THEMATIC STRUCTURE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL NEWS REPORTS IN NEW YORK TIMES ONLINE NEWSPAPER

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Abstract

This study analyzes the types and functions of Theme used in political news reports, which taken from ten selected articles from the New York Times online newspaper. The objective of this research is to identify the types and functions of Themes used by the writer of each article. The writer used the systemic functional grammar approach which is related to the types and functions of Themes. The types are divided into marked and unmarked Theme. The writer used qualitative method and library research in doing this research.

The writer found that the writers from ten news used unmarked Theme more than marked Theme. In addition, the writer found out that marked and unmarked Theme might have the same function in a clause. Both types of Theme may have , for instance, coherence and cohesion or topic introducing functions. In contrary, the same type of Themes also may have different functions. However, the functions of the Themes depend on the context of situation of the clause and its writer put them in a clause.

Key words: Systemic Functional Grammar, Marked And Unmarked Theme, Political News Report

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INTRODUCTION

In reporting any news, the author must be able to emphasize what becomes the focus or the topic of the news. Within a text, theme helps the author to decide what the main focus is in the clause, paragraph, and a text (Al Falaq & Puspita, 2021a; Pradana & Suprayogi, 2021; Teknologi et al., 2021). The Theme-Rheme structure is a grammatical resource that gives the clause its character as a message. In other words, in terms of Theme and Rheme, Theme represents 'this is what I'm talking about' and Rheme is 'this is what I'm saying about it' in terms of looking at a clause as a message; the theme looks backwards, relating the current message to what has gone before (Oktavia & Suprayogi, 2021; Puspita & Pranoto, 2021; B. N. Sari & Gulö, 2019)

Therefore, Theme is seen to play a crucial role in the way author chooses the theme also influences the text (Kuswoyo, Sujatna, Indrayani, et al., 2020; Kuswoyo, Sujatna, Rido, et al., 2020; Nindyarini Wirawan, 2018). The author can freely choose what comes first. However, there is a reason why they choose something as a theme instead of putting something else. It might influence the patterns of the text that the choice of what comes first is "a textual resource systematically exploited" to effect different patterns (Ayu, 2020; Gulö, n.d.; Novawan et al., 2020). The different patterns and meanings made by the choice of theme can be manipulated and exploited consciously or unconsciously, by the writer in order to convey their 'angle' or viewpoint . This means, besides helping to organize the text, Theme in a text also helps the authors construe their viewpoint . The authors might want the readers focus on the way they want, thus, they make a choice of theme in certain ways.

Furthermore, each choice of theme represents a different starting point for the message conveyed in the clause. Moreover, Thematic structure must take generic conventions into consideration such as the facts or the condition of the society and the environment and the readers (Kuswoyo, 2016; Kuswoyo & Susardi, 2016). The writer must take into consideration the 'real world' situation in which the reader may receive the information. Concerns related to the intended audience will influence the choice of Theme (Abidin et al., 2021a; Istiani & Puspita, 2020; Suprayogi Suprayogi et al., 2021). No matter what the author wants to talk about, he or she must arrange the relative information around this topic in a logic order, with the thematic structure arranged distinguishingly according to the specific aims. In another word, thematic structure is one of the necessary conditions for creating the discourse coherence (Amelia & Daud, 2020; Erya & Pustika, 2021; Gustanti & Ayu, 2021).

In addition, Martin also notes that the choice of Theme "constructs a particular angle of interpretation on the topic of each text which resonates with other aspects of discourse organization (Evayani & Rido, 2019; Pranoto & Suprayogi, 2020; Purwaningsih & Gulö, 2021b).There are many resources which help construct the angle of the intended meaning, such as the choice of the Subject of the main clause or what holds modal responsibility in the main clause (Purwaningsih & Gulö, 2021a; S Suprayogi & Pranoto, 2020). Hence, theme is seen to contribute to the construal of a text's meanings, to the organization of the ideas in a text, and to a reader's interpretation of the message.

From the facts that has been mentioned above, the writer is interested to analyze the frequency of Themes appeared political news reports in the New York Times newspaper and their functions using the systemic functional grammar approach (Pratiwi et al., 2020; Suprayogi Suprayogi & Novanti, 2021). Particularly, the writer will choose political news reports dealing with the condition of the new era of US Presidential. There are ten selected news reports that the writer used in conducting this research from January until February 2017. Every performance of the new President dealing with politic matters pay some attention and this news becomes one of the desirable news that society want to know.

