
COHERENCE ANALYSIS OF THE 2015 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ARTICLE ABSTRACTS IN APPLIED LINGUISTIC

Reski Oktaviani Yuned
University of Bengkulu
reski.oktaviani@gmail.com

Abstract

Coherence is one of the characteristic of good abstract that represent the whole content of research article in order to be able to show what messages want to be expressed. This study investigated the English abstract International conference in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker in its coherence by analyzing the theme and rheme. This study focuses on (1) identifying thematic progressions which are dominantly used in 2015 International conference article abstracts written by non-native speaker of English (2) finding out coherences' quality of the research article abstract section in 2105 International Conference article abstracts in applied linguistics based on thematic progression. This study was designed by using descriptive qualitative with content analysis approach. The results show that Zig Zag (Simple Linear) pattern in thematic progression is dominantly used in International Conference Article Abstract then followed by reiteration (Constant) theme, and the last Multiple (Split) pattern. None of the abstracts use Derived TP pattern. Most of the research article abstracts section in International Conference abstracts in applied linguistics have fair quality, just a few included to less quality, none of them was categorized as good and poor quality. It can be concluded that 2015 International conference article abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speakers can be categorized as good abstract based on their coherence.

Keywords: *Abstract, Coherence, Theme, Thematic Progression*

1. INTRODUCTION

Abstract is one of the important parts or sections of an academic writing due to the fact that it is a kind of short condensed text to represent the whole text or overview of a research article it is located in the first section of research article. This is the point that determines whether readers will continue to read the next section or not. It is important for the researcher to write the abstract interesting in order to make the reader want to continue to read the abstract (Belcher, 2009). Therefore, a good abstract must be created by the writers as worth as the whole content of research article in order to be able to represent what messages want to be expressed in the abstract. Abstract lets the readers who may be interested in the paper to quickly decide whether it is relevant to their purposes and whether they need to read the whole paper. One of the characteristics of good abstract is its coherence. Writing an abstract with its coherence is not only difficult for university student but also hard for lecturers. Creating a coherent and cohesive academic writing is also complicated for students at the tertiary level. In fact, most university students would agree that academic writing particularly writing a research thesis is the hardest task to complete (Evans & Gruba, 2002; Emilia, 2008). Meanwhile, several well-established researches recommends that analyzing students' writing with the emphasis on meaning and function, Theme-Rheme, and textual metafunction of text have provided an effective framework for identifying coherence in students' texts (Vande Kopple, 1991; Bloor & Bloor, 1992; Eggins, 2004; Schleppegrell, 2004, 2009; Christie & Dreyfus, 2007; Wang, 2007). As a result, it has been suggested that analysis on textual coherence using Theme Rheme progression can be useful for academic writing

Many researchers had analyzed about abstract in many aspect. Safnil (2014) conducted the Rhetorical of abstract. According to Safnil (2014) reviewed clearly about many researchers' ideas about rhetorical of abstract. In his Research Article stated that there are four possible moves of abstracts (problem, aims, method, and results), only three are considered compulsory (aims, method

and results) while problem is optional. In his research article, he focused to analyze social-humanity field. On the contrary, the researcher takes another field, non-native speaker of English, to analyze in this research. Similar idea, Bathia suggests that an abstract consist four aspect of research; they are 1) the purpose, 2) the method, 3) the results, and 4) the conclusion. In addition, it should present the purpose of the work to the reader and also to encourage the reading of the complete work. Scientific texts (papers, reports, theses, etc.) have a well-defined structure that can be categorized as: Introduction, Development, and Conclusion (Safnil, 2014; Swales, 1990)

Another researcher had conducted the coherence analysis in another section of research article. With regard to students' ability to create a coherent and cohesive writing, several studies have been conducted to investigate the coherence and cohesiveness in students' academic writing. One of them is conducted by Emilia et al (2008 and 2010) that reports students' difficulties in writing discussion chapter of a research thesis coherently and critically. To overcome the problem, Emilia proposes a teaching program with a view to nurture students' ability in writing a discussion chapter so that they have the capability in writing a thesis critically and coherently.

