



T.C.

YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

MASTER'S PROGRAM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**THE ROLE OF THEME AND RHEME IN THEMATIC PROGRESSION
PATTERNS IN ENGLISH ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS BY TURKISH**

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

DİLARA KESKİN

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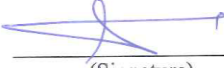
YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES DIRECTORATE

THESIS SUBMISSION and APPROVAL FORM

SUBJECT: The Role of Theme and Rheme in Thematic Progression Patterns in English Argumentative Essays by Turkish University Students

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DATE OF THESIS APPROVAL : 19.06.2019

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Bünser Dilara Koçbaşı Demir for her explicit feedback, support and patience she showed in the process of my thesis.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank my lecturers Assist. Prof. Dr. Aysun KUNDURACI, Assist. Prof. Dr. Evrim EVEYİK AYDIN, Assist. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Banu KOÇOĞLU and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hossein FARHADY from whom I have learnt a lot. I sincerely owe many thanks to Prof. Dr. Ayşe Semra AKYEL who encouraged me to do what I believe in.

I would like to thank all the participants who have kindly volunteered to take part in my study.

I am grateful to all my beloved friends but especially to Pervin KESKİN and Rabia BAYRAM, who have been by my side whenever I need them. I thank them for being patient with me during this stressful process. Their friendship has been a source of motivation for me.

Last but not least, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my dear family; my devoted father Metin KESKİN, my lovely mother Nell KESKİN and my little sister Defne KESKİN for their belief in me. I would not be where I am today but for their support, sacrifice and unconditional love. I would like to express my deepest thanks to them as they have always stood by me in any decision I have made.

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF THEME AND RHEME IN THEMATIC PROGRESSION PATTERNS IN ENGLISH ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS BY TURKISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Master Thesis, English Language Teaching Department

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Bünser Dilara KOÇBAŞ DEMİR

June, 2019, 93 pages

Since writing requires a lot of processing of the language to produce a message, it is seen as one of the most difficult skills to be developed. To develop EFL students' writing skills, the notion of Theme/ Rheme and thematic progression patterns are widely accepted to be useful. Therefore, the present study aims to determine the thematic progression patterns in Turkish EFL students' argumentative essays by regarding their language education background. The data in this study were taken from students who study in English Language Teaching and Psychological Counselling and Guidance departments in a private university in Turkey. Moreover, eight native speakers of English participated in the present study, as well. The data was analyzed by dividing the sentences into clauses and defining the thematic progression patterns based on Danes' thematic progression patterns (1974). Results of student essays were compared within each other considering their departments. The results revealed that ELT students use more thematic progression patterns than PCG students. Furthermore, it was determined that students from both of the departments used similar variety of thematic progression patterns in their essays.

Finally, seven problems that arise from misuse of Theme and Rheme were identified in Turkish EFL students' written texts.

Key Terms: Theme- Rheme, Thematic Progression Patterns, Argumentative Essay



ÖZET

TÜRK ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN, İNGLİZCE TARTIŞMACI METİNLERİNİN TEMATİK İLERLEME ÖRÜNTÜLERİNDE VERİLEN BİLGİ VE YENİ BİLGİNİN ROLÜ

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Master Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı

Danışman: Yard. Doç. Dr. Bünser Dilara KOÇBAŞ DEMİR

Haziran, 2019, 93 Sayfa

Yazma, bir mesajın üretilmesi için birçok dil gelişimi evrelerini gerektirdiği için geliştirilmesi en zor becerilerden biri olarak görülmektedir. İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin yazma becerilerini geliştirmek için verilen bilgi/ yeni bilgi ve tematik ilerleme örüntüleri yaygın olarak faydalı kabul edilmiştir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin yabancı dil sınıfı geçmişlerini dikkate alarak tartışmacı metinlerindeki tematik ilerleme örüntülerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmadaki veriler Türkiye’de özel bir üniversitede İngilizce Öğretmenliği ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık ve Rehberlik bölümlerinde okuyan öğrencilerden alınmıştır. Dahası, bu çalışmaya sekiz tane İngilizceyi anadili olarak konuşanlar da katılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın verileri cümleleri tümceciklere bölünmüş ve tematik ilerleme örüntüleri Danes (1974) tarafından önerilen model temel alınarak incelenmiştir. Öğrenci metnlerinin sonuçları okudukları bölümleri dikkate alınarak birbirleriyle karşılaştırılmıştır. Sonuçlar İÖ öğrencilerinin PDR öğrencilerinden daha fazla tematik ilerleme örüntüleri kullandıkları ortaya çıkarmıştır.. Her iki bölümden olan öğrencilerin metinlerinde benzer çeşitlilikte tematik ilerleme örüntüleri kullandıkları belirlenmiştir. Son olarak,

İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin metinlerinde verilen bilgi/ yeni bilginin yanlış kullanımından kaynaklanan yedi problem tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Verilen Bilgi/ Yeni Bilgi, Tematik İlerleme Örüntüleri, Tartışmacı Metin



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ÖZET	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background to the Study	1
1.2. Significance of the Study	4
1.3. Statement of the Problem and Research Questions.....	7
1.3.1. Overview of English Language Classes in Turkish Education System	7
1.3.2. Purpose of the Study	9
1.4. Overview of Methodology	11
1.5. Definition of the Significant Terms	12
1.5.1. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)	12
1.5.2. English as a Second Language (ESL)	12
1.5.3. Essay	13
1.5.4. Clauses	13
1.5.5. Theme and Rheme.....	14
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.1. Coherence and Cohesion.....	15
2.2. Theme and Rheme.....	18
2.3. Danes' Thematic Progression Patterns	22
2.3.1. Simple Linear Progression	22
2.3.2. Constant Progression.....	23
2.3.3. Derived Hyperthematic Progression	23
2.3.4. Split Progression	24
2.4. Current Literature.....	25
2.4.1. Literature on Cohesion and Coherence	26

2.4.2. Literature on Theme/Rheme, Thematic Progression and Thematic Progression Patterns in EFL/ESL Writing	30
2.4.3. Problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme	39
2.4.4. Summary	41
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	44
3.1. Introduction	44
3.2. Participants and Setting of the Study	44
3.3. Data Collection.....	48
3.4. Argumentative Essays	49
3.5. Data Analysis	50
3.6. Trustworthiness of the Study	51
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	52
4.1. Introduction	52
4.1.1. The Use of Thematic Progression Patterns in Turkish EFL writers' English argumentative texts	52
4.1.1.1. Turkish ELT Students' Use of Thematic Progression Patterns	53
4.1.1.2. Turkish PCG Students' Use of Thematic Progression Patterns	55
4.1.1.3 Differences Between Turkish ELT and PCG Students' English Written Texts in Thematic Progression Patterns.....	57
4.1.2. Native English Speakers' Use of Thematic Progression Patterns.....	59
4.2. Problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme	62
4.2.1. The Problem of the Brand New Theme	64
4.2.2. The Problem of Empty Rheme.....	66
4.2.3. Intervening Material Between Mention in Rheme and Subsequent Thematization.....	67
4.2.4. Over-Use of Constant Progression.....	69
4.2.5. Themes with Unclear Reference	70
4.2.6. The problem of the empty Theme	72
4.2.7 Problems with Coherence in Turkish EFL Written Texts.....	73
4.3. Summary of the Findings	75

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	77
5.1. Summary	77
5.2. Conclusions	78
5.2.1. What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish EFL writers' English argumentative texts?.....	78
5.2.1.1. What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish ELT students' texts?.....	80
5.2.1.2. What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish PCG students' texts?	81
5.2.2. Is there a difference between Turkish ELT and PCG students' written texts in thematic progression patterns?	81
5.2.3. What are the main patterns in written texts of native speakers of English?	86
5.2.4. What are the common problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme in Turkish EFL students' written texts?.....	87
5.3. Limitations	90
5.4. Pedagogical Implications	91
5.5. Recommendation for Future Research.....	92
REFERENCES	94

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Example of Clauses in an EFL Student's Writing	13
Table 4.1.	Examples of the Use of Constant Theme Progression in a ELT Student's Writing	53
Table 4.2	The Use of Simple Linear Theme Progression in an ELT Student's Writing	54
Table 4.3	The Use of Split Progression in an ELT Student's Writing	54
Table 4.4	The Use of Constant Progression in a PCG Student's Writing	55
Table 4.5	The Use of Simple Linear Progression in a PCG Student's Writing	56
Table 4.6	The Use of Derived Hyperthematic Progression in a PCG Student's Writing	57
Table 4.7	Number of ELT and PCG Students' Thematic Progression Patterns	58
Table 4.8	Number of Native Speaker Texts' Thematic Progression Pattern	60
Table 4.9	Examples of the Use of Constant Theme Progression in a Native Speaker's Writing	61
Table 4.10	Examples of the Use of Simple Linear Progression in a Native Speaker's Writing	61
Table 4.11	Number of PCG and ELT students who faced problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme	63

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Simple Linear Progression	22
Figure 2	Constant Progression	23
Figure 3	Derived Hyperthematic Progression	24
Figure 4	Split Progression	25



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

English as a foreign language (EFL) is a compulsory course in Turkish education system which starts from primary school. In this course, students are expected to develop their writing, speaking, reading and listening skills in the target language. The development of a language occurs in a similar order for most of the EFL learners. They often develop listening skills at the beginning (extensive input that they can understand), speaking as the second skill (they start to produce what they have learnt in the second language), then reading (they understand the sound and symbol relationship and interpret the word in the second language) and finally they develop their writing skills (they learn the language effectively to express their ideas). This belief is highly common among language learners and teachers because writing requires a lot processing of the language to produce a message. Additionally, Kellogg (2001) indicates writing as a cognitive process because it requires incorporation of learners' thinking ability, memory and their ability to produce and express their ideas.

An effective text of an EFL/ESL writer's has to be clear, logical, organized, clearly structured and cohesive with large spectrum of vocabulary items (Jacobs & L,1981;Hall,1988). Moreover, Nunan (1989) believes that writing an effective text is a very difficult cognitive activity because it requires the learner to have control over different factors. These factors can depend on learners' background knowledge, personal interests and linguistic and cognitive phenomena. Another important factor affecting students' L2 writing can be about the differences in the way of succeeding

the organization of beginning and ending points of their ideas in their L1 and L2. Native speakers of a language can succeed this unconsciously without any instruction with the help of extensive reading. Nevertheless, L2 learners face difficulties when they are writing in their second language even they have extensive exposure with the target language. Students may not be aware of their mistakes or they may use their background knowledge from their L1 because of the lack of effective feedback related to beginning and ending points of the texts and their organization.

There are several problems that students face with while writing an effective essay in the target language and one of the primary difficulties is the absence of coherence (Bamberg, 1983). Incoherent texts fail to share the writers' ideas effectively even if they have a command of lexical, syntactic and grammatical structures of a language (Rico, 2014).

While cohesive ties are seen as substantial part of a coherent text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976); Theme is also considered to be a significant element to create textual cohesion (Fries, 1981, 1992, 1994, 1995a, 1995b). M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar theory constructed groundwork for the study of Theme/Rheme structure. Systemic-functional grammar is the theory of grammar and language and it analyses the texts in their social and cultural contexts. Therefore, language is not only a word or sentence but it is a text (Halliday, 1970). There are four theoretical claims of SFL which are (1) language is functional which explains what language does and how it does it, (2) making meaning (semantics) is its function, (3) cultural and social context, which refers to what is going on around the speaker, the social roles and relationships between the speakers and aspects of the channel of communication, effects these meanings, and (4) the process of using language is

semiotic (Eddings, 2004). SFL theory has been applied to different fields such as child language development and language education.

Theme in a sentence has the role of providing new, additional or unfamiliar information to the readers. In other words, Theme can be explained as ‘the point of departure for the message’ and it helps the reader to understand what the writer wants to express as the initial point of the statement (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). After the Theme in a sentence, Rheme comes as the remainder of the message (Wang, 2007). The flow of information in a clause from Theme to Rheme is important to succeed the effectiveness of a message. The exchange of information between Theme and Rheme in sentences is called as thematic progression. Danes’ (1974) model of thematic progression is very important and useful and widely accepted while studying the progression patterns.

According to Witte and Faigley (1981), students write better and more coherent texts when they use the two structures Theme and Rheme more effectively. Students need to present their ideas with proper equilibrium thematic and rhematic patterns and make the presentation of ideas clear by placing them in ideal position which is before and after each other. Nevertheless, several EFL teachers still focus on errors that occur below the clause level, such as incorrect use of verb, lack of subject-verb agreement and so on while giving feedback (Belmonte & McCabe-Hidalgo, 1998). Although the focus has widened to discourse level in different fields, teachers currently feel the lack of tools to analyze students’ texts at the discourse level.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Writing is an important area among four skills in second language learning. According to Hyland (2003), EFL learners' performance in their development is related to their improvement in their writing skills. A successful text of an EFL writer needs to meet some criteria such as being cohesive, understandable, structured, logical and organized with diversified amount of vocabulary. Writing is considered to be a very compelling cognitive activity because the learner needs to possess different competencies to succeed this level of writing. These competencies differ depending on learners' personal interests and academic backgrounds. Moreover, linguistics, psychological and cognitive factors also affect learners' writing.

Learners' poor writing can result from several reasons. Firstly, teachers' lack of training can be seen as the root of learners' problem with writing. Teachers may not have enough pedagogic approach for teaching writing skills. Moreover, providing effective feedback can be a challenge for the language teachers. Giving learners feedback is one of the most powerful ways to encourage and scaffold students. While some teachers do not know how to provide effective feedback, some believe that feedback can be only negative and corrective. Finding Turkish EFL students' use of thematic progression patterns and misuse of Theme and Rheme will have some pedagogical implications because Grabe and Kaplan (1996) claimed that learners should be encouraged by the teachers in writing classes with effective feedbacks on their writings. On the other hand, learners come against various difficulties. Since they already know a language, their L1 may affect their L2 writing

both in positive and/or negative ways. Lack of effective reading, practicing and motivation are other factors affecting learners' writing skills.

