

# THE THEMATIC PROGRESSION PATTERN IN PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT FOUND IN THE INTRODUCTION OF SCOPUS JOURNALS WRITTEN BY EXPERT WRITERS

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## **Abstract**

*Paragraph Development is the way the author develops an idea in a paragraph. In developing writing ideas, writers are encouraged to pay attention to thematic developments. As in this study, the researcher examined how expert writers construct ideas in the introductory paragraphs of international journals consisting of the five highest indexed countries based on the SCIMAGO portal ranking using a thematic development pattern instrument. The type of this research was qualitative research with descriptive analysis. The introduction researched consisted of five journals preliminary documents totaling thirteen paragraphs. The five documents were SCOPUS journals with the theme Language Teaching and English Teaching. The results of this study stated that of the thirteen introductory paragraphs of the journal, expert writers used paragraph development in an argumentative, descriptive and comparison-contrast way. Then, from all argumentative paragraph development, expert writers tend to use the same thematic development pattern, namely constant rheme. In comparison-contrast development found, the writer used constant rheme. Then, in developing descriptive paragraphs expert writers used constant theme thematic progression patterns. So, based on these findings, it can be concluded that the expert writers from various countries tend to use the same thematic patterns in the development of the paragraphs found.*

**Keywords:** Journals Introduction, Paragraph Development, Thematic Progression Pattern

## **Abstract**

*Pengembangan Paragraf merupakan cara penulis mengembangkan sebuah ide didalam sebuah paragraph. Dalam mengembangkan ide tulisan, penulis dianjurkan untuk memperhatikan perkembangan tematik. Sebagaimana dalam penelitian ini, peneliti mengkaji tentang cara penulis ahli dalam membangun ide pada paragraf pendahuluan jurnal internasional yang terdiri dari lima Negara tertinggi yang terindeks berdasarkan rangking diportal SCIMAGO dengan menggunakan perangkat pola perkembangan tematik. Jenis dari*

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penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan analisis deskriptif. Dikarenakan penulis perlu memahami isi dari pendahuluan jurnal yang ditulis oleh penulis ahli dan mendeskripsikannya kedalam hasil penelitian. Pendahuluan yang diteliti berjumlah lima dokumen pendahuluan jurnal yang berjumlah tiga belas paragraf. Lima dokumen tersebut merupakan jurnal SCOPUS dengan tema Pengajaran Bahasa dan Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris. Hasil dari penelitian ini menyatakan bahwa dari tiga belas paragraf pendahuluan jurnal, penulis ahli menggunakan pengembangan paragraf dengan cara argumentatif, deskriptif dan perbandingan. Kemudian dari seluruh pengembangan paragraf argumentatif penulis ahli cenderung menggunakan pola pengembangan tematik yang sama yaitu constant rheme. Pada pola pengembangan paragraf perbandingan, penulis menggunakan pola constant rheme. Lalu pada pengembangan paragraf deskriptif penulis ahli menggunakan pola pengembangan tematik constant theme. Jadi, berdasarkan dari temuan tersebut dapat disimpulkan bahwa penulis ahli dari berbagai Negara memiliki kecenderungan menggunakan pola tematik yang sama didalam pengembangan paragraf yang ditemukan.

**Kata kunci:** Pendahuluan Jurnal, Pengembangan Paragraf, Pola Perkembangan Tematik

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Writing needs the ability to convey a message through the proper choice of words and word construction based on the purpose of the writing. Academic English writing is quite different from general English writing in terms of its purpose, potential readers, text structures and language styles (Zhang, 2018). Writing in academic purpose believe as a difficult task where the writer must capable to process the specific purpose and language style because it is different from general English writing. It made the ability to write is widely recognized as one of the highest abilities (Campbell, 2019). As in the field of education, the competence to develop knowledge and idea that are in minds into writing to show how they advance in the knowledge is needed for the writers. For example, students at the university level must be able to write a paper in which a written work has an idea to be discussed in deep detail, contains the author's opinions, and is supported by existing facts.

