

# Thematic Structure and Progression in Selected Business News Reports of Two Nigerian Newspapers: Implications for Professional Writing

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## ABSTRACT

One of the problems of writing both in and outside academic setting is the structuring/packing of information by the writer. Sometimes, poor structuring and packaging of the information that the writer wants to convey to the target audience results communication breakdown. This paper investigates thematic structure and progression in business news report of selected Nigerian newspapers. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) Theme-Rheme theory was adopted for investigation of the theme-rheme patterns, while Danes (1974) theory of thematic progression was used for investigation of thematic progression patterns. The result of the analysis revealed that the themes of the clauses are mostly multiple because of the modification of the topical themes by either textual, interpersonal, prepositional phrase or adverbials. The result of the analysis of the thematic progression pattern showed that the linear and constant themes are prevalent in business news report, though the constant theme is the predominant. These two patterns are reflective of the features of narrative writing task of which news reporting is an aspect. The analysis also revealed ruptures and breakdowns occur in the thematic progression which affects network of the themes and the flow of information.

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## 1. Introduction

The primary aim of communication in whichever medium is to transmit ideas, thoughts or feelings. The process normally involves two participants-the speaker/writer and the listener/reader. The speaker/writer initiates the process, while the listener/reader is saddled with the work of decoding the encoded message. The success of the processes however depends to a large extent on the packaging and structuring of the message.

This paper attempts to analysis the thematic structures of four texts selected from the following Nigerian Newspapers-*Daily Trust*, *The Punch*, *The Nation* and *Leadership*. The analysis was carried out at two but inter-related levels. The thematic structures of the texts clause by clause were analysed at the first level, while the progression of the themes was analysed at the second level. The analysis of the themes clause by clause was based on Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) model of Analysis. Halliday and Matthiessen refer to the theme of a clause as the starting point. Following the terminology of the Prague school, they refer to the theme as the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its own context. The remainder of the clause, the part in which the theme is developed is called in the Prague school terminology the rheme.

Thematic progression as the second major part of the study was investigated using Danes (1974) theory of thematic progression. Danes refers to thematic progression as the ordering of utterance themes, the mutual concatenation and hierarchy as well as their mutual relationships to the superior text units (such as the paragraphs and chapters). The identified thematic patterns were discussed after presentation of diagrams showing the progression patterns.

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## 2. Aim and objectives

The study aims to analyse the thematic structures and progressions in four selected Nigerian Newspapers. In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following specific objectives were drawn:

- (i) To identify and discuss the thematic structures of the various clauses in the selected texts.
- (ii) To present and explain the various thematic progression patterns found in the texts
- (iii) To discuss the implications of the identified thematic progression patterns for professional writing.

## 3. Corpus of the Study

The corpus of the study consisted of four texts selected from the Daily Trust, The Punch, The Nation and the Leadership Newspapers. The selection of the newspapers was based on accessibility of the newspapers. This refers to the ease with which the newspapers were obtained. In other words, the availability of the newspapers determined their selection.

## 4. Methodology

As stated in the introduction, the study was based on two models of analysis (Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) theme-rheme structure and Danes(1974) theory of thematic progression. Being a corpus based study, descriptive and discursive approach was used to carry out the study. The selected texts were subjected to analysis and discussed with the aid of diagrams showing the patterns of thematic progression of the various clauses. The implications of the identified thematic patterns for professional writing were finally discussed.

### 5.1 *Thematic structure*

Thematic structure is one of the components of information structure. It is one of the fundamental concepts underlying the theory of Functional grammar. Thematic structure deals basically with how information is packaged and organised in the clause /utterance. There are two elements forming thematic structure which combine together to form message(theme and rheme).Theme and rheme are obligatory elements of clauses just as subject and predicate of English sentences. Wang (2007) citing Weil (1844) states that the theoretical principles underlying the study of theme and rheme are derived mainly from the theory of Systemic Functional Grammar, but these issues have been debated in the linguistic research as early as the eighteenth century. Well refer to point of departure and enunciation as the structural division within a clause. Wang (2007) also says that following Weil, linguists have produced quite a range of terms, such as topic and comment (Bates,1976), topic and dominance(Erteschik-Shir,1988) etc, in attempting to account for the certain aspects of the communicative function of a sentence. Theme and Rheme, on the other hand is the one favoured by Halliday 1968, 1985). Halliday (1985), define theme as the given information which serves as the point of departure of a message. The given information is the information which has already been mentioned somewhere in the text, or it is shared or mutual knowledge from the immediate context. In other words, Theme typically contains familiar, old or given information. The theme provides the settings for the remainder of the sentence-Rheme. Rheme is the remainder of the message in a clause in which the theme is developed, that is to say, Rheme typically contains unfamiliar or new information. New information is the knowledge that the writer assumes the reader does not know, but needs to have in order to follow the progression of the argument. Wang concludes that the boundary between Theme and Rheme is simple: Theme is the first element occurring in a clause; the remainder clause is Rheme. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) define thematic structure as what gives the clause its character as a message. They point out that the clause is organised as a message by having a distinct status assigned to each of part of it. One part is labelled as the theme which combines with the remaining part rheme so the two parts constitute a message. The theme of a clause is signalled by putting the focusing item at the beginning or initial of the clause.

Similarly, Ran, Goa, Gao and Li (2009) citing Halliday (1979) define the themes as the element which serves as the starting point of the message. It is what the clause is concerned with. The remainder of the clause in which the theme is developed is called the rheme. They add that the theme is the frame work of the clause. All the remaining parts are called the rheme. They assert that the theme is the nerve centre of the clause, since it is the narration, description, and explanation of the message.

Dawning (2001) citing Firbas (1976) describe English clause as having two parts. One part is the starting point of an utterance, which is which is known, at least obvious in the given situation and from which the speaker precede. It serves as the foundation of the utterance and is something that is being talked about in the clause. Rheme on the hand as described by Dawning consists of what the speaker says about or in regard to the starting point of the utterance. The theme is usually something that can be gathered from the previous context, while the rheme expresses something new, something known from the previous context. It is in line with this that theme-rheme are known as the given and the new.

Taiwo (2001) says that the theme is what the speaker/writer chooses as the starting point while the rheme consists of the part in which everything about the clause is explained or described. Similarly, thematic structure as Thomas (1999) explains involves an analysis of the theme-rheme distribution at the clause level and the subsequent study of the different theme-rheme as network established across sentence boundaries. He further explains that the theme and the rheme are defined on the formality of the information that they conveyed. By formality the theme is what is known to the reader/listener and what the speaker is going to talk about. According to Thomas the theme conveys information that is known by the reader in that it is easily recovered from the context or extra-linguistic situation. The rheme on the other hand conveys information which is new to the reader or unpredictable to the reader.

The theme as explained earlier is the clause element on which the writer/speaker builds up what he wants to convey to the audience. It is the element that is put in the initial position of the clause which signals the reader to understand what the write has selected to say something about. We can also deduce from the views of the scholars that the theme and the rheme are the essential parts of the organisation of information in the clause. It is the organisation of the themes in the clauses that give the message its characteristics and makes a text coherent.

According Ren et al (2009), Halliday classifies themes into complexity –simple themes, multiple and clause as theme. The simple theme consists of independent unit that cannot be broke or split. It is made up of topical theme only which relates to the experiential function. The multiple theme consists of a topical theme and textual theme or interpersonal themes. Clause as theme is a situation where entire clauses serve as the theme of an utterance.

## **5.2 Thematic Progression**

For the themes of the hyper or superior texts to function as one or build a single idea, they must be coherent. It is thematic progression that gives text coherence. It involves how the speaker chooses the various themes and arranges them in such a way that they relate. In other words, thematic progression refers to how the various themes of the superior texts (paragraphs and chapters) relate together to produce meaningful texts. Eggins(1994) in Wang (2007), is of the view that the information flow in a sentence from theme to rheme is crucial in achieving communicative effectiveness in a message. The exchange of information between successive Theme and Rheme pairings in a text is called thematic progression. Thematic progression contributes to the cohesive development of a text, that is to say, in cohesive text the distribution of given and new information needs to follow certain patterns. Danes (1974) identifies the following thematic progression patterns:

### **i Simple linear progression**

In this pattern of thematic progression, the rheme of the preceding clause becomes the theme of the next clause or utterance.

### **ii Constant thematic progression pattern**

As the name implies, constant themes develops a single participant. The same theme or part of it is repeated in series, though it may not be in identical wordings.

### **iii thematic progression with derived themes**

The themes of the successive sentences are derived from a single over-riding theme. Each of the successive sentences develops as characteristic of a single entity.

If the split rheme pattern Split rheme as the name implies occurs when the theme of a clause splits into two or more. This means that the split rheme pattern has two or components having roots from a single theme.

In a text, these themes co-occur to explain its content. It is not usual to have a text whose themes consist of one type of thematic patterns. It is the interplay of various themes that built up meaningful text. Through the interplay of the different patterns, the writer/speaker achieves cohesion.

## 6. Data presentation and analysis

Four texts were randomly selected from Daily Trust, The Punch, The Nation and Leadership. The texts were first presented before analysis into Theme-Rheme and Thematic progression. After the analysis of each text, the result was discussed. Finally, general findings were discussed. Each of the texts were subjected to analysis within the framework of thematic structure developed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Danes(1974) theory of thematic progression. The themes and rhemes of each of the clauses of the texts forming the corpus of the study were first subjected to analysis. Secondly, the progression patterns of the clauses were presented in diagrams. Themes were italicized while the rhemes of the clauses were left in bold prints. Diagrams illustrating the progression patterns of themes of the clauses were provided.

### Text 1

- 1 *The managing director of the Capital Oil&Gas industry Ltd, Mr Ifean Uba* **was yesterday arrested by the police special fraud unit(SFU) Ikoyi following the involvement of his company in the fuel subsidy scam**
- 2 *The company* **was indicted over five different fuel subsidy claims totalling N8.9 Billion.**
- 3 *According to information from the ministry of finance,* **Capital gas received Subsidy payments of N984.440 million without proof of existence of the mother vessel bill of lading,N1.48 billion subsidy payments for which mother vessels were not found in locations claimed at the time of transhipment**
- 4 *Other illegal subsidy payments received by the company, the ministry said included:* **N1.83 billion payments for which mother vessels were not found in locations claimed at the time of transhipment as well as N2.49 billion payments for which mother vessels were not found at location claimed at the time of transhipment**
- 5 *SFU Spokes person, Ngozi Isitume, an assistant superintendent of police* **confirmed the arrest of Uba to LEADERSHIP.**
- 6 *She said he* **was arrested at about 10.am and would remain in police custody Until investigation was concluded.**
- 7 *The company which received dodgy payments running into billions of naira from the Petroleum Products Pricing and Regulatory Agency (PPPRA) on kerosene, petrol,and diesel subsidy* **was indicated by the Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede's led 15-man presidential panel constituted by president Goodluck Jonathan to re-investigate the findings of the report of an earlier investigation panel set up by the ministry of finance on fuel subsidy payments valued at over N22 billion.**
- 8 *Earlier, the Federal Government through the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON)* **gave Capital Oil 60 days to pay back N5 billion being rogue precedes it made from kerosene subsidy or risk arrest and prosecution.**
- 9 *The company* **was also alleged to have made N22 billion from petroleum subsidy alone.**
- 10 *In a related development, a hearing challenge suffered by one of the suspects in the oil subsidy fraud stalled* **the arraignment of four other suspects before an Abuja High court yesterday.**
- 11 *The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC)filed a 17-count charges* **against Alhaji Saminu Rabi, Jubril Rowaye, Aminnur Resources Limited and Brila Energy Limited before the court.**
- 12 *EFCC accused the four suspects of conspiracy and fraudulently obtaining the Sum of N1,051,030,434* **from the petroleum support fund (PSF) as payment for the purported importation of N10,000 metric tons of premium motor spirit (PMS), otherwise known as petrol.**
- 13 *When the matter was mentioned yesterday Blessing I Onwaghe, the lawyer representing Alhaji Saminu Rabi and Alminnur Resources(1st and 3<sup>rd</sup>) respondents* **informed the court that the first respondent has hearing challenge and needed a specialist to define means of communication with him.**
- 14 *She* **prayed the court for a short adjournment to enable her make arrangement for means of communication with her client before he could take his pleas to the charges against him by the anti graft agency, which was granted by the trial judge.**

The text consists of 14 paragraphs. Most of the paragraphs as can be seen from the analysis have multiple themes. It is also observed that most of the themes are made up of included words in forms of adverbials or prepositional phrases. These included words or phrases make the themes complex. Within these words, forming the themes are textual themes and interpersonal themes occurring before the topical themes or basic themes. It is observed also that the rhemes are mostly complex. This is not surprising because it is in the rhyme that details about the theme are provided. The diagram below shows the thematic progression patterns of the clauses.

The analysis revealed interplay of three types of thematic patterns. The first three clauses showed linear progression pattern which narrates and traces the root of the fuel subsidy. Clause 4 has 2 themes derived from it. The themes provide breakdown of the other illegal subsidy payments made. The theme of clause 7 introduced a new participant for the first time in the text (the federal govt). This does not form a progressive pattern as both the preceding and following clauses are not link to it. The theme of the ninth clause which followed it rather points back to oil and Gas Company which is the most constant topical theme. The theme of clause 10 is the suspects that formed the override topic in the title of the report. The themes of clause 11 and 12 are constant which introduced and developed EFCC as participant in the discourse. Likewise, the themes of clause 13 and 14 are constant as they developed a single participant (Blessing I Onwaghe)

Summary of the thematic patterns is:

- (i) Theme  
    └── Rheme  
        └── Theme=linear
- (ii) Theme  
    └── Rheme=constant
- (iii) Digression(single derive theme)

## Text II

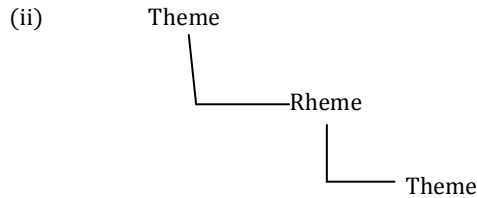
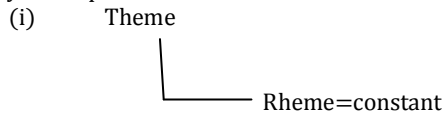
The text is a report on the status of Unity bank of Nigeria Plc by the Executive Director, Lagos and West. The director defended the status of the bank as a national bank with River State Government as the largest single shareholder. It is not a regional bank as some people consider it. The analysis of the text into theme and rheme is presented below:

- 1       *The Executive Director, Lagos and West, of the Unity Bank of Nigeria Plc, Mr Laure Fagbohun has said that Unity bank has national status and not a regional bank.*
- 2       *Mr Fagbohun said this during an interactive session with media in Lagos, Last week.*
- 3       *He stressed that River State Government is the single largest shareholder of the bank which indicates that the bank is not owned by one region.*
- 4       *He said the bank has adhered to central bank of Nigeria's directive that all state Governments should reduce their stake in the bank to 10 per cent.*
- 5       *He said the bank in its effort to be one of the top four banks in the country in its service provision is working towards expanding the branches across the country.*
- 6       *'We are one of the banks that have been granted ISO certificate in Nigeria. Getting ISO certificate is not something someone can write and get it. We meet international standard and after inspection we get it', he said.*
- 9       *Fagbohun said that the bank has been able to manage its challenges and Overcome them.*
- 10      *He explained that the bank started through a very difficult process but with pride /can tell you today that we have a bank that is clean.*

The text consists of 10 clauses with simple linear predominantly .simple themes which However, the rhemes are complex because of the reporter's attempt to give in-depth report.

The analysis shows constant or continuous patterns. Except for clause 7 whose theme is drawn from the rheme of clause 6, all the themes are constant. There are two single characters developed in the clauses. The first three clauses developed the Executive Director Mr Fagbohun, while the bank was fully developed in the rest of the clauses. The claims by the Director that the bank is not a regional bank are developed also in the rhemes of the clauses. The pronoun "we" is used to refer to the bank. In this case, the use of synonymy and direct repetition gives the text the characteristic of constant pattern. Though the reading sounds monotonous, the use of synonymy and repetition expands ideas on a participant or item in a discourse

Summary of the patterns is:



### Text III

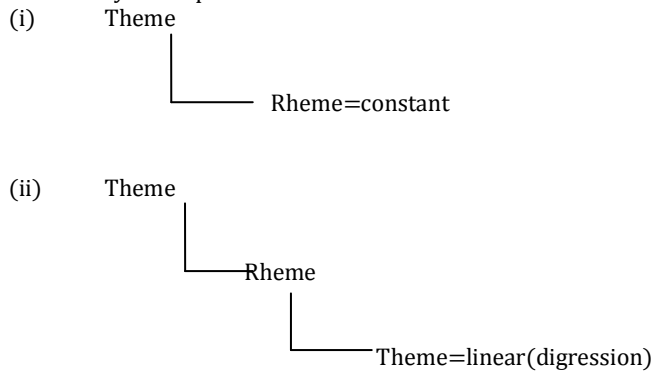
#### N'Assembly threatens NNPC over non-submission of budget The Punch, February 15, 2011

- 1 *The National Assembly's joint committee on Gas Resources has summoned the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and the ministry of Petroleum Resources to appear before it on Wednesday with their respective budgets or risk having no funds budgeted for them.*
- 2 *The committee led by senator Osita Izunaso held a budget defence session on Monday but the minister of petroleum resources, Mrs Diezani Alison madueke; Group managing director of NNPC, Austen Oniwon and the leadership of the National Petroleum Investment management service were absent.*
- 3 *The minister was represented by the permanent secretary in the ministry, Ahaji Goni Sheikh, the committee members were not disposed to accepting the excuses given for their absence.*
- 4 *The chairman of the house of representatives committee on Gas, Mr Igo Aguma said the budget of the NNPC had not reached the National Assembly as directed by the leadership of both chambers.*
- 5 *He said, "c5 The NNPC is not at all. c6 We have not seen NNPC'S budget before; in 2011, c7 we must see NNPC'S budget. c8 NNPC cannot be a lawless institution. c9 We must see their budget. c10 Nigerians need to know how their money is being expended. C11 We must request NNPC submit its budget before Wednesday.*
- 6 *Izunaso noted that the 2011 budget of the ministry was completely disconnected from the 2010 budget, saying that it did not show any serious developmental trend.*

The text consists of 6 paragraphs and 12 clauses. It is a report on the summoning of NNPC for failure to present 2011 budget before the national assembly's committee on gas resources. The analysis of thematic progression in the text as follows.

The analysis revealed that there are two thematic patterns that developed the entire text. The first two clauses displayed constant theme which identify the national assembly's joint committee on gas resources as the key actors in the discourse. Clause 3, 5 and 8 are partial instances of linear pattern. I call it partial because they are not followed by yet another instance. Clause 4 draws its theme from the first two clauses with the linear theme of clause three coming in between. This is what Berry describes as digression. Though this seems to distort the flow of the constant theme, it has saved the reader from the boredom of repetition in constant theme pattern. The interplay of the partial linear themes the single ones that do not form progression pattern make the reading of the text smooth.

The summary of the patterns is:



**Text iv**

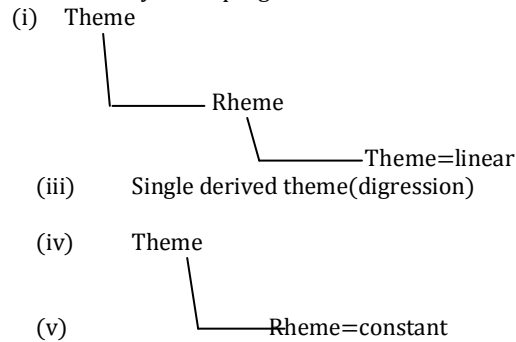
**Intel, Shell to sponsor 7<sup>th</sup> National Science Students Fair.**

- 1 **INTEL, Nigeria has extended its commitment to the development of science in secondary schools, as it partnered with Shell Corporation and the initiative for sustainable Educational development (ISED) to sponsor the 7<sup>th</sup> National Festival of schools sciences and quiz competition.**
- 2 **The annual three day event brings together hundreds of talented science students from different parts of Nigeria. This year's edition hosted by Government Junior secondary school/Jabi, Abuja, had participants from 60 schools across 20 states of the six geo-political zones to showcase their scientific talents and compete for the big prize which includes an all expense paid trip to Los Angel,United states, in May to participate at the global level of the science fair.**
- 3 **Speaking to journalists at the event, corporate Affairs Group Director, Intel Africa, Joseph Nsengimana said 'The annual fair is designed to offer a platform for students to demonstrate their mastery of the sciences and as well as exhibit their creativity. The program is aimed at encouraging young people to take a keen interest in the sciences and mathematics particularly in today's technology driven world. It is indeed a platform for the discovery of future scientists. C7 The 2011 edition marks a step forward in the effort to promote mathematics and science, as well as foster innovation that will in the long run fast track development of education in Nigeria and across Africa.**
- 4 **"The 2011 Intel International Science and engineering Fair (ISEF) billed to hold in Los Angeles, United State in May will brings about 2000 exceptional high schools Science students from more than 50 countries, regions and territories to compete for \$4 million in scholarship and prizes at the world's largest science, maths, and engineering competition", said the Intel spokes person.**
- 5 **Managing Director, Shell Corporation, Mutlu Sunmonu also expressed delight on the performance of Nigerian Science students. He said joint collaborative efforts on IT driven education program will boost science and technology development for Nigeria and Africa.**
- 6 **He added 'Great efforts are required between the public and private sectors to embed electronic learning program in all schools the country to enhance computer literacy and into the global direction of knowledge economy.**

The text deals with report of science competition organized by Intel Nigeria. It has six paragraphs consisting of 11 clauses which were subjected to analysis in to theme and rheme as follows:

The analysis showed interplay of three patterns of thematic progression; the constant, linear and derived. The linear and derived patterns are digression cases as each appeared once. Linear progression is noted between clause one and two. The theme of clause 2 is drawn from the theme of clause 1. Theme 2 and 3 constant are continuous themes. The theme of clause 3 is synonymous with the theme of the preceding clause (clause 2). The forth clause has a theme from which three themes are derived (the theme of clause 5, 6 and 7 are drawn from clause 4. This is also digression as it occurred once. The 8<sup>th</sup> clause points back to clause 3 which breaks the preceding derived themes. The theme of clause 8 and 9 form a brief constant theme as they are synonymous.

The summary of the progression is:



Finally, the theme of clause 12 is drawn from the rheme of clause 11, thereby forming just a slight progression. Of all the patterns identified from the analysis, none of the dominated another. The nature of the interplay of these themes reflects the participants in the discourse-Intel Nigeria and Shell Corporation. The reporter captured the two partnering corporation in the organisation of the completion.

## 7. Findings and Discussions

The texts in the corpus were subjected to analysis into theme and rheme structures in order determine the selection of utterance themes and the network of the themes which build a text as whole. Having established the fact that the theme of an utterance forms the starting point of the clause and is what the clause is concerned with, I went ahead to investigate the network of the themes in each text. It was noted that most of the clauses of the texts consist of multiple themes. This means that most of the clauses have added themes alone side the basic or topical themes. The rhemes of the clauses are mostly complex as it is the part in which the ideas in the themes are develop.

The analysis of the texts in the corpus showed that two types of patterns are predominant (the linear and constant theme progression. This entails that in business news report writing, the reporters consciously or unconsciously use these patterns. Each of the patterns has great advantage if applied appropriately in writing news report. The linear progression enhances step by step presentation of information in the text. The drawing of the theme of the next utterance from the rheme of the previous utterance provides gradual unfolding of the plot or major theme of a text. Through the application of this pattern, the reader is made to understand how an event started, developed and ended. This pattern is suitable in narrative essays where information are naturally put into chronological other beginning with what happened first to what happened last.

The second dominant pattern is the constant or continuous theme. Though this pattern makes provision for developing a single character or participant fully, the reader is at the same time made to experience boredom. Because of the repetition of the same or synonymous noun phrase to build the theme of the subsequent utterances, the text becomes static since little chance are left to develop the rhemes of the clauses or introduce new ideas. The constant themes are good in descriptive essays. It is also suitable for writing business news report since it involves description of past events. In order to be concise, precise and clear, the combination of the linear and constant themes need to be applied in news report writing.

In addition to the two patterns are negligible instances of the occurrences of the derived themes. Though they are part of ruptures or breakers, they contribute to having interplay of varieties of patterns developing a text rather than one or two types.

Serving as ruptures or breakdowns are themes that do not form any form of progression. These themes are either new ideas introduced in form of paragraphs or referent of a previous theme. The instances of ruptures or breakers are in red prints in the texts.