As one of the oldest newspapers in the world, New York Times has had many achievements in journalistic. More than 90 achievements have they got from 1918 until 2004. Moreover, it has international and national version of news in their newspaper everyday, which means that the readers are not only for American but also international society. This means that The New York Times can be considered as provider of the information in more interesting ways and in good structural than the other, because it is possible that more than one newspapers report the same information to the society and yet people still choose to read New York Times. However, The New York Times is still able to maintain its place in society until now. Thus, the writer will choose The New York Times as the object analysis in conducting this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Thematic Structure
The writer's judgments about the reader's current mental states are reflected in what is called the Thematic structure used (Kuswoyo & Susardi, 2017; Puspita, 2021; K. Sari & Pranoto, 2021). Thematic structure has three main functions; to convey given information and new information (Theme and Rheme), to subject and predicate, to frame and insert. A thematic structure helps to make a media text coherent meaning that it orients a text around

a central Theme of strand within a text (Afrianto et al., 2021; Ayu et al., 2021; Fakhrurozi & Puspita, 2021). However, in this study the writer will focus on Theme-Rheme analysis.

Theme and Rheme

The using of Themes reveals the organization of a text on all levels (Athaya et al., 2021). Theme is "what the message is concerned with: the point of departure for what the speaker is going to say" in a clause (Abidin et al., 2021b; Alita, 2021). At the level of a clause complex (paragraph), the first clause will be taken as the theme (topic sentence), while at the level of a text, the first clause or clause complex will be regarded as the departure of what the author is going to say in the article (Al Falaq & Puspita, 2021b; Pranoto, 2021).

As the writer mentioned before, the analysis in this research included all types of clauses which are simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex clause. Simple sentence contains only one subject and one predicate. In the case of compound sentences, there will be two independent clauses which are connected by conjunctions such as and, or, for, nor, yet, and so. Meanwhile complex sentence is an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses. Thus, it needs subordinator (as, because, since, after, although, when) or relative pronouns (who, that, which) to connect them. Last, A compound-complex sentence which has two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause (Khasanah et al., 2017).

However, in the case of compound, complex, compund-complex clauses, the dependent clause in such a clause complex is considered part of the Rheme (Gulö & Nainggolan, 2021; Qodriani, n.d.; Sujatna et al., 2020). Although it still has its own Thematic structure, in practice the reason for not analyzing the dependent clause is that, as Fries and Francis point out that the structure of dependent clauses, including their thematic structure, tends to be constrained by the independent clauses. The main contribution comes from the thematic structure of independent clauses" also supports the position adopted in this study (Adelina & Suprayogi, 2020; Suprayogi Suprayogi, 2021).

Meanwhile Rheme is everything that is not Theme: it is the part of the clause where the Theme is developed. A message structure in English is comprised of a Theme plus a Rheme. There is an order to the structure: Theme comes first, followed by Rheme, and whatever is placed in initial position is Theme. In many instances Rheme is related to New Information, while Theme is related to Given Information. Given refers to what is already known or predictable, while New refers to what is unknown or unpredictable.

Types of Theme

Theme in systemic functional grammar can be divided into two, Marked and Unmarked Theme.

-   Marked Theme

Marked Theme is the Theme in a clause which the function is a not subject. Forey said that marked Theme can generally functions to show a change in topic or progression that help establish the context of the clause (Fadilah & Kuswoyo, 2021; Purwarianti, 2014).

METHOD

In this research, the writer will use the qualitative research because this study aims to describe the types of Theme used in political news reports of New York Times. Qualitative research explores attitudes, behaviors and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups (Mandasari & Wahyudin, 2019; Mertania & Amelia, 2020; F. M. Sari & Oktaviani, 2021). Moreover, the writer applied library research; library research is used where the data already available, such as journals, articles and books that relevant to the research (Nurmalasari & Samanik, 2018; Setri & Setiawan, 2020). In conducting this research, the writer took the data source from the official website of New YorkTimes

online   newspaper
http:/www.nytimes.com/pages/todayspaper/index.html?mobile. There will be ten news reports selected from January until February 2017 in the form of text. Meanwhile the data that will be analyzed are all clauses from the political news reports, which deal with decision and performance of the new President of US after presidential election.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Marked Theme

This section presents some classifications of how marked Theme is placed, which are in the form of circumstantial adjunct and complement.