Further, the most important focus when making a paper, as a face of a body, is the introduction of the study. Because in this chapter, the writers are must be able to express and construct their thought to make a good and understandable written work. Moreover, it can say that a paper is written in paragraphs and has a structure that includes an introduction, body, and conclusion. To achieve scientific truth, Paragraphs are useful to findings to be theories and deliver discussed. According to (Wirantaka, 2016) a good

paragraph is critical as it helps the readers to understand the content of the writing. As said by (Yakhontova, 2021) development of paragraphs which should not only present ideas but also explain them and support through evidence and details. Paragraphs can be made according to the functions of a research article. These types include description, process, classification, argumentative, compare/contrast, and qualification paragraphs (Gray, 2019). One way to recognize the structure is by analyzing the way theme and rheme are organized in a sentence. The theme conveys the ideas or the topic of what the writers want to tell about (Kang, 2016) and rheme is present the additional information regarding the theme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Halliday in (Khedri & Ebrahimi, 2012) categorized theme into three, there are topical theme or ideational theme, interpersonal theme, and textual theme. To consider what is theme writer can look to the head of a clause or also called the topic of the sentence. Then, to find out what is rheme, can find out with rest of information after the theme occurs. The criteria of the Theme and Rheme are simple: theme is the first element occurring in a clause; the remainder clause is rheme. This theme and rheme development in a clause into the next clause allows the writer to write coherently. So that the resulting paper becomes better and more structured.

After knowing about part of a clause, now the writer must consider how to arrange it into a smooth paragraph so the reader can understand the written text easily. The way of organizing messages or information is called thematic progression. Thematic progression concerns the relatedness of Themes and Rhemes in discourse, and it would be easy to make the links and establish if the Theme of a clause proceeds from a previous Theme or a previous Rheme (Jing, 2014). The pattern of theme-rheme connections is known as a thematic progression that contributes to the development of a paragraph (Hawes, 2015). As this pattern continues, ideas in a text or discourse are expected to flow along smoothly and it gives a reader orientation as to where the information has come from and where it is going and hence creates coherence (Arunsirot, 2013).

In this study, the researcher is interested in analyzing thematic progression patterns to look at how expert the writers when developing their idea in a paragraph. Moreover, it is because these writers should experience to construe ideas in a logical and coherent (Chen, 2019). It is to avoid miss understanding and missing information when the reader reads the paper. Based on this reason, the researcher thinks it is very important to analyze the Thematic Progression of experienced writers to visualize how they construct ideas in paragraph development. Moreover, researchers are interested in seeing how the paragraph development on expert writers' journal introduction.

## 2. METHODS

In conducting this study, descriptive method was used and the approach used by the researcher is qualitative research (Gay et al., 2012). Because, the researcher will analyze then describe the data about paragraph development and the pattern of thematic progression in experienced writers' journal introduction. The documents will take based on the research purpose and criteria determined by the researcher. Thus, purposive accidental sampling was used by the researcher in conducting the data collection because this allowed the researcher to select the sample simply as they just happen to be situated (Etikan, 2016). The researcher used the document from five high index countries there are United State, China, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan. With the focus topic is all about Language Teaching and Teaching English.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to know the paragraph development found of five journals by expert writers based on ranking in. The paragraph development was classified based on the purpose of the paragraph. Fifteen paragraphs are from the total of paragraph in every introduction of international journal. There were ten paragraphs as argumentative. Which are three paragraphs from Germany, Japan and China, then one paragraph from US and UK. Further, there were two paragraphs as descriptive paragraph development it was one paragraph in each from US and UK. There was also cause-effect paragraph found by the researcher it was one on China journal.

### *Argumentative Paragraph Development*

***Research on anxiety reduction methods is important in L2 education due to various negative effects of FLA on language learning.*** A great number of L2 studies have indicated that FLA is negatively correlated with crucial aspects of L2 students, including willingness to communicate, achievement, proficiency, and performance. Based on his study on foreign language programmes in American universities, Elkhafaiji suggested that alleviating students' FLA and creating low anxiety environments are critical to help students enhance their performance. In this study, we implemented methods to reduce classroom FLA and explored L2 students' response to them. (Japan, Paragraph 2)

In the sample above, the writer persuaded the reader to agree with the statement “Research on anxiety reduction methods is important in L2 education due to various negative effects of FLA on language learning” and the rest of sentence in the paragraph is the supporting sentences to hence the reader agreement to the statement. Because the writer want to stand that research on methods to reduce anxiety is important to helps students with their FLA in learning second language. As the purpose of this paragraph to make the reader agreed about the statement before, it can conclude that the writer used argumentative paragraph development in him or his second paragraph introduction journal.

