



Theme-Rheme And Thematic Progression Analysis Of Joe Biden's Speech On Israel-Hamas And Russia-Ukraine Wars

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ABSTRACT

The study mainly focuses on Theme-Rheme and Thematic Progression in the speech of Joe Biden on Israel-Hamas and Russia-Ukraine Wars. The objective of this study is to examine the type of Theme-Rheme and Thematic Progression pattern found in the speech text. To examine the data, the study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive design. The data is derived from Biden's speech on the United States' Response to Israel-Hamas and Russia-Ukraine Wars. The data was analysed using Halliday's theory (1994, 2004) to analyse the Theme-Rheme and Paltridge, (2006) to analyse the Thematic Progression pattern. Based on the study, it shows that Participant as Topical theme is the most dominant, while, Constant theme is the most dominant in Thematic Progression patterns.

INTRODUCTION

Thematic analysis serves as a pivotal component in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), allowing experts to delve into the systemic organization of language within different contexts. Many experts have investigated thematic progression and discovered that it plays a significant role in learning language skills. In the realm of English studies, students are not only about grasping reading, listening, and speaking, but also about honing writing skills. Consequently, there exists research focusing on thematic progression patterns that can aid students in generating a good work by employing thematic progression. According to Yang (2008) as cited in (Purba & Nahum Pasaribu, 2021) stated that thematic progression is very helpful for students in organizing the text, and it would help the students improve their skills in writing. According to Paltridge (2002:102) as cited in (Farikah, 2013) thematic progression refers to how a clause's theme may pick up or repeat a meaning from a preceding theme or rheme. Thematic progression is a method of developing and organizing a clause's theme and rheme. In other words, theme development patterns are treated in a certain way to increase the effectiveness and coherence of writing. Related to the previous statement, Paltridge (2012), also stated that there are several types of ways to develop theme and rheme in a clause. A constant theme pattern is found when the theme of a clause is reiterated in the following clauses, which is signified by the use of pronoun or conjunction in the beginning of the clauses. A zig-zag pattern is a pattern of the sentence that describes a sentence where the second clause theme contains the information of the rheme in the first sentence. Split theme pattern is a combination pattern between (theme reiteration and Zig-Zag pattern).

Thematic progression analysis has been explored by multiple researchers. This study relies on three articles to offer a comprehensive overview and comparison of how to analyze thematic progression. The first article is written by Octaberlina & Muslimin, (2020) which is about Theme-Rheme Analysis and Thematic Progression in Joko Widodo's Speech. The article is similar to this study, both analyzing speech as the data source. The second article is written by Oktaviani (2013). Like the first article, the second article is also similar to this study. Both first and second articles are similar to this study, analyzing the same topic "thematic progression". The third is written by Susanti & Gulo (2021). The third article is about analyzing the thematic progression used in Zakir Naik's lecture. The overall article that is mentioned in the study as the literature review of this study as well as the comparison of how to analyze the thematic progression.

The study analyzed thematic progression using theories proposed by Paltridge and M.A.K. Halliday. Partridge categorized thematic progression into three types: constant theme pattern, zig-zag or linear pattern, and split/multiple theme pattern. Meanwhile, Halliday's framework focused on participant, process, and circumstance themes within thematic analysis. Halliday described topical themes as participants, processes, or circumstances. Participants, the most common thematic type represented by pronouns or nominal forms like I, We, You, It, and That, are frequent in nominal groups. Process themes often start

sentences with a verb, while circumstance themes convey time or place using adverbs or prepositional phrases. Regarding Textual Themes, Halliday's classification includes continuative, structural, and conjunctive elements in a specific sequence. Lastly, Interpersonal Themes, according to Halliday, indicate likelihood, typicality, opinions, admissions, persuasions, presumptions, desirability, or predictions within the discourse.