Another study which focuses on coherence and cohesiveness in students' academic writing is also conducted by Watson, Khongput, and Darawasang(2007). They found that student's essays lack coherence and cohesion and suggested to write comments, feedback, or side notes on students' academic essay particularly to guide the students in recognizing the lack of coherence and cohesion in their essays.

The relevant study by Souza and Feltrim (2011) which was conducted an analysis of textual coherence in academic abstracts written in Portuguese. The main purpose of their work is to propose four dimensions of analysis concerning textual coherence in academic abstracts. These dimensions take into consideration the rhetorical structure of abstracts, as proposed by Feltrim et al (2003). Abstracts from Bachelor theses written in Brazilian Portuguese were analysed according to the proposed dimensions and the results for each of them were presented. By taking into account the manual analysis performed on the corpus, Feltrim observed that from the four proposed dimensions, at least three can be automated by means of computational resources: Dimension Title, Dimension Purpose and Dimension Gap-Background. In these three dimensions, he have observed the existence of patterns concerning the rhetorical structure and aspects of coherence, he differently from the fourth dimension, Dimension Linearity-break. He observed in Dimension Title that the sentences with a higher semantic relationship with the title of an abstract were the sentences of Purpose category. Moreover, he observed problems of coherence in abstracts in which the relationship of the title and the sentences of the Purpose are low. Both categories of sentences, title and Purpose, summarize the main purpose of the work, each in its proportion and, therefore, a high relationship between these sentences is expected to led to a greater level of coherence.

The importance of academic writing in International conference is important for the researchers because it is a medium for research article publication in academic writing. It is also a medium for them to convey their ideas and to share with another researchers. One of them is Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia (TEFLIN). TEFLIN publish the research in international area, so it must be have some characteristic to pass the selection of TEFLIN itself, one of them is the coherence of the text. Thus, based on the previous study had been done, there are many researchers had conducted the research about the analysis of abstract in other aspect and conducted the coherence analysis in other aspect of research article. So, it is the main reason for the researcher to analyze coherence in abstracts especially in International conference article in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker especially in TELFIN.

2. REVIEW RELATED THEORY

Coherence is continuity in meaning and context and concerns with underlying phenomenon in the text. Coherence refers to the way a group of clauses or sentences relate to its context or in other words coherence in a text refers to their contextual property which means the way in which it relates to and makes sense in the situation in which it occurs (Halliday and Hasan 1976 in Eggins, 2004; Paltridge, 2006).

In addition, according to Systemic Functional Linguistics, coherence embodies two aspects of context: the outer context of text is acknowledged as context of culture which is known as

generic coherence and the inner context of text is known as situational or registerial coherence (Butt et al, 2000; Eggins, 2004). Context of culture or generic coherence refers to a possible meaning that represents and is influenced by its broader socio-cultural environment, such as ethnic group, institution, ideology, or social convention or in other words a generic coherence occurs in a particular communicative context, event, or genre. This means that generic coherence is used to identify its social purpose from the clauses or the coherence properties included in the text (Butt et al, 2000; Eggins, 2004).

The latter term, situational or registerial coherence refers to the language use in a more specific situation or the situation where the text occurs, accordingly; the situation shapes the function and the meaning of the text (Butt et al, 2000; Eggins, 2004). In terms of the situational or registerial context of coherence, Eggins (2004: 29) describes three different systems of grammar: field, mode, and tenor system. Field system is used to point out the language used to talk about what is happening, what will happen, and what has happened. Mode system reflects the role of language that is employed in the interaction, and tenor system associates with the role of relationship between the interactants (Butt et al, 2000; Eggins, 2004).

As explained above, the three parameters of context of situation (field, tenor, and mode) affect linguistic choices of the speaker or writer in the sense that these parameters reflect major functions of language and these functions manifest in different grammatical features of text (Butt et al 2000, Eggins, 2004). The three parameters above are instilled in the three distinct modes of meaning: 1) ideational, 2) interpersonal, and 3) textual. These three functions are then known as the linguistic system of metafunctions which represent different purposes in the development of the text (Butt et al, 2000; Eggins, 2004; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Emilia, 2010).

