

An Analysis of The Thematic Progression Patterns in The Abstract of The Undergraduate Thesis

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Abstract

The analysis of thematic progression in various texts has been carried out by many researchers. However, the study of thematic progression and its contribution towards the coherence and cohesion of the texts particularly the ones such as the undergraduate thesis abstracts is rarely done. This study aims to examine the use of thematic progression patterns and its contribution to the coherence and cohesion of the undergraduate thesis abstract. To achieve the objective, the study employed qualitative research in which the study involved eight abstracts to be analyzed. The aforesaid abstracts were drawn from the 8 high achieving undergraduate students in one of the universities in Garut for the past two years 2020-2021. The data were analyzed by following Eggins, Halliday and Hasan's framework. The findings showed that from the three patterns, Reiteration was found to be the most frequent pattern in the students writing (48,78%), followed by the Zig-zag pattern and the Multiple Rheme pattern by 39% and 12,2% respectively. Meanwhile, in regard to the contribution of the patterns toward the coherence and the cohesion of the abstract, the results showed that the usage of thematic progression and the cohesive device can contribute to making the thesis abstract coherence and cohesion. The study concluded that understanding the thematic progression is important because it can make the writing have more coherence and cohesion.

Keywords: *coherence; cohesion; thematic progression; thesis abstract*

INTRODUCTION

As a requirement for final study, students are required to submit their research thesis. Within this research thesis, there are several important elements that need to be written, one of which is abstract. The abstract serves as a point of entry for readers of the article. It's a metric for determining the quality of papers that will be published in a journal. Despite the fact that abstracts are typically prepared most lately, they are the first component of the paper that the reader reads after the title (Belcher, 2009).

Writing an abstract should be comprehensive, cohesive, and coherent apart from some general aspects of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, and structure. Moreover, a coherent text makes it easier for readers to understand the messages conveyed. As cited by Multasih (2005) The reader can easily understand the message when the text consists of cohesive and coherent. And one of the ways

to write a structured or coherent and cohesion abstract is to pay attention to the use of a thematic progression in which Theme and Rheme are formed. The Thematic structure is concerned with the organization of a clause or utterance composed of theme and Rheme to form a message. It is one of the elements that contribute to the texture of a text, known as unity of texture (Paltridge, 2006).

Moreover, thematic progression according to Paltridge (2006: 148) in Marfuaty et al (2015) is the way in which the Theme of a clause can be retrieved or repeated, from the meaning of the previous Theme or Rheme. Thematic progression usually analyzes a written text. Therefore, Not (1996: 4) in Katharina (2010) stated that thematic progression is necessary for making coherent text and structured grammar. The thematic progression is the key way to create information flow in a text.

As well as, Eggins and Emilia (2004; 2005) stated that thematic progression contributes to the cohesive development of a text and can strengthen the text's coherence and cohesion. Moreover, three main patterns of thematic progression can be observed: (1) Theme reiteration, (2) The zig-zag pattern, and (3) The multiple – Rheme pattern (Eggins, 2004)

Furthermore, Theme Reiteration According to Eggins: 2004, Theme reiteration is one basic way to keep a text focused on simply reiterating elements. It refers to the patterns in which Theme 1 is repeated at the beginning of the next clause. It indicates that each clause has information to discuss. Having the same participant-made Theme on regular basis provides the text with a clear focus. A text in which the Theme never varied would not only be boring to read or listen to but would indicate a text which is going nowhere.

Moreover, the Zig-zag pattern is an element that is introduced in the Rheme in the clause that gets promoted to become the Theme of a clause. The zig-zag pattern achieves cohesion in the text by building on newly introduced information. This gives the text a sense of cumulative development which may be absent in the repeated Thematic pattern (Eggins: 2004)

Whereas Multiple split Rheme, According to Eggins (2004), the Theme of one clause introduces a number of different pieces of information, each of which is then picked up and made a Theme in the subsequent clauses. This multiple–rheme pattern is also common in longer expository texts. The multiple–Rheme pattern provides the underlying organizing principle for a text, with both the zig-zag and Theme reiteration strategies being used for elaborating on each of the main thematic points.

Nevertheless, writing a research abstract in a language other than our native tongue is undeniably difficult; some students fail to control the Theme and Rheme interaction, causing readers to struggle to understand the entire meaning. The role of the Theme is as a message in the clause's structure that has substantial meaning and information as well as starting point for what the writer is about to say. Whereas Rheme contains new information that is developed from the Theme. (Eggins 2004; Halliday & Matthiesen 2004).