Besides the Constant and Linear theme patterns, there's another type called the Split rheme pattern in thematic progression. This pattern combines elements from both theme reiteration and the zig-zag pattern. The importance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding thematic progression, which helps students in constructing coherent and structured paragraphs. Learning about thematic progression improves students' writing skills by enabling them to create well-organized compositions. This research aims to inspire a deeper understanding of thematic progression among students, fostering a more profound comprehension of this writing aspect.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theme and Rheme, integral components in linguistic analysis, constitute the structural framework of sentences by distinguishing between established information (Theme) and new or emphasized details (Rheme). The Theme, placed at the sentence's outset, presents known information, setting the context for subsequent details. Meanwhile, the Rheme is understood as part in the clause that develops the information of the theme. The rheme consists of new or unfamiliar information that has not yet been stated in the previous clause or sentence. The simple way to notice it only by understanding that everything comes after the theme is the rheme. (Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020).

In systemic functional linguistics, which employs the Theme-Rheme structure, Halliday (1994) explains that the Theme is the element that sets the "starting point" or "point of departure" for the message. It sets the context and provides the background against which the new information, or Rheme, is introduced. The Rheme, on the other hand, contains the new or emphasized information that the speaker or writer wishes to convey to the listener or reader.

Egins in Susanti & Gulo, (2021) explained thematic progression as the exchange information between successive theme and rheme pairings in a text and it contributes to the cohesive development of a text and it can strengthen the text's coherence and cohesion. Further, Paltridge (2006) supported that the thematic progression refers to the way in which of the theme of a clause may pick up or repeat a meaning from a preceding theme or rheme. Therefore, thematic progression is known as the successful combination of theme and rheme when both of them are established on text (both verbal or oral).

METHODOLOGY

This research is aimed to find out the types of theme and rheme, as well as the thematic progression pattern *On Israel-Hamas And Russia-Ukraine Wars*. The data for this study is derived from Joe Biden's speech text. The full script of the speech is available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov>.

Before analysing the data, the first thing to do is reading and watching the speech on Youtube. Then the data is analysed to find out the thematic structure of the speech. To analyse the data, the study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The analysis is presented in the table along with its description below.

RESEARCH RESULT

This study discusses the findings of theme and thematic progression patterns in the speech text of Joe Biden's speech. The research discovered that there are three types of theme and three types of thematic progression. After analysing the data, there are three types of theme namely Topical, Textual, and Interpersonal theme. Meanwhile, there are three types of thematic progression patterns found in the speech text. They are Constant/Reiterated theme pattern, the Zig-zag/Linear Theme Pattern, and the Split/Multiple Theme Pattern.

Concerning the theme, it is found that there are three types of theme found in the speech text of Joe Biden on Israel-Hamas and Rusia-Ukraine Wars. They are Topical, Textual, and Interpersonal themes. There were two categories in Topical theme, namely Participant as Topical theme with six sentences and Circumstance as Topical theme with three sentences. The rest is Textual theme with four sentences and Interpersonal theme with one sentence. Meanwhile, In regard to thematic progression, it is found that there are three types of thematic progressions among others Constant/Reiterated theme pattern with three sentences, the Zig-Zag/Linear theme pattern with three sentences, and the Split/Multiple theme pattern with four sentences. The detail explanation of the total findings are as follows;

THEME AND RHEME

Participant as Topical Theme

According to Halliday & Matthiessen, (2004) the most common type of theme is a participant, realized by a nominal group, and the topical theme is frequently in the form of a pronoun, notably the pronouns I, We, You, It, That, and other nominal forms. As stated by Halliday & Matthiessen as cited from Octaberlina & Muslimin, (2020) states that a topical theme appears when the first constituent of a clause is process, circumstance, or participant. The first constituent form can be in the form of a nominal group or a prepositional phrase. It means that there are many categories of topical theme based on the first constituent, such as; participant, process, circumstantial of matter, circumstantial of time, circumstantial of manner, circumstantial of manner, circumstantial of place, circumstantial of cause, circumstantial of accompaniment, and circumstantial of role.

Topical Theme	Rheme
They	tell me I'm the first American president to travel there during a war.
I	also spoke with President Abbas, the Palestinian Authority, and reiterated that the United States remains committed to the Palestinian people's right to dignity and to self-determination.
We	mourn every innocent life lost.
We	can't ignore the humanity of innocent Palestinians who only want to live in peace and have an opportunity.
They	both want to completely annihilate a neighboring democracy-completely annihilate it.
He	claims the Soviet Union created Ukraine.