In the current study, argumentative essays written by two groups of Turkish EFL learners and a number of native speakers were analyzed considering their thematic progression patterns. On the contrary to most of the studies in the field which compare written texts of native and non-native speakers of English, the present study focuses on two groups of Turkish EFL students who have different language backgrounds. These two groups are Psychological Counselling and Guidance (PCG) and English Language Teaching (ELT) departments because students' language backgrounds differ in these two disciplines. The participants from these two different disciplines are compared with each other considering their use of thematic progression patterns in their texts because it is assumed that EFL writers who share the same first language would also show different results. Students from these two disciplines have different experiences with the target language, thus their English written texts can change in terms of coherence and cohesion. With the similar purpose, Ebrahimi and Kedri (2011) studied two different fields which are Applied Linguistics and Chemical Engineering, and found that success in using appropriate thematic progression pattern changed according to the students' disciplinary background. In line with the similar purpose, Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2012) studied EFL students' written texts to find out whether students' academic experience with the target language and their proficiency level have an effect on coherence in their texts when they use appropriate thematic progression patterns. It was investigated that students with high proficiency level differed from others with lower proficiency levels. Therefore, the researchers claimed that writing experience and proficiency level are important factors for writing coherent texts.

EFL learners produce less coherent discourse comparing to native speakers of English (Hawes, 2015). Through extensive reading, native speakers of the target language acquire the proper use of Theme and thematic progression intrinsically. Thus, they learn the syntactic subjects and basic structures of a text easier than a non-native speaker. Since non-native speakers of the target language are exposed to these structures less, they cannot write as effective as native speakers (Hawes, 2015). Moreover, thematic progression patterns in every language differ from one another. Since thematic progression patterns are different from each other in Turkish and English, Turkish EFL learners face difficulty in English writing classes.

The present study will contribute to the field of EFL writing context in Turkey because Theme and Rheme patterns in student texts have not been studied widely. Moreover, it will shed light to both learners and instructors in terms of writing cohesive texts. It may also help instructors to notice and raise the awareness about the importance of thematic progression patterns for cohesion in EFL writing. As a consequence, language teachers can design their syllabus by putting importance on this issue.

There are four main reasons why it is important to study thematic progression in written texts. First, thematic progression helps to organise the sentence when the new information is given (Hutchin, 1987). Another reason is that it is used to reflect the development of text (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Third, it helps writers to organize their written work in a linear and coherent way (Butt, Feez, Spinks, & Yallop, 2000). Finally, it helps learners to improve their reading and writing skills for longer texts (Emilia, 2014).

In addition to thematic progression patterns, a number of problems are analysed related to misuse of Theme and Rheme, Thematic progression or both

because the balance and flow of Theme and Rheme are highly important for writing a coherent text. The results will contribute to the field in terms of improving teacher feedback and students' awareness because Turkish EFL students' problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme and/or thematic progression have not been studied yet. The most common results will show where students face difficulties in managing Theme and Rheme and guide writing instructors while evaluating their students' texts. Thus, teachers can give more specific feedback to students on thematic progression. With the help of effective feedback, students will be aware of their problems related to thematic progression, and produce more effective and coherent written texts.

1.3. Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Writing is an important skill for academic success. It is a productive skill and students face different challenges in the process of writing. Numerous studies have been done on the process of writing texts (Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1955; Onwuegbuzie, 1999). Researchers proposed various methods and suggestions to enhance students' writing skills but the present study draws attention on patterns of Theme and Rheme in Turkish EFL students' written texts to produce coherent texts. Therefore, the focus is more on the sequence of thematic and rhematic preferences that results in building thematic patterns in this study. To indicate the focus of the study more clearly, English language education in Turkey and purposes of the study will be explained below.

1.3.1. Overview of English Language Classes in Turkish Education System

From the early years of proclamation of Turkish Republic by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, English language education has been highly important. Therefore, teachers of English language education were raised ideally both in Turkey and abroad (Akyel, 2012). After 1980s, English language department in faculty of education was raised and English language education became more important.

English language teaching policy has changed a lot at all levels of Turkish education with globalization, socio economic and political factors. A main ELT curriculum reform was made in 1997 because the importance of age of onset for language learning was taken into consideration. Most of the educators were in the same idea that language teaching should start in 4th grade in all schools. During this period, parents started to send their children to English medium schools for a better education (Bayyurt, 2012). With other educational developments in 2006, English language started to be taught in 4th grade with a holistic and communicative approach (Haznedar, 2010).

With another educational reform in English language teaching in Turkish education system, the onset of English classes has changed from the 4th grade to the 2nd grade in state schools and kindergarten in private schools. While state schools offer 2 hours English classes per week, private schools offer 8-12 hours of instruction per week. State schools are based on more of a grammar-based curriculum, whereas private schools follow task-based and integrated skills. Moreover, private schools encourage students to use the language comparing to state schools. When it comes to English education in university level, students receive English instruction differently depending on their school. While some schools are English-medium universities, some are not. In English-medium universities, students

usually study in English preparatory class in which they are taught 24-30 hours English per week. After they pass English preparation class successfully, they start to get their field major area courses in English.

These reforms show how students of the present study learn English language in Turkish EFL context.

1.3.2. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the present study is to determine the use of thematic progression patterns in argumentative essays of Turkish EFL learners, who have different backgrounds of language classes, and native speakers of English.

Although there have been little research on effect of disciplinary differences in students' writings, several researchers claim that students' disciplinary background can reflect differences in their writings (MacDonald, 1994; Hyland, 2000; North, 2005; Ebrahimi and Khedri, 2011). The present study suggests that students' writing success can be affected by their writing experiences from their previous writing courses. Since one of the target groups has a language education background, they are expected to use thematic progression patterns more successfully than the other group who do not have a language class background.

For the last few years, Theme/Rheme has been substantially studied in EFL writing context. Nevertheless, it has not studied widely in Turkish EFL context yet. Therefore, the primary objective of the present study is to analyze Theme/Rheme patterns in Turkish EFL students' written texts. The study also hopes to gain information about the differences in thematic development of Turkish EFL students' texts considering their experiences with English which had not been studied in

literature yet. The assumption behind this is that students with language class background use the two structures Theme and Rheme more effectively in their written texts comparing to other students without language class background. Therefore, students from two disciplines which are English Language Teaching and Psychological Counseling and Guidance are chosen as the participants of the present study.

Another aim of this study is to investigate common problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme in Turkish EFL students' texts. Most of the EFL writers face problems while handling the flow of information in Theme and Rheme. Therefore, through analysis of student texts Turkish EFL students' problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme and/or thematic progression are identified. These misuses of Theme and Rheme result in problems that occur in textual cohesion. Since these types of problems have not been studied in the field yet, it would give an idea about the problems that Turkish EFL students experience in writing.

Moreover, it is assumed that the thematic progression will influence coherence of student texts. In addition to benefits to student writings, it is also aimed to be helpful to teachers in their way of feedback by showing errors of EFL students' writings considering thematic progression patterns. Several teachers lack in evaluating thematic progression patterns in student texts (Wang, 2007). Therefore, it is expected that teachers will be more aware of the errors that occur in discourse level rather than clause level after the present study.

In line with the aims of the study, the following research questions are asked to analyze the data:

1. What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish EFL writers' English argumentative texts?

- a. What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish ELT students' texts?
 - b. What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish PCG students' texts?
2. What are the main patterns in written texts of native speakers of English?
 3. Is there a difference between Turkish ELT and PCG students' written texts in thematic progression patterns?
 4. What are the common problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme in Turkish EFL students' English written texts?

1.4. Overview of Methodology

Participants of the present study are categorized into two groups. First group is subdivided into two as students from English Language Teaching and Psychological Counselling and Guidance departments. These two groups of students study in a private university in Turkey and they are all in the first year of their departments. To identify their language background and demographic information, a demographic survey was conducted. The participants of the second group are a number of native speakers of the target language.

Before collecting the data, a pilot study was conducted to choose the essay topics. A number of topics were chosen for each questions and presented to a group of students from the two departments. Students shared their ideas on these questions. Some questions were found ordinary, boring or nonsense by the majority of the students. Therefore, those questions were eliminated. Then, two questions that were widely acclaimed were selected to collect the data. These two questions were given to participants to select one of them and write an argumentative essay in a classroom environment. All participants had 45 minutes to write their essays.

To analyse the data, all sentences were divided into clauses and parts of the clauses were labeled based on thematic progression patterns. Next, the use of Theme and Rheme and thematic progression patterns were compared within students' written texts of two disciplines. Then, common problems that arise from misuse of Theme and Rheme were identified.

1.5. Definition of the Significant Terms

There are some significant terms in the present study and they are explained in this part.

1.5.1. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

EFL context refers to learning a language in a country where English is not spoken dominantly. Students learn the language from an instructor where the language is not the native language of the country. In the present study, participants from both of the groups are defined as EFL students because they use English as a medium of instruction in their departments (Nayar, 2012).

1.5.2. English as a Second Language (ESL)

ESL context refers to a coursework which helps non-native students to develop English as their second, third or further language. Students learn English as their second language in a country where English is dominantly spoken or it is the

original language. The ESL program helps students to become fluent in their second language (Nayar, 2012).

1.5.3. Essay

An essay is a piece of written work in which the writer presents a point of view. It has been an important part of formal education and students are expected to explain, comment on or assess a topic in a specific format. Essays are divided into different types. Some of them are argumentative, opinion, exploratory and narrative. Argumentative essay type was chosen as the genre to collect the data for the present study. Argumentative essay asks writers to write their opinions or ideas about a topic and then requires them to convince the readers with opposing ideas. Although students were given the instruction to write argumentative essays some of them wrote opinion essays. Since both of these essay types require the writers to write about their opinions, it did not affect the results of the study.

1.5.4. Clauses

To analyze participants' written texts, all the sentences were divided into clauses. A clause is a basic unit of grammar which comprises of a subject and a verb phrase (Cambridge Dictionary). Nevertheless, sometimes complements, objects and/or adjuncts come after verb phrase to complete the meaning of the clause. An example how a sentence is divided into clauses is given below:

Table 1.1: *Example of Clauses in an EFL Student's Writing*

Clause a	Clause b
----------	----------

When we live an easier life,

we actually create our comfort zone.

While the sentences were divided into clauses, non-finite clauses were not analyzed in terms of thematic progression patterns. On the contrary, finite clauses which were either main clause or subordinate clause were analyzed in this study.

1.5.5. Theme and Rheme

Theme is the point where the writer shares the message with the reader. Moreover, it helps the reader to understand what the writer wants to remark at the beginning of the statement (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

Rheme is the remainder part of the message (Wang, 2007). Rheme provides details about the Theme.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Coherence and Cohesion

Writing is a broad term and involves different meanings. It means text in written script and acts of composing, thinking and encoding language into text. Writing in L2 is an important part of second language learning. While learning to write in L2, both linguistic competence and writing skill are needed and they need to support each other mutually. Moreover, learning L2 writing is an overlong and ongoing process that never ends for many L2 learners.

At the beginning of linguistic studies, researchers focused mainly on grammar, vocabulary, and sound system at sentence level of a language and neglected the overall organization of the text. As time progressed, linguists began to query how people convey their message or opinion through writing in their L2. In order to develop fluency, ESL specialists tried to teach ESL learners free composition, which encourages students to write and develop their ideas without concerning the traditional rules of writing. Two types of writing methods, which are controlled and guided composition, were used to prepare learners for free composition. Neither of these two types of methods were found efficient for free composition because they were based on sentence-level grammar exercises which did not let learners to write their own sentences.

As a consequence of the failure of sentence-level structure teaching, ESL pedagogy tended towards to focus on the level of the paragraph (Chrintensen, 1965).

This was the period that linguists reoriented their research interest from sentence level to discourse level. Discourse analysis and text linguistics developed in 1980s,

with the appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks to analyze the written discourse.

With the development of different fields such as psychology, semiotics, cognitive science, communication studies, the researchers started to interest in discourse level rather than sentence level. With the development of discourse studies, researchers started to show interest to discourse level which is important for both writers and speakers to produce and comprehend coherent text and speech (Bloor & Bloor, 1995). The emphasis on discourse level studies called forth different definitions for the term 'coherence'.

According to Halliday & Hasan, two important features of successful written texts are cohesion and coherence. Linguists who studied texts describe coherence as combination of sentences in a particular common theme which differentiate a text from collection of unrelated sentences. (Katz & Fodor, 1963). Coherence is also described as the relationship between different semantic meanings in a text (Canale, 1983). Various researchers (Van Dijk 1977; Brown & Yule 1983; McNamara & Kintsch 1996) stated that both readers and writers create and interpret semantic relationships in a text with the help of their background knowledge. Another significant element for a clear semantic relationship is ordering ideas in a logical sequence. In other words, there has to be a relationship between sentences and they need to follow each other in a logical sequence (Bander, 1983). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985), a coherent text is integration of ideas while writing.

Coherence which helps passages to be integrated successfully in a text became an essential aspect in second language education. In written discourse, coherence is an important element because it helps the reader to follow the ideas that

the writer tries to convey. The coherence of a text fundamentally comprises of two conditions. First, the organization of the ideas in a text needs to be clear. Second, meaning of each sentence should be related to each other. In that respect, coherence creates a semantic frame with the help of cohesive ties which help to link ideas together and seen as a part of coherent texts. The connection of the cohesive ties in sentences contributes to semantic continuousness or cohesiveness of text.

Nevertheless, some researchers claim that cohesive ties are not sufficient to create a coherent text. On the other hand, coherence, builds interaction between the text and the writer (Widdowson 1978; Carrel 1982, 1984). In other words, a meaningful context occurs with the help of some cohesive devices (e.g. conjunction, lexical cohesion and substitution) and they help to make connections and meanings between sentences and paragraphs. With the help of the cohesive devices, readers “make sense” of what they read and then reach up to an interpretation with their own experiences creating coherence. (Yule, 2010). When the readers face with odd texts, they try to fill the gaps that exist in the text and try to build meaningful connections that are not virtually appear in the text.