Adjunct

Circumstantial Adjunct

Article 1

The clause has marked Theme as it is begun with non-subject in the very first beginning of the clause. The Theme the author used functions as circumstantial adjunct of manner. It is aimed to answer the question of with what/by what. It explains how Mr. Trump, in Rheme, doing something and the author wants the Readers to focus first on with what Mr. Trump signaled something, thus the clause is written this way. The Theme in this clause also functions as the coherence tool since the previous clause talks about Trump's work on multinational trade agreements which are the reference for stroke of a pen. Thus, then clause may cohesive to the previous clause. This means that the writer of the news tries to lead the readers to focus on what will happen with Trump's work on multinational agreements. After leading the readers in Theme, the readers will find the answer in the Rheme.

Article 2

This clause shows the use of marked Theme as it is begun with prepositional phrase 'after' as circumstantial adjunct. The marked Theme used in this clause functions as conveyance of new formation. It is clearly put to explain what happens at reconciliation at the C.I.A. in Langley. By putting the Theme this way, we now are able to identify the important information of this clause which is After racing through his words of reconciliation at the C.I.A. in Langley, which is why the author put it in the very beginning of the clause. This Theme also can function as situation-setting in this clause because the Theme is obviously started with after which indicates certain time. Besides, this Theme also make the readers focused on what happened reconciliation at the C.I.A. in Langley.

b. Unmarked Theme

Many unmarked Theme in clauses serve the same function as subject or to emphasize the topic. However, the subject might be written in different forms, as follow:

Unmarked Theme in Declarative Clause

Article 1

The same as the previous analysis, this clause also uses unmarked Theme in the form of subject. The author put the Theme this way because he or she wants the reader to focus on Democrats and labor groups first as the opposit of Republicans. His in this clause refers to Mr. Trump and the previous clause was talking about Mr. Trump's action. Democrats and labor groups is put in the beginning because it is unusual thing that these two groups support their opponent. Thus, the author writes the Theme this way in order to get the readers' attention. Besides, this Theme is certainly conveying or emphasizing the subject which in this case is Democrats and labor groups. The main information in this clause lays in Democrats and labor groups.

Article 2

In article 2, the Theme is written as the subject of this clause, therefore it is called an unmarked Theme. As this clause is written in the beginning of the text, there is no need for the author to correlate this Theme to the previous clause since there s no previous clause except the title of the news. However, as the first clause of a text the Theme of this clause also must catch the readers' attention. The title of article in d article article 2 is Rocky First Weekend for Trump Troubles Even His Top Aides which quite much highlights about Trump's first weekend of being President of US and the Theme of the first clause in this article, President Trump's first weekend in office, tends to make people paying attention on what has happened during the first weekend of Trump's period of the new President of America.

In article 5 which is in the same form of subject as data example analysis in article 2, the Theme is also unmarked since it has function as subject that the author puts nothing before the subject. New York's attorney general is placed first because the author wants the text in coherence by putting the subject as the response of New York's attorney general of what has been accused or complained in the previous clause. The author writes about the violation of court orders for some states including New York. The next clause is written as the response from New York to the accusation which makes New York's attorney general the focus of this clause since it has the right to a letter to federal authorities.

The last representative of this form Theme is form article 6 which has the same characteristics and reasons of why it is unmarked Theme. The only difference is the reason the author puts the Theme of this clause as subject. As the whole text is talking about Trump's action due to Supreme Court nomination, there is almost always something about Judge Gorsuch in every clause. He is the person that Trump's pick from his party to be a nomination for Supreme Court election. This clause is one of the examples that the author

really wants the readers to focus on Judge Gorsuch. The Theme in this clause is aimed to give one of examples of his activity after his nomination's announcement.

In the case of representative in article 3, the unmarked Theme is in the form of gerund functioning as subject and it is put in the beginning of the clause, therefore it is included into unmarked Theme. Gerund as subject also has the same function as other forms of subject. In this case, Moving into the White House is written first because the author wants the readers' to see this Theme or subject as the result of Trump's steps in throwing away his worries.

The Theme used by this clause is unmarked Theme in the form of subject. The subject Judge Ann M. Donnelly of Federal District Court in Brooklyn is followed by appositive who was nominated by former President Barack Obama which is to explain the subject. As Halliday (2014) explains that any subject that is placed in the very first beginning belongs to unmarked Theme. In this case, after the appositive that explains the the subject is also part of the subject. Thus, the Theme includes the appositive. Meanwhile, this Theme has function to emphasize more specifically on one of Judges' performance, Ann M. Donnely. Since the previous clause was talking about some Judge's decision, here the next clause is written to make the readers focus on Judge Donnelly's action. The previous clause states that judge's decision can affect many people who were detained in America's airport. Then, to make the text coherence, this clause continuous to inform the readers about Judge Donnelly's decision due to the President's order.