The findings of the participants as subject theme are shown in the table above. The first topical theme in the first sentence is "They" which is followed by the rheme "tell me I'm the first American president to travel there during a war." The second topical theme of the sentence is "I". The third and fourth topical theme is "We". Meanwhile, the fifth topical sentence is the same as the topical theme available in the first sentence "They" And the last topical theme is "He". The result of the participants as topical theme in the table above shows that there are six sentences that are categorized as participant/topical theme. The sentences in the table were categorized as participants/topical themes because they used pronouns such as (I, We, They, He) as the topical themes. And each sentence is followed by the rheme, as seen in the table above.

Circumstantial Adjunct as Topical Theme

According to Halliday (2004), the circumstantial adjunct as topical theme is a theme which functions to express time and place. The circumstance as topical theme which uses an adverbial in the form of adverb of time, adverb of place, or prepositional phrase.

Topical Theme	Rheme
Just last week,	a mother was brutally stabbed.
Well over a year later,	Putin has failed, and he continues to fail.
Earlier this year,	I boarded Air Force One for a secret flight to Poland.

The table above presents the results of circumstantial adjunct as topical theme in the speech text. The main function of the circumstantial adjunct is to describe the time or place. In the speech, it is found three sentences that are categorized as circumstantial adjunct as topical theme. The first sentence is "Just last week" as the topical theme of the first sentence which is followed by the rheme "a mother was brutally stabbed". The second sentence is "Well over a year later" as the topical theme of the second sentence with the rheme "Putin has failed, and he continues to fail". And the last sentence is "Earlier this year" as the topical theme of

the third sentence with the rheme *“I boarded Air Force One for a secret flight to Poland”*.

Textual Theme

According to Halliday (2004), textual theme is any combination of continuative, structural and conjunctive, conjunction, in that order. A continuative is one of a small set of discourse signallers, yes, no, well, oh, now, which signal that a new move is beginning a response, in dialogue, or a move to the next point if the same speaker is continuing.

Textual Theme	Topical Theme	Rheme
But	We	are not withdrawing.
And	We	will continue to hold them accountable, I might add.
And	I	want to say this to you:
So	I	caution the government of Israel not to be blinded by rage.

The table above presents an overview of textual theme. The table is showing the results found in the speech about Textual theme. The textual theme of the first sentence is “but” followed by the topical theme “we” and continued by the rheme “are not withdrawing”. The textual theme of the second sentence is “and” followed by the topical theme “we” and continued by the rheme “will continue to hold them accountable, I might add”. The textual theme of the third sentence is “and” with “I” as the topical theme and ended by the rheme “want to say this to you”. And the textual theme of the last sentence is “so” followed by the topical theme “I” and ended by the rheme “caution the government of Israel not to be blinded by rage”.

Interpersonal Theme

According to Halliday (2004), an interpersonal theme can indicate likelihood, usuality, typicality, or obviousness. It can also indicate opinion, admission, persuasion, entreaty, presumption, desirability, or prediction. The interpersonal theme is presented as follows:

Theme	Rheme
My fellow Americans,	thank you for your time.

As stated by Halliday & Matthiessennn (2004), the interpersonal theme function is to describe the typicality, opinion, persuasion, admission, etc. After analyzing the data, the study found one sentence that used an interpersonal theme.

As displayed on the table, the interpersonal theme in the sentence is "My fellow Americans" which expresses "vocative" namely someone's name or name of community used to address. The American president, Joe Biden calls his people 'My fellow Americans'.

THEMATIC PROGRESSIONS

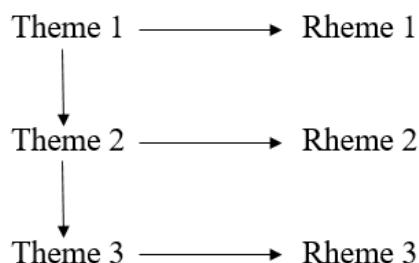
According to Paltridge (2002: 102), thematic progression refers to how a clause's theme may pick up or repeat a meaning from a preceding theme or rheme. Thematic progression is a method of developing and accessing a clause's theme and rheme.