Cohesion has the ‘bridging’ role between the syntactic and semantic features in surface structure. Ties and connections that exist within a text is called as cohesion (Yule, 2010). For example, pronouns, references, lexical connections that have common element of meaning are some of the cohesive ties. Such ties and connections help the reader to understand what the writer means. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesion helps to create coherence in a text with semantic relations. Cohesion links up various elements in a text. It makes connections between different elements and previously mentioned entities in a

context. Although it was found that cohesion is not enough by itself to make a text coherent, using cohesive devices appropriately increases coherence of a text.

The text can involve all the segments, cohesive ties and devices that are expected from the target text type but still may not be good enough as an acceptable writing (Ping, 2007). In addition, the ideas may need to be sequenced in a coherent and logical way in an acceptable writing. Therefore, teaching presentation and development of ideas are also important in foreign language classes.

2.2. Theme and Rheme

It is important for readers to understand correctly the message and this understanding is formed by the place where the writer puts the information in a sentence. In English language sentence structure, writers place the old or known information at the beginning of a sentence and the new or unknown information comes afterwards. Arranging sentences in such order helps to make information clear to reader. Moreover, this kind of sentence order helps to improve some important aspects such as cohesion, coherence and unity within paragraphs (Hawes, 2015).

A number of researchers found that thematic progression plays a crucial role in creating cohesive texts (Ebrahimi & Ebrahimi, 2012; Yunita, 2018). Several applied linguists (e.g. Liu, 2004; Wang, 2007; Li, 2009) claimed that teaching thematic progression helps students to enhance coherence in their writings. A coherent text can be understood from the way the information proceeds in a clause because the word that is chosen to be placed in the initial place influence the readers' interpretation of subsequent clauses. In other words, the place of given and new information has to be ordered in a certain pattern for a cohesive text. Hence the

ability to use of Theme and Rheme are crucial for learners to write more effective texts by connecting Themes and Rhemes in former clauses.

Readers are assumed to know the given information because it is the information that is shared previously in discourse, and readers and the writer has a common knowledge on it. Given information usually comes at the beginning of a sentence. Moreover, it helps to prepare the readers for the upcoming message. Having common roles in a sentence, terms like Theme, topic and given information are used interchangeably. The Theme is broadened in the remaining part of the sentence and it is called as Rheme.

The remainder of the message is Rheme and comes after Theme (Wang, 2007). In other words, everything aside from Theme can be called as Rheme. New information is the information that is not provided previously in the discourse by the writer. Therefore, the reader does not know the new information. This information is provided late in the sentence and it ensures details about the topic/ Theme/ given information. The term “new information” is used interchangeably with Rheme. The information flow in a clause from Theme to Rheme helps writers to organize their messages in a text effectively. Moreover, understanding the meaning that the writer is trying to express in a text and place the Theme and Rheme necessitate careful reading.

The exchange of information between Theme and Rheme is called as Thematic Progression (Eggins, 1994). With the help of these successful connections between Theme and Rheme, thematic progression can be developed and this promotes to the coherence of a text.

In English language writing, writers order a sentence by putting the Theme first and afterwards the Rheme. This ordering of information is important because it

affects the reader's understanding and interpretation of following information after reading the initial clause (Wang, 2007). Therefore, the thematic progression of given and new information are significant to assist readers to follow meanings and understand the given information in a text.

In written texts, Theme/ Rheme and thematic progression play crucial role in coherence because it helps to create integrity between ideas, sentences and paragraphs on both discourse and linguistic level.

Earliest studies on Theme and Rheme date back to beginning of eighteenth century (Weil, 1844). Linguists named different structural categories according to their communicative functions in sentences such as topic and comment (Bates, 1976) and topic and dominance (Erteschik-Shir, 1988). Later, Halliday (1968, 1985) introduced two terms which are Theme and Rheme to show how the information is spanned in a sentence. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), theme is 'the point of departure for the message' and it expresses what the writer wants to say as the starting point of the utterance. Also, Fries (1995) defined Theme as 'an orienter to the text'. According to him, Theme provides a framework for explicating the message.

Two reasons can be given for the importance of ordering of Theme and Rheme structure in a text (Koç, 2018). First of all, some readers may have shared background knowledge about the topic. For this reason, the writer may provide given information in Theme structure and new information in Rheme structure (Widdowson, 2007). Second, the writer shares the knowledge that s/he wants to share with the reader in the Theme structure and comment part in the Rheme structure (Widdowson, 2007).

Several researchers studied Theme and Rheme structure in EFL and ESL literary works. Three progression types proposed by Danes' (1974) are still widely accepted while studying the organization of Theme and Rheme studies were proposed by Danes' (1974).

Danes (1974) introduced four patterns of thematic progression. Danes' (1974) model is based on functional sentence perspective which focuses on the links between the structure of a sentence and language communication system in general. Danes (1974) describes his concept of thematic progression as "the choice and ordering of utterance themes, their mutual concentration and hierarchy as well as their relationship to the hypertheme of the superior text units (such as paragraph, chapter...) to the whole text, and to the situation." (p.114).

Although Danes' (1974) model has been used most frequently in the related studies, there are also some other researchers who proposed other thematic progression types and terms (McCabe, 1999; Mellos, 2011; Hawes, 2015). For example, McCabe (1999) added two new progression types to Danes' (1974) model and called them as summative progression and split theme progression. Zig-zag pattern was suggested as an alternative term for linear theme progression. Hawes (2015) also suggested that Danes' (1974) theory needs to be modified and proposed three new categories for thematic progression which are constant type progression, constant Rheme progression and constant gap progression. However, since Danes' progression patterns are still used more frequently despite all these new suggestions his model will be used to examine thematic progression patterns in the present study.

2.3. Danes' Thematic Progression Patterns

Thematic progression patterns proposed by Danes (1974) in the organization of Theme and Rheme are explained and illustrated below.

2.3.1. Simple Linear Progression

Danes' (1974) simple linear progression can be defined as the most elementary type of thematic progression. Mellos (2011) suggested another name for simple linear progression which is the zig-zag pattern of development. This pattern requires the Rheme of the first clause to become the Theme of the following clause, which can be seen in Figure 1.

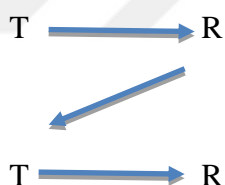


Figure 1: Simple Linear Progression

<u>Theme 1</u>	<u>Rheme 2</u>	<u>Theme 2</u>	<u>Rheme 2</u>
She	picked <i>the flower</i> .	<i>The flower</i>	was pink.

As it can be seen in the sentence, the Rheme of the first sentence (the flower) becomes the Theme of the second sentence.

2.3.2. Constant Progression

Danes (1974) defines constant progression type as the repetition of Theme in the following clauses. In this type, the same Theme can be used multiple times in subsequent clauses. Although it appears repeatedly it does not have to be the exact same wording.

The Theme of the first clause becomes the Theme of the following clause that is represented in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Constant Progression

<u>Theme 1</u>	<u>Rheme 2</u>	<u>Theme 2</u>	<u>Rheme 2</u>
Deniz	is a student.	He	studies English Language Teaching.

The example above shows that the Theme (Deniz) of the first sentence becomes again the Theme (he) of the second sentence.

2.3.3. Derived Hyperthematic Progression

A hypertheme, which means global Theme to establish a number of related Themes, of a sentence becomes the Theme of the following clauses. The main Theme has different subcategories. These subcategories are like multiple Themes

that can be found in subsequent sentences. All Themes may be different in each clause but all of them are related to a hypertheme.

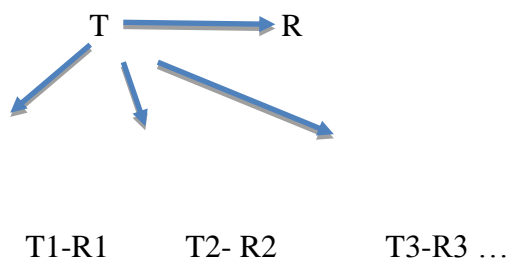


Figure 3: Derived Hyperthematic Progression

Fruits are plentiful in the market at the moment. *Bananas* are particularly cheap. *Mangoes* are expensive but delicious.

The given example above shows that the Theme '*fruits*' is divided into multiple Themes in the subsequent Themes which are '*bananas*' and '*mangoes*'.

2.3.4. Split Progression

In addition to three thematic progression types mentioned above, Danes (1974) proposed split progression type. Multiple Rhemes in a clause are divided into different items and become the Themes of the following clauses.

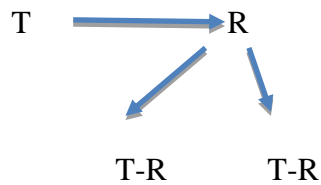


Figure 4: Split Progression

There are two essential properties of the texts in academic writing which are *cohesion and coherence*. *Coherence* is the connection of ideas at the idea level. *Cohesion* is the connection of ideas at the sentence level and focuses on grammatical aspects of writing.

As it is seen in the example above, split progression shows that there are two elements as the Rheme (cohesion and coherence) of the first sentence. These both elements become the Theme of the upcoming sentences.

2.4. Current Literature

In this part, current empirical literature relevant to main aims of this study are explained. First, the relevant literature to cohesion and coherence are explained and exemplified. The analyses of the texts are presented according to Danes' framework. Afterwards, related studies to thematic progression patterns are reviewed. Finally, studies about problems that are related to misuse of Theme and Rheme are explained.

2.4.1. Literature on Cohesion and Coherence

Khalil (2002) analyzed 20 Arab EFL college students' compositions with regards to Halliday and Hasan's model (1976). As the analysis of cohesion, it was found that the iteration of same lexical items as a cohesive device were overused in Arab students' compositions. Nevertheless, they they used less grammatical and lexical cohesive devices. Moreover, the analysis of coherence showed that the writers failed to provide enough information about the topic.

Researchers study Theme/Rheme and thematic progression because it helps to see how EFL learners locate and develop their message in theirs texts. Cheng (2002) and Zhang (2004) studied Chinese EFL learners' texts in order to determine the problems about the usage of Theme and thematic progression. Cheng (2002) found that improper use of Theme and thematic progression was the main reason for incoherence in learners' texts. Moreover, he contended that most of the learners used Themes which were not related to preceding or succeeding Themes. Zhang (2004) demonstrated that almost half of the texts' Themes that he obtained from EFL Chinese learners were confusing and this caused lack of coherence. These two researchers found some other similar problems such as use of irrelevant Themes to the topic and use of unavailing Themes which did not develop the text.

Tangkiengsirisin (2010) examined Thai postgraduate students' essays to see the effects of teachers' written feedback and accordingly students' revision of cohesive devices. Teachers provided written feedback including advisory, correcting and indicative comments to students' written works. The results revealed that there is a significant positive effect of written feedback on students' essays.

Use of cohesive devices may be affected by EFL students' language proficiency level. Therefore, Yang (2012) studied the use of cohesive devices in argumentative essays of Chinese EFL learners who were from different proficiency levels. The researcher analyzed argumentative essays of second-year and fourth-year undergraduate Chinese EFL students. Students of different proficiency levels showed different results from each other. The results showed that there is a relationship between students' proficiency level and correct use of cohesive devices.

Bae (2001) investigated the nature of cohesion and coherence in students' English written texts. Participants were studying in an immersion program and English-only classes and they were first and second graders. Bae (2001) defined writing quality as combination of coherence, grammar and content. Findings of the study showed that lexical and referential cohesion show a high correlation with the overall writing quality. On the other hand, ellipses and substitutions correlate weakly with the writing quality. Moreover, lexical and referential cohesion are found as important clue of coherence in a text. Finally, use of inaccurate error was found as the most dominant error in cohesion.

Lee (2003) studied with ESL students from China and Nordic countries to compare similarities and differences between these two groups in terms of their writing skills. Lee (2013) used the results of NORDWRITE project (1985) which identified significant problems in students' writings including cohesion and superstructures. Moreover, English students, who were at same age and educational background, wrote narratives because their writings were used as a reference to make comparison. Narrative structure and cohesion of their written products were analyzed. Since English is the participants' second language similarities were found. On the other hand, differences were found because of the influence of their L1.

Another study was also carried out with ESL first grade students who study in Faculty of Education in a public school to find out the relationship between their use of cohesive devices and their ability to form a coherent text (Karadeniz, 2017). Coşkun (2005) developed “Coherence Tools Evaluation Scale” to determine the coherence tools presented in students texts. Moreover, “Paragraph Consistency Evaluation Scale” developed by Can (2012) was used for the evaluation of the consistency of the texts. Highly significant relationship between length of text, consistency and coherence was investigated. Moreover, significant relationship in a positive way between coherence and forming a coherent text was found.

Çoşkun (2011) studied cohesion in compositions of Turkish and immigrant Uzbek students. All participants were living in Hatay and they were asked to write a story. Then, the stories were analyzed in terms of cohesion devices (ellipsis, lexical cohesion, reference, conjunctions, substitution). The results showed that there is no significant difference between Turkish and immigrant students with regards to cohesion devices except ellipses. In other words, there is not much difference between these two groups because immigrant students are exposed Turkish language from childhood. When cohesion devices were analyzed in students’ texts, the researcher found similar findings with his previous study (Çoşkun, 2005). Although ellipsis are not used commonly in English language ((Bae, 2001; Ramadan 2003; Zarnowski, 1983), they are the most commonly used cohesion device in Turkish writings.