This study conducts to find out the contribution of thematic progression to the coherence and cohesion quality in the abstract of the undergraduate thesis. Furthermore, according to Halliday and Hasan (2004), a text is considered good if it satisfies two properties: cohesion and coherence. Cohesion is an internal property, whereas coherence is a contextual property of a paragraph. Besides, as cited by Halliday and Hasan (2004), it is necessary to be able to establish additional relations within the text, relations that may involve elements of any extent, both smaller and larger than a clause, from single words to lengthy passages of text.

Concentrating on the thematic progression there have been some studies that have examined thematic progression on types and genres of text. For instance, Yunita (2018) studied recount texts. Dewi, Hernawan, and Apsari (2019) investigated descriptive texts. Rahayu, Krisnawati, and

Soemantri (2020) Theme and Thematic progression in narrative texts of Indonesian EFL learners. Nasution (2019) Recount text. Undayasari and Mursid (2018) compare English and Indonesian exposition texts. Sujatna, Pamungkas, and Heriyanto (2018) studied education advertorials. Fitriati & Gayatri (2021) investigated a literature review. Siahaan (2018) analyzed in a business column of the Jakarta Post newspaper.

However, those studies predominantly investigated the thematic progression of the common genre and text type. According to the researcher's best knowledge, studies on the text type of scientific works such as thesis abstracts are rather rare. Hence, another study that focuses on the thematic progression thesis abstract needs to be conducted.

Additionally, this research would clarify the thematic progression patterns that appear predominantly in the abstract of the undergraduate thesis as well as the contribution of thematic progression to the coherence and cohesion quality of the undergraduate thesis. It expects to help the further writer determine which thematic progression patterns need to be used in writing the thesis abstract.

METHODS

This research employed qualitative research which used a case study design. The design considers proper because as cited by Creswell (2013) case study is to provide an in-depth understanding of the case by analyzing data from multiple sources and describing all details of the case where issues are identified by the researcher. Moreover, this study aims to examine the use of thematic progression patterns and its contribution to the coherence and cohesion of the undergraduate thesis abstract.

The materials in this study were chosen intentionally (purposeful) not randomly which were eight undergraduate students' thesis abstracts with the highest grade. Their thesis abstracts were taken from one of the universities in Garut which offer English majors that were published in the last two years 2020-2021. Since the final year students have submitted their theses, the participants were chosen. As well as, to determine the thematic progression that predominantly appeared and the quality of coherence and cohesion of high-achieving students' abstract thesis. Moreover, the topic of the abstract which was analyzed in this study mostly comprehends the teaching-learning process with 172 words on average.

The data were then analyzed by the following framework proposed by Eggins (2004) to determine the thematic progression pattern. The procedures of the analysis are as follows: first, close-reading the abstracts and then break down the abstracts into clauses. Second, determining the Theme and Rheme into table format to make the process of the analysis easier and clearer. Third, identifying the type of thematic progression and classifying it into reiteration, zig-zag, and Multiple patterns. Fourth, Calculate the frequency of each kind of abstract-found thematic progression pattern.

Fifth, analyze the coherence level proposed by Eggins (2004) by looking at the thematic progression analysis. The level of coherence: Good, If the type of thematic progression is constant in one type of each paragraph. Fair, If the type of thematic progression is inconstant or changes from one type to others type each paragraph. Less, if new Theme(s) is/are created in the middle of the paragraph. Poor, if there is no thematic progression used.

Lastly, in analyzing the cohesion the researchers looked at the cohesive devices proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1975). This device was used in connecting one sentence to the others. Lastly, interpreting the findings to draw a conclusion about how English students present their ideas and see

how the use of the thematic progression patterns influences the coherence and cohesion of their abstract.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings and the discussion regarding the thematic progression pattern on the undergraduate thesis abstract. This section is written to serve as the answer for the thematic progression that appears predominantly in the thesis abstract as well as to find out the contribution of thematic progression to the coherence and cohesion quality of the undergraduate thesis abstract.