Theme Reiteration/Constant Theme Pattern

Constant/Reiteration theme pattern is a clause sentence in which there is the use of pronoun or conjunction in the beginning of the sentence then becomes the theme of the sentence, and the rheme of the sentence is reiterated in the next sentence Paltridge (2002; 102).

Theme	Rheme
He	denies Ukraine has, or ever had, real statehood.
He	claims the Soviet Union created Ukraine.
He	told the world that if the United States and our allies withdraw

The table above shows the reiteration/constant theme pattern in the speech. As shown in the table above, the sentence in the table is taken from a paragraph that creates a constant/reiteration theme pattern. The first theme of the sentence starts with the topical theme "He" and ended by the rheme. The first theme is reiterated in the next theme which is the second theme. The second theme becomes "He" since it repeats the first theme and then continues with the rheme. The third theme is the same as the second theme "He" since it repeats the second theme, the third theme also followed by the rheme. The sentence in the table is categorized as reiterated/constant theme pattern because from the first theme to the third theme are the same starting with "He" as topical theme. The paragraph in the table above will form the following pattern:

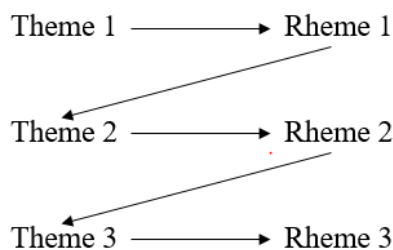


The Zig-Zag/Linear Theme Pattern

Zig-Zag pattern is a pattern of the sentence which describes about a sentence where the second theme is found the information of the rheme in the first sentence Paltridge (2022:131).

Theme	Rheme
a little boy	who just turned 6 years old, was murdered in their home outside of Chicago.
His name	was Wadea.
Wadea,	a proud American, a proud Palestinian American family.

Here are the results of Zig-Zag/Linear theme pattern. The table and the pattern above show the findings of Zig-Zag/Linear theme pattern that is found in the speech. As seen in the table, the theme 1 is started with "a little boy" as the topical theme. After the topical theme of theme 1 then it is continued with the rheme "who just turned 6 years old, was murdered in their home outside of Chicago". The rheme 1 gives new information for the next theme which is theme 2. From the information of rheme 1, the theme 2 becomes "His name", the theme 2 "His name" as the topical theme. The rheme 2 is giving new information for the next sentence which is theme 3. The rheme 2 is "was Wadea". From the information of rheme 2, it continues with the theme 3 "Wadea". From the findings above, it is found 3 sentences as the theme and rheme that are classified as Zig-Zag/Linear pattern. And the sentence will create a pattern as illustrated below:

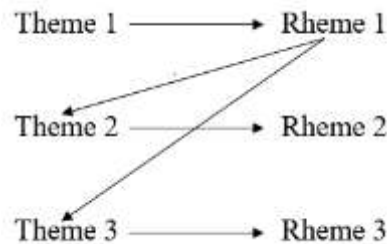


The Multiple/Split-Rheme Pattern

Eggin (2004: 236) stated that, split theme pattern is a combination of pattern between (theme Reiteration and Zig-Zag pattern). So multiple theme is the theme of one clause introduces a number of different pieces of information made in subsequent clauses.

Theme	Rheme
They	tell me I'm the first American president ...
I	met with the prime minister and members of his cabinet,
I	met with Israelis who had personally lived through...

