Comparing the Senior and Vocational High School Students' Speeches through Thematic Progression

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Abstract

Public speaking is vital in the 20th century. Mastering public speaking can benefits in either work and education setting. Speech is an example of public speaking that commonly used as in an English competition. A good speech can be seen from its cohesion and coherence. This study aims to analyze the students' ability in maintaining the cohesion and coherence in their speeches in an English speech competition. The data of this study was taken from two YouTube videos from Erlangga Inspirasi channel. Four speeches from each video were taken randomly. The speeches were transcribed into written form and analyzed using the theory of thematic progression. The results of the analysis were validated by an expert in SFL field. The result showed that all thematic progression are realized in all speeches. The constant patterns are rarely found in both senior and vocational high school students' speeches. This finding is different with the previous studies regarding the thematic progression. The multiple patterns are mostly found in senior high school students' speeches. This indicates that they have a good ability to develop a cohesive and coherent text. Meanwhile, the linear patterns are mostly found in vocational high school students' speeches. This indicates that they can maintain a good cohesion although it is not as good as the senior high school. Several challenges are also found. Few clauses were failed to develop which led the text become less cohesive and coherent. This highlight the importance of applying thematic progression in English language teaching activity.

Keywords: SFL, Textual Metafunction, Thematic Progression, Cohesion

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is a crucial tool in the 20th century. A good public communication skill is a privilege in the field of academic and work. In English teaching and learning settings, public speaking can foster students' communication skill, confidence, and critical thinking (Sijin, 2023). However, students tend to have difficulties in practicing their public speaking skill due to several factors such as anxiety, the traditional teaching methods, and fear to make mistakes (Chen, 2024; Nguyen & Tong, 2024).

Speech is a part of public speaking. It functions to inform, describe, or persuade about something to the audience (Sellnow, 2005). (Utama, Fitriati, & Sakhiyya, 2024) added that through speech, people can convey their feeling, thought, and emotion as well as building connection and relationship with the audience. In Indonesia, speech becomes one of the English competitions among the high school students. Joining English speech contest can benefit the students in maintaining their public speaking skills (Burry, Sellick, & Yamamoto, 2012). Also, the students' ability can be observed from their coherence and cohesion in delivering the speech.

Coherence and cohesion in speech is vital. A speech is considered good if it can deliver the message cohesively and coherently. Coherence means that the clauses are organized according to its structure. Meanwhile, cohesion refers to how the clauses are connected to each other in the text (Farida & Rosyidi, 2019). To examine the coherence and cohesion of a text, thematic progression of systemic functional linguistics can be utilized.

Systemic functional linguistics is a branch of linguistics that see meaning is situated in a context of situation and culture (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). In systemic functional linguistics, there are three types of metafunction, namely ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafuntion, and textual metafunction. A theme in the textual metafunction can be developed to attain coherence and cohesion. This development is called as thematic progression. There are three types of thematic progression, namely constant theme pattern, linear theme pattern, and multiple/ split pattern (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). Constant pattern, known as reiteration pattern, is a type of thematic progression which employs the theme of previous clause to become the theme of the following clause (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Eggins, 2004; Paltridge, 2012). This pattern helps the audience to focus on the topic of

the speech. By employing the constant pattern, the speaker wants to emphasize the point of view of the speech topic (Dou & Zhao, 2018).

Linear pattern, known as zig-zag pattern, is a type of thematic progression which untilize the rheme of the previous clause to become the theme on the following clause (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Paltridge, 2012). It ensures the new idea connected effectively from the previous clause (Utama et al., 2024). In addition, this pattern provides a better progression compared to the constant pattern (Eggins, 2004).

The last type of thematic progression is split/ multiple pattern. This pattern is emerged when a piece of information in the rheme of a clause is developed into several themes in the following clauses (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Eggins, 2004; Paltridge, 2012). By employing this pattern, the idea of the text is developed logically. Moreover, this type of thematic progression is commonly found in the high achiever students (Yunita, 2018) and expository text (Eggins, 2004).