Theme and Rheme system is a basic form, a source for organizing and constructing the clause message, and also for assigning textual prominence to elements within the clauses in textual organization (Halliday, 1983; Matthiessen, 1992). Thus, by organizing and examining the patterns Theme and Rheme, the meaning of the whole text and how clauses are organized or combined can be understood. With regard to Theme and Rheme as the clause message system, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) define the practical implementation of Theme and Rheme in the sentences. Sentence may be divided in terms of given information (Theme) and new information (Rheme) which means Theme typically holds several old or given information and provides particular setting as a mean to keep the contextual unity in the sentences. Furthermore, Halliday (1994: 39) elaborates that Theme is what the speaker has in mind to start with and also organizes the clause as message, but the position is not what defines the Theme: it is a mean which realizes the function of the Theme.

In addition, McCarthy (1990: 55) explains that Theme is noun (phrase) that signal the topic in the sentence, yet, do not tell about the rest of clause or topic, and what comes after Theme or the rest of the clause is known as Rheme or comment that develops the topic or Theme. Gerot and Wignell (1997: 103) also define Theme as an element which comes first in the clause and commonly immediately precedes the main verb of the clause and Rheme as the element which includes the main verb and all other remaining constituents of the sentences.

There are three different types of Theme: topical (experiential), interpersonal, and textual element (Emilia, 2010). Topical element of the clause is to which a transitivity function can be assigned or the first element of transitivity in the clause (Gerot and Wignell, 1994: 132; Eggins, 2004: 32). According to Martin, Matthiessen, and Painter (1997: 22), topical (ideational) Theme can be recognized as the first element in the clause which expresses kinds of representational meaning that attaches a transitivity role such as actor, behavior, senser, carrier, or circumstance. In other words, topical or ideational Theme is technically a function from the transitivity structure of the clause and it might be a participant, process, or circumstance in the first element of the clause. Thus, to consider whether the first Theme is topical, it should fulfill the slot that functions as participant, process, or circumstance (Butt et al, 2000: 136).

Interpersonal Theme is when a constituent is labeled as a mood in the beginning of a clause Interpersonal Theme deals with modal/comment, adjunct, finite verbal operator in yes/no interrogative, mood, polarity or any combination of vocatives or personal names The

constituents that can function as interpersonal Themes are: The finite, Modal adjunct as in Mood Adjunct and Comment adjunct, Mood Adjunct, Vocative Adjunct, and Wh Elements or Polarity Adjunct. (Martin, Matthiessen, and Painter, 1997; Eggins, 2004; Emilia, 2010).

Textual Theme is the constituents which do important cohesive work in relating clause to its context (Eggins, 2004). The Textual Theme covers continuatives (small set of discourse items which signal that a new move is beginning such as: yes, no, oh), structural elements (coordinates and subordinates), conjunction, and conjunctive adjunct which relate the clause to the preceding text (e.g., in other words). In addition, the use of Textual Theme such as conjunction and the like indicates that the text is highly written (Emilia, 2010). In particular, Textual Theme is important in structuring the texts because the Theme operates at sentence or clause complex level (Gerot and Wignell, 1994). According to Martin, Matthiessen, and Painter (1997: 25), Textual Themes are: Structural Conjunction (Linking two clauses in a coordinating relation or marking one clause as dependent on another), Conjunctives (Providing a cohesive link back to previous discourse), Continuative (continuity adjunct as Theme and the commonest continuity items).

Thematic progression (TP) as a theory was first propounded by Frantisek Danes in 1974, who argue that 'the paragraph is a content unit delimited by its boundaries and its inner coherence'. Thematic progression is Theme Rheme development employed in the text to organize the ideas through the Theme which is employed in the clauses (Butt et al, 2001: 134). Thus, how thematic elements succeed each other can be observed through its development pattern (Eggins, 1994: 324). Furthermore, thematic progression is a important aspect to trace the global flow of information throughout the text. In addition, Eggins (2004:326) divided them into three patterns are Theme reiteration, Zigzag pattern, and Multiple Rheme pattern.