### **Descriptive Paragraph Development**

*Action research, first established in the 1940s by Kurt Lewin, involves staging research activities as the following: (1) identify a problem or question; (2) carry out an action; (3) observe and reflect on the outcome; and (4) plan another action. The goal of action research for language teachers is to improve their pedagogical practices by deepening their understanding of students’ learning processes, experimenting with a variety of methodological options, and critically examining and reflecting on their lessons and activities with a view to taking initiatives. **Ultimately, action research empowers teachers by giving them a voice to be heard about their classrooms as well as allowing their perspectives to be documented in the field.** This approach, which is used here, serves as a productive way of facilitating collaboration among teachers themselves as well as with classroom researchers. (USA. Paragraph 2)*

The researcher classified this paragraph as descriptive is because this paragraph give explanation all about “action research”. Because, in this paragraph, the writer wanted to show that how and what is the action research. It can be seen in the information of the paragraph where it started with the steps of how to do action research. Then followed by another additional information about the goal of action research in improve teachers’ pedagogical practices and what the effect of this in classroom activities. Based on this information, the researcher classified that this paragraph as a descriptive paragraph that describe about action research.

### **Comparison-Contrast Paragraph Development**

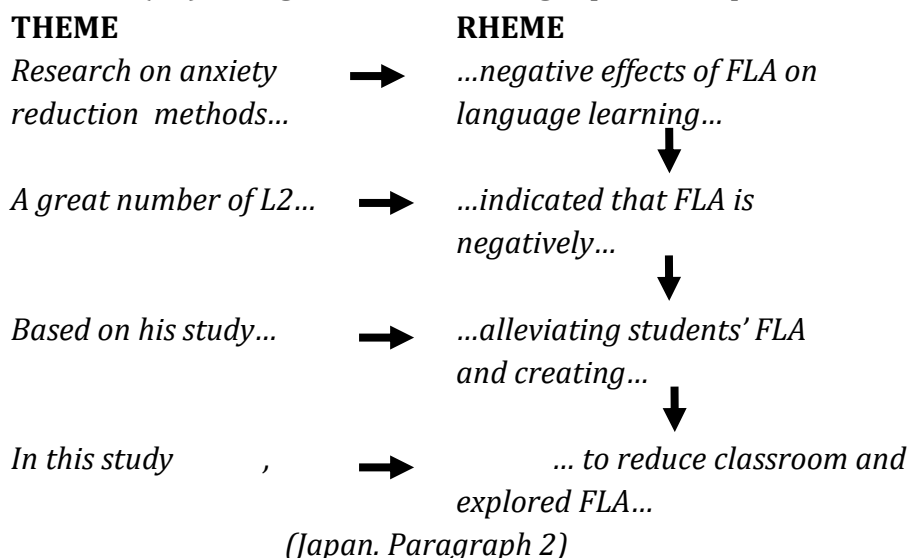
*In combination with quantitative data from teachers' analytic and holistic rating, this study applies a mixed-method approach and intends to contribute to the existing qualitative research tradition of written teacher comments on ESL student writing. **To our knowledge, this has not been examined in previous research and existing studies were either focused solely on written teacher comments or on judgment accuracy in the context of quantitative writing assessment.** For instance, there is a considerable body of research investigating the influence of textual features on teachers' analytic and holistic rating. The present study investigates Swiss and German pre-service teachers' reported perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of ESL written compositions in order to examine how the teachers' judgments are influenced by experimentally manipulated qualities of vocabulary and spelling. We hope to make an impact on understanding how certain textual features influence teacher comments of student essays in a mixed-method approach. (Germany. Paragraph 3)*

From the paragraph above, the writer develop the paragraph to compare the previous and present research. Instead, this paragraph also stated the similarities of both research. The writer compare that the previous research and existing studies just focus on the teacher comment accuracy in quantitative writing assessment. While the study of the expert writer used mixed-method approach to make an impact on understanding how certain textual features influence teacher comments of student essays. Then the researcher also stated the similarities of those research which investigating the influence and teachers' perception of strengths and weaknesses of ESL written. So from the sentences that build up a paragraph the researcher conclude that the expert writer develop paragraph in comparison-contrast ways.

Based on the classified of the paragraph development above, then the researcher determined what pattern used by the writer on each paragraph development. The most patterns found on argumentative paragraph was constant rheme is about eight amount ten paragraph and there was two paragraph used constant theme pattern. In addition, on descriptive paragraph development there was two paragraphs found and both of this used constant theme pattern or can be called as theme reiteration. In comparison-contrast, the expert writer used constant rheme progression pattern.