There were several studies regarding the thematic progression. These studies were divided into the realization of thematic progression in written and in spoken text. In written text, some scholars focused on the realization of thematic progression in descriptive text, recount text, narrative text, and journal articles.

A study was conducted by (Dewi, Hernawan, & Apsari, 2019). They studied about the realization of thematic progressions in descriptive text written by eleven grade students of Vocational High School in Cimahi. The students' level were divided into high achiever students, middle achiever students, and low achiever students. The result showed that all three thematic progressions were realized. Constant pattern became the most frequent pattern employed by the students with 90% occurrences. Moreover, the realization of constant pattern was mostly found in the middle achiever students. This indicated that the middle achiever students possessed the ability to keep the focus on the topic of the clause by repeating the theme of the clauses. The linear pattern became the second most frequent pattern used by the students with 6.48% occurrences. This pattern was mostly found in the low achiever students. This realization indicated that the low achiever students was attempting to build cohesion among the clauses by employing the rheme of the previous clause to become the theme of the following clause. Split/ Multiple pattern became the least frequent pattern with only 2.77% occurrences. This pattern indicated that the students could build a better cohesion by developing an information in the rheme of a particular clause to become the themes of several following clauses. This pattern was only found in high achiever students.

Another study was conducted by (Dewi & Kurniawan, 2018). They analyzed a recount text from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics. A purposive sampling was employed by choosing the most problematic text as the source of data. In terms of thematic progression, only two patterns were employed in the text. The first pattern was constant pattern. This pattern showed that the student tried to focus on what the text is. The second pattern was linear pattern. This pattern indicated that the student was able to introduce a new information by putting the rheme in a clause to become the theme in the subsequent clause. However, some grammatical issues were found in the text that made the text became unstructured. To overcome this, they promote a strategy called POWER (Plan, Organize, Write, Edit, and Revise).

A study about the realization of thematic progression in narrative text was conducted by (Rahayu, Krisnawati, & Soemantri, 2020). They analyzed the narrative texts written by nine students of international elementary school in Bandung. The students' level were divided into low, middle, and high achiever students. The result showed that constant and linear patterns were realized in the text. Constant pattern became the most frequent pattern. This pattern was mostly found in high achiever students. The realization of this pattern indicated that the students could focus on the specific participant which belongs to the language feature of narrative text. In addition, the linear pattern was mostly found in the low achiever students. The linear pattern indicated that the students were able to create a well-organized text. On the other hand, split/ multiple pattern was not found in the text. The absence of split/ multiple pattern indicated that the elementary students were not able to construct complex text.

A study concerning the realization of thematic progression was conducted by (Susilowati, Faridi, & Sakhiyya, 2022). The study focused on the analysis of thematic progression in research articles published in Q1 and Q2 Scopus-indexed journals. The result showed that contant pattern became the dominant one. This indicated that the author was successfully keeping the focus in the text. The split/ multiple pattern became the second dominant pattern. This result served as a new novelty since split/ multiple pattern was mostly became the rarest pattern in the written text.

In the spoken, few studies were conducted concerning the realization of thematic progression in speech. However, the studies were predominantly focused on speeches spoken by famous person. The studies were conducted by (Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020), (Djimet, 2022), and (Saepuloh, Ningsih, & Halimah, 2023). A study was focused on the realization of thematic progression in Joko Widodo's speech regarding COVID-19 pandemic (Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020). Meanwhile the other studies were focused on Joe Biden's speech on the capitol building attack and Hamas-Israel Rusia-Ukraine war (Asep Saepuloh et al., 2023; Djimet, 2022). The result of these studies reached into a consensus that the constant pattern was mostly realized in the speech. The frequent use of constant pattern indicated that the speaker tried to emphasize the topic of the speech. It also became the characteristic of political speech as the meaning could be delivered easily to the audience regardless their social background.