Findings

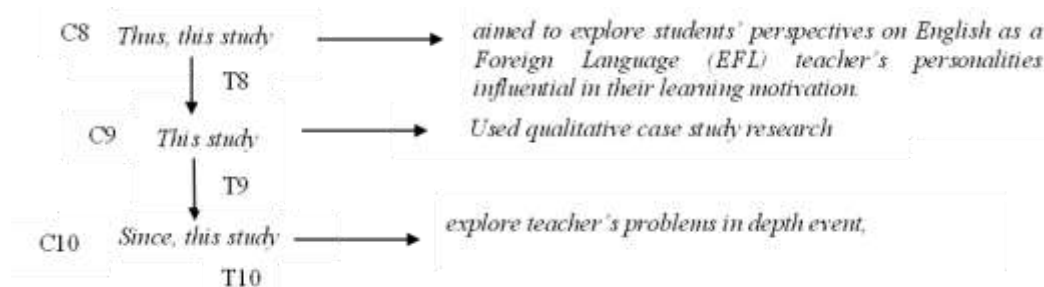
Thematic progression pattern

The first findings explain the thematic progression that appears in the thesis abstract. The result is shown below:

Table 1. Thematic progression of abstract

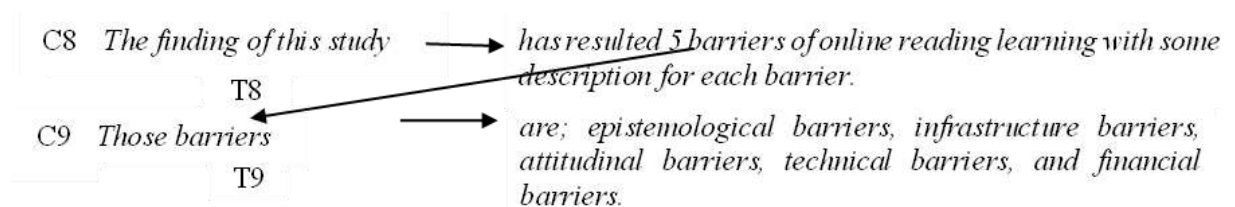
No	Types of Thematic Progression Pattern	Percentage
1.	Reiteration Pattern	48,78%
2.	Zig-Zag Pattern	39%
3.	Multiple rheme Pattern	12,2%

From the table above, the result of the thematic progression indicated that the Reiteration pattern was the most applied by the students by 48,78% Followed by the zig-zag pattern by 39% and the Multiple rheme split pattern by 12,2% which was the least pattern that was applied by the students. The example of the reiteration pattern is shown below.



From the data analysis sample above, the phrase of this study appeared from the eighth Theme to tenth Theme. The writer here applied continuously the same Theme to make the abstract has a clear focus on the topic being discussed.

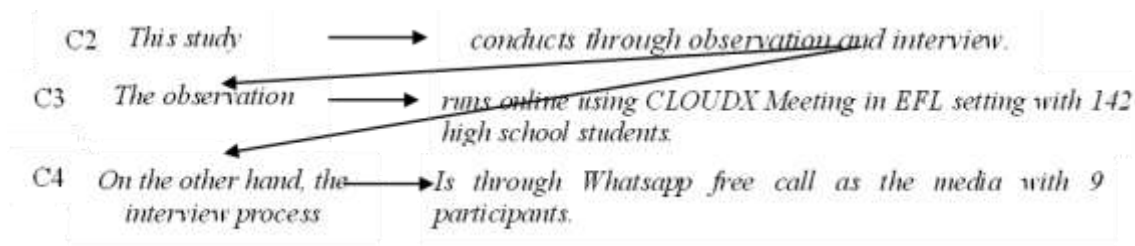
Moreover, the zig-zag pattern also appeared in the undergraduate thesis abstract. The example is shown below:



From the example above, the Zig-zag pattern appeared when in the eighth clause there was a Rheme that referred to the ninth Theme. "has resulted 5 barriers..." this was the eighth Rheme that

refers to “*Those barriers*” that became a theme in the ninth clause. The Rheme here became a new Theme to produce new information for the readers.

Furthermore, the Multiple rheme pattern appeared as the least pattern in the undergraduate thesis abstract. The example is shown below:



From the example above, the Multiple rheme split pattern appeared when the Rheme in the second clause has multiple different information in which the information from the previous Rheme became a new Theme in the next clause. It was shown that the Rheme in the second clause has multiple different information. So that, the information became a new Theme in the next clause.