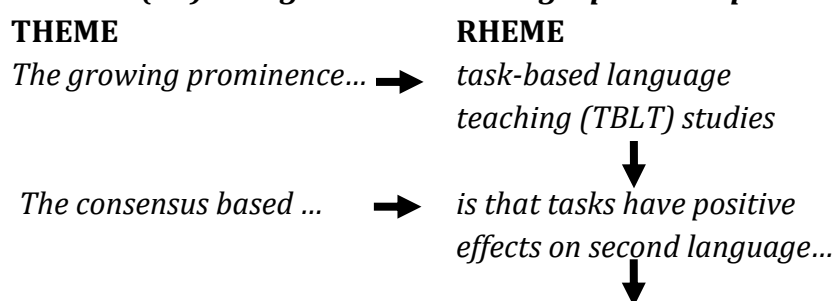


### ***Constant Rheme Pattern (CR) in Argumentative Paragraph Development***



In the paragraph above, there are four clauses that identified. In the first clause, the theme is “*Research on anxiety reduction methods*” the type of theme 1 is topical theme because it is the subject so it categorized as unmarked topical theme. After that, theme 2 is “*A great number of L2 studies*”. Theme type of the second clause is topical theme as unmarked topical theme because it categorized as the subject. And then, for the third theme stated “*Based on his study*” that determine as topical theme. This type of theme also found in fourth theme is “*In this study*”. In the paragraph above, the first rheme tell about “*various negative effects of FLA on language learning*” and this also found in the next rheme that stated “*indicated that FLA is negatively correlated*”. For the following clause there also stated about “*FLA*”. Because from the first paragraph till the fourth paragraph has the same rheme, so the writer in the paragraph above is identified as using constant rheme pattern.

### ***Constant Rheme Pattern (CR) in Argumentative Paragraph Development***



THEME		RHEME
<i>In combination with quantitative data</i>	→	<i>from teachers' analytic and holistic rating</i>
<i>this study</i>	→	<i>...written teacher comments on ESL student writing</i>
<i>To our knowledge</i>	→	<i>...written teacher comments or on judgment ...</i>
<i>For instance, there is a considerable...</i>	→	<i>...textual features on teachers' analytic and holistic rating</i>
<i>The present study</i>	→	<i>...teachers' reported perceptions of strengths and weaknesses ...</i>
<i>in order to examine</i>	→	<i>how the teachers' judgments ...</i>



*We hope* → *... textual features  
influence teacher  
comments...*  
(Germany. Paragraph 3)

In this paragraph, the writer started the paragraph with *"In combination with quantitative data"* which is the theme of the first clause then followed by rheme *"...from teachers' analytic and holistic rating"*. In the second clause the theme is *"this study"* and rheme *"...teacher comments on ESL student writing"*. Then in following rheme also stated *"...written teacher comments or on judgment..."*. This rheme of the second and third clause also stated about *teacher comment or judgment* is repeated in every rheme. It means that this paragraph used constant rheme pattern.

### **Constant Theme Pattern (CT) in Argumentative Paragraph Development**

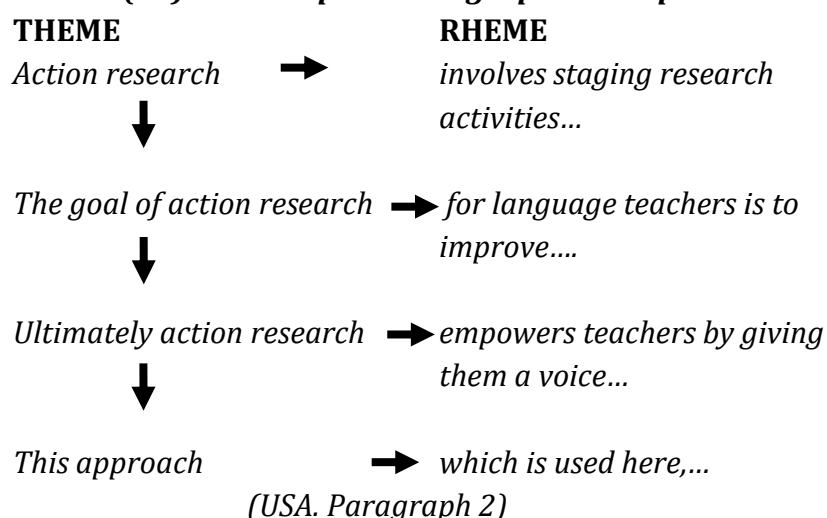
<b>THEME</b>	<b>RHEME</b>
<i>Identifying and analysing strengths and weaknesses of a student's performance</i>	→ <i>is a central element of teachers' diagnostic competence</i>
↓	
<i>It influences the selection of suitable learning activities</i>	→ <i>enables a comprehensive evaluation of students' abilities....</i>
↓	
<i>As such, the identification of strengths and weaknesses</i>	→ <i>is particularly relevant in formative assessment situations....</i>

(Germany. Paragraph 1)

Based on the paragraph and the pattern above, there are three clauses/sentences. The first clause till the last clause has the same theme. The theme 1 is *"strengths and weaknesses of a student's performance"* this also stated in theme 2 *"It influences"* where is *"It"* in this clause is refers to the theme of previous sentence. *"Strengths and weaknesses"* is also repeated in beginning of third clause. It means that the writer uses constant theme pattern. As known that constant theme is the pattern that the theme is repeated along the clause/sentence. For determined what type of theme, we must look at the starting point of close. *"Strengths*

*and weaknesses*” in the first, second and the third theme is a subject that called topical theme. When the theme is as the subject, it can be categorized that as unmarked topical theme.