Besides, the appositive as part of the Theme that explains who is Judge Ann M. Donnelly also has an important function to this clause. As a whole, the unmarked Theme of this clause is written for the readers to focus on Judge Ann M. Donnelly who did an action against Mr. Trump's order. For that, the appositive as part of the Theme is written to emphasize Judge Ann M. Donnelly's position as former nominee by Barack Obama who was the previous president before Trump. Moreover, Barack Obama is from Democrat party which is an opponent to Trump's party, Replubican. Therefore, the Theme is written together with the appositive to emphasize Judge Ann M. Donnelly's position and to explicitly explain the cause of what happened to Judge Ann M. Donnelly's decision in the Rheme.

The clause in article 7 also has unmarked Theme because All three here functions as subject. Furthermore, this All three has function to make the text coherence since All three here is the reference of Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer, and Frank Gaffney Jr. in the previous clause. In previous clause, Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer, and Frank Gaffney Jr. is not put as subject, but functions as Rheme to explain about people who outspoken the most in warning about Islam. Those three are mentioned by the author as some examples of people warned about Islam. Meanwhile, in this clause the author puts them in the form of All three as the subject to make the readers' viewpoint on them and what happened to them in the past as explained in the Rheme.

Unmarked Theme in Interrogative Clause

Article 4

This clause is begun with WH-element of what that is not function as subject and not as an exclamatory clause. This means that this clause is in interrogative form to ask someone,

might be the readers. Thus the Theme, what, is unmarked Theme. What is put first no matter what other function it has in the mood structure of the clause, whether Subject, Adjunct or Complement because she or he wants to know something meaning 'I want you to tell me the person, thing, time, manner, etc.'

Unmarked Theme in Imperative Clause

Article 6

This clause has unmarked Theme, Dont, which is verbal process or called as Predicator. The subject of this clause is hidden as it is one of the characteristics of imperative clause. As an imperative clause, this Theme indicates that the speaker or the writer wants the readers not to do something since it is in negative form. However, this clause is written after the author wrote some Democrats' protest about Trump's decision in Supreme Court election. So, this clause is part of Democrats' complains to the new President and tells the other members of Democrat not to flinch and back down.

CONCLUSION

The finding shows that from 10 political news articles, unmarked Themes in declarative clauses are the most Theme found in each article. More than 50% from every article chosen has unmarked Theme in declarative clause. This means that the writer of the news articles used many subject or topics in the beginning of clauses to emphasize the topic, particularly in the first clause of the article. From 10 chosen article, all of the first clause always has unmarked Theme because the writer of the articles need to connect the title to the text. Furthermore, the writer also found unmarked Theme in declarative clause in the form of pronouns, such as it, they, etc, as the reference of the noun in the previous clauses.

However, the writer also found that there are some unmarked Themes in imperative and interrogative clauses. Those unmarked Themes found in imperative and interrogative clauses are in the form of reported speech. This shows that articles in newspaper, which in this case is political news reports, use declarative clauses to describe the condition or something related to the topic. The reported speeches are used to strengthen the opinion or statement that the writer has stated. In case of declarative clause, the writer cannot find any exclamative clause as Theme from ten articles. The writer assumed that because political news reports focus more on the figure or events, exclamative clauses are rarely found as a subject or Theme. Although, they are found in middle or at the end of the clause.

Meanwhile, the number of marked Themes found in 10 chosen articles are not as many as unmarked Theme. However, they are not so rarely to be found in political news reports. This is because marked Themes also hold an important role in a text. In Besides, the writer cannot find any marked Theme in the form of complement. This could be because as it is mentioned in chapter 2, complement is the least likely form of marked Theme and news report in newspaper is usually written in more formal way. Thus, Theme in modal adjunct is not found since modal adjunct is usually used to share writer's opinion. Meanwhile, news report is written to inform the facts, not to side one or other party.

In sum, even though the amount of markedness in political news reports are different, both convey equal role for a text in delivering the information, carrying the writer's viewpoint, and make the text coherence and cohesive. This research also proves that news report, particularly political news report, contain unmarked Themes more than marked Themes.

This might be assumed that since news report are written in mostly declarative clauses, the Themes that the writer used also mostly unmarked Themes to focus on the subject.

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