Mellos (2011) conducted a Theme-Rheme analysis from eight undergraduate ESL students’ texts. These eight texts were divided into two categories as low in coherence and high in coherence in order to discover whether Theme-Rheme development had an effect on coherence or not. The findings of the study revealed

that Theme and Rheme choices have an effect on coherence of a text. When the unmarked Themes were analysed it was found that texts that are high in coherence showed more complex nominal groups. Nonetheless, the other group which have the low scoring paper used unmarked Themes. Another finding of the study was about the Theme types which are textual and interpersonal Themes. Since students were writing academic text they did not use interpersonal Theme. High scoring texts preferred to use more textual Themes that help to create cohesion in their texts. As the last part of the results, thematic progression patterns were analyzed. Constant Theme pattern (Theme reiteration) was found in low scoring text most commonly because they tended to use same simple Themes recurrently. As a result, their texts appeared as undeveloped and disconnected. On the other hand, high scoring texts were more developed, connected and coherent because they combined them same Themes with extended and complex Themes. Another thematic progression pattern which is simple linear pattern (zig zag linear theme pattern) was used in both of the groups' texts but in different ways. Simple linear pattern was used more commonly in high scoring texts with extended Themes to build cohesion in their texts. In contrast, low scoring texts used simple linear pattern with demonstrative pronouns (e.g. this) in their texts to address to previous clauses. Similar to the results of simple linear pattern, the multiple-rheme pattern appeared more often in high scoring texts. The findings showed that this type of pattern can organize the text and help readers to foresee what will come in following clauses. At the end of the study, the researcher provides an ESL reading and writing model and materials of how to teach Theme-Rheme patterns in order to improve coherence in students' texts.

2.4.2. Literature on Theme/Rheme, Thematic Progression and Thematic Progression Patterns in EFL/ESL Writing

To analyze how learners improve their ability to write coherent texts different studies were conducted by analyzing their use of Theme and thematic progression considering different factors (Wei, 2016). So far, researchers have studied different factors that may influence EFL/ESL learners' use of Theme and thematic progression such as L1 transfer, proficiency level, target language input and disciplinary background. While some of the researchers compared native speakers of English to non-native speakers, other researchers made comparisons between different groups of non-native speakers.

Koç (2018) studied thematic patterns and cohesion by comparing native speakers of English and Turkish EFL students' argumentative essays. Written corpus of LOCNESS was used to receive native speaker written texts. The analysis of texts showed that Turkish EFL learners used less variety of vocabulary items than native speakers of the language which is related to the complexity of the texts. In the essays of two groups of participants, theme progression types were used respectively; constant Theme, simple linear, and derived Theme and split Rheme progressions. While native speakers had 915 clauses in their texts, non-native speakers had 1208 clauses. As a consequence, Turkish EFL writers used no thematic progression more than native speakers of English. Moreover, non-native students had also less variety in the use of thematic progression patterns than native speakers. It was also found that Turkish learners of English and native speakers differed in the way of cohesion and thematic structure in their texts.

In another EFL context, Ebrahimi and Khedri (2011) studied with 10 learners' academic research abstracts (5 in Applied Linguistics and 5 in Chemical Engineering) to analyze how they use thematic structures and thematic progression in their literary works. It was investigated that learners' texts were shaped according to their disciplinary background. In other words, learners' success in writing was affected by their experiences from their previous courses. Moreover, the researchers claimed that thematic progression is very important and effective tool in creating cohesion in written texts because it helps to improve connectivity between ideas in the written text.

Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2012) claimed that academic experience can influence learners' production of coherent texts by using appropriate Theme structure and thematic progression. 180 composition from 60 students in the department of Teaching English as a Foreign Language was conducted for the study. Students were chosen from three different language proficiency levels. Considering their use of constant and linear progression patterns, these three groups showed significant differences. The results showed that senior group who had courses on grammar, paragraph and essay writing could write more coherent text by using constant and linear patterns. Moreover, junior group who got instruction on grammar and paragraph writing used these patterns of progression more effectively than sophomore group who got instruction only on grammar. In other words, use of thematic progression types differs from elementary to advanced level. Consequently, it was proved that academic writing experience is one of the important factors affecting students' ability to write more cohesive text.

Medve and Takâc (2013) also compared the use of thematic progression in native and non-native speakers' texts. Medve and Takâc (2013) studied 90

assignments written by three groups to explore learners' use of cohesion and coherence by considering thematic progression patterns (constant progression, linear progression and back Themes). Three groups were consisted of 30 EFL learners, 30 German learners as a foreign language and 14 learners of both foreign languages. The researchers found that linear progression type was used mostly in all groups. Moreover, it was found that successful learners used linear progression more frequently than unsuccessful learners. No significant differences were found in progression type scores between the learners of English and German as a result of an independent t-test.

Considering Halliday's (2014) model of theme types, Rosa (2007) analyzed an ESL student's expository essay to see the usage of Theme and Rheme patterns and thematic progression. According to the results, problems occurred in textual cohesion because of the overuse of constant pattern of progression. Therefore, the student did not widened the new information which was provided in Rheme. This caused disconnections between sentences and meanings.

Belmonte and Hidalgo (1998) studied Spanish EFL learners in the way of their thematic selection and progression. 25 essays were conducted from the learners as the data of the study. The results showed that constant pattern of progression was more dominant than other pattern types.

There are several studies that compare Theme and thematic progression of English learner texts and native-speaker texts. Study of Yang, Ramirez and Harman (2007) is one of the examples of such enquires in which they studied two expository essays. One of the essays was written by a Chinese college student and the other one was written by a North-American first year college student. The essays were analyzed in terms of thematic progression patterns among other features that

influence coherence in text. The results showed that Chinese student did not use linear progression extensively because she used marked themes continually. On the other hand, North- American student's text succeeded the flow of information from Theme to Rheme which lead to create a coherent text because the text had different types of thematic progression patterns. Both of the students used iterative theme progression more than linear progression pattern. The researchers claim that the structuring of the essays can be related to cultural differences and individual academic experiences. Therefore, they suggested to do more research in this area.

Similarly, Herriman (2011) compared Swedish EFL learners' writing to native speakers of English in terms of the use of Theme and thematic progression. Swedish EFL learners used less thematic progression patterns comparing to native speakers. Split progression type was used more frequently comparing to other patterns.

In a frequency and functional analysis of Thematic Progression patterns, 90 Iranian students' essays in English were analyzed considering Halliday (1985) and McCabe (1999) thematic progression models (Jalilifar, 2010a.). It was argued that students would organize meanings in their texts better if they are taught how to organize old and new information. Educated native speakers were the criteria for the evaluation part. Iranian writers used high number of Themes and complicated patterns of thematic progression. Therefore, the reader had to reread the previous clauses to understand what the Theme is about. The researcher suggested giving attention to Theme and Rheme patterns to improve cohesion of students' texts.

In line with the same model of Halliday (1985) and McCabe (1999), thematic choices and thematic progression patterns in a corpus of 240 research articles comprising of mechanical engineering, biomedical engineering, horticulture, and

environmental science (Esmat et al., (2016). These disciplines were divided into two status as well-established and emerging fields. The findings of the study showed significant differences among well-established and emerging fields in terms of use of thematic progression patterns. Simple linear and constant theme progression patterns were the most used by both well-established and emerging fields. The researchers found a new pattern which they called convergent theme. They explained this pattern as the opposite of split theme pattern because two or more Themes join together and become the Theme of the upcoming sentence.

Wang (2010) supported the idea that thematic progression is very useful to help students to share their ideas effectively in their literary works. Although thematic progression and its' usefulness are studied widely, both teachers and learners are still not aware of the importance of thematic progression in EFL writing. Jinqxia & Li (2013) who studied with Chinese EFL students divided them into two groups. First group was the experimental class and the second was the controlled group. The results of the study showed that teaching thematic structure to students has a positive effect on their writing competence.

As many other researchers, Nurdianingsih and Purnama (2017) were in the same idea that thematic progression patterns can be used as a technique in English language writing classes to improve students' writing skills. The researchers conducted a quasi experimental study by dividing students into two classes as experimental class and control class. Students of experimental class were taught thematic progression patterns in writing classes. Nevertheless, students of control group were taught by direct instructions. The reason of the writers to divide students into two groups was to find out whether teaching thematic progression patterns have impact on students' writing skills comparing to direct instruction. The researchers

conducted their data by a writing skill test about organisation, content, grammar, mechanics, style and quality. While analyzing the data a t-test was used. The results of the analysis showed that there is a significant difference between students who learned by thematic progression patterns or direct instructions. Activities, that were used to enhance students' awareness of thematic progression patterns, helped them to understand that ideas and information need to be written in a flow in order to make readers understand easily. From the results of the pre test, it was indicated that students had difficulties in writing classes. They had difficulties in organizing their ideas, grammar and spelling. The results of the post test showed that both experimental and control groups' writing skills were developed in terms of organisation and writing their words easily. Since experimental group showed higher mean scores in post test, it can be said that teaching thematic progression pattern is a useful technique in writing classes.

Rustipa (2010) studied paragraphs written by 15 students to analyze how they organize and develop Theme and Rheme in their written texts. While analyzing Theme and Rheme development, the emphasis is given to find out which thematic progression pattern is used mostly. The results showed that students preferred to use constant progression patterns most dominantly because it is the easiest one. Constant progression pattern is followed by simple linear or zig-zag progression pattern. Split or multiple theme progression pattern is the least preferred one while writing their texts. Since students need to produce new Themes from Rhemes that are mentioned previously, students find it difficult to use split progression patterns in their texts. Therefore, the researcher suggests that students need to read paragraphs that involve split progression patterns. When they get familiarized with split progression patterns they need to practice in writing paragraphs with this pattern.

Ade et al. (2017) analyzed high school students' recount paragraphs based on thematic progression. The researchers collected the data by observation, documentation, interview, and field notes. The findings showed that students wrote thematic progression-based recount paragraphs in various ways. First, students tended to determine the Theme in pre-writing activities. Then, students started to connect Theme and Rheme with transition signals while writing the first draft as whilst-writing activity. In this process, students gave importance to thematic progression patterns while writing their texts and chose which they would like to use. Finally, students revised and edited their texts in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation and flow of ideas as the post-writing activity. When the thematic progression patterns were analyzed in students' text, zig-zag pattern was used most commonly. Students expressed that connecting Theme and Rheme is easy by zig-zag pattern.

Beginning and ending points of the texts and their organization play crucial role in EFL writing and achieve this successfully may differ in L1 and L2. Native speakers of the language can achieve this subconsciously with the help of extensive reading in their first language and they can do this without any instruction (Hawes, 2015). Nonetheless, L2 writers may find this difficult even they have extensive exposure to texts in their second language. It has been found that there are different factors that affect learners not to be fully accurate in their L2. For example, they may try to use their background knowledge of writing from their L1 or they may not be aware of their mistakes because of the lack of effective feedback. In relation to native and non-native students' texts and their organization, Norwegian component of the International Corpus of EFL/ESL writing (NICLE) was used to examine advanced Norwegian EFL/ESL learners' use of thematic progression patterns and native

speaker professional writers' essays (Rørvik, 2012). Participants' writings were compared whether both groups used the same Thematic Progression patterns and/or whether Norwegian students were influenced by Norwegian discourse patterns. Moreover, Norwegian texts written by professional writers were also examined to make comparisons with novice writers. The researcher found that there were significant differences between the thematic patterns of NICLE writers and professional writers of English because of Norwegian writers' L1 transfer. Furthermore, the novice writers seemed to use similar structures while writing their texts and they differed from professional writers in this way as well.

In line with the similar idea, Hawes (2015) compared thematic progression in the writings of non-native students, who study a course leading to MA programs related to journalism, media and communication, with professional journalists from two British newspapers. The researcher aimed to find out which progression principles are needed to be taught to students and which progression strategies they have to use more or less in their writings. While analyzing the data, independent clauses of writings from two groups were identified. Then, Themes of these clauses were analyzed considering Danes progression patterns and any other when it was noticed. The results of students' writings Theme- Rheme and thematic progression patterns were compared with professional journalists' writings. It was found that both of the groups used Danes' progression patterns almost same frequency with each other.

Ping (2007) analyzed essays written by 20 students from upper secondary school in Singapore in terms of use of Theme and Rheme. The researcher used Hallidayan framework which includes Danes's thematic progression patterns. Good and weak essays were analyzed by dividing into major clauses to study use of Theme

and Rheme. Themes and Rhemes of these clauses were compared with each other to identify whether there is a semantic and/or referential relationship between them. The findings showed that there is not much difference in students' selection of Theme. Nevertheless, findings of thematic progression showed that there is a remarkable difference between two groups. Theme and Rheme of good essays were developed elaborately.

Lorés-Sanz (2004) analyzed two specific fields' research article abstracts in terms of its rhetorical organisation and thematic structure. The study brought out two types of rhetorical organisation which are CARS (Create a Research Space) type and IMRD (Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion) type. As the second part of the results, the researcher analyzed the thematic progression patterns following Daneš' (1974) model. When two types of structures were analyzed different patterns of thematic progressions were found. Linear progression type was the most preferred pattern in both CARS and IMRD abstracts. Linear and constant themes were combined in both CARS and IMRD types of abstracts but derived Themes were not.

North (2005) claims that students' success in higher education is related to their writing performance and how they meet their writing class requirements and students' can vary depending on their disciplines. The researcher conducted her study in a history of science course in Open University. North (2005) examined students' text by using systemic functional approach to see whether their use of Theme differ with regard to their disciplinary backgrounds which are science and arts. The results of the study revealed that students from arts background showed higher grades than others who have science background. Moreover, the study suggests that students writing experiences in their previous courses can influence their success in writing.

In most of the studies of theme progression in argumentative essays, it was found that learners use primarily constant theme progression. Nevertheless, they start to use linear progression type more when their proficiency levels get higher (Herriman, 2011; Rakhman, 2013; Wang, 2007). Argumentative essays written by EFL Spanish learners were analyzed in terms of Theme-Rheme patterns (Belmonte and McCabe-Hidalgo, 1998). The data were collected from 25 student compositions which were written for a mock Test of Written English. The analysis showed over-use of constant progression and lack of simple linear and split Rheme development. Moreover, it was found that there was no connection between Themes because the writers jumped from one idea to another.

2.4.3. Problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme

The flow of information from Theme to Rheme is highly important in a cohesive text. When the writers cannot succeed the flow of information their texts become difficult for readers to follow an idea or arguments as a consequence of the lack of clear signposts. Bloor & Bloor (1992) characterised three common problems that stem from misuse of Theme and Rheme. First of all, the problem of a brand new Theme occurs when the writer puts new information in position of Theme. Second common problem is the empty Rheme which occurs when writers do not share 'new' information in the place of Rheme. Thirdly, the problem of the double Rheme happens when there are two Rhemes in a sentence but one of the Rheme has had no previous mention. In addition to common problems identified by Bloor & Bloor (1992), Belmonte and McCabe-Hidalgo (1998) indicated other related problems which are over-use of constant progression, confusing selection of Discoursal and

Topical Themes, over-use of 'There', intervening material between mention in Rheme and subsequent thematization, and Themes with unclear reference.