In the reiteration pattern, the same element appears repeatedly and is used frequently as a starting point of message in the sentences, but is rarely used to develop the Rheme. However, the Theme reiteration is used to create a strong topical focus (Eggins, 2004). The Zigzag pattern ties a text with a sense of continuous development because new information in the preceding clause becomes the starting point of the following clause (Vande Kopple, 1991; Eggins, 2004; Emilia, 2005; Christie and Dreyfus, 2007). The third pattern is multiple - Rheme pattern. This pattern occurs when the Theme of one clause introduces a number of different pieces of information then the different pieces of information are written as the Theme in following clause in sequence paragraph in the text (Eggins, 2004: 325). The multiple Rheme pattern can be used to organize a paragraph, but this pattern can also occur across paragraphs.

Additionally, Danes in 1974 divided Thematic Progression into four main patterns: first, Zig Zag theme contains two or more sentences in which each rheme becomes the theme in next sentence. Second, constant theme which he also referred to as theme reiteration. In this, (theme reiteration or constant theme) pattern is picked up and repeated at the beginning of next clause, signaling that each clause will have something to say about the theme. Thus, it consists of two or more sentences with the same theme. Third is Multiple (Split) pattern. It has a certain rheme which is divided or split into two or more parts, each of which is developed separately as the theme of the following sentences. The last is TP with derived T's which is "hypertheme" develops individually different theme of each sentences. The last, to know how coherence's quality in International Conference abstract, the researcher use The Parameter of Coherence Proposed by Eggins.

This research will reveal 2 questions. The first is the types of thematic progression pattern are dominantly applied in 2015 International conference article abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker. The second is the coherence's quality of the conference abstract section in 2015 International conference article abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used descriptive qualitative method. The researcher will describe the coherence of abstract written by Indonesian author's research article. According to Gay (2009), a descriptive research involves collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. Moreover, it determines and reports the way things are as the representative about current condition. Thus, descriptive research is a method to collect the data in the group of people, an object, a set of condition and other in order to answer questions concerning the

current status of the subject of the study. The analysis of thematic progression is used to answer the questions in this research. The quality of abstract will be analyzed by using parameter of coherence proposed by Eggins.

Table 1. The Parameter of Coherence Proposed by Eggins (2004)

No	Level of Coherence	Explanation
	Good	If the type of thematic progression is constant in one type each paragraph.
	Fair	If the type of thematic progression is inconstant or change from one type to others type each paragraph.
	Less	If new theme(s) is/are created in the middle of paragraph.
	Poor	If there is no thematic progression used.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

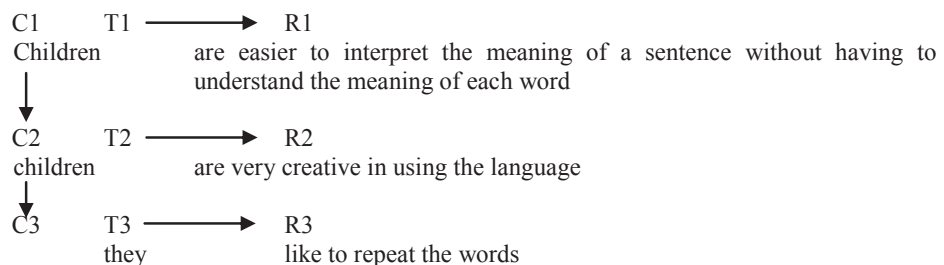
The analysis on Thematic Progression used by the researchers in International conference of English abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker. Based on Theme choices employed by the researchers in International conference of English abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker, the data showed that there are three thematic patterns found in the abstracts section, namely Continuous (Reiteration) pattern, (Simple Linear) Zig Zag pattern, and Multiple or Split Theme. The analysis in this section concerns with the flow of information from Theme to Rheme. The analysis also deals with the development of Theme and Rheme which is used to convey their ideas in the abstracts section. The table below shows types of thematic progression pattern is applied in International conference of English abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian writer