Concerned by the previous studies, it is intriguing to see how the realization of thematic progression in the spoken text, particularly in the speeches of senior and vocational high school students. The speeches done by senior and vocational high school students become the focus since they have different characteristics. Senior high school students are believed more erudite (Juhaidi, Bainah, Tajudin, & Munadi, 2024) since they are prepared to pursue their study in the university level. On the other hand, the vocational high school students focus on practical skills since they need to fulfil the job market after graduation (Panditatwa & Hidayat, 2024). These contrast characteristics is likely to produce different outcomes in delivering English speech. Thus, the research questions of this study are:

1. How are the realization of thematic progression in the speeches of senior high school students?
2. How are the realization of thematic progression in the speeches of vocational high school students?
3. How are the comparisons in the realization of thematic progression in the speeches between senior and vocational high school students?

METHODS (WITHOUT SUBHEADINGS IS PREFERRABLE)
This study employs descriptive qualitative study in the form of Systemic Functional Discourse Analysis. This study focuses on examining text to find the ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning hidden within the text (Li, 2022; Wang, 2021). Textual metafuntion becomes the aspect of analysis by examining the realization of thematic progression in the speeches of senior and vocational high school students using the theory of thematic progression by (Bloor & Bloor, 2004).

The data of this study were the speeches from both senior and vocational high school students at the Erlangga English Speech Contest 2021. The research data were obtained by downloading the Youtube video entitled 'National Grand Final Erlangga English Speech Contest 2021 Senior High School' and 'National Grand Final Erlangga English Speech Contest 2021 Vocational High School'. Four speeches were taken randomly from each video. The speeches were then transcribed into written form. An English education graduate program of Universitas Negeri Semarang was asked to evaluate the transcripts.

To analyze the data, the transcripts were labeled as SHS 1, SHS 2, SHS 3, and SHS 4 for senior high school students' speeches. Meanwhile, the vocational high school students' speeches transcripts were labeled as VHS 1, VHS 2, VHS 3, and VHS 4. These transcripts were then divided into clauses. The clauses in each speech were analyzed using the theory of thematic progression by (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). The results of the analysis were calculated, compared, interpreted, and infered to answer the objectives of the study. To avoid subjectivity, the results of the analysis were validated by an expert in the field of Systemic Functional Linguistics.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
This section presents the result and deeper explanation based on the formulated research questions. They are the realization of thematic progression in the speeches of senior high school students, the realization of thematic progression in the speeches of vocational high school students, and the comparisons in the realization of thematic progression in the speeches between senior and vocational high school students. The explanations are presented below.

The Realization of Thematic Progression in the Speeches of Senior High School Students

From the analysis of the realization of thematic progression in the speeches of senior high school students, it was found that all three thematic progressions were realized. The result of the data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The realization of thematic progression in senior high school students' speeches

Speeches	Constant Pattern	Percentage	Linear Patten	Percentage	Multiple/ Split Pattern	Percentage
SHS 1	25	25%	33	35%	28	30%
SHS 2	5	8%	20	31%	32	50%
SHS 3	18	26%	21	30%	23	33%
SHS 4	16	21%	31	40%	25	32%