Inexperienced writers tend to fail to handle the flow of Theme and Rheme in their written texts. Therefore, different problems are identified because of the misuse of Theme and Rheme. Bloor & Bloor (1992) highlighted three common problems which are the problem of the brand new Theme, the problem of the double Rheme, and the problem of the empty Rheme. Belmonte and McCabeHidalgo (1998) added other problems which are over-use of constant progression, confusing selection of Discoursal and Topical Themes, intervening material between mention in Rheme and subsequent thematization, over-use of 'There', Themes with unclear reference. Moreover, Arunsirot (2013) revealed another problem resulting from misuse of thematic progression which is the problem of empty Theme. All the problems that are found in participants' written texts in the present study are identified and illustrated in results chapter.

Wang (2007) studied on Theme and Rheme relationship to improve cohesion in students' academic texts. The researcher studied on a university student's text by demonstrating how the role of Theme/ Rheme, thematic progression and misuse of Theme and Rheme are analyzed. The aim of the demonstration is to catch students' attention and inform them about Theme and Rheme in the thematic organization of a text so that they can apply the same analysis in their own writings.

Abdul Ridha (2014) studied EFL students' written texts to analyze both Theme and Rheme types and problems related to misuse of Theme. The first part of the study showed that unmarked Themes are dominant in students texts. As the second part of the study, various types of problems were noted that result from misuse of Theme and Rheme. The problems of the brand new Theme, the over-use of

“There” in the Theme selection, empty Rheme and non-constant progression and Themes with unclear reference are the elicited problems in students’ written texts.

Arunsirot (2013) studied Thai EFL students’ problems in writing English texts. The researcher explored five problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme including Theme selections and thematic progressions. The problem of empty Rheme, the problem of empty Theme, the problem of overuse of constant progression, the problem of the brand new Theme and the problem of confusing selection of textual Theme are five common problems investigated in Thai EFL students’ written texts.

2.4.4. Summary

Danes’ progression patterns are most widely accepted patterns to examine thematic progression in written texts of native and non-native speakers. Most of the studies that compared native and non-native speakers of English found that there is a remarkable difference between written texts of these two groups. Non-native speakers of English tended to use less thematic progression patterns than native speakers of the target language (Herriman, 2011). Some researchers found different reasons for the difference between native and non-native speakers’ written works such as L1 transfer, cultural differences or academic experience (Qian et al., 2007; Rørvik, 2012). Contrary to studies that claim there is a significant difference between non-native and native speakers’ written texts, Hawes (2015) found that two groups used Danes’ progression patterns similarly. When Turkish EFL students’ written texts were compared to native speakers of English, it was found that Turkish writers did not use more thematic progression patterns than native speakers of the target

language (Koç, 2018). Furthermore, native speakers used more variety of thematic progression patterns compared to non-native speakers.

EFL and/or ESL learners have also been studied within each other to investigate their use of thematic progression patterns. Disciplinary background is found as an important factor affecting EFL learners' thematic progression patterns in their English written texts because academic writing experience from their previous courses significantly increases the success in organizing thematic patterns successfully. (Ebrahimi and Khedri, 2011; Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi, 2012a; Esmat et al., 2016; North, 2005). Moreover, Ping (2007) compared good and weak essays of EFL Singaporean students' texts considering Danes' progression patterns and noted that good essay writers developed Theme and Rheme elaborately. Thus, a significant difference was found between two groups of weak and good essays.

The progression and/or balance between Theme and Rheme are highly crucial to write a cohesive text. When the flow of information from Theme to Rheme is not handled appropriately, the text would be difficult to read and follow the ideas for the reader. As a result of handling the flow of Theme and Rheme inappropriately, several common problems that result from misuse of Theme and Rheme were identified. Bloor & Bloor (1992) stated three common problems which are the problem of the brand new Theme, the problem of the brand new Theme and the problem of the empty Rheme. Furthermore, Belmonte and McCabe-Hidalgo (1998) added other problems such as over-use of constant progression, intervening material between mention in Rheme and subsequent thematization, over-use of 'There', Themes with unclear reference.

Various previous studies focused on how writers use Theme/ Rheme and thematic progression patterns and found out the significance of Theme and Rheme

instruction in writing classes. To draw the attention to the positive effects of teaching thematic progression patterns explicitly to EFL students, different studies were conducted with experimental and controlled groups (Wang, 2010; Nurdianingish and Purnama, 2017). The results of these studies indicated that teaching thematic progression patterns has a positive impact on students' writing skills. Furthermore, Jalilifar (2010a: 44) pinpoints that “thematic organization is a highly effective and valuable technique in writing as it enhances connectivity between ideas in the text”.



CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

Considering studies discussed above, this chapter involves research questions, participants, data collection and data analysis procedures. The following research questions are enquired to analyze the data in the present study:

1. What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish EFL writers' English argumentative texts?
 - a) What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish ELT students' texts?
 - b) What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish PCG students' texts?
2. Is there a difference between Turkish ELT and PCG students' written texts in thematic progression patterns?
3. What are the main patterns in written texts of native speakers of English?
4. What are the common problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme in native Turkish students' English written texts?

3.2. Participants and Setting of the Study

The researcher is a graduate student from the ELT department of chosen university. Therefore, both prep school and faculty courses are observed at first hand. Since ELT and PCG departments have several common courses PCG students are also observed by the researcher. Moreover, the researcher works as an instructor in the chosen university and teaches oral communication skills course to the first

graders in ELT department who are the participants of this study. Therefore, course contents and teaching techniques are very familiar to the researcher.

Participants are 50 Turkish EFL undergraduate university students between the ages of 18-25. To compare thematic development patterns in their essays, students are chosen from two different disciplines. The first group students are studying in Psychological Counseling and Guidance department and they are all in their first year of faculty. These students do not take any English exam to get into university. Nevertheless, they take exams from other fields such as maths, Turkish language or science. When they get to the university, they study English in prep school because the medium of teaching in the chosen university is English. Therefore, they have to develop their English language skills no matter what they are studying. They have classes for different skills which are writing, reading, listening and grammar in prep school. Another point is that they do not have much English language background from their high school years because they studied other fields that are mentioned above. Since they are from different fields and different high schools their English language background and proficiency level are not same neither. To clarify their English language proficiency level, they take an exam at the beginning of the semester and they are placed in classes according to their exam results in prep school. The classes composed of three levels which are A level, B1 level and B2 level. After studying a year in prep school, they take an English proficiency exam and they get to the faculty when they pass the exam. To pass this exam, PCG students need to get 60 from the exam. All students in this group have passed this exam. After they pass the exam, they start to take faculty courses which are expected to be taught in English. Nevertheless, from observations and interviews with the PCG and ELT students it is found that they turn into Turkish because of

students' low proficiency level of English. PCG students insist on speaking in Turkish. Thus, they do not practice English anymore in faculty.

The second group is students studying in English Language Teaching department and they are in their first year in the faculty. These students were required to take an English language test which is called as LYS-5 (undergraduate placement exam) to study this department. Moreover, they studied English in their high school in English Language Department, as well. Therefore, their proficiency level in the target language is higher than the first group. As it is mentioned above, students take a proficiency exam at the beginning before they pass to faculty. This exam is not same level with the exam that PCG students take because a particular one is prepared for students studying in language departments. All ELT students participating in the present study have passed this exam. The passing grade is 60 for ELT students. Although the passing grades are same for both ELT and PCG departments, they do not take the same exam. ELT students take another exam that is prepared specifically for language departments and it is more difficult from the one that PCG students take. Therefore, ELT students can write and speak the target language more fluently. These students are expected to write more complex sentences and patterns of thematic progression.

Besides preparatory school, ELT students continue to have language skills courses when they pass to faculty contrary to PCG students. ELT students have English language skills courses in their first grade for two semesters such as oral communication skills, writing skills, reading skills and listening skills. For example, they learn how to write a thesis statement, start a paragraph or a new idea and different essay types with specific instructions. Furthermore, they take all their department courses in English. Nevertheless, PCG students do not have any courses

that improve their language skills when they pass to faculty. They start to have their department courses which are taught in Turkish most of the time. Since practice is highly important to improve students' language skills ELT students are more advantageous and have a higher proficiency level in the target language. Moreover, as being the instructor of oral communication skills course of ELT students their proficiency level is observed at first hand.

The study was conducted in two sections in a classroom environment without regarding participants' language class background. Essay questions were given with a demographic survey on the top of the paper. With this demographic survey, students answered a number of questions before writing their essays. The demographic survey helped to get information about students' name, age, grade, department, and language education and preparatory class background. Since they wrote their language education background experience and departments on top of their papers they were divided into groups afterwards. The demographic survey demonstrated that 16 of PCG students studied three terms in prep school and four of them studied two terms. On the other hand, 14 of ELT students studied two terms in prep school while six of them did not study prep school. Instead of studying in prep school, they passed the proficiency exam that all the students take before and after the prep school. Therefore, they started to study in faculty directly. Moreover, the demographic survey showed that none of the PCG participants in this study had language education background from high school. Nevertheless, all the participants in ELT group had language education background from their high schools.

Participants were asked two questions and they chose one of them to write an argumentative essay. They wrote 250-300 word essays in one session (45 minutes).

Furthermore, eight native speakers of English participated in the study. All of these participants have lived in İstanbul, Turkey for a period of time but had education in their own countries. They are between the ages of 24 and 45 and they are all graduated from a university. They participated in this study voluntarily by being conscious of participating in a study related to writing skills.

3.3. Data Collection

The present study adopts qualitative research approach that enables exploratory research. Qualitative research helps to study and analyze a problem deeper. As the qualitative research, the study deals with students' written works in the target language. Therefore, content analysis is used in the present study. Krippendorff (2013) defined content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use." (p.18).

It is presupposed that all participants know how to write an argumentative essay because they had writing courses in prep school. They are expected to write 250-300 word argumentative essays. Two questions are given to them and they are required to choose one of them to take a position on an issue. These two questions are chosen considering students' opinions with the help of a pilot study. Five students from each department volunteered to share their opinions about a number of questions. Five questions were prepared at total beforehand considering students' age, interests and their daily life problems. When volunteer students gathered, each question was discussed one by one with the students. They made comments on the questions, chose their favourite ones and explained why they would enjoy writing

about those questions. After meeting with the two groups separately, two questions which were preferred by the majority were selected as the essay topics. Selected two questions are given below;

1. *Are people becoming technological zombies?*
2. *Are schools and teachers responsible for low test scores?*

3.4. Argumentative Essays

For the data collection part of the present study, argumentative essay type was chosen as the genre. Argumentative essay deals with writers' opinions or ideas about a topic and then requires them to convince the readers with opposing ideas. Argumentative genres help undergraduate students to improve their academic writing skills (Hyland, 2009). Since argumentative essay is used widely in literature of thematic progression it is chosen for the present study. Consequently, essay topics are chosen in accordance with the requirements of argumentative essays. Before participants started to write their essays, students were informed that they were expected to write argumentative essays and some tips were given to them about the structure of argumentative essay. Nevertheless, some of the participants wrote opinion essay instead of argumentative essay. This does not affect the results of the present study because the important factor in their essays is the number and type of thematic patterns.

3.5. Data Analysis

In order to assess participants' texts, sentences were divided into clauses. The clauses were analyzed according to Danes' thematic progression patterns and Theme/Rheme patterns were identified in students' written texts. After determining Theme and Rheme patterns in students' writings, results of two departments were compared with each other. As the next part, native speakers' written texts were analyzed and thematic patterns were identified. Finally, problems related to thematic progression and thematic selection of students' texts were identified.

Danes' thematic progression patterns were adopted in the present study. Then, these patterns were used to identify thematic patterns in Turkish EFL students' texts. Use of Theme/Rheme and thematic progression patterns were compared between two departments of EFL Turkish students and to identify the underuse and/or overuse of certain features and in what way EFL learners differ from NSs.

In order to assess texts, sentences were divided into clauses. After identifying and numbering the clauses both in NSs' and non-native students' texts, they were matched with Danes progression types. The number of each pattern used by participants was written on the top of their papers. The number of each thematic progression patterns was figured up separately in two departments to make comparisons within each other. Then, some examples from two departments are chosen for each thematic progression pattern to illustrate for the readers.

Finally, main common problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme were identified. To identify these problems, all texts were analyzed for the second time after the analyses of thematic progression patterns were finished. Examples from participants' texts for each problem were provided in the results part.

3.6. Trustworthiness of the Study

The assessment process of the present study is repeated for consistency and reliability of the results. Reliability in qualitative studies mean generalizability of the assessment and it helps to decimate the concerns about random errors of measurement and identification in analysis part. To ensure the reliability, inter-rater agreement was arrived and an assessor was asked to analyze the data of the present study. The researcher of the present study provided short one hour training for identifying thematic progression patterns and problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme to the assessor. The assessor has both a bachelor's and master's degree from English language teaching department. Moreover, the assessor is working as an instructor in a English prep school of a university. After getting training about the analysis of the data, the assessor analyzed participants' written texts on her own. The assessor wrote the extracted results on the top of the papers as the researcher did and calculated the total number on a table to compare with the researcher's results.

Afterwards, both assessor's and researcher's results in terms of thematic progression patterns and problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme were compared with each other. Some different results were found for both thematic progression patterns and problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme in students' texts and thus, discussions were made to find a middle ground. Agreements and disagreements between the researcher and assessor were tallied for each participant's written texts. After given justifications, the most reasonable results were selected to reach a conclusion.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

The first part of the analysis composed of carrying out a study of thematic progression patterns regarding Danes' model. Turkish EFL students' essays from two departments which are ELT and PCG are analyzed and each pattern is supported by examples, and results are compared with each other. Then, native speaker essays are analyzed and exemplified. As the final part, the most common problems resulting from misuse of Theme and Rheme are identified and exemplified in the writings of ELT and PCG groups.