### ***Constant Theme Pattern (CT) in Descriptive Paragraph Development***



Based the pattern movement above, there are four clauses/sentences. The first clause till the last clause has the same theme. The theme 1 is “*Action research*” this also stated in theme 2 “*The goal of action research*”. “*Action research*” is repeated in every beginning of clause. It means that the writer uses constant theme pattern. As known that constant theme is the pattern that the theme is repeated along the clause/sentence. For determined what type of theme, we must look at the starting point of clause. “*Action research*” in the first, second and the fourth theme is a subject that called topical theme. When the theme is as the subject, it can be categorized that as unmarked topical theme. Then in the third theme, there is start with “*Ultimately, action research*”. This statement used textual theme and topical theme.

In the end, from the explanation above, the patterns found were two patterns. Each of the patterns is found in this research. In argumentative paragraph, there were constant rheme and constant theme used by the writers. It can conclude that the expert writers had varied way to develop argumentative paragraph. But mostly of the writers found tend to use constant rheme pattern. Beside of that, in descriptive, the writers only used one type pattern of thematic progression which is constant theme pattern and comparison-contrast paragraph development the writer used constant rheme progression. It can assume that

the writer had similar way to develop descriptive paragraph. But, this cannot conclude this way because the sample of this study was very limited so it needed more deep classification of paragraph to found the detail difference on the movement of pattern used by the writers.

Based on the finding that has been presented by the researcher above, the researcher found that constant rheme pattern is the most commonly pattern which found in argumentative paragraph development. Where constant rheme pattern found amount to eight paragraphs. Then, constant theme was also found both in argumentative and descriptive paragraph. In (Keskin, 2021), the researcher asked the students to wrote argumentative essay in one session than found that among 325 thematic progression patterns in ELT students' texts, 265 of them are written as constant progression pattern. Therefore, it can be said that ELT students used constant progression pattern most frequently. Because constant theme was the easier way in develop the ideas.

In addition, in (Viska et al., 2020) the result showed that the thematic progression pattern which is commonly used by the students are zigzag or linear theme pattern and then is constant theme pattern. Then the level of coherence was in good level. It is different from researcher study result that found the mostly pattern is constant progression which amount thirteen paragraph there are eight paragraph used constant rheme pattern and five paragraph used constant theme. This indicate that the way of paragraph development of expert writers used same pattern to develop their sources.

Furthermore, (Arunsirot, 2013) found that the multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern was used at the most frequently. This indicates that the multiple Theme or split Rheme patterns are dominant in the texts. Consequently, the use of the multiple Theme or split Rheme patterns is one of the characteristic features of writing exposition that tries to convince the readers to align with the writers' points of view. This research aims to know how thematic progression in exposition writing, while the finding is different to the researcher study. Where in this study, he found that multiple theme or split rheme is the most frequently found compare to the researcher study where there is no split rheme nor multiple theme found in any introduction journal by the expert.

In beside of that, (Soleymanzadeh & Gholami, 2014) in terms of TP patterns' frequency of use in argumentative genre, that is, overuse of constant progression, which is regarded as a problem in argumentative type since in this genre, it is simple linear progression is much preferred. Contrast to the researcher finding, this researcher said that the frequently of used constant progression can make paragraph less of coherence since he said that the simple linear pattern is better.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The result of this research is that the paragraph development found was argumentative, descriptive and comparison-contrast paragraph development. Ten amount thirteen as argumentative paragraph, two were descriptive paragraph and one comparison-contrast also found in this study. In all paragraph development have been found, the writers had different ways to develop their ideas. Because, in argumentative paragraph, the expert writers used constant rheme pattern more. It can conclude that in argumentative paragraph development, the expert writers had similarities in construe their idea. Further, in descriptive paragraph the writers used constant theme only. Further, in comparison-contrast paragraph development, the writer used constant rheme. Actually, this cannot be compare. The reason is the number of document between these paragraph developments was very far. Because of the sample of this study was very limited, the researcher suggested that it needed more deep classification of paragraph to found the detail difference on the movement of pattern used by the writers.

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