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(UAC)



Faculté des Lettres, Langues,
Arts et Communication
(FLLAC)



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Pluridisciplinaire
Espaces, Cultures Et
Développement

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ACTES DU 2^{EME} COLLOQUE SCIENTIFIQUE INTERNATIONAL DU LABODYLCAL – FÉVRIER 2023

THEME

L'ÉDUCATION MULTILINGUE,
UNE NÉCESSITÉ POUR TRANSFORMER
L'ÉDUCATION

février 2023
Université d'Abomey-Calavi



Laboratoire de Dynamique
des Langues et Culture
à Calavi (LABODYLCAL)

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SCIENTIFIQUE INTERNATIONAL
DU LABODYLCAL – FÉVRIER 2023**

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UNE NÉCESSITÉ POUR TRANSFORMER
L'ÉDUCATION**

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Professeur Julien Koffi GBAGUIDI

Directeur du LABODYLCAL

Préface

Que vaut un monde de savoir et de savoir-faire sans les langues, notamment les langues autochtones ? Il est indéniable que les langues maternelles constituent une source d'épanouissement socioculturel, intellectuel, économique, scientifique et non une barrière pour le développement comme certains le pensent à tort. Cependant, leur usage demeure un défi en Afrique en général et au Bénin en particulier. En choisissant comme thème : « ***L'éducation multilingue, une nécessité pour transformer l'éducation*** », à l'occasion de l'édition 2023 de la célébration de la Journée Internationale de la Langue Maternelle, l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'Education, la Science et la Culture (UNESCO) s'est inscrite dans la dynamique de l'accélération des réflexions et recherches pour l'évènement d'un monde plus juste où les programmes et contenus éducatifs s'orientent de plus en plus vers l'utilisation des langues des communautés comme ferments de structuration de leurs savoirs et leviers de développement. Le Laboratoire de Dynamique des Langues et Culture à Calavi (Labodylcal) a eu l'idée de marquer cette édition, la 32^{ème}, en organisant une agora pour susciter des réflexions approfondies qui concourent à la vitalité des langues africaines.

Le deuxième colloque scientifique international du Labodylcal couplé avec sa rentrée scientifique a offert l'occasion aux participants de présenter des communications dans les axes prédéfinis. Les présents actes regroupent les articles sélectionnés à l'issue d'un processus d'évaluation en double aveugle par des experts. L'objectif visé est de partager avec la communauté scientifique – et au-delà – la synthèse des réflexions et des trouvailles en vue de leur appropriation et exploitation par les chercheurs, les militants des langues autochtones et les locuteurs. De la linguistique descriptive à la didactique des langues en passant par la linguistique contrastive, la sociolinguistique, la terminologie, la parémie, l'analyse des œuvres littéraires et l'analyse des œuvres d'arts, les auteurs des articles présentés dans ce volume ont proposé -

s'appuyant sur leurs ressources et leurs domaines de compétences - des productions qui montrent clairement l'intérêt des langues maternelles d'Afrique dans l'éducation multilingue et la révélation des savoirs qu'elles véhiculent.

Après le premier colloque en hommage au Professeur Flavien GBETO, directeur honoraire du Labodylcal sur le thème : « *Terminologies en langues africaines : pratiques actuelles et perspectives pour la promotion des patrimoines, la science, l'enseignement et les productions spécialisées* », tenu à l'Université d'Abomey-Calavi du 17 au 19 février 2021, la présente initiative s'inscrit dans la logique de la continuité et vise à mobiliser plus d'acteurs pour gagner la bataille du positionnement des langues africaines dans tous les domaines du savoir, dans l'enseignement, les médias, les productions didactiques, la littérature, etc. Cet objectif est partagé par l'Ecole Doctorale Pluridisciplinaire Espaces – Cultures et Développement, la Faculté des Lettres, Langues, Arts et Communication (FLLAC) et le rectorat de l'Université d'Abomey-Calavi (UAC) qui ont été fortement représentés à l'occasion du lancement officiel du colloque le 21 février 2023.

A toutes et à tous, je souhaite bonne lecture et surtout une meilleure défense des langues et cultures africaines.

Dr LIGAN Dossou Charles

Maître de Conférences en linguistique
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Exploring Thematic Progression in Selected Bachelor of Arts Dissertation Abstracts: A Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach

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Abstract : Writing a dissertation abstract seems sometimes to be too demanding for novices in the field of scientific research in many ways, especially at the level of thematic progression. The present study aims at describing, analysing, and interpreting the different linguistic features that predict Themes patterns and thematic progression in ten (10) abstracts culled from Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) dissertations through a mixed method of research. The analyses have taken into account such salient Theme patterns as re-iteration, zig-zag, and multiple Theme patterns through the description of the structural configuration of the clauses within the selected abstracts from a systemic-functional perspective. The discussion has revealed the mechanisms that create cohesive texts in each of those B.A. dissertation abstracts. The findings disclose the way the thematic properties have allowed each candidate to write his/her abstract as a short paragraph that summarises the gist of a whole dissertation following the academic requirements.

Keywords: Theme-Rheme theory, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), textual meaning, B.A dissertation.

Résumé : La rédaction d'un résumé de mémoire parfois, paraît trop exigeante pour les novices dans le domaine de la recherche scientifique à bien des égards, en particulier au niveau de la progression thématique. La présente étude vise à décrire, analyser et interpréter les différents traits linguistiques qui illustrent les modèles de thèmes et la progression thématique dans dix (10) résumés tirés de mémoires de licence en langues et sciences humaines au moyen d'une méthode de recherche mixte. La description et les analyses ont passé en revue des schémas thématiques saillants tels que la réitération, le zig-zag et les modèles de thèmes multiples à travers la description de la configuration structurelle des propositions dans les résumés sélectionnés

selon une approche fonctionnelle systémique. La discussion a révélé les mécanismes qui ont facilité la rédaction des textes cohésifs dans chacun des résumés étudiés. Les résultats ont révélé la manière dont les propriétés thématiques ont permis à chaque candidat(e) de rédiger son résumé comme un court paragraphe qui résume l'essentiel d'un mémoire entier conformément aux exigences académiques.

Mots-clés : Théorie de thème-rhème, linguistique fonctionnelle systémique (LSF), signification textuelle, mémoire de licence.

Introduction

People use language to convey meanings that are context-oriented. Language use can either be fictional or non-fictional regarding the goal its user has planned to reach. Be it fictitious or not, contexts and contextual features do guide language use. The same, EFL learners are taught the English language to convey oral or/and written meanings depending on the circumstances. Fictitious or non-fictitious languages can be subjected to linguistic studies through diverse scientific lenses among which SFL, fully termed Systemic Functional Linguistics. This theory considers language as a meaning-making potential (Halliday, 1985/1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) or a medium of communication people highly use in their daily life to accomplish such various tasks as making statements, commands, questions, and offers.

In the academic field, students-teachers, at the end of the first cycle training at the Teacher Training College of Education of Porto-Novo (Ecole Normale Supérieure de Porto-Novo), have to write and defend a Bachelor of Arts (BA) dissertation thesis in English. It is required that these students-teachers provide an abstract right at the beginning of the document to clearly present the salient aspects of their study including, the aim, the objective, the research problem being investigated, the research design used, and the major findings. All these in an approximately 300-word paragraph.

Considering the fact that language exists in many forms and that its study is approach-guided, the present paper uses the Hallidayan systemic approach to carry out a thematic analysis of 10 abstracts selected from

ten different BA dissertation theses written by different candidates who have successfully completed their 300 level. The writing up of such abstract paragraphs, actually, encounters problems of thematic development that the present study attempts to investigate. The main purpose of the present research is to study the language of each of the selected texts to point out the linguistic features of Theme that have characterized them. These texts' characteristics have helped to find out how language is used therein by the candidates that are, predominantly, novices in the field of academic paper writing.

To achieve this, the ten (10) selected abstracts have randomly been sampled from defended dissertations and have undergone a logical study of the thematic features at the clause level. A systemic understanding of the above-mentioned linguistic features implies an in-depth study of the Theme patterns identified in the texts in order to facilitate the interpretation of the progression of Themes within each of the texts. Besides, the study enables the clarification of the textual unity in terms of the conveyed message within each of the texts.

Theoretical Framework of Theme-Rheme and Thematic Progression

The present theory of Theme-Rheme falls within the domain of the grammar of textual meaning (in the broader field of Systemic Functional Linguistics) and has to do, mainly with the thematic structure and the cohesive property of text. Within this theoretical construct, Theme-Rheme is realized by the Mode of discourse and derives from the textual meaning or metafunction. Thus, the theory deals, first with the core organization of the message and, second with the communicative nature of texts. This metafunction enables the spoken or written text to the rest and to other linguistic events (Eggins, 1994:273). This is to say that, textual meaning/metafunction helps to organize experiential and interpersonal meanings into a linear and very coherent block. Hence, the textual metafunction of language embodies the textual property that contributes to the weaving together of the two prior functions-experiential and interpersonal- to create a text. Textual metafunction is then a function that is internal to the language and is concerned with the creation of text. Halliday (1978) says that "it is through this function

(textual) that language makes links with itself and with the situation; and discourse becomes possible, because the speaker/narrator/writer can produce a text and the listener/reader can recognize one.” (p.107)

The grammar of textual meaning or the grammar of Theme-Rheme reveals the structural configuration through which language is organized as a message endowed with a semantic implication. Such a revealing property of structural organization has two levels of operation that are the Thematic Structure and the information system. The present research work lays an emphasis on the Thematic Structure with a specific reference to the Thematic Progression or the methods of development of Themes suggested by Eggins (1994). These methods of Theme development are re-iteration, zig-zag, and multiple Theme patterns. Consequently, the current study describes and analyses the structural configuration of the clauses of the selected abstracts from a systemic-functional perspective to look at how language, at the clausal level, is organized as a semantic construction with a configuration of Theme and Rheme (Eggins, 1994: 271).

Matthiessen (2014) observes:

The Theme is the element that serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context. [...] The remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed, is called in Prague school terminology the Rheme. As a message structure, therefore, a clause consists of a Theme accompanied by a Rheme; and the structure is expressed by the order – whatever is chosen as the Theme is put first. The message thus unfolds from thematic prominence – the part that the speaker has chosen to highlight as the starting point for the addressee – to thematic nonprominence (p.89).

Theme, thus, always appears initially in the clause and gives room to the remaining part of the clause to be expressed. Besides, Theme also situates the clause in relation to the unfolding text. As for its constituent elements, a Theme can be a proper noun, a pronoun, an adverbial phrase, a prepositional phrase, a noun phrase, a Conjunctive Adjunct, a Continuity Adjunct, Wh-elements, a finite, or a Modal verb that

occurs initially in the clause. Depending on the nature of the linguistic elements that occur initially and the conflation they make with the Mood structure of the clause, Theme can be topical, interpersonal, and textual, on the one hand, and unmarked, marked, or marked dependent clause as Theme, on the other.

Concerning the Theme Re-iteration pattern (TRP), it is one way to keep the text cohesive or focused. For Eggins (1994), “re-iterated elements are an effective means of creating cohesion in text and provide it with clear focus” (p.324). Such a Thematic development model allows to continuously positioning the Theme of the preceding clause in the beginning of the next clause. Eg: “**Jim** usually eats fruits in the evening. **He** usually eats with his best friends. But, today, **he** is eating alone.”

As for the second method of Thematic progression, i.e., the Zig-zag Theme pattern (ZTP), it is a pattern which favours the deployment of the Rheme or the Rhematic content of one clause in the Theme of the following clause (Eggins, 1994:324). In simpler terms, an element, which is introduced in the Rheme in clause 1, gets promoted to become the Theme of clause 2. In line with the previous subsection, simple examples can also be used here. Eg: “**Jim** usually eats fruits in the evening. **The fruits** are brought home by her mother. **Jim’s** mother happens to sell fruits and vegetables.”

The last, not the least, method of Thematic progression devised by Eggins (2014) is the Multiple-Theme pattern (MTP) which consists in promoting in a given Rheme position a number of different pieces of information, each of which can be taken up as the Theme in a number of subsequent clauses(p.325). As proceeded before, the following sentences can provide illustration. Eg: “**Jim** usually eats fruits with three friends **Carls, Peter, and Mia**. **Carls** is a little boy of five. However **Peter** is tall and smiling, **Mia** is a bold and black boy”

The analysis of the different methods of development of Themes in the selected abstracts displays the way writers, systematically, progress from one Theme in a clause to the next in the subsequent one. The study has, from time to time, paid a close attention to the academic context of writing of the abstracts, in general. Systemicists point to two types of contexts while carrying out textual analysis. These are the context

of culture (field) and the context of situation (register). According to Eggins (1994), the context of situation or register can be realized by three variables, which are field, mode, and tenor. In simpler terms, Field is what language is being used to talk about while Mode reveals the communicative role that language plays in the interaction. As for Tenor, it points out the role relationships that exists between language users. The textual meaning deals with the organization of the clauses as message and is expressed through the "Theme/Rheme" system to unravel the way in which the writer (language user) signposts his/her text to orient readers (listeners) from one idea to the next. From the foregoing, Field determines Transitivity patterns, Mode determines Theme patterns, and Tenor determines Mood patterns (Halliday 1978, p. 64).

2- Analytical Results

2.1- Identification of Theme Types in the Selected Texts

In this section of the paper, practical analyses have been carried out in ten texts following keys provided by Eggins (1994/2004). The different texts under study have been split into numerically manageable clauses before being counted and tabularized accordingly. Minor clauses, ellipses as well as the keywords sections are left unanalysed.

Keys: **Theme:** Theme is underlined, textual Theme: *in italics*, interpersonal Theme: in CAPITALS, Topical Theme: in **bold**, dependent clause as Theme: **whole clause in bold**. For reason of analysis, the researcher has devised some extra keys susceptible to simplify the designation of Theme patterns. These extra keys are: Theme re-iteration pattern = (TRP), Zig-zag pattern= (ZZP), Multiple-Theme pattern= (MTP)

Text 1

(1) **The aim of this research** is to analyse the speaking abilities of EFL students/ *and* to show the impact of English Club on EFL students speaking abilities. (2)/ **This research** has used qualitative and quantitative research. (3)/ **Data** were gathered through class observation and questionnaires. (4)/**The target population of this research** is

the students of CEG Honvié in Adjarra/ *and* those of CEG Djassin in Porto-Novo./ (5) **The objective of this research** is to know how to pull students' interest in joining the English Club at school/ (6) *and* to show the readers / (7) *how* is the impact of English Club on students speaking ability./ (8) *Therefore*, **BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THIS RESEARCH FROM ALL STUDENTS who** get questioned./ (9) **ninety percent** agreed/ (10) *that* **English Club** can increase their speaking ability/ (11) *and they* find out a lot of new vocabularies as well as added expense of upgrading their English knowledge./ (12) *Those who* don't attend the club find/ (13) *that* **the club** can help them also improve their level in speaking English.

Keywords: Impact, English Club, Speaking ability, extracurricular club

Text 2

(1) **The present study** aims first to explore, the actual difficulties experienced by these students in English class.(2)/ *Secondly*, **it** aims to analyse their performance/ *and finally* to discuss the practices used by the teachers towards these students./ (3) *To achieve this objective*, **the following methods** were used: interview, class visit/ (4) *and questionnaires* were sent to the targeted students and teachers.(5) **The results** revealed/(6) **these students often** face many difficulties or challenges related to classroom accessibility, hearing, movement, writing, sight/ (7) *and others* including teachers lack adequate strategies and practices./ (8) **GIVEN that** it is one thing to master the English language, (9) *but* **the most important thing for a teacher to master** is how to help learners especially the ones with disabilities.

Keywords: Pupils with disabilities; Difficulties; English as a Foreign Language; Littoral Region; Inclusive Education.

Text 3

(1)**This research work** focuses on strategies to foster reading in post-beginners' classes. (2)/ **These strategies** are motivation through music playing, storytelling, selection of interesting reading texts, questioning, scanning, skimming, *and* predicting. (3) **The instruments I** have used/ (4) *to carry out my research* are questionnaires, classroom observations

and interviews.(5)/ **The results of this finding** show/(6) *that post-beginner students of CEG1 Bonou and those of CEG Affamè* are not motivated to read.(7)/ ABOUT THE ENGLISH TEACHERS, **most of them** are not trained.(8)/ *To solve these problems, it* is suggested to train the recruited teachers pedagogically, (9)/ **teachers** should prepare well classes about reading (10)/ *and learners* should have intrinsic motivation to read.

Keywords: strategies, reading, intrinsic motivation, post-beginners 'classes, recruited teachers.

Text 4

(1)**This study** aims at revealing the effects of comic strips on EFL beginners' reading comprehension performance.(2)/ *To achieve this goal, the present study* has used a twofold methodology, *which* combines qualitative *and* quantitative methods of investigation.(3)/ **They** consist in collecting information from learners *and* teachers through means of classroom observation, *and* questionnaires distributed to ten (10) teachers *and* one hundred and sixteen (116) students of CEG1 Akpro-Misséréte. (4)/ *Throughout this study, it* is noticed/(5) *that EFL teachers* do not use comic strips effectively due to many problems, from the Beninese educational system, *and* teachers themselves.(6)/ *Moreover, the results* show a difference of 20.69% between [the group treated with traditional text] *and* [the group treated with comic strips]. *Besides, 37.06% of the participants* affirmed/(7) *that traditional texts* are boring.(8)/ *From the above results, it* can be said/(9) *that comic strips* motivate the students to read,/(9) **(they)** improve their comprehension ability *and* their output.(10) **It then**, becomes important for teachers to reconsider their way of implementing reading comprehension classes/ (11) *to actually meet the final goal which* is to help students decode *and* interpret/(12) *what they* read.

Keyword: Effects; Comic strips; EFL beginner students; Reading comprehension.

Text 5

(1) **English** is one the most spoken languages in the world./ (2) **Learn to speak it** involves *that* one's master a minimum of the language vocabulary./ (3) *For we* cannot speak without knowing the appropriate word to use *and then* expect to get ourselves comprehended by others./ (4) *In Benin*, **the learning of vocabulary** is based on activities proposed by textbooks./ (5) **STUDENTS OF FORM ONE, who** are most having their first contact with this language./ (6) *are taught basic notions they* need in vocabulary to begin any communication in the target language./ (7) *To better those students learning process*, **the following research work** has been made to investigate in[sic.] the advantage of inserting educational games in Form One English textbook for vocabulary lessons./ (8) *To reach this goal*, **questionnaires** have been addressed to 53 EFL learners *and* 9 teachers of CEG DOWA Porto-Novo./ (9) **The findings** reveal/ (10) *that, it* is easier for 53% of the students to participate to[sic.] educational games./ (11) *Moreover, 100% of the teachers* think/ (12) *that educational games* have positive impacts on students learning process./ (13) *Based on all those information gathered*, **the insertion of educational games in Form One textbook** will be favourable for the beginners.

Keywords: Textbooks, activities, educational games, vocabulary lesson, beginners.

Text 6

(1) **Large class size** is a big challenge in most public educational institutions in Benin./ (2) **The main purpose of this study** is to examine the impact of classroom size on academic performance of secondary school students./ (3) **The present study** aims to investigate the effect of class size on the educational performance of secondary school students *and* to determine/ (4) *the extent to which the class size* affects the teaching *and* learning process in secondary schools./ (5) *Thus, the study* has used the mixed methods research approach consisting of data collection, analysis of questionnaires distributed to 113 students *and* interviews with 10 EFL teachers selected from Lycée Toffa 1^{ier}, Porto-Novo./ (6) **The findings** have revealed/ (7) *that class size* has an

effect on the academic performance of students/(8) **where students in small class size** record higher performance than their peers in large class sizes./(9) **It** results to poor teaching methods./(10) **instructional materials** are not used properly in a large class size/(11) **because, it** is very hard for the teacher to show students the instructional material,/(12) **especially, those who** sit at the back.

Keywords: Classroom Size, Academic Performance, Impact, Students, Secondary schools

Text 7

(1)**This study** aims at revealing the contribution of group work to the teaching of reading comprehension./(2) **To achieve this goal, the present study** has used a twofold methodology/(3) **which** combines qualitative and quantitative methods of investigation./(4) **They** consist in collecting information from learners and teachers through means of classroom observation and questionnaires distributed to 10 (ten) teachers and 116 (one hundred and sixteen) students of CEG2 Ikipinle./ (5) **The results** reveal/(6) **that EFL teachers** do not effectively do group work due to many problems.

Keywords: strategies, round table technique, groups work technique, post-beginners' classes, recruited teachers.

Text 8

(1)**This research work** is an attempt to explore the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) **and** to investigate EFL teachers' difficulties in teaching communicative language in EFL intermediate classes. (2) **To achieve this goal, a mixed methodology** has been used including qualitative and quantitative methods of investigation./(3) **These Methods** have consisted in collecting data by the means of classroom observation, guided interviews, and questionnaires from six (06) EFL teachers, one hundred (100) learners, and eight (08) students' parents of CEG d' Application./(4) **Throughout this study, it** is noticed/(5) **that EFL teachers** effectively face a lot of challenges while teaching communicative language in EFL intermediate classes./(6) **In fact, they** all (100% of teachers) find the implementation

of CLT difficult and time-consuming./ (7) Also, EFL teachers are more accustomed to the traditional method of teaching./ (8) Likewise, it can be said./ (9) that EFL teachers' lack of experience in implementing CLT./ (10) and above all, the shortage of teaching resources and authentic materials prevents the optimal implementation of CLT./ (11) I think/ (12) that the government should initiate educational reforms/ (13) that promote learners' oral communication, [] provide EFL teachers with adequate teaching and learning resources related to CLT, and [] improve the condition of classes/ (14) where activities take place.

Key words: CLT; implementation; EFL intermediate classes; Communicative competence.

Text 9

(1) This study aims to investigate the importance of reading for learners and teachers and analyse how well English teachers implement the Communicative Approach to teaching reading in their classes./ (2) The methodology used is a two twofold one, combining quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation./ (3) Information was collected from teachers and learners through classroom observation, interviews with four (04) English teachers of form 4, and questionnaires distributed to ninety (90) students./ (4) Throughout this study, it has been concluded/ (5) that the majority of EFL teachers at Lycée Béhanzin do not apply the Communicative Approach to teaching reading effectively./ (6) This attitude is observed/ (7) because teaching reading communicatively is time-consuming./ (8) and students do not show much interest./ (9) Furthermore, the results indicated/ (10) that most students did not appreciate reading classes and lacked motivation to learn the language./ (11) However, a significant percentage of students believed/ (12) that reading could improve their speaking ability./ (13) It is then important for teachers to reconsider their methods of implementing the communicative approach to teaching reading to help learners acquire speaking abilities./ (14) Finally, teachers should create a positive learning environment and demonstrate the importance of reading classes to students.

Keywords: Importance of reading; Communicative Approach;

Speaking ability; Reading; Communicate

Text 10

(1) **The aim of this study** is to show/(2) *how* **EFL teachers** can improve the poor skills of their students *and* develop by extension the other skills through of games in the teaching process./(3) *Through questionnaires and interview, the results of this study* show/(4) *that teachers and educators* are aware /(5) *that games* are key tools to develop language skills, especially reading,/(6) *but still* have some reluctance to use it in their teaching routine./(7) *In fact, most of the teachers* acknowledged/(8) *that they* are not familiar with common games or gamified activities/(9) **that** may help them improve their teaching methods, considered too static by learners in search of dynamism./(10) *Moreover, students* are not exposed enough to reading tasks./(11) **The research hypotheses** have been confirmed/(12) *and the researcher* concludes/(13) *that both teachers and students* will benefit from the introduction of reading games in the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: Game; Reading; Game-Based Learning; Gamification; Language skills

2.2 Analysis of Thematic Progression in the Selected Texts

As early mentioned, the analysis of Theme patterns allows the scrutiny of the internal organization of each of the selected texts at the clausal level to uncover the nature of these clauses as a message. First, this analysis takes into consideration the system of Theme and Rheme to explore the rhetorical structure of the texts. Second, it grounds on this Theme-Rheme identification to investigate the dynamic deployment of Themes in these texts. This second facet of the study is meant to disclose the relationships between successive Themes and Rhemes. As being suggested by Eggins (1994) the study of Themes embraces Theme re-iteration pattern (TRP), the zig-zag Theme pattern (ZTP), and the Multiple-Theme pattern (MTP). The various Thematic progression patterns' rates and their respective percentages can be summarized in the following table.

Table1: Frequency of Thematic progression in the selected texts

Data	Thematic Progression					
Paragraph Number	TRP	%	ZZP	%	MTP	%
1	5/10	50%	5/10	50%	00/10	00%
2	4/8	50%	4/8	50%	00/8	00%
3	6/9	66.67%	3/9	33.33%	00/9	00%
4	5/12	41.67%	4/12	33.33%	3/12	25%
5	8/13	61.54%	3/13	23.08%	2/13	15.38%
6	6/11	54.5%	3/11	27.3%	2/11	18.2%
7	1/5	20%	4/5	80%	00/5	00%
8	5/13	38.5%	6/13	46.1%	2/13	15.4%
9	6/13	46.15%	7/13	53.85%	00/13	00%
10	7/12	58.33%	5/12	41.66%	00/12	00%
Total	53/106 or 50%	44/106 or 41.5%	9/106 or 8.5%			

In all the texts under study, the language of the abstracts has revealed a great occurrence of Theme re-iteration pattern (i.e. 50%) in the sum of the clauses in the whole data as the candidates develop the abstracts following the required academic steps. Theme re-iteration signals constancy regarding the research objectives and methods, and is used when a topical Theme or thematic element of a clause is repeated in the following clauses and so on. Consequently, the candidates commonly use this method of Themes development. Besides, the method of re-iteration contributes a dynamic nature which sometimes leads the candidates to rapid shifts between restricted sets of Thematic contents. This writing method, thus, create an effect of conserving a strong topical focus in the data which allows the candidates to spine around a mere repetition of the same lexical items. However, the candidates have achieved Theme re-iteration with some complexity and consistency cohesively out of a previous Thematic move as in clauses 9,11, 12, in text1, clauses 2, 3, 5, 6 in text6, and clauses 3, 6, 7, 8, in text10, to quote but a few. Occasionally, some of the candidates achieve Theme

re-iteration with the insertion of a new Theme coming from outside the immediate text as in clauses 3, 5, 8 in text3, clauses 4, 5, 6, in text5, and clauses 10, 11 in text10. Through the Theme re-iteration pattern, research aims, methods, findings or their respective Thematic contents are endlessly remembered to the reader.

As can be seen in the above table, the Zig-zag pattern holds the second rank with 41.5% after the Theme re-iteration pattern. This is, in fact, a linear pattern through which a Rheme or a Rhematic content of a previous clause becomes a Thematic elements in the following clause. As illustrated in the theoretical section, examples of Zig-zag pattern can be found in clauses 3, 4, 8, 10, 13 in text1, clauses 3, 8, 10, 13 in text4, clauses 2, 3, 5, 12, 13, 14 in text8, and clauses 2, 4, 5, 9, 13 in text10. In these instances of Zig-zag pattern, the Rheme of the previous clauses are naturally deployed into the Thematic position in the subsequent clause or modified, but carrying the Rhematic content of the previous clause. In case the Rhematic content of a previous clause got promoted into the Thematic position, it can be seen that the candidates sporadically try to apply some extension or alteration or replacement of the semantic contents of lexical items in the following clause to expand their ideas in the texts as in clauses 5, 6, 7, 8 in text9.

Multiple Theme pattern is the third type of method of Theme development uncovered in the data (cf. Table1). This type of method ranks third after Theme re-iteration and Zig-zag patterns with a rate of 8.5% of the overall clauses of the analysed data. Actually, only 4/10 dissertation abstract writers have made use of this technique in their abstracts. The instances of Multiple Theme pattern are uncovered in clauses 5, 6, in text4, clauses 12, 13 in text5, clauses 11, 12 in text6, and clauses 9, 10 in text8. In these texts, the abstract writers have tried to endow the Rhematic contents of each previous clause with messages that need to be gradually detailed in the initial position in the subsequent clauses. For example, in text4, it is the Rheme of clause 4 (notice), a transitive verb, that has been developed on many occasions in the topical Theme position in clause 5 (**EFL teachers**), clause 6 (**the results**) etc. to indicate that the some of the B.A. candidates have also made use of the three methods of Thematic development, regardless the

low occurrence of the Multiple Theme patterns in the overall data, as proposed by Eggins (1994).

3- Interpretation of the findings

The results of this analysis show the predominance of the Theme re-iteration pattern, followed by the significant occurrence of the Zig-zag pattern, while the Multiple Theme pattern occupies the last position in the overall data. Similarly, in each of the texts, these methods of Theme development occupy the first, second, and third positions respectively, mirroring the presentation of Theme progression in the overall data.

From the analysis of the pattern of Theme re-iteration in the data, its predominance confirms that candidates find it easy to unfold meanings from existing information in previous clauses rather than promoting new ones. They simply have to pick up a previous Theme or Thematic content (semantic content) and repeat it first in the following clauses. In abstracts with such a method of Thematic progression, B.A. candidates find it easy to derive the Themes of the following clauses from the first one, in order to provide their readers with a range of information focusing on the research objectives, methods, and results. The main problem that this method of theme development seems to cause in abstracts is that the very first Topical Theme is spun around by repeating it in the remaining clauses of the abstract, thus creating redundancy. Consequently, this method of progression will not favour candidates' creativity, in general, and their writing skills, in particular.

The high frequency of the Zig-zag pattern in the data suggests that the abstract writers sometimes took the initiative to develop some ideas, initially announced in the opening clauses, in the following clauses. This is an advantage for these candidates in order to develop the text smoothly, gradually, by adding/promoting a new meaning from the one existing in the Rheme of the preceding clause. In terms of creativity, such a systematic progression has a positive influence on the development of their fluency. Last but not least, it should be noted that the smooth movement created by the zigzag pattern also promotes coherence in the abstract under study.

The low proportion of Multiple Theme patterns is explained by the fact

that few candidates have really taken up the challenge of providing blocks of information in the Rheme of the first clause that they have systematically detailed in the following clauses. Thus, the Rheme or Rhematic elements of a previous clause are used in the Theme of subsequent clauses to show further implications of the initial Rheme. In the data, only 4 out of 10 abstract texts have presented instances of the Multiple Theme pattern, where the writers have used this method to create in the minds of their readers implications that were generated in a previous clause and that provide information about, as amply pointed out at the end of the previous section. In terms of structure and meaning, the texts that bear such a method of development are more relevant and require more elaboration from the writers. It may seem that candidates, for one reason or another, try to avoid these more demanding compositions. These demands seem to justify the very low frequency of the Multiple Theme pattern in the data. Bearing in mind that the candidates are beginners in the academic writings; it can be concluded that their texts need to be taken more seriously in terms of structure and meaning.

Conclusion

The present study has investigated the Thematic development in ten (10) selected B.A. dissertation abstracts written and defended by students-teachers between the academic years 2020-2023, following a systemic linguistic approach. The study aimed at describing, analysing and interpreting the different Thematic patterns and types of Thematic development methods that the language of the corpus exhibits, using quantitative and qualitative methods, in order to uncover some major findings in line with the way candidates unfold the chain of ideas in their abstract paragraphs. In this sense, it was found that the predominance of the Thematic Repetition method has helped the most of the candidates to express a strong Thematic focus in their texts, but unfortunately this method happens to impede their creativity and critical thinking, as well. As for the Zig-zag and Multiple Theme patterns, their presence on some occasions promoted coherence and aesthetics in the texts, as these methods allowed candidates to provide information in a linear

way, thereby enhancing the unity of the texts.

All in all, everything shows that the low level of coherence and aesthetics characterises some of the texts studied. For this reason, the present study suggests that lecturers vary the techniques and approaches they use to teach writing, alternating or shifting from the classical approach of paragraph structure, which deals with the concepts of “topic sentence”, “supporting sentences”, “examples and facts” and “concluding sentence”, to the Thematic progression approach, in order to promote not only the critical thinking of students-teachers, but also their creative writing.

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QUELQUES IMAGES DE LA CÉRÉMONIE



Vue du présidium à l'ouverture du colloque



Vue partielle des participants



Vice-recteur en charge des affaires académiques, Professeur Yélindo Patrick HOUESSOU au milieu en prononçant l'allocution d'ouverture du colloque.



Prof Coffi Sambiéni et Dr (MC) Idrissou Zimé Yérima du labo gur



*À gauche, Professeur Flavien Gbéto ; à droite Dr (MC) Charles Dossou Ligan,
Directeur adjoint du LABODYLCAL*



Vue partielle des participants



Prof. Julien Koffi Gbaguidi, directeur du LABODYLCAL



De droite à gauche, Dr (MA) Albert Koukpossi du labo GRAD & Prof Sourou Innocent Koutchadé, directeur adjoint de l'EDP -ECD



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Alexandre Atindokpo et sa compagnie de théâtre "Tout Terrain "