Table 1 depicts the realization of thematic progression in the speeches of senior high school students. From Table 1, it can be inferred that all thematic progressions are realized in the speeches. Linear and multiple pattern become the frequent pattern realized in the speeches. Linear pattern is employed mostly in SHS 1. This pattern occurs 33 times, followed by SHS 4 which occurs 31 times, SHS 3 by 21 times, and SHS 2 by 20 times. Meanwhile, the multiple/ split pattern are mostly found in SHS 2 with 32 occurences, followed by SHS 1 with 28 occurences, SHS 4 with 25 occurences, and SHS 3 with 23 occurences. The realization of linear and multiple/ split patterns are presented below:
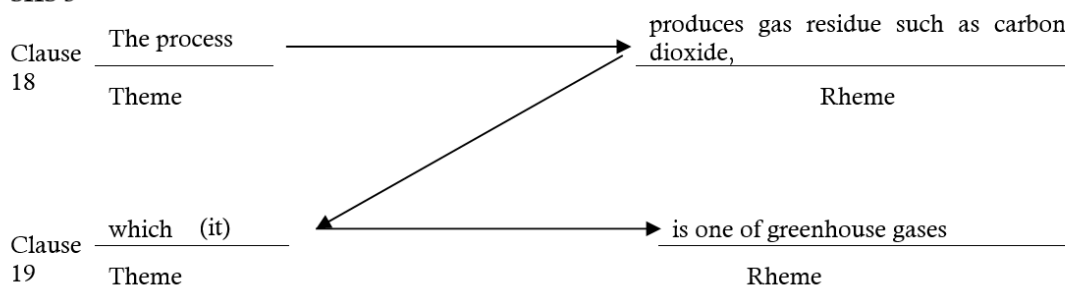
SHS 3

Clause 18 — The process / Theme → produces gas residue such as carbon dioxide, / Rheme

Clause 19 — which (it) / Theme → is one of greenhouse gases / Rheme

Figure 1. The realization of linear pattern in senior high school speech

SHS 4

Clause 5 — The technical term for this / Theme → is called Phubbing or Phone Snubbing. / Rheme

Clause 6 — That / Theme → is an act of ignoring everyone around you in favour of your phone. / Rheme

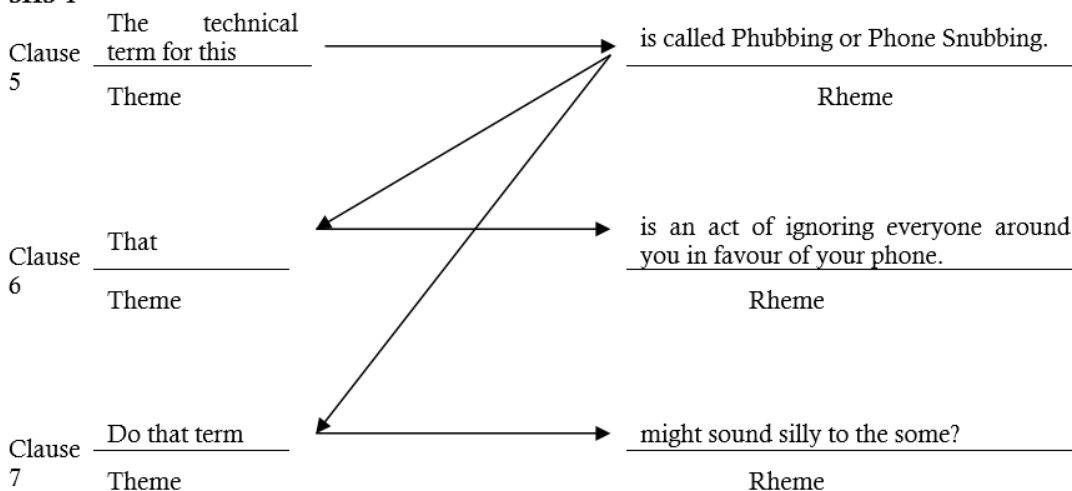Clause 7 — Do that term / Theme → might sound silly to the some? / Rheme

Figure 2. The realization of multiple/ split pattern in senior high school speech

Figure 1 depicts the realization of linear patten in SHS 3. It can be seen that the information about 'carbon monoxide in the rheme of clause 18 is developed into the new information of the clause 19. The information is replaced by pronoun 'it' and becomes the theme of clause 19. This pattern indicates that the speaker wants to build cohesion among the clauses. Thus, the flow of

information is not stopped. Meanwhile, Figure 2 depicts the realization of multiple/ split pattern in SHS 4. In addition, as illustrated in Figure 2, the information about 'Phubbing or Phone Snubbing' in the rheme of clause 5 is developed to become the theme in the clause 6 and clause 7. This pattern infers that the speaker can promote a better flow of information. The realization of linear and multiple/ split patterns are also in harmony with several previous studies regarding the realization of thematic progression (Dewi et al., 2019; Dewi & Kurniawan, 2018; Rahayu et al., 2020; Susilowati et al., 2022). However, these prior studies were focused on written text, not spoken text. Meanwhile, speech is a type of spoken text.

Meanwhile, the constant pattern occurs frequently in SHS 1 with 25 occurences, followed by SHS 3 with 18 occurences, SHS 4 with 16 occurences, and SHS 2 with 5 occurences. The realization of constant pattern is presented below:

SHS 1

Clause 17: Truly, Ki Hajar Dewantara (Theme) — was a visionary. (Rheme)

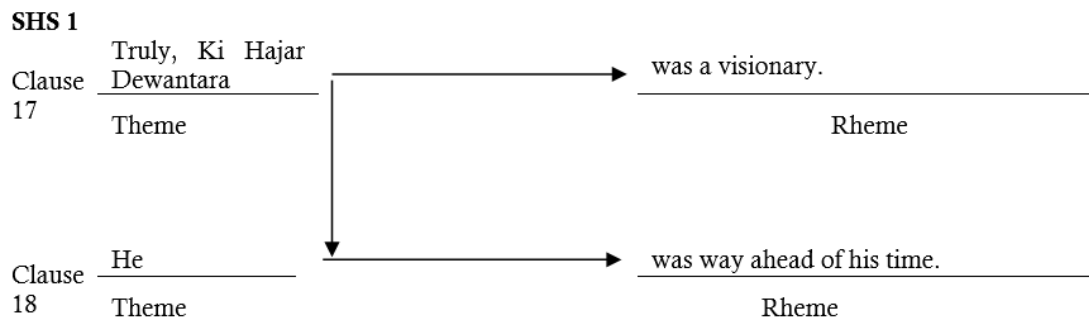Clause 18: He (Theme) — was way ahead of his time. (Rheme)

Figure 3. The realization of constant pattern in senior high school speech

Figure 3 illustrates the realization of constant pattern in SHS 1. As presented in figure 3, the subject 'Ki Hajar Dewantara' in clause 17 is repeated to become the subject in clause 18. The pronoun 'he' is used to refer to 'Ki Hajar Dewantara'. This pattern indicates that the speaker wants to emphasize that the topic is about Ki Hajar Dewantara. Also, it is clear that the speaker wants to keep the cohesion among the clauses. The realization of constant pattern follows the previous studies regarding the realization of thematic progression in speeches by (Asep Saepuloh et al., 2023; Djimet, 2022; Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020). The application of constant theme also becomes the easiest way to build cohesion among the clauses in the text.

The Realization of Thematic Progression in the Speeches of Vocational High School Students
Based on the analysis of the realization of thematic progression in the speeches of vocational high school students, it was found that all thematic progressions were realized in the speeches. The result of the data is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The realization of thematic progression in vocational high school students' speeches

Speeches	Reiteration Pattern	Percentage	Zig-zag Patten	Percentage	Multiple Pattern	Percentage
VHS 1	16	22%	28	39%	26	36%
VHS 2	13	14%	59	66%	11	12%
VHS 3	15	22%	30	43%	17	25%
VHS 4	15	22%	48	44%	33	31%

Table 2 presents the realization of thematic progression in vocational high school students' speeches. It can be seen that linear pattern becomes the frequent pattern employed by the vocational high school students. This pattern occurs most frequently in VHS 2 by 59 occurences, followed by VHS 4 with 48 occurences, VHS 3 with 30 occurences, and VHS 1 with 28 occurences. The realization of linear pattern is presented below:

VHS 1

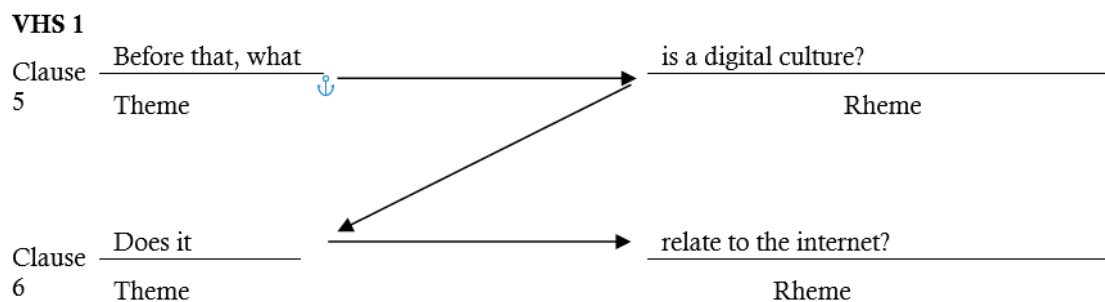|		
Clause 5	Before that, what	is a digital culture?
	Theme	Rheme
Clause 6	Does it	relate to the internet?
	Theme	Rheme

Figure 4. The realization of linear pattern in vocational high school speech

As depicted in Figure 4, the information about digital culture in the rheme of clause 5 is promoted to become the theme of clause 6. The pronoun 'it' in clause 6 refers to the 'digital culture'. This indicates that the flow of information is continued and the cohesion is maintained. This is in accordance with several prios studies conducted by (Dewi et al., 2019; Utama et al., 2024) which stated that linear pattern makes sure that the new information is connected with the previous clause.

The multiple/ split pattern becomes the second frequent pattern employed by the vocation high school students. VHS 4 employs the most multiple/ split pattern with 33 occurences, followed by VHS 1 with 26 occurences, VHS 3 with 17 occurences, and VHS 2 with 11 occurences. The realization of multiple/ split pattern is presented in Figure 5.

VHS 1

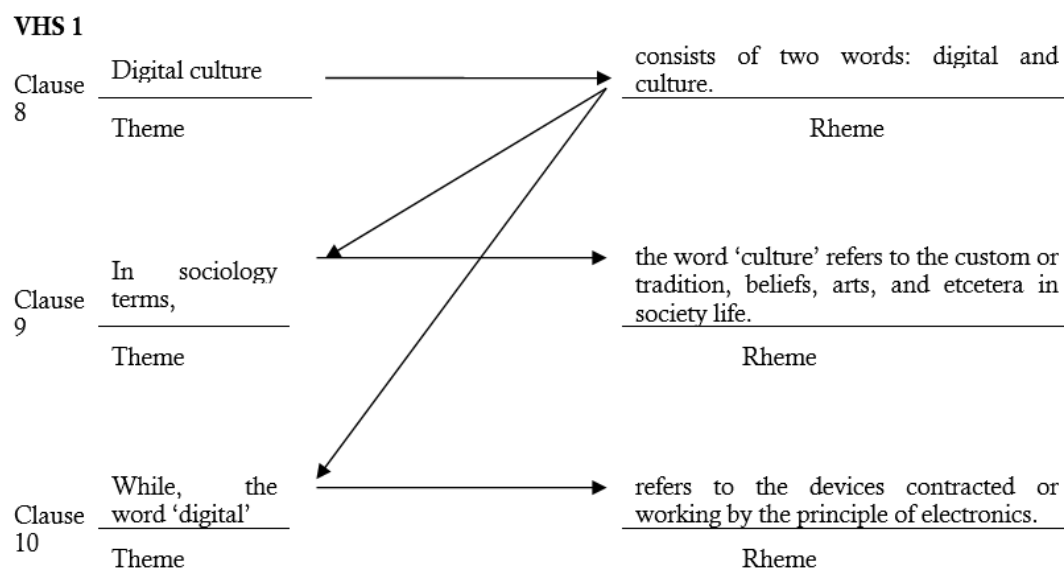|		
Clause 8	Digital culture	consists of two words: digital and culture.
	Theme	Rheme
Clause 9	In sociology terms,	the word 'culture' refers to the custom or tradition, beliefs, arts, and etcetera in society life.
	Theme	Rheme
Clause 10	While, the word 'digital'	refers to the devices contracted or working by the principle of electronics.
	Theme	Rheme