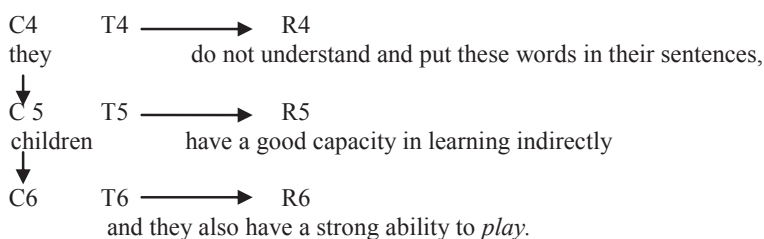
Table 2 Thematic Progression of abstracts

Types of Thematic Progression	Frequency	Percentage
Continous (Reiteration) Pattern	62	38%
Zig Zag (Simple Linear) Pattern	89	55%
Multiple (Split) Pattern	12	7%
TP with Derived (T's) Pattern	0	0%
Total	163	100%

Table 2 presented the data of Thematic Progression was used in International conference of English abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian writer. In the first position, Zigzag (Simple Linear) Pattern as the basic pattern of Thematic Progression was applied 89 times or it is about 55% from 100%. In the second position of single pattern is Continuous (Reiteration) Pattern. It is applied 62 times from 100 abstracts or it is about 38%. The last and the less of Thematic Progression was applied is Multiple (Split) Pattern. It was only appeared 12 times from 100 abstracts. None of researchers use Derived TP in their abstracts

The example below is the example of Theme Reiteration in the abstract section:

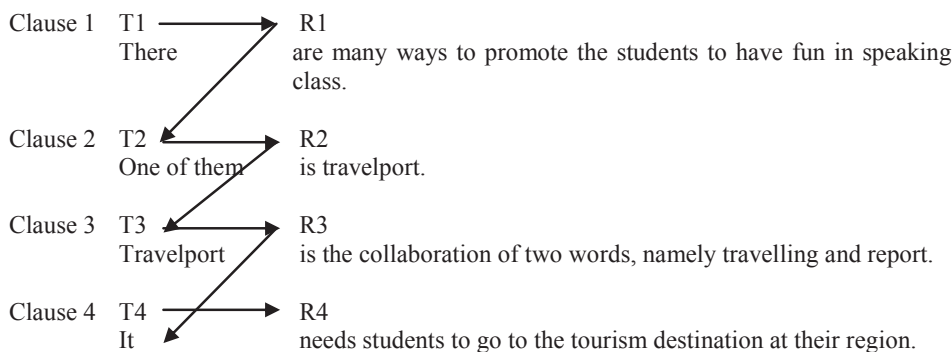




From the example above, the researcher use the same Theme in his abstract. The word “*Children*” appears three times. It is from T1 to T6. He used the same Theme continuously in his abstract. Moreover the researchers use “*they*” as the pronoun or personal reference of children as the subject. If the Rheme of the abstract have different one to another, the Theme always repeat again and again. It means the researcher attempted to provide a focus in his/her writing in order to be clear with the topic being discussed.