4.1.1. The Use of Thematic Progression Patterns in Turkish EFL writers' English argumentative texts

One of the main purposes of the present study is to identify what kinds of thematic progression patterns are used in Turkish EFL students' English written texts. Therefore, written texts of Turkish students from two different departments are analyzed. Another primary purpose of the study is to compare two different groups of Turkish EFL students' written texts in terms of their use of thematic progression patterns. Therefore, first year students from two disciplines which are English Language Teaching (ELT) and Psychological Counselling and Guidance (PCG) are chosen. In this part, the results of thematic progression patterns in the written texts will be explained and illustrated. Then, comparisons will be made between students' written texts from the two departments.

4.1.1.1. Turkish ELT Students' Use of Thematic Progression Patterns

Considering Danes' progression patterns, ELT students used constant, simple linear and split progression patterns in varying frequencies in their written texts. Nevertheless, derived hyperthematic progression pattern was not used by any of the ELT students.

An ELT student who used the similar Theme of the first clause in the following clauses is plotted below in Table 4.1, making evident to the constant progression pattern. The Theme "teachers" is repeated in *Theme b* and *Theme d* as "they" and in *Theme c* as "teachers". Since the Themes do not need to be repeated exactly in a same way *Theme a* is restated in *Theme b* and *Theme d*.

Table 4.1: *Examples of the Use of Constant Theme Progression in a ELT Student's Writing*

<i>Theme a</i>	<i>Rheme a</i>
<u>Teachers</u>	can easily affect students.
<i>Theme b</i>	<i>Rheme b</i>
That is why, <u>they</u>	can be responsible for low test scores.
<i>Theme c</i>	<i>Rheme c</i>
If the <u>teachers</u>	are not qualified about the knowledge of the lesson
<i>Theme d</i>	<i>Rheme d</i>
<u>they</u>	cannot teach anything to students.

Among 325 thematic progression patterns in ELT students' texts, 265 of them are written as constant progression pattern. Therefore, it can be said that ELT students used constant progression pattern most frequently.

The use of simple linear progression pattern in an ELT student's writing is illustrated in Table 4.2 given below. The Rheme of the first sentence "people" becomes the Theme of the following sentence.

Table 4.2: *The Use of Simple Linear Theme Progression in an ELT Student's Writing*

<i>Theme a</i>		<i>Rheme a</i>
Education		has always been crucial for <u>people</u> .
<i>Theme b</i>		<i>Rheme b</i>
<u>People</u>		try to get good education for their future job and career.

ELT students used 58 simple linear progression pattern in their written texts within 325 thematic progression patterns.

The following example in Table 4.3 which is split progression pattern shows that the Rheme of the first sentence has two elements which are "schools" and "teachers". Both elements become the Theme of the succeeding clauses individually in *Theme b* and *Theme c*.

Table 4.3: *The Use of Split Progression in an ELT Student's Writing*

<i>Theme a</i>		<i>Rheme a</i>
For a quality education		<u>schools and teachers are crucial</u> .
<i>Theme b</i>		<i>Rheme b</i>

If <u>schools</u>	do not provide sufficient materials in the class, (...)
<i>Theme c</i>	<i>Rheme c</i>
Furthermore, if <u>teachers</u>	are not good at teaching, (...)

Split progression pattern was used rarely in ELT students' texts because students used only two of them among 606 clauses and 325 thematic progression patterns.

4.1.1.2. Turkish PCG Students' Use of Thematic Progression Patterns

PCG students used constant, simple linear and derived hyperthematic progression patterns in their written texts. Nonetheless, split progression pattern was not found in PCG students' written texts.

Table 4.4 is an example of a PCG student's constant progression pattern where the Theme of the first clause retain the similar Theme in the following clause. The Theme of the first clause is "children" which again becomes the Theme of the following clauses.

Table 4.4: *The Use of Constant Progression in a PCG Student's Writing*

<i>Theme a</i>	<i>Rheme a</i>
In the 21st century, <u>children</u>	don't go outside
<i>Theme b</i>	<i>Rheme b</i>
<u>They</u>	play with the technological devices like

playstation, computer
etc.

<i>Theme c</i>	<i>Rheme c</i>
<u>They</u>	watch television instead of going outside.

Constant progression pattern was used 111 times among 409 clauses. Similar to ELT students' findings, constant progression pattern is used most frequently in PCG students' texts.

In the Table 4.5, the use of simple linear progression in a PCG student's writing is exemplified. The *Theme b* "the technological devices" repeats the *Rheme a* "technological devices" of the preceding clause.

Table 4.5: *The Use of Simple Linear Progression in a PCG Student's Writing*

<i>Theme a</i>	<i>Rheme a</i>
Nowadays, people	seem to love <u>technological devices</u> .
<i>Theme b</i>	<i>Rheme b</i>
<u>The technological devices</u>	give people fake happiness.

To widen the information given in the Rheme of the first clause, PCG students used simple linear progression pattern 26 times within 409 clauses.

Table 4.6 indicates the use of derived hyperthematic progression in a PCG student's writing. "The first cause" and "Another cause" are both derived from the hypertheme "several causes".

Table 4.6: *The Use of Derived Hyperthematic Progression in a PCG Student's Writing*

<i>Theme a</i>	<i>Rheme a</i>
There are <u>several causes</u>	why schools and teachers are not responsible for low test scores
<i>Theme b</i>	<i>Rheme b</i>
<u>The first cause</u>	is related to readiness of students.
<i>Theme c</i>	<i>Rheme c</i>
<u>Another cause</u>	is that exams are not good measurement tools.

PCG students used derived hyperthematic progression pattern for three times among 409 clauses in their texts. The reason why they used derived hyperthematic progression pattern seldomly can be because of its difficulty to use for EFL students.

4.1.1.3 Differences Between Turkish ELT and PCG Students' English Written Texts in Thematic Progression Patterns

The following table gives the number and percentage of the use of constant, simple linear, derived hyperthematic and split progression patterns of ELT and PCG students' written texts. Constant progression was the most used thematic structure in English language teaching department students' written texts because it constitutes 81.54% of the total number of thematic progression patterns used by ELT students. The constant progression type is followed by simple linear progression which covers 17.58% of total percentage. As the last and least progression pattern, ELT students used split progression pattern as 0.62%. Derived hyperthematic progression was not

identified in any of the ELT students' essays. The results showed that ELT students used constant progression pattern almost five times more than simple linear progression.

Table 4.7: *Number of ELT and PCG Students' Thematic Progression Patterns*

	Department	Token	Percentage based on total
Constant	ELT	265	81.54 %
	PCG	111	79.29 %
Simple Linear	ELT	58	17.85 %
	PCG	26	18.57 %
Derived Hyperthematic	ELT	0	0 %
	PCG	3	2.14 %
Split	ELT	2	0.62 %
	PCG	0	0 %
TOTAL	ELT	325	100 %
	PCG	140	100 %

In the same way as ELT writers' results, the most commonly preferred thematic progression pattern in PCG students' writings was constant progression because it covers 79.29% of 140 thematic progression patterns in PCG students' written texts. Then, it was followed by simple linear progression. Simple linear progression constitutes 18.57 % of the total number of thematic progression patterns in PCG students' written texts. In PCG students' written texts, 2.14 % of the thematic progression patterns is used as derived hyperthematic progression pattern. Split

progression pattern was the least preferred pattern by both ELT and PCG writers. While it constitutes 0.62 % of thematic progression patterns of ELT students' written texts, it was totally neglected in PCG students' writings. In writings of PCG students, one student did not use any thematic progression pattern. For that reason, in the text of that student the cohesion is remarkably ill-formed. On the other hand, there was no such an exception in ELT students' writings.

According to the results, ELT students had 188 more thematic progression patterns than PCG students in their writings. This is due to the fact that ELT students had more number of clauses than PCG students in their written texts. While ELT students used 606 clauses, PCG students used 409 clauses in their writings.

Percentage based on total results show that there is not much difference in the use of thematic progression patterns between ELT and PCG students. Writers from both of the disciplines used almost similar types and frequencies of constant, simple linear, derived hyperthematic and split progression patterns in their written texts. Constant progression overruns all other progression patterns in both of the disciplines. Nevertheless, the token numbers show that ELT students use more thematic progression patterns in their written texts comparing to PCG students. Therefore, ELT students have the ability to write more cohesive texts than PCG students.

4.1.2. Native English Speakers' Use of Thematic Progression Patterns

The following table gives the number and percentage of the use of constant, simple linear, derived hyperthematic and split progression patterns in written texts of native speakers of English.

Table 4.8: *Number of Native Speaker Texts' Thematic Progression Pattern*

	Token	Percentage based on total
Constant	38	86.36 %
Simple Linear	6	13.64 %
Derived Hyperthematic	0	0 %
Split	0	0 %
TOTAL	44	100 %

As it is illustrated in Table 4.8 above, native speakers of English used constant progression pattern most frequently in their essays. 83.36 % of the total number was used as constant progression pattern and 13.64 % was simple linear progression which was used rarely in native speakers' texts. None of the native speakers preferred to use derived hyperthematic or split progression patterns in their essays. According to the results, simple linear progression was not used by all native speaker participants. Additionally, native speakers of the target language had 200 clauses in total in their written texts.

The use of constant progression pattern in a native speaker’s writing is illustrated in Table 4.9 that is given below. The Theme of the first sentence “zombies” becomes the Theme of the following sentence as “they”.

Table 4.9: *Examples of the Use of Constant Theme Progression in a Native Speaker’s Writing*

<i>Theme a</i>	<i>Rheme a</i>
As far as I understand, <u>zombies</u>	do not speak.
<i>Theme b</i>	<i>Rheme b</i>
<u>They</u>	are only capable of grunting or hissing.

Within 44 thematic progression patterns, native speakers of English used 38 constant progression patterns in their written texts.

Table 4.10 indicates the use of simple linear progression in a native a speaker’s writing. The Rheme of first clause “it” becomes the Theme of the second clause.

Table 4.10: *Examples of the Use of Simple Linear Progression in a Native Speaker’s Writing*

<i>Theme a</i>	<i>Rheme a</i>
I	have lately been thinking of deleting <u>it</u> .
<i>Theme b</i>	<i>Rheme b</i>
<u>It</u>	is too full of advertisements and I have run out of things to post.

Native speakers of English had 6 simple linear progression pattern in their written texts among other thematic progression patterns.

4.2. Problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme

The balance and movement of Theme and Rheme is a crucial factor for a cohesive text. When the writer cannot achieve to hold the flow of information from Theme to Rheme, it would be difficult for the reader to follow the ideas and text. Since the text cannot direct the readers, they would get lost while reading the text.

The problems of controlling the flow of Theme and Rheme are widely common among both EFL writers and native writers. There have been different researchers studying the problems of controlling the flow of Theme and Rheme in EFL writers' texts. Bloor & Bloor (1992) specified three common problems which develop out of misuse of Theme and Rheme. These three problems are (a) *the problem of the brand new Theme*, (b) *the problem of the double Rheme*, and (c) *the problem of the empty Rheme*. Furthermore, Belmonte and McCabe Hidalgo (1998) identified other problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme which are (a) *over-use of constant progression*, (b) *confusing selection of Discoursal and Topical Themes*, (c) *intervening material between mention in Rheme and subsequent thematization*, (d) *the empty Rheme*, (e) *Over-Use of There*, (f) *over-use of 'There' and* (g) *Themes with unclear reference*. Arunsirot (2013) who studied Thai EFL students' written texts found five problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme. These problems were (a) *the Problem of empty Theme*, (b) *the Problem of Brand New Theme*, (c) *the problem of overuse of constant progression*, (d) *the problem of empty Rheme* and (e) *the problem of confusing selection of textual Theme*. Not all of the

problems mentioned in the literature were found in student writings in the present study. Number of problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme and thematic progression in the data are given in Table 4.11. There are six problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme in the texts written by EFL participants in this study. These problems are brand new Theme, empty Rheme, overuse of constant progression, intervening material between Rheme and subsequent thematization, Themes with unclear reference and empty Theme. In order to clarify these problems, they are explained and exemplified in the table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: *Number of PCG and ELT students who faced problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme*

Problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme	PCG	ELT	TOTAL NUMBER OF TEXTS IN EACH GROUP
Brand New Theme	20	20	20
Empty Rheme	12	6	20
Intervening Material between Rheme and Subsequent Thematization	6	6	20
Overuse of Constant Progression	12	8	20
Themes with Unclear Reference	13	9	20
Empty Theme	2	0	20

Each participant had at least one problem related to misuse of Theme and Rheme and thematic progression in their written texts. Due to the problems with either misuse of Theme and Rheme or thematic progression in each student's written text, teachers and students need to pay more attention to the level of text and to these types of problems.

4.2.1. The Problem of the Brand New Theme

Based on Bloor & Bloor's (1992) studies, Wang (2017) stated the problem of the brand new Theme as putting new information in the Theme position. This means that the writers use new Theme(s) that are not mentioned in the previous Theme(s) or Rheme(s) without introducing them appropriately. The new Theme can be connected to the overall text but this would make the text difficult for the readers to understand and can make them get confused. Moreover, using Brand new Themes excessively is a sign that inexperienced writers are not able to develop and introduce ideas appropriately.

Brand new Theme was the most frequently faced problem related to misuse of Theme in both of the groups' written texts. All of the students in both of the groups had the problem of brand new Theme in their written texts. The problem of brand new Theme in a ELT student's written text is illustrated below in Text#1.

(TEXT#1)

(1) *People* are becoming technological zombies. (2) *It* is getting worse everyday. (3) *Social media and usage of mobile phones* became essential

in today's world. (4) Every teen has a mobile phone these days and (5) they use it all the time. (6) Even when they are with their friends or families, (7) they do not pay attention to the outer world. (8) Not just teens, but many adults are addicted to technology too. (9) People are living their lives on social media. (10) They envy other and want to show themselves by posting pictures on the internet. (11) I think this is sad.