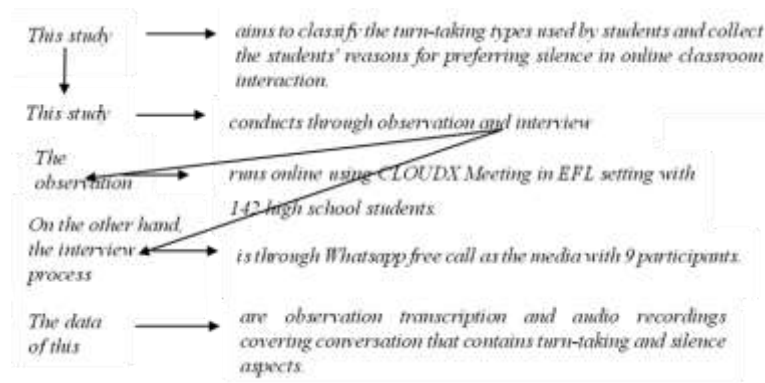
The coherence quality

Additionally, the second findings explain the coherence quality of the thesis abstract. The result is shown below:

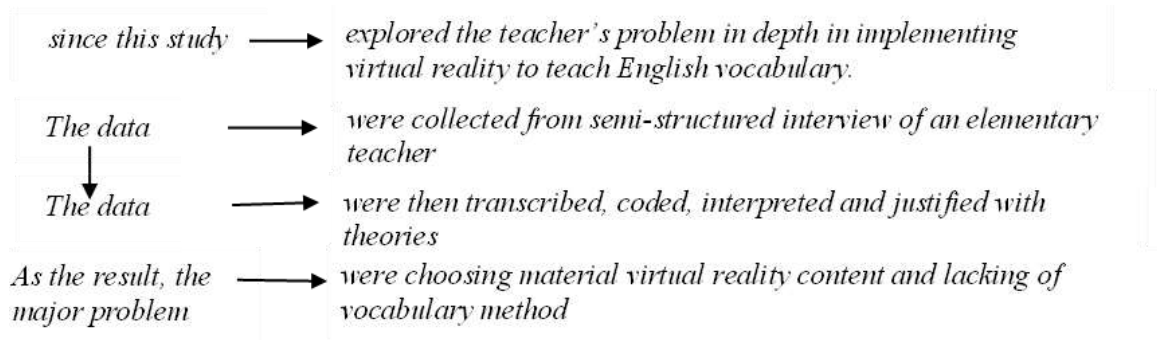
Table 2. Coherence quality

Coherence quality	Frequency	Percentage
Good	0	0
Fair	5	62,5%
Less	3	37,5%
Poor	0	0
Total	8	100%

From the data analysis above, the result of the coherence quality of the undergraduate thesis abstract that was based on the thematic progression analysis was found that the quality of the abstract was fair by 62,5% and less by 37,5%. And there was no good and poor abstract quality. As the result, it could be concluded that the coherence quality contributes to the undergraduate thesis abstract was considered fair and less. The example of fair quality abstract thesis is shown below:



From the data analysis above, the writer used two thematic progression patterns namely Reiteration and Zig-zag pattern. Moreover, the abstract was considered fair since the researcher used the Reiteration pattern at first but then change to Multiple rheme pattern. Besides, less quality abstract thesis was also found. The sample is shown below:



From the sample above, the coherence quality of the thesis abstract was considered less since it was found that the researcher used a thematic progression pattern in the middle of the paragraph. In which the researcher used the Reiteration pattern from the fifth clause to the sixth clause.

The use of cohesion

Furthermore, the third findings explain the contribution of cohesion in the undergraduate thesis abstract by using the cohesive device proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1975).

Text	Reference	Substitution	Ellipsis	Conjunction	Lexical cohesion
1.	10	-	-	7	3
2.	18	-	-	3	6
3.	16	-	-	2	6
4.	18	-	-	5	4
5.	24	-	-	5	8
6.	22	-	-	9	10
7.	26	-	-	4	4
8.	28	-	-	8	5
Total	162	0	0	43	46

As it is shown above, the result of this finding was that reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion was used to create their writing cohesively but the usage of ellipsis and substitution was not encountered. Moreover, the reference was mostly used in the text followed by the conjunction and lexical cohesion. As the result, using cohesive devices can contribute to the quality of the students writing of an abstract.