Figure 5. The realization of multiple/ split pattern in vocational high school speech

Figure 5 illustrates the realization of multiple/ split pattern in VHS 1. It can be seen that the information in the rheme of clause 8 is developed to be the theme of clause 9 and clause 10. The term 'digital' and 'culture' in clause 8 is explained more in the clause 9 and clause 10. This pattern indicates that the students have the ability to build a well-organized text by flowing the information from one clause to others. The realization of multiple/ split pattern is generally found in high achiever students (Yunita, 2018).

Constant pattern become the least frequent pattern employed by senior high school students. This pattern occurs freuently in VHS 1 with 16 occurences, followed by VHS 3 and 4 with 15 occurences, and VHS 2 with 13 occurences. The realization of constant pattern is presented in Figure 6.

VHS 4

Clause 6	Before I		start,
	Theme		Rheme

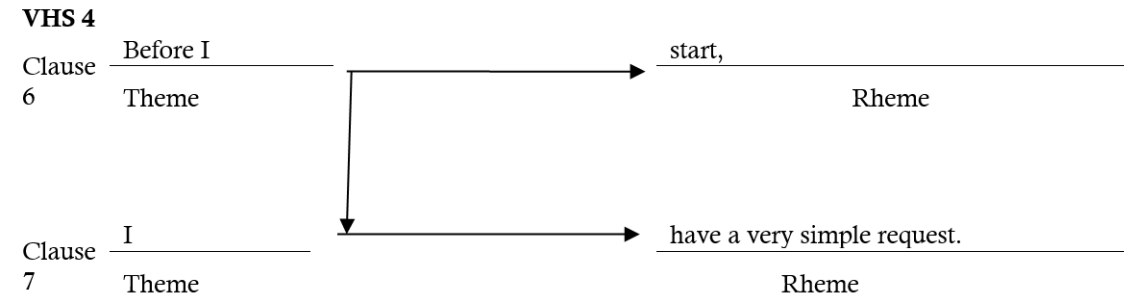| Clause 7	I		have a very simple request.
	Theme		Rheme

Figure 5. The realization of constant pattern in vocational high school speech

As illustrated in Figure 5, it can be seen that the subject theme of clause 6 is repeated as the theme of clause 7. This happens as the speaker wants to emphasize his point of view about the topic of the speech. The employment of constant pattern also show that the speaker wants the audience to understand the message of the speech easily.

The Comparison of Thematic Progression Realized in Speeches between Senior and Vocational High School Students
After analyzing the realization of thematic progressin in the speeches of senior and vocational high school students, the results are compared to answer the last research question. The comparison is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Comparison of Thematic Progression Realized in Speeches between Senior and Vocational High School Students

Comparison	Similarities	Differences
The realisation of thematic development in the speeches between senior and vocational high school students	• All thematic developments are realised in the speeches of senior and vocational high school students. • Constant pattern is less realized in the speeches of both senior and vocational high school students.	• Multiple patterns are realized more in the speeches of senior high school students. • Linear patterns are realized more in the speeches of vocational high school students.

As presented in Table 3, it can be concluded that there are similarity and differences in the realization of thematic progression between senior and vocational high school students' speeches. From the analysis of thematic progression in both senior and vocational high school students' speeches, it can be infered that all types of thematic progression are realized. In addition to this, the constant pattern is less realized in both senior and vocational high school students' speeches. The low occurrence of constant pattern is in contrast to several previous studies (e.g. Saepuloh et al., 2023; Dewi et al., 2019; Dewi & Kurniawan, 2018; Djimet, 2022; Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020). Based on these prior studies, constant pattern becomes the most frequent pattern. This is likely due to the fact that the speech is delivered in an English speech competition where the judges are the experts of English speech. Therefore, the frequent use of constant pattern is not appropriate since it is the simplest pattern to build a cohesion. The repeatation of topic helps the audience understand the topic easily. However, it is monotonous.