The writer used 'people' as the Theme of the first clause and 'it' as the second clause. Then, the writer used 'social media and usage of mobile phones' and 'every teen' as the following Themes. None of these Themes are related to Themes or Rhemes stated before in the paragraph and they are mentioned as the first time. At the end of the paragraph, the writer changed the Theme as 'I' which is not related to Themes or Rhemes mentioned previously either.

The problem of brand new Theme in a PCG student's written text is illustrated below in Text#2.

(TEXT#2)

(1) First of all, technology is everywhere nowadays. (2) Especially people always use internet. (3) For example, some people spend most of their time on the internet such as social media and online games. (4) Moreover, a lot of children depend on internet. (5) Some things are more useful thanks to the technology.

The writer used 'technology' as the Theme of the first clause and 'people' as the second clause. Then, the writer used 'a lot of children' and 'some things' as the

following Themes. These Themes are not related to Themes or Rhemes that are given in the paragraph and they are mentioned for the first time.

4.2.2. The Problem of Empty Rheme

Another common problem in students' writing is the empty Rheme in which students do not provide new information in Rheme position (Bloor & Bloor, 1992). The problem of empty Rheme was seen in both of the groups' written texts but more in PCG students' texts. 12 of the PCG students had the problem of Empty Rheme at least once in their written texts and six of ELT students had the same problem in their writings.

As it is seen from the Text#3 below which is written by a PCG student, there is not any new information in Rheme part. Students can overcome this problem by widening the information given in Rheme.

(TEXT #3)

(1) Technology has changed *everything*. (2) Technology has made a deep impact on the *functioning of the world*. (3) It led to *positive changes and negative changes*. (4) We have become *technological zombies*.

First, the Rheme of the sentence given above in the first clause and the third clause is empty of any conceptual content. To solve this problem, the writer can add new information in the Rheme part to complete the sentence. Then, the writer can widen his/her point in the following clauses. For example, the reader would not know what the writer means by "everything" in the first clause and by "positive and

negative changes” in the third clause because they are not elaborated with enough details.

(TEXT#4)

(1) There are uncountable uses of technological devices and programs still, but (2) what about ones we use in our private lives? (3) These are mobile phones, computers and other types and (4) they can be used both in a harmful or beneficial way.

Secondly, the sentence written above in the fourth clause is empty of any content similar to the Text#4. Therefore, the writer failed to present new information. The writer should strengthen the information given in Rheme and provide extra information about harms and benefits of technology shortly.

4.2.3. Intervening Material Between Mention in Rheme and Subsequent Themmatization

The third problem found in students’ writing was about the placement of Rheme in thematic progression. This problem occurs when the writers do not provide details about the Rheme just after they mention it but rather provide it in subsequent sentences. Since the writers do not develop the new idea at the time it was introduced into the text, it shows that there is no clear plan of development. This forces the reader to go back to previous sentences and reread them carefully in order to find the similar information. Same number of PCG and ELT students confronted this

problem. Therefore, students from both of the groups need to improve their skills in developing clear plans while writing an essay (Belmonte and Hidalgo, 1998).

(TEXT#5)

(1) The teacher is responsible for low grades of *students*. (2) The teacher should prepare the lessons. (3) The teacher should bring the necessary materials to the lesson. (4) *Students* may be more successful in the classroom.

A fragment above of a PCG student's composition (Text#5) is an example of the placement of Rheme in thematic progression. The writer introduces the Rheme of *students* in clause 1 but the writer picks up it later in clause 4. The writer should maintain the Rheme after it was introduced in clause 1 to improve the coherence in the text.

(TEXT#6)

(1) Technology was invented to make *people's lives easier*. (2) Also, technology is developing every second. (3) *To make their lives easier*, people buy technological products and (4) they use them.

Text#6 written by a ELT student is an example of the placement of Rheme in thematic progression. The writer introduces the Rheme of *people's lives easier* in clause 1 but does not provide any information about it in clause 2. Then, the writer picks up the Rheme of clause 1 later in clause 3. Instead of expanding the

information of the Rheme of the first clause in the third clause, the writer could provide it just after the Rheme was introduced in the first clause.

4.2.4. Over-Use of Constant Progression

The analysis showed that both groups of students overused the pattern of constant progression in which clauses have the similar Theme continuously. 12 of the PCG student writers and eight of the ELT student writers encountered this problem in their texts. Since the writers do not use simple linear, derived hyperthematic and/or split progression types effectively, their writings show that they do not provide enough details and fail to expand information that is shared in the Rhemes. Text#7 is an example of over-use of constant progression pattern in an ELT student's text.

(TEXT#7)

(1) People have adjusted the technological world, (2) so people think that (3) they could not survive without technology in this modern world. (4) While some people believe that (5) people are not addicted to technology, (6) other people believe that (7) people are becoming technological zombies.

In Text #7, it is seen that the writer used “people” in the Theme position consistently. Since the topics of the Rhemes are not developed, it is deprived of progression of ideas. The text looks like a list, therefore lacks coherence.

(TEXT#8)

(1) Teenagers don't usually pay for their education. (2) They often don't value it because (3) teenagers don't like lesson. (4) They often don't try their best because (5) they aren't ready.

Text#8 which is taken from a PCG student's writing shows that the writer uses the Theme of *teenagers* and *they* constantly. Therefore, the student lacks of other progression patterns. Moreover, the student wrote less idea because of not developing and expanding ideas shared in the Rhemes.

4.2.5. Themes with Unclear Reference

The problem of Themes with unclear reference was found in 13 PCG students' and nine ELT students' written texts. Students who encounter with this type of problem use constantly pronouns and indefinite "it" in their texts. Several students switch from the pronoun "I" to "we" to "you" without making any thematic connection. Moreover, this shows that there is not a clear plan of development in the text. This can be seen in the sample of student's text below:

(TEXT#9)

(1) All people use telephone, television and computer. (2) This event cause health problems, (3) so we can stop use technological alert. (4) People are becoming technological zombies.

The example given above which is taken from a PCG student's written text shows that the writer uses "*people*" as the Theme in the first clause but then switches from "*people*" to "*we*" in the third clause. Later, the Theme "*people*" is used again in the fourth clause.

(TEXT#10)

(1) Some people think that (2) people are not addicted to technology, (3) they use it when (4) they are in need. To exemplify, (5) some people use technology to get information with one click, (6) you can reach every news or information all around the world.

Text#10 shows that an ELT student switches from "*some people*" to "*you*" as the Theme of the clauses. At the beginning, the writer refers to people in general but then seems to be referring to the readers by using "*you*". This is not an effective method of developing the flow of the written texts and ensuring the coherence because it makes the reader confused.

(TEXT#11)

First, (1) it must not be forgotten how harmful technology can be, and (2) one of the harms is becoming a technological zombie. (3) Meaning of a technological zombie can be described as getting addicted to technology.

In Text#11, an ELT student uses "*it*" as the Theme without any clear referents. Therefore, it makes the text less coherent.

(TEXT#12)

(1) Many people argue that (2) we are not technological zombies, (3) because *it* is up to us whether to use it or not.

The example given above which is taken from a ELT student's written text shows that in clause 3, the writer uses "*it*" as the Theme, which has no clear referent.

4.2.6. The problem of the empty Theme

The problem of the empty Theme was rarely seen in students' texts. Two of the PCG students had this problem in their written texts but none of the ELT students had it.

The problem of empty Theme occurs when the writer omits the subject for different reasons. One reason can be L1 interference. To avoid such interferences, teachers can facilitate cross-lingual comparisons through several practices on the omitted subjects.

(TEXT#13)

(1) There are several causes why schools and teachers responsible for low test scores. (2) *The first* is related to readiness of students.

As it is seen in Text#13, the PCG writer did not use any subject as the Theme in the second sentence. The writer could change the sentence as "The first cause is related to readiness of students".

4.2.7 Problems with Coherence in Turkish EFL Written Texts

To indicate coherence problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme more clearly, several paragraphs that consist various problems are extracted from Turkish EFL students' essays and explained below. Text#14 is taken from a PCG student's text and Text#15 is written by an ELT student.

(TEXT#14)

(1) Firstly, the technology includes lots of information. (2) People can use these informations to improve himself/herself. (3) For example, you need to read an article but (4) you don't have any time to go to library. (5) You can access this article through technology. (6) It is clear that (7) technology develops people's life. (8) Secondly, although technology has some good qualifications, (9) some people say that (10) it includes harmful things. (11) If you get out (12) you can see easily how do people behave. (13) To explain, these people are looking their mobile phone, television etc. (14) As a result, people look like technological zombies.

Text#14 written by a PCG student has different problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme. First, the problem of the brand new Theme is seen in the clauses of two, three, six, seven, nine, ten, eleven and thirteen. The problem of the brand new Theme shows that the writer uses new Themes which are not mentioned in the previous Themes or Rhemes. The new Themes can be connected to the overall text but still this would make the text difficult for the readers to understand because they

may need to go back to previous sentences or paragraphs to check whether there is such a Theme or not. Second problem in this student's text is empty Rheme. As it can be seen from the clause eight and ten, the writer mentions some good qualifications and harmful things but these words do not give clear information to the reader. The writer can expand the Rheme either with a relative clause or with more detailed information. Another problem in Text#14 is Themes with unclear reference. The writer switches from *people* (second clause) to *you* (third clause). Moreover, in the sixth clause "*it*" is used as the Theme and it has no clear referent. All these problems make text less coherent and complex to read for the reader.

(TEXT#15)

(1) We are using technology in every part of our lives for homework, presentations, or even kitchens to look out different types of recipes. (2) In that ways, we use just positive sides of technology to make our lives easier. (3) However, generally we do not realize how much time we spent on internet. (4) Apart from positive sides, we use social media or (5) we play games which affect our lives in a negative way.

(6) Almost every day, we check our messages, mails, notifications and so on but (7) we do not think that all these things are time consuming. (8) While doing these things, we are becoming addicted persons unrealizingly.

(9) On the other hand, we do not have a choice. (10) It is because we are exposed to technology in every aspect of our lives. (11) Even when we try to escape from it, (12) we cannot escape from it. (13) Since we all live

in technological era, (14) we just know using it everytime and everywhere.

Text#15 given above is taken from an ELT student's written texts and involves different problems resulting from misuse of Theme and Rheme. The first problem resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme is intervening material between Rheme and subsequent thematization. The writer refers to "*positive sides*" in second clause but the writer picks up it later in fourth clause. The writer could maintain the Rheme after it was introduced in second clause. Another problem seen in the ELT student's text is overuse of constant progression pattern. It is seen in Text#14 that the writer used "*we*" in the Theme position consistently. The writer did not develop the topic of the Rhemes and, thus there is a lack of progression of ideas.

4.3. Summary of the Findings

In the present study, Turkish ELT and PCG students' English written texts were analyzed regarding their use of thematic progression patterns and compared with each other. Students' texts were analyzed by using Danes' (1974) thematic progression patterns and all of them were found in Turkish EFL students' texts.

ELT students used the following thematic progression patterns; constant, simple linear and split progression patterns. Derived hyperthematic progression pattern was not found in any of the ELT students' written texts. On the other hand, PCG students used constant progression pattern most frequently, followed by simple linear and derived hyperthematic progression patterns. PCG students did not use any examples of split progression pattern contrary to ELT students.

While ELT students used 325 thematic progression patterns in their written texts, PCG students used 140 thematic progression patterns. Since ELT writers used more thematic progression patterns comparing to PCG students; texts written by ELT students found to be more successful in writing coherent texts. Moreover, while ELT students used 606 clauses PCG students used 409 clauses.

Written texts by native speakers' were analyzed to find out their use of thematic progression patterns. Native participants used only constant and simple linear progression patterns in their written texts. Native speakers of the target language had 200 clauses in their writings.

In addition to analyzing thematic progression patterns of ELT and PCG students' written texts, problems that result from the misuse of Theme and Rheme were identified. The balance and flow of information is highly significant for writing more coherent texts. The results of the analysis of misuse of Theme and Rheme showed that PCG and ELT writers had similar problems such as using brand new Theme, empty Rheme, overuse of constant progression, intervening material between Rheme and subsequent thematization, Themes with unclear reference and empty Theme.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1. Summary

This study has the aim of showing the most frequently used thematic progression patterns and the most common problems that arise from misuse of Theme and Rheme in Turkish EFL students' written texts regarding their language backgrounds and thus raise teachers and students' awareness on the importance of Theme and Rheme in L2 writing. The results of this study demonstrated different conclusions, some of which were similar to the results of previous studies and some were unique to the present study.

When Turkish EFL students' texts were analyzed, all kinds of thematic progression patterns that were proposed by Danes' (1974) were identified. Students from both of the groups used constant progression, simple linear progression, derived hyperthematic progression and split progression patterns in their texts. Nevertheless, native speakers of English used only constant progression and simple linear progression patterns in their written products.

The study investigated that ELT students who have an extensive foreign language education background used higher number of thematic progression patterns than PCG students who do not have a foreign language education background. ELT students had more numbers of constant progression, simple linear and split progression patterns than PCG students. PCG students used only derived hyperthematic pattern more than ELT students because none of ELT students used derived hyperthematic progression pattern in their texts.

Other than thematic progression patterns, some problems resulting from misuse of Theme and Rheme were identified and exemplified. These problems were in line with findings of various previous studies in the literature. Problems of brand new Theme, empty Rheme, overuse of constant progression, intervening material between Rheme and subsequent thematization, Themes with unclear reference and empty Theme were found in both ELT and PCG students' written texts.

5.2. Conclusions

There have been few studies that examined thematic progression pattern of Turkish EFL learners' written texts. For this reason, the present study has the aim of making contribution to EFL writing education in Turkey. In line with this aim, this chapter discusses the findings of each research question with regard to studies in the field.

5.2.1. What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish EFL writers' English argumentative texts?

Danes (1974) proposed a number of main progression patterns which are constant progression, simple linear progression and derived hyperthematic progression and also split progression patterns. Research question 1 was concerned with non-native Turkish EFL students' use of thematic progression patterns considering their experiences with the target language. The analyses of the study showed different results, some of them were in line with previous studies' findings.

Some of the results were unique to this study because thematic progression patterns of Turkish EFL students' essays were not studied widely.