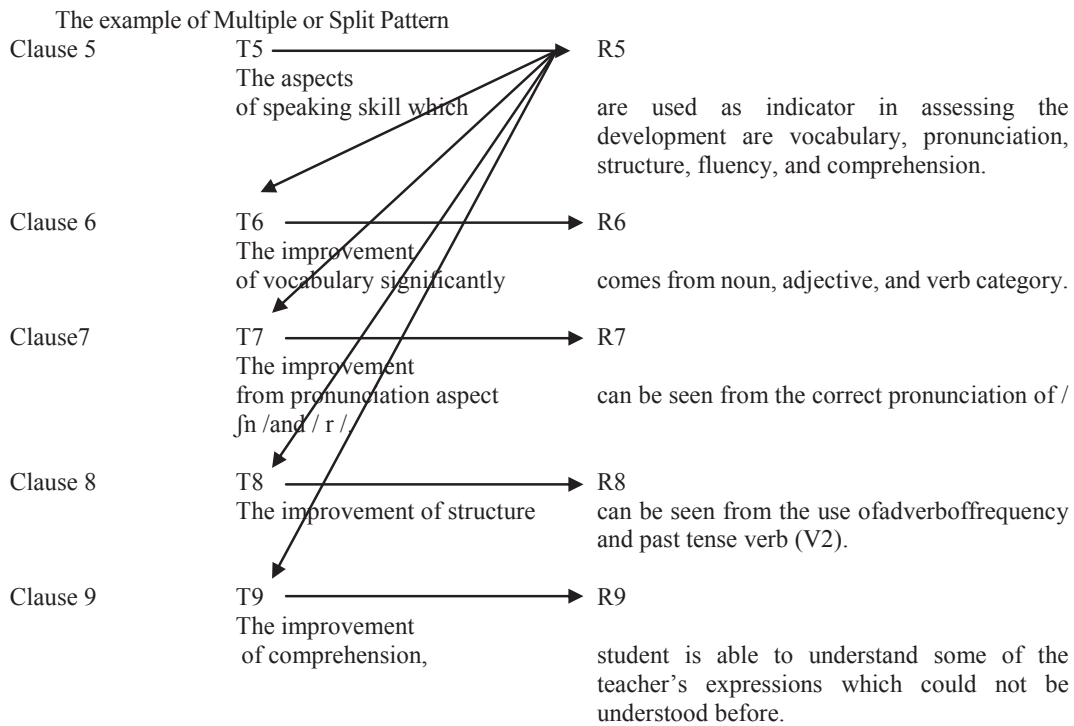
Zig Zag pattern can be. Here is the example of zigzag pattern from the International conference of English abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker.

The example of Zig Zag Pattern.



The example above is taken from abstract 29. It is indicated that the researcher use Zigzag (Simple Linier) Pattern. It can be seen in the example above that T9 is same with T11. “*lack of knowledge which part of the articles should be underlined*” as R11 become Theme in clause 12. While R12 that is “*provide some suggestion*” is become T in clause 13. It is happened again in the next sentence. The words “*should receive more attention*” as R13 become T in clause 14. It is important to use Zigzag pattern in research or academic writing because this is a way make their writing have a consistent flow of information and to provide logical connection between their writing. There are new information in the beginning of every clause. Clause 2 shows that the element which is introduced in the Rheme of first clause is established as a Theme in the following clause 2.

Multiple or Split pattern can be found in International conference of English abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker. Here is the example of Multiple or Split pattern from the International conference of English abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker.



From the example above (taken from abstract 7), it can be described that R5 “are used as indicator in assessing the development are vocabulary, pronunciation, structure, fluency, and comprehension” introduces a number of different pieces of information, the R5 are written as the Theme in clause 6 until clause 9. “The improvement of vocabulary “ be the Theme in clause 6, “The improvement of pronunciation“ becomes the Theme in clause 7, “The improvement of structure“ be the Theme in clause 8, and “The improvement of vocabulary “ becomes the Theme in clause 9.

Coherences’ Quality

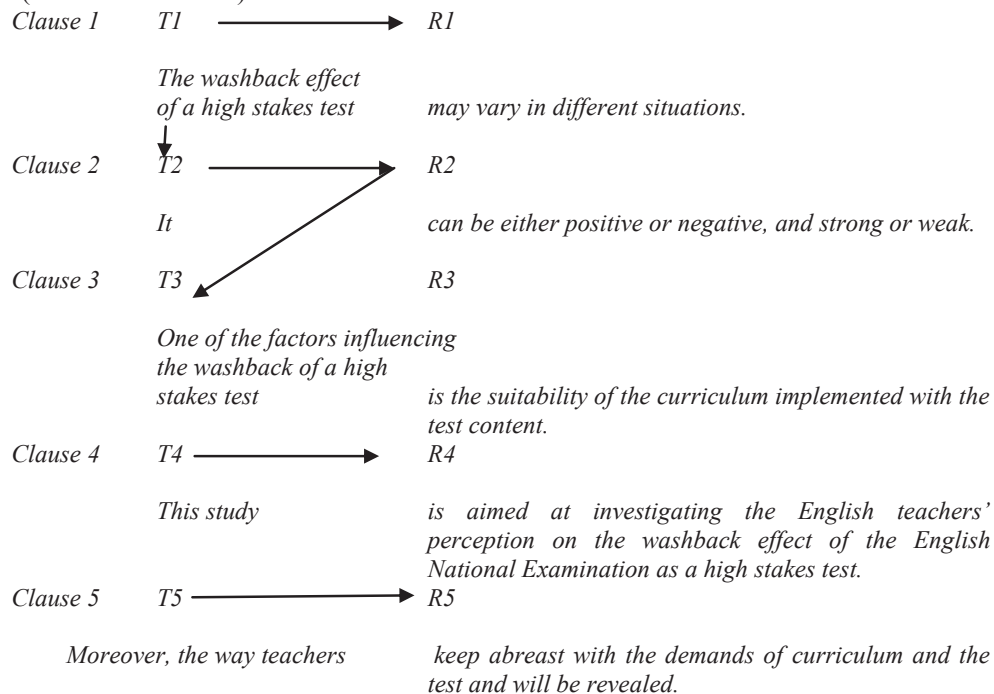
Coherences’ quality of the research article abstract section in International Conference abstracts in applied linguistic is based on thematic progression. The result showed that there are two coherences’ quality is indicated in this research. They are fair and less quality. The table below shows the result of coherences’ quality of the research article abstract section in International Conference abstracts in applied linguistic based on thematic progression.

Table 3. The level of coherence in abstracts section

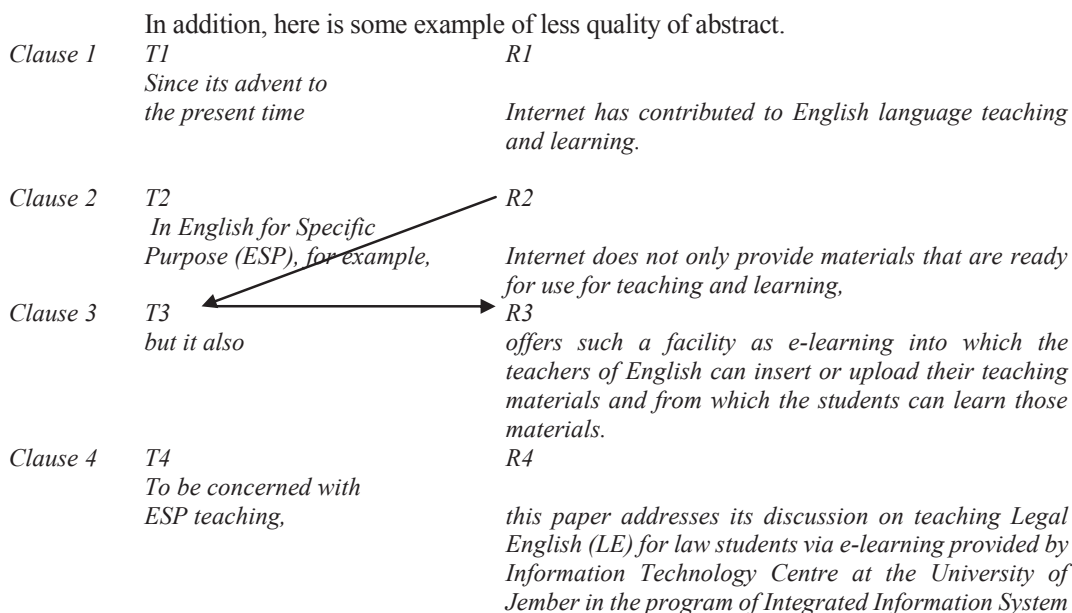
Coherence Quality	Frequenc	Percentage
Good	0	0
Fair	94	94%
Less	6	6%
Poor	0	0
Total	100	100%