Multiple/ split pattern is realized more in senior high school students' speeches. The employment of this pattern indicates that the students can create a well-organized speech. This pattern is typically found in high achiever students (Yunita, 2018) and expository text (Eggins, 2004). The frequent occurrence of multiple pattern/ split pattern contradicts several prior studies (e.g. Saepuloh et al., 2023; Dewi et al., 2019; Dewi & Kurniawan, 2018; Djimet, 2022; Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020; Rahayu et al., 2020; Yunita, 2018). The multiple/ split pattern was rarely occurred in these previous studies. Meanwhile, in senior high school students' speeches, this pattern becomes the most frequent pattern. This phenomenon indicates that the senior high school students can build a better cohesion in creating the speech. By doing so, it can be infered that the senior high

school students has better ability in creating a good speech in English. It is in accordance with the characteristic of senior high school students who are recognized more academic (Juhaidi et al., 2024). Moreover, a speech is typically prepared beforehand. The students can review their speeches before share it to the audience. Therefore, the cohesion and coherence of the speech can be maintained effectively.

On the other hand, linear pattern is frequently realized in vocational high school students' speeches. This pattern indicates that the students can keep the cohesion in the text by developing information in the rheme of a clause to become the theme in the subsequent clause. However, this pattern is commonly appeared in low achiever students (Dewi et al., 2019). Compared to senior high school students, vocational high school students are less likely to maintain a better cohesion due to less occurrence of multiple/ split pattern. This happen due to the fact that vocational high school students focus more on practical skills. They have to fulfil the job market after graduation (Panditatwa & Hidayat, 2024). However, they still can maintain a good cohesion in the text and make the audience understand the message.

Challenges in Developing the Thematic Progression
Although all thematic progressions are realized in both senior and vocational high school students' speeches, some challenges are found. Several clauses in both senior and vocational high school students' speeches fail to develop the thematic progression. This phenomenon is called as empty thematic progression. The empty thematic progression happens on which the clauses in the text are failed to develop whether from prior theme or rheme (Susilowati et al., 2022). This happens since the students often introduce new topics that are not related. The failure in developing the thematic progression results in the less coherence of the text since the information cannot not be linked (Utama et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION
Overall, this study reveals the comparison of thematic progression realized in the speeches between senior and vocational high school students at the Erlangga English Speech Contest 2021. The result showed that all thematic progressions are realized in the speeches in both senior and vocational high school students. Based on the findings, the constant patterns are less realized in the speeches of both senior and vocational high school students. This finding shows a new novelty since constant pattern is commonly found as the most frequent pattern based on the prior studies. Another novelty that found in this study is the frequent occurrence of multiple/ split pattern. This type of thematic progression is typically the rarest pattern based on the previous study. The frequent occurrence of multiple/ split pattern indicates that the senior high school student can develop a well-organized text by maintaining an excellent cohesion and coherence. Thus, the information in the speech can be delivered effectively to the audience. Moreover, the employment of multiple pattern indicates that the senior high school students has prime ability in developing a high quality text.

On the other side, the vocational high school students speeches employ linear pattern most frequently. The application of linear pattern indicates that the students are able to maintain the cohesion among the clauses. However, it is not as good as the senior high school students'. This is assumed that the characteristic of vocational high school students affected their outcome in learning English. They are prepared to meet the job market. Therefore, they focus more in learning practical skills rather than academic skills.

Finally, some suggestions are offered based on the findings of this study. First, the English teachers are encouraged to apply thematic progression in teaching English, particularly in writing and speaking skills. The application of thematic progression in teaching writing and speaking can help the students to better create a cohesive and coherent text. Second, the future researchers are hoped to further study the thematic progression in students' speeches and its implication in English language teaching setting.

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