic progression. The errors concerning the grammar or spelling are ignored.
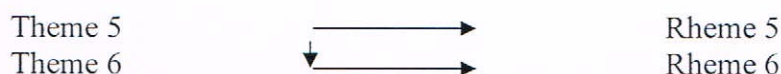
Analysis of Constant Pattern

In the endoresement letter 1 consists of 5 paragraphs with finding 13 clauses used constant patterns. The researcher divided each clause into theme and rheme. It can be seen on the table below:

Table 2. The Theme and Rheme of letter 1

CLAUSE	THEME	RHEME
5	*(he)*	*has the capability to lead*
6	*And (he)*	*(has the capability) to continue the path of success of this entity.*

After finding the theme and rheme, the researcher analyzed the movement of theme or rheme used by the writer. It is the figure of thematic progression pattern. It can be seen below:

Figure 1. The Thematic Progression of Letter 1

Theme 5   →   Rheme 5
Theme 6   →   Rheme 6

Constant patterns are used by writer thirteen times. These patterns are used in many paragraphs. For example it is employed by repeating the theme of clause 5 (*he*) as the theme of clause 6 (*and he*).

Analysis of Multiple Pattern

Endoresement letter 1 also used the multiple pattern in certain clauses, as below:

CLAUSE	THEME	RHEME
1	*Sincerely I, Rifanditto Adhikara*	*endorse Panji Agustian*
2	*Who*	*is currently positioned as the Local Committee President of AIESEC LC University Andalas*
3	*(Who)*	*(is) to be the candidate for Member Committe Vice President of AIESEC in Indonesia term 13/14.*

Figure 2. The Thematic Progression of Letter 1

Theme 1   →   Rheme 1
Theme 2   →   Rheme 2
Theme 3   →   Rheme 3
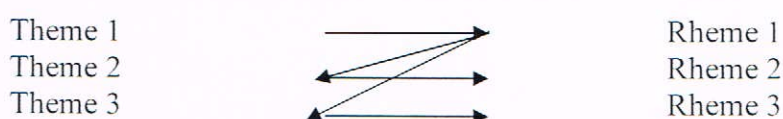
These are the fewest patterns of all, the multiple thematic progression patterns. It is just two times in thisparagraph. This pattern is employed by splitting

the rheme of clause 1 (Panji Agustian) to be the theme of clause 2 (who) and clause 3 (who).

Analysis of Zig-zag Pattern

In the endorsement letter 1, the writer also used the zig-zag patterns by dividing the theme and rheme as table below:

Table 3 The Theme and Rheme of letter 1

CLAUSE	THEME	RHEME
4	*I*	*Believe he*
5	*(he)*	*has the capability to lead*

Figure 3 The Thematic Progression of Letter 1

Theme 4   Rheme 4
Theme 5   Rheme 5

After classifying the theme and rheme, the progressing is drawn as figure above. This showed up the zig-zag pattern by picking up the rheme 4 (He) of clause 4 and repeating this as the theme 5 of next clause.

Analysis of Unexpected Pattern

The Unexpected pattern are also still found in the letter 1. Because of this the letter became less coherent because there is no connection from the theme or rheme of certain clause with the following theme of next clause, so the pattern became broken. For example:

Table 4. The Theme and Rheme of letter 1

CLAUSE	THEME	RHEME
10	*and (somene who)*	*(has strong) motivation in AIESEC's mission to develop young people.*
11	*Perharps this strong belief*	*was incorporated*
12	*because of his own experience in self-development throughout the roles he*	*took so far*

Figure 4 The Thematic Progression of Letter 1

Theme 10   Rheme 10
Theme 11   Rheme 11
Theme 12   Rheme 12
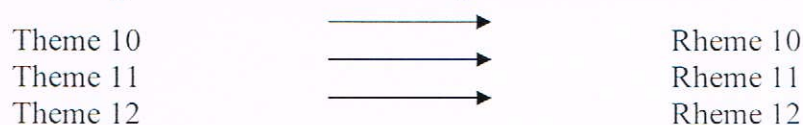
CONCLUSION

Briefly the researcher concludes that the business letter of AIESEC consist of 119 clauses for 6 business letters. After the analysis has been done, AIESEC used three kinds of thematic progressions in spreading the themes of their business letters. They are constants, zig-zag and multiple patterns.

Constant patterns are the dominant patterns among others. It is employed by the writer in spreading the theme or rheme to make the thematic progression of the letter many times. This patterns is repeated until fifty times (44,24%). The method of this theme progression is just by repeating the theme in the previous clause as the theme of the following clause and doing same method for the following clause. It is easy and the simplest one.

Zig-zag patterns are the second patterns mostly found in the AIESEC's business letters. About 25,66 %, the writer use this pattern twenty nine times. Comparing this with the constants pattern, it is more difficult because the writer must pick up one rheme of the previous clause to be the theme of following clauses. AIESEC is an international organization so that they are fluent both writing and speaking English. This is the reason why, although the zig-zag pattern is not as easy as the constant pattern, it is also mostly found in the endorsement letters of AIESEC.

The fewest patterns which are found in this letter are the multiple patterns. It is just found once in the letter 1. It indicates that this pattern is the most difficult of all. The writer must split one theme or rheme to be used as the themes or rhemes in the following or previous clauses. The letters which are analyzed by researcher are an endorsement letters which support someone to get better position, so this pattern is not too appropiate to progress the paragraphs. This pattern is more appropiate for progressing the descriptive text, or the other kinds of text.

In 6 letters above, new themes or unexpected patterns were also found in the letters. An unexpected theme makes paragraph in the letters less coherent, therefore this kind of development should be avoided. These patterns still found in the endoresement letters written by AIESEC Local Committe in Indonesia. They are thirty times (29,22%). It is more than twenty five percen. This result indicates that not all of the member of AIESEC have deep understanding about the thematic progression pattern. This can be happened because the recruitment of AIESEC member is from all of student which has a good comprehension in English. AIESEC member are students, it means that they are still learning English.

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