The reference was mostly used by the researchers which consisted of personal reference and demonstrative reference. The personal reference which contains words such as it, he, and they were found in the text analyzed as well as the use of words such as this, the, that, and those were found in the personal reference. This can be seen as the example below:

In an online learning setting, student participation is considered an important aspect. It has repeatedly been reported that student participation is considered a sign of a successful learning process.

The word 'it' serves as a personal reference which refers to the word in the preceding sentence. Hence the word 'it' here made the text cohesive.

This study aims to classify the turn-taking types used by students and collect the students' reasons for preferring silence in online classroom interaction.

The word 'this' in the examples above serves as a form of verbal pointing and connecting to others' sentences.

Moreover, conjunction also appeared to make the thesis abstract cohesive. As it presents below:

Text	Conjunction			
	Additive conjunction	Adversative conjunction	Causal conjunction	Temporal conjunction
1	And	On the other hand	-	The first, The second
2	And	however	-	-
3	And	-	-	-
4	And, moreover		because	First, second, last
5	And, Furthermore, but also, not only	-	-	-
6	And, in addition, but also	In fact	Thus, since, As the result	then
7	And, while	-	Since, as the result	-
8	And, also	However, still	Since, so that	then

From the data analysis above, various conjunction was found in the abstract thesis. The usage of additive conjunction was most widely used by the students to make the text cohesive. The example of additive conjunction appeared:

*To achieve these goals a qualitative research case study design is used through document analysis **and** semi-structured interviews.*

Based on the example above, the use of 'and' as the additive conjunction here is to produce additional information and help to link one clause to another.

Besides, adversative conjunction was also found in the thesis abstract namely on the other hand, however, in fact, and still. The example of adversative conjunction:

***On the other hand**, the interview process is through Whatsapp free call as the media with 9 participants.*

As it is shown above, the 'on the other hand' phrase here serves as adversative conjunction in this clause to provide a contrary connection from the prior clauses.

Moreover, causal conjunction appeared in the thesis abstract such as because, thus, since, and as the result. The example is expressed below:

*A case study qualitative research design was conducted **since** this study explored the teacher's problem in depth in implementing virtual reality to teach English vocabulary.*

Based on the example of causal conjunction above, the word 'since' provide to connect the causal relationship in one clause to another.

Lastly, temporal conjunction was also expressed in the thesis abstract namely first, second, last, and then.

***First** is pre-activity. In this activity, the teacher use the video as a model of teaching learning proses. **Second** is main activity.*

Based on the example above, the word first and second serves to connect sentences using a time sequence. It can be seen the second sentence happened after the prior sentence or clause.

Additionally, lexical cohesion was found to see the contribution how to making the writing cohesive. The use of reiteration which contains repetition, synonyms, and antonyms appeared in the thesis abstract. The example presented below:

*Moreover, **the data** was gathered from an English teacher who teach English using audio visual aids in one of senior high school in Garut. **The data** was collected from classroom non-participant observation by using audio-video recording.*

Based on the example above. The repetition word in that text is ‘the data’ which was also applied again in the next sentence. Moreover, repetition was used by the author to make the text cohesive.

Discussion

This research has examined the use of the thematic progression patterns that predominantly appeared and its contribution to the coherence and cohesion of the undergraduate thesis abstract. The study found that the students mostly applied the Reiteration pattern in their academic text. This result confirms the findings of Gunawan and Aziza (2017) which indicate that most academic papers employed the Reiteration pattern. In addition, this finding is also supported by the result of Muroda, Madjid, and Jati (2018) study which showed that this pattern was applied by the writers to make the readers over and over the same word in order to have clear focus information. As well as this pattern is used to be the most common pattern utilized by writers since it is simple, with one Theme repeated from the previous clause becoming the new Theme in the subsequent sentence. Moreover, as cited by Eggins and Emilia (2004; 2014) the use of the Reiteration pattern indicates that the writers have a clear focus on the information that is being conveyed by repeating the same Theme from the previous Theme in the prior clause.

Besides, the Zig-zag pattern also appeared. This finding was also in line with Muroda, Madjid, and Jati (2018) that indicated this pattern is more difficult compared to the reiteration pattern since the Rheme from the prior sentence must be picked up and used as the new Theme in the subsequent sentence rather than being repeated directly. Furthermore, as stated by Eggins (2004) the use of this pattern by the writers is to produce new information which developed from the preceding Rheme the information in this Rheme becomes new information in the next Theme.