Here are the results of the multiple/split rheme pattern. Based on the table above, three sentences are categorized as multiple/split rheme pattern. The table and the pattern above shows the multiple/split rheme pattern. The first sentence is initiated with the topical theme "They" and followed by the rheme "tell me I'm the first American president". The rheme of the first sentence is referred to by the second sentence, which the pronoun "I" becomes the topical theme of the second and third sentences (repeated/reiterated) and then ended by each rheme. And the sentence will create the following pattern:



DISCUSSION

The research findings highlight diverse thematic elements such as topical, textual, and interpersonal themes. Regarding the Topical theme, it is found two types namely Participant with six occurrences and Circumstantial Adjunct with three occurrences. Therefore, it can be concluded that Participant as the subject theme is the most dominant than Circumstantial Adjunct with only four occurrences. Topical theme as Participant above introduced through pronouns I, We, They, and He, which establish the central subject, paving the way for the subsequent rheme that encapsulates the essential action or message within the clause. Meanwhile, circumstantial adjunct found three times in the speech text, employing adverbs of time. First, "just last week" with the rheme "a mother was brutally stabbed". Second, "well over a year later" with the rheme "Putin has failed, and he continues to fail". The last, "earlier this year" with the rheme "I boarded Air Force One for a secret flight to Poland". All of them are classified as adverb of time which denote temporal aspects, providing contextual details that influence the subsequent content expounded in the rheme. Furthermore, the classification of textual theme, signalled by coordinating conjunction "but, and, so" along with interpersonal theme with an intimate greeting "My fellow American" that indicates the closeness and familiarity of a leader and his community.

The exploration of thematic progression, as outlined in the text, unveils significant patterns governing the development and organization of information within clauses. Thematic progression refers to the systematic arrangement of themes and rhemes across sentences, elucidating the flow of ideas and the interconnection between consecutive clauses. The research findings present distinctive patterns such as the constant/reiteration theme pattern, zig-zag/linear theme pattern, and multiple/split-rheme pattern. These patterns showcase how themes and rhemes interact within sentences. The reiterated/constant theme pattern repeats a consistent topical theme "He" which

is reiterated in the second and third themes, while Zig-Zag/Linear themes progress with different topical themes and related rhemes as shown in the table that the first rheme becomes the second theme and the second rheme becomes the third theme. And the multiple/split rheme pattern involves a split rheme across sentences, connected by a recurring topical theme. As shown in the table, the first rheme in the form of noun phrase "the first American president" is repeated in the second and third themes with the pronoun "I".

Each pattern illustrates distinct ways in which themes and rhemes are organized in sentence structures.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the current study is to determine the theme-rheme and thematic progression in the speech by Joe Biden. This study aims to investigate the type of theme and rheme in the speech text. The study has found three types of theme and rheme in the speech, they are Topical theme, Textual theme, and Interpersonal theme. In the first type, it is found two kinds of Topical theme namely Participant and Circumstantial Adjunct as the Topical theme with six sentences for Participant and three sentences for Circumstantial Adjunct. The second type is Textual theme with four sentences. And the last type of theme and rheme found in the speech text is Interpersonal theme with one sentence. The study has also found three types of thematic progression namely Constant/Reiteration theme, Zig-Zag/Linear theme, and Split/Multiple theme pattern with three sentences of each.

As mentioned above, among the four language skills which include speaking, listening, reading, and writing, writing skill is one that can be developed by applying the research results from the study, particularly theme-rheme and thematic progression study. It is expected that the output of this Systemic Functional Grammar research can be further applied in the teaching and learning process. Enhancing the quality of students' writing skills through similar studies related to Systemic Functional Grammar by analysing students' writing outcomes, will undoubtedly be more beneficial. The result will be more measurable and applicable to be applied in improving or enhancing the quality of learning process.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has some limitations and needs more suggestions for the next improvement among others: First, the study might not fully capture all the nuances and intricacies within these linguistic concepts due to the complexity of Systemic Functional Grammar and thematic elements that might constrained the depth analysis of the study. Second, this study might also involve subjective interpretation and judgement that might perceive theme-rheme structure or thematic progression differently which might lead to potential variations in interpretations of the data.

Concerning the limitations above, the author also proposes some suggestions for the improvement of the study such as involving multiple researchers of the relevant study to validate the interpretations,

creating a clear framework with specific criteria to minimize subjective biases and ensuring the data interpretations more consistent and reliable, and employing a combination of methodologies to make a more comprehensive and deeper analysis of the relevant study.

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