In table 3, it is shown that from 100 number of abstract, none of them can be categorized as good coherences. About 94 abstracts or 94 % of theme can be categorized as fair coherences’ quality and only 6 abstracts are included as less coherences’ quality. None of the abstracts can be categorized as poor coherences’ quality. It can be concluded that the coherence quality of 2015 International Conference article abstract can be categorized as fair coherence quality. Here are some examples of abstract in the level of fair quality

The Example of fair quality of abstract section
(Extract abstract 49)



From the example above, the researcher use two thematic progressions; Reiteration Pattern and Zigzag Pattern. This abstract is included in fair quality of abstract because the researcher use inconstant thematic progression, he change his pattern from Reiteration patter to Zigzag Pattern.



The example above, is taken from the abstract 4, it can be categorized as less quality of abstract because the researcher use thematic progression in the middle of the sentences. He used Zigzag pattern in the second clause. It can be seen that R2 becomes T3 in the third clause.

Zigzag pattern is the dominantly applied by researchers in abstract section. The use of Zigzag pattern in this abstract may be show that the researchers can built a new Theme based on

the Rheme in the previous clause. This by using Zigzag pattern means the researchers acknowledged the function of this pattern and have an effort to develop new information in. The Rheme in Zigzag pattern is developed and became the Theme in the next clause. Butt (2000) also stated that this Theme can provide focus and moving the topic forward. The high usage of this theme found in the abstract may be equal to what Danes (1974), argues about simple linear pattern is the basic pattern of thematic progression.

Furthermore, the use of Zigzag pattern is a way to maintain and develop the information in writing. It is important to use zigzag pattern in research or academic writing because this way make their writing have a consistent flow of information and to provide logical connection between their writing. By applying Zigzag pattern, the researcher showed capability to “build newly introduced information in its Theme which is derived from the previous Rheme” (Eggins, 1994: 325).

Reiteration pattern is the second thematic progression which was applied. This theme used thematic development that repeatedly make uses the same Theme in the Clause. The repetition word perhaps indicates that the researcher attempted to provide a focus or subject in his/her writing in order to be clear with the topic being discussed. However, this strategy prevents the topic development in the text. The researchers repeatedly use the same unmarked topical element. If the same topical element is used frequently, it means that the researchers cannot develop the idea. Eggins (2004), said that the text will not be developed and this makes the information in the text under developed if the repetition word always appear.

Using different elements or the combination with other elements indicates that the student avoids “the monotonous repetition” (Eggins, 2004). Over usage of this theme may lead the lack of deep explanation of the ideas introduce as the writer does not expand the information contained in the Rheme. Multiple or Split pattern can be found in International conference of English abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker but just a few researchers used this theme. Derived theme never applied in abstract section. It possibly happened because this Theme is difficult to judge. The reason for this is still debate on whether derived theme is one type of thematic progression or not. (McCabe, 1999)

The inconstant or change of using thematic progression in each sentence probably indicate that the researcher have fair quality of abstract because the use of thematic progression in abstract is the basic way to indicate how is the coherences’ quality of the conference abstract section in International conference of English abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker. The result showed that there are two coherences’ qualities are indicated in this research. They are fair and less quality. By using thematic progression, the writer can analyze the quality of abstract. Fair quality of abstracts is the most quality in abstract section. It perhaps, the researchers used more than one thematic progression in one abstract. They did not use constant thematic progression in each sentence of their abstract. While, less quality happened because of using thematic progression in the middle of the sentences. Eggins (2004) also stated that there are level of coherence of abstract. One of them is fair quality which is happened if the type of thematic progression is inconstant or change from one type to others type.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusions from this research are taken from the data analysis in From 2015 International conference article abstracts in applied linguistics written Indonesian speaker, the result indicated that writers have used various types thematic progression patterns while thematic progression is dominantly applied is Zigzag (Simple Linear) pattern. Then, the quality of abstract in TEFLIN 2015 almost has fair quality, just a few of them have less quality and none of them has good or poor quality of abstract.

Finally, it can be concluded that 2015 International conference of article abstracts in applied linguistics written by Indonesian speaker can be categorized as good abstract based on their coherence.

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