Meanwhile, in regard to the least used pattern in the abstract, the study found that the multiple split rheme was the least used by the writers. As it is in line with the study conducted by Yani, Bambang, and Hati (2017). This pattern was more challenging to use. Since the writer should employ Multiple Rheme to make the first clause's Rheme contain some information that will be expanded upon in the following clauses. As well as, according to Eggins (2004) the use of this pattern when the writers have different multiple information in the Rheme which information becomes a new Theme in the next clause for elaborating on each of the main thematic points. Moreover, this pattern commonly appears in the longer text

Additionally, the second finding is the contribution of thematic progression to the coherence quality of the undergraduate thesis. The result presents that there are two coherences' qualities are identified in this research. They are fair and of less quality. To analyze the coherence quality, the researchers used the thematic progression. As the result, the first finding was found that the coherence quality is fair since it was encountered that the inconstant type of thematic progression or change from one type to others type each paragraph as cited by Eggins (2004). The second finding, the coherence quality is considered less since it was found that the writer created a new Theme in the middle of the paragraph (Eggins, 2004). As the result, the coherence quality can contribute to the thesis abstract writing. This finding is in line with a study that investigated article abstract by Yuned (2015) stated that the fair quality of coherence is most likely because researchers used more than one thematic

progression in one abstract. Also, less quality of writing appeared since the writers create a new Theme in the middle of the paragraph.

Meanwhile, the cohesion quality to the undergraduate thesis abstract is considered good. Since it was found that three cohesive devices were used by the writers. Namely, reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. However, substitution and ellipsis were not used. It was perhaps the lack of students understanding to apply substitution and ellipsis. On the other hand, as cited by Halliday and Hasan (1975) the ellipsis is mostly used in oral discourse than in written discourse. Furthermore, this finding was supported by Arifin (2018) who conducted coherence and cohesion quality in the thesis abstract. The usage of cohesive devices can build cohesion in the text at least three types of cohesive devices were used to make the abstracts cohesive. Meanwhile, the absence of using substitution and ellipsis is in line with Sugianto, Nilopa, and Miftah (2017) that substitution and ellipsis are more common in spoken discourse dialogue.

This research is not without limitations. The first one concerns with there are no raters involved in the data analysis process. Hence, the result of this study can be biased since it is just a one-sided analysis conducted by the researchers by following several frameworks proposed by the experts. The second one, the analysis of the thesis abstract only involved eight thesis abstracts from high achieving undergraduate students which were published in 2020-2021.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and discussion of the research data, the conclusions can be drawn as follows: Firstly, all of the writers employed the re-iteration pattern in their abstracts and it becomes the most pattern that is used in writing their abstracts (48,78%) followed by the zig-zag pattern (39%) and the multiple Theme pattern (12,2%) are also found in the abstracts. Secondly, the consistency of the patterns in each text is different from one another. But most of them quite consistent in employing the pattern because they used all of the thematic progression. However, the overuse of Theme re-iteration and lack of Multiple rheme used in the abstracts may indicate that the abstracts are not really hang together. In addition, some of the writers used inconstant type of thematic progression and created new Theme in the middle of the paragraph may indicate that they found difficulty in developing their ideas to create their thesis abstract with more coherence. Since the use of thematic progression can determine the coherence level, from the finding above the researchers found that the quality of the abstracts written by the undergraduate students was fair and less. Although, the cohesion quality found in the abstract is considered good. This is because the writers were able to use and understand to apply the cohesive devices in creating the sentence to hang together.

The conclusions explained above lead the researchers to provide some suggestions. First, the students need to pay attention to their writing skills. They have to understand SFL and thematic progression so that they can write a good text by using the patterns. Besides, they have to learn and practice more in writing so that they can write a thesis abstract coherently. This present study still has weaknesses because it only focuses on evaluating the three patterns of thematic progression. Moreover, it only has a little sample to explore. Therefore, future studies can try to investigate more patterns in thematic progression and compare it with the thematic selection. As well as, the future study is suggested to have raters' involvement in their research. In addition, the future researcher can try to explore the problems in thematic progression and get more samples to make it better. Additionally, the lecturers of writing at universities are recommended to apply the Theme and Rheme technique in their writing subject to improve the student's writing competency. It also can generate students' achievement and motivation because Theme and Rheme had clear guidance and flow of thinking which later will improve their writing skills in creating the text cohesion and coherence.

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