## **8. Pedagogical Implications**

The study has looked at thematic structure and progression in business news report clause by clause. The Rhemes and Rhemes of each of the clauses were identified first and were followed by the progression patterns with the intention of examining how the various themes relate to produce meaningful text. This subsection looks at pedagogical

## **9. Implications for Professional Writing**

Writing business news report is in fact an aspect of writing for the media. However, not many of the reporters are exposed to thematic structure and thematic progression. For any communication through the medium of writing to be successful, the writer must package the information in a way that the target audience can read and understand. In other words, the writer must control the flow of information the text. A focus on theme and rheme structure in a clause can have startling and immediate results in teaching writing. Once the reporters know how to properly arrange themes and develop them in rhemes, they have gained powerful tool for managing the news they are reporting. They can consciously and strategically draw on this knowledge to construct cohesive writing. Cohesion in news report writing can be improved dramatically if attention is given to theme selection and thematic progression.

The result of the study showed prevalence of multiple themes with the linear and constant thematic progressions used interchangeably. Disrupting the flow of these patterns are ruptures or breakdowns in between. The reporters are encouraged to develop ideas thoroughly by using the two patterns (linear and constant patterns). While the linear theme is quite suitable for narrative writings of which business news reporting is an aspect, the constant theme on the other hand is good for providing detailed description of events or participants in discourse. As the main objective of reporting news is to reach the mass audience, the use of derived or split themes or rhemes may constitute problems of identifying and isolating the information in clauses for the news text. The obvious factor that led to the complexity of the information structures in some of the clauses is the lack of detailed development of the ideas in the paragraphs. The paragraphs are mostly in one long and complex sentence. In order to achieve chronological and detailed presentation of events, the complex topic sentence that serve as paragraph alone should be developed by the application of the intermixes of the linear and constant themes. A close look at the analysis revealed that the constant theme is more prevalent which definitely makes the texts static and boring. However, its application leads detailed development of ideas. The constant themes are interrupted by one or two instances of linear progression. Linear progression is a tool that if used writers properly result to having step by step exposition of an event. It can be concluded based on the two identified patterns that news reporting as a media genre requires intermixes of these patterns.

There seems to be lack of knowledge or sticking to the style of a particular genre. News reporting as a media genre has peculiar language style that the writers of business news report should focus. Even within the media genre, attention should be paid to the register of sub- genres. Writers should be aware of the need to apply the knowledge of thematic structure and progression in professional discourse. Through the application of this knowledge, cohesive and coherent text will be created. News reporters and editors should keep at the back of their minds, the need to have proper networking of the themes. Thematic structure and progression if taught and applied well produce a coherent and meaningful text.

## **10. Conclusion**

Thematic structure is the means of packaging information in the clause. The study has looked two but related aspects (theme-rheme distribution and thematic progression). The explicit outcome of which is meaningful and coherent text. The study has revealed that though most of the themes of business news reporting are complex because of the addition of either adverbials or prepositional phrases to the topical themes, they are still simple. The themes also are mostly unmarked as they conflate with the grammatical subjects. In most cases, therefore, the subjects of the clauses are automatically the themes of the clauses. There are some that are marked as the themes do not conflate with grammatical subject. This is a situation whereby something other than the grammatical subject is made subject for emphasis or in short for information prominence.

The network of the various themes to produce meaningful text was examined through thematic progression using Danes(1974) theory of thematic progression. The four texts in the corpus were subjected to analysis in order to identify and discuss the different types of thematic progressions identified by Danes (1974). The result showed that the linear and constant themes were prevalent in the texts. However, the constant themes are predominant which is in line with the narrative nature of news reporting in general. It was noted that the two patterns had frequent ruptures/ breakdowns. These are themes that do not form any progression. They are themes introducing participants, characters or new ideas for the first time in a text. They could also be those that have their referent mentioned in the preceding text. The ruptures/ breakdowns interrupt the flow of information in the texts. There were negligible instances of derived themes and split rheme patterns. It is against this back ground that the study established that a single pattern cannot form a meaningful and coherent text. There is need for variation and intermixes.

Finally, the study looked at the implications of thematic structure and progression in relation to news reporting as media genre. Since there is a style peculiar to every genre, news report writers should stick to news report writing style which include concision, precision, brevity, and clarity. As news reporting is a form of narrative, news report writers are encouraged to use the linear and constant themes as they are suitable for descriptive and narrative of events.

Lack of the knowledge of the application of thematic structure and progression in writing task affects many forms of writing. It is on this premise that news report writers are encourage to apply thematic structure and progression in order to reach the mass audience successfully.

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