Among thematic progression patterns, EFL participants used all of Danes' thematic progression patterns which are constant, simple linear, derived hyperthematic and split progression patterns. This finding was in line with the results of other previous studies (e.g. Koç, 2018; Jalilifar, 2009; Rakhman, 2013; Yunita, 2018) that investigated all types of thematic progression patterns in EFL students' texts. For example, Yunita (2018) carried out a study with EFL students who are in a state vocational school in Bandung and also investigated that the most frequently used pattern was constant progression pattern, succeeded by simple linear, derived hyperthematic and split progression patterns in students' written texts.

Danes (1974) defined constant progression pattern as repetition of Theme in subsequent clauses. In other words, the same or similar words become the Theme of the following sentences. Other studies also found the constant progression pattern to be the most frequently used thematic progression pattern by EFL learners in their written texts (Rosa, 2007; Belmonte & Hidalgo, 1998). This type of thematic progression pattern was used most frequently by all of the EFL participants.

Simple linear progression pattern requires the Rheme to become the Theme of the following sentences (Danes, 1974). Koç (2018) also found that simple linear progression comes after constant progression pattern in Turkish EFL students' written texts. Simple linear progression pattern was also used by all of the Turkish EFL participants in this study.

Another progression pattern that Danes (1974) proposed is derived hyperthematic progression which was used rarely by the participants in the present study. As Danes' defined, the main Theme has different subcategories which are not

mentioned in the first sentence. These subcategories are used as the Theme of following sentences.

Split progression pattern is also defined by Danes (1974) but found barely in our participants' texts. Multiple Rhemes of a sentence become the Theme of the subsequent clauses. Rustipa (2010) argues that split and derived hyperthematic progression patterns are the most difficult patterns for EFL learners because they are supposed to form new Themes from the Rhemes. Therefore, they are used rarely in students' written texts.

5.2.1.1. What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish ELT students' texts?

ELT students used 325 thematic progression patterns in their written texts. In ELT students' written texts, the most frequently used thematic progression pattern is constant thematic, succeeded by simple linear, and split progression pattern. Derived hyperthematic progression pattern was not seen in none of the ELT students' written texts.

In line with this study's results, Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2012) similarly studied students' written texts in department of Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Students were divided into three groups regarding their experiences with the target language. The senior group who got the most instruction of the target language wrote more coherent texts using constant and simple linear progression patterns. Another previous research analyzing students' written texts considering their discipline backgrounds and writing experiences in the target language was that North's (2005) research in which findings showed that students with writing experiences with the target language showed high grades of thematic progression

patterns and thus wrote coherent texts. Similarly, ELT students in the present study wrote coherent texts with high number of thematic progression patterns in their written texts because of the fact that they are highly experienced in writing texts in the target language.

5.2.1.2. What kinds of patterns are used in Turkish PCG students' texts?

PCG students used 140 thematic progression patterns in their written texts. PCG students used; constant progression, simple linear progression and derived hyperthematic progression patterns in their essays more than the ELT students. PCG students did not use split progression pattern in their essays.

The results of constant progression as the most frequently used pattern confirmed the findings of previous findings in the literature (Rosa, 2007; Belmonte and Hidalgo, 1998; Rustipa, 2010). For example, Rosa (2007) studied ESL writers' written texts and found that writers used mostly constant progression pattern. Therefore, writers abstained from widening the new information provided in the Rheme. As a result, disconnections between sentences and meanings occurred in students' texts. The reason of this result can be PCG students' less experience with writing in the target language.

5.2.2. Is there a difference between Turkish ELT and PCG students' written texts in thematic progression patterns?

Research question two was concerned with the differences between non-native ELT and PCG students' written texts considering their thematic progression

patterns. Students' written texts from these two different disciplines were analyzed and compared with each other because their language backgrounds and academic writing experiences are assumed as important factors affecting their texts. This confirmed previous findings in the literature (Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi, 2012; Qian et al. 2007; Babai et al. 2016; North 2005). For example, Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi's (2012) study of thematic progression in EFL learners' written texts proved that academic writing experience is a significant factor affecting the ability to write more cohesive texts. In this respect, Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2012) assert that academic experience influences learners' texts by using appropriate Theme structure and thematic progression patterns. In line with the findings of Ebrahimi & Ebrahimi's study, in another study with two different disciplinary backgrounds resulted in significant differences between two groups and it was pointed out that students' writing experiences from their former courses play a role in their writing abilities (North, 2005). Ebrahimi and Khedri (2011) also claim that learners' texts are shaped based on their disciplinary background. Additionally, Yang (2012) suggested in the study of Chinese EFL learners' argumentative essays that use of thematic progression types differ from students' proficiency levels. The findings of Yang's (2012) study showed that there is a relationship between students' proficiency level and use of cohesive devices and thematic progression patterns.

The analysis of Turkish EFL students' thematic progression patterns indicated different results in terms of students' disciplines which are ELT and PCG. Since ELT students, who have a foreign education background, used more dependent and embedded clauses in their essays, they used higher number of thematic progression patterns than PCG students. Since ELT students have more academic experience with the target language and need to pass prep year proficiency exams

with higher grades than PCG students, their proficiency level is assumed to be higher than PCG students.

According to the findings of this study, students from both of the departments showed similar results in the uses of thematic progression pattern types. Writers from both of the disciplines used constant progression pattern most frequently, succeeded by simple linear, and split and derived hyperthematic progressions patterns. In good agreement with the findings of this study, Rustipa (2010) also argues that constant progression pattern is the easiest one and preferred most frequently by most of the students. Simple linear progression pattern, which helps revealing more information about the topic that is discussed, follows the constant progression pattern. Both derived hyperthematic progression and split progression patterns were least preferred. In this study, EFL students did not use these patterns, in which they need to produce new Themes from Rhemes that are mentioned previously and develop them for further ideas, because they might have found it difficult to use. Moreover, use of constant progression pattern excessively can show that students could not arrange their written texts well.

In both of the groups' written texts, constant progression pattern outruns other patterns which results in simplistic and repetitive sentences and paragraphs. The reason behind this may be applying the same topic continuously. This finding supports Wang's (2007) results. Nevertheless, it is in contrast with Fries' (1983), and Alonso and McCabe's (2000) results. Wang (2007) asserts that use of excessive constant progression pattern cause a more static text. Nonetheless, Wang (2007) states "cross-referential" links in which information passes from Rheme of a clause to Theme of the following clause can build a more dynamic progress in an argumentative essay. With overuse of constant progression pattern, as Wang also

states (2007), the text may be seen as a list and lack in further progression of information that is presented in the Rheme. In most of the argumentative essays, EFL writers in this study mostly make a list of arguments that they are going to write in their texts with little explanations and examples to extend on their arguments. Writers may overuse constant progression pattern because they may not be aware of that their written texts seem as a list as a result of this tie (Khedri, 2011). Therefore, setting explicit instruction on the use of thematic progression patterns is highly important for learners' text development. In parallel with the findings of these studies, Rosa (2014) and Belmonte and Hidalgo (1998) found that constant progression pattern was more dominant than other progression patterns in texts of non-native writers of English. Moreover, disconnections between sentences and meanings can emerge because writers do not widen the Rheme in which new information is provided (Rosa, 2007). Contrary to the results of overuse of constant progression pattern, Fries' (1983), and Alonso and McCabe's (2000) found that simple linear progression pattern was used most frequently in ESL students' written texts. Nevertheless, the higher preference of constant progression pattern rather than other three patterns can also make the text easy to comprehend for the readers (Jalilifar & Alipour, 2017).

In terms of simple linear progression pattern, this pattern was used in similar frequencies in written texts of ELT and PCG students. The simple linear progression pattern helps readers to realize where the information comes from and where it is going by reading the following sentences. Fries (1983) also suggests that progression patterns in students' academic texts need to have "cross-referential" links in their texts where information passes from Rheme to Theme. Moreover, as Denardi (2006) points out, simple linear progression pattern helps the writers to produce more

cohesive texts. This pattern helps to develop new ideas in a written text instead of repeating the same topics. As McCabe also stated, simple linear progression helps to create conceptual framework because the writer guides the reader by providing starting points of ideas clearly. The present study's finding of simple linear progression pattern suggests that Turkish EFL students need to practice writing their texts by using simple linear progression pattern. Since they use constant progression pattern more than simple linear progression pattern in their written texts, they lack in creating conceptual framework.

Derived hyperthematic progression pattern was used by PCG students (3) but not preferred by ELT students. Ebrahimi and Khedri (2011) claimed that using derived hyperthematic progression pattern seems to have a more academic impression but also supposes more background knowledge and carefulness from the readers. Readers need to make the agreement with the Themes that derived from the hypertheme. Nevertheless, neither ELT students with language education background nor PCG students used this pattern commonly. Therefore, students from both of the groups need to practice writing by using derived hyperthematic progression pattern.

While split progression pattern was used rarely in ELT students' written texts, it was not used in PCG students' written texts. Although this finding was in contrast to Herriman's (2011) study in the EFL context in which it is observed that split progression pattern was the most prevalent pattern, it was in good agreement with a number of previous literature. For example, findings of Rustipa's (2010) study showed that constant progression and simple linear progression were most dominant pattern but split progression pattern was the least occurred pattern in EFL context. The reason why PCG students did not use split progression pattern might be because

of its difficulty or complexity. In compatible with this idea, Rustipa (2010) claimed that split progression is perceived as difficult by students because they need to produce new Themes from Rhemes which are mentioned before.

As to split and derived hyperthematic progression patterns, they are the least used patterns in both of the student groups' written texts. Because of their difficulty and complexity, students do not use them frequently in their texts. To solve this problem, students need to be exposed to paragraphs including split and derived hyperthematic progression patterns so that they can be more familiar with these two patterns.

The results indicated that while ELT students used 325 thematic progression patterns, PCG students used 140 thematic progression patterns in their written texts. Since PCG students did not use thematic progression patterns as efficiently as ELT students, they are argued to be less successful in producing cohesive texts. Students can write cohesive texts with the help of explicit instruction of the organization of old and new information (Jalilifar, 2010). The reason why PCG students wrote less cohesive texts than ELT students can be the fact that ELT students received education of English language for many years and thus exposed to the target language more than PCG students. Consequently, academic writing experience in English language is defined as an important factor in students' writing competence and consequently in writing cohesive texts (Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi, 2012).

5.2.3. What are the main patterns in written texts of native speakers of English?

Native speakers of English use four main thematic progression patterns in their written texts. In the analysis of native speakers' written texts were analyzed, not

a rich variety was found in the use of thematic progression patterns. The native writers used constant progression pattern most frequently and it was followed by simple linear progression pattern. Derived hyperthematic and split progression patterns were not identified in native writers' texts. In line with a similar result, Koç (2018) found that native speakers use constant progression pattern more dominantly than other patterns. This result went against previous findings in the literature examining thematic progression patterns in native speakers' essays. For example, Fontaine and Kodratoff's (2003) research found that native speakers of English used simple linear progression pattern the most succeeded by constant progression pattern. In the present study, linear is not used widely by the native participants because writers did not develop their ideas that they shared in the Rheme. They either used constantly the same Themes or developed unrelated Themes which cause difficulty in following ideas.

5.2.4. What are the common problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme in Turkish EFL students' written texts?

When students' texts were analyzed, seven problems were identified that result in losing effectiveness in their arguments. These problems were either related to Thematic selection or Thematic progression, or both. Moreover, these problems showed how valuable it is to teach Theme and Rheme relationship in writing classes.

The problem of brand new Theme was the most common problem found in both PCG and ELT students' texts. Similarly, the problem of the empty Rheme was also common in students' texts but 12 PCG students had this problem while the number of students was 10 in ELT. As Bloor & Bloor (1992) stated, these types of

problems of inappropriately managing the flow of Theme and Rheme frequently encountered in inexperienced writers. In line with the findings of this study, in another study that investigated EFL university students' written texts also found that the problem of brand New Theme and empty Rheme are common in inexperienced writers' texts (Ridha, 2014). Wang (2007) also found that brand new Theme is common in inexperienced written works. Writers tend to provide new information in Theme position. To avoid this problem, the writers can put adverbial, prepositional or infinitive phrases before the brand new Theme. The problem of empty Rheme was also found in EFL students' texts in Wang's (2007) study. This problem occurs because no information is shared in Rheme. Writers from both of the groups have this problem in their texts.

Third common problem found in student texts was over-use of constant progression pattern. PCG students over-used constant progression pattern more than ELT students. Since students tended to use constant progression pattern excessively, information which was introduced in the Rheme was not expanded. This is considered as a problem in students' texts because constant progression can be used in narrations and descriptions to build up a more static text but cross-referential links which refer to simple linear progression pattern can provide a more dynamic effect in argumentative texts. As a result of the problem of constant progression pattern, simple linear and/or split progression patterns were lacking. Therefore, as Rustipa (2010) also suggests, EFL writers need to read paragraphs involving simple linear and/or split progression patterns. After getting familiarized with these patterns, they need to practice to write paragraphs by using these patterns. In line with the similar finding, Rosa (2007) also found that overuse of constant progression patterns lead to problems in textual cohesion when ESL students' expository texts were analyzed. In

this study, overuse of constant progression pattern by PCG students supported the idea that disconnections between sentences and meanings occurred because PCG writers experienced difficulties in widening the new information provided in the Rheme part.

The problem of intervening material between mention in Theme and subsequent thematization was found as the fourth problem and it was faced by the same number of students in both of the groups. The problem occurs when the idea that is mentioned earlier in Rheme position is commented at a later sentence without a proper Theme and Rheme flow. This shows that there is not a clear plan of development. Students from both of the groups tend to give more details about the previously mentioned ideas later somewhere in the text. This can be because of the reason that they do not plan their ideas that they are going to write in their essays before they start writing. To avoid this problem, students can write a quick outline on the top of their papers by writing the main points and examples to ensure a well-organized thematic progression.

The fifth problem occurred in PCG and ELT students' texts was the use of Themes with unclear reference. This problem was detected more in PCG students' written texts comparing to ELT students' written texts. The problem of the use of Themes with unclear reference can be divided into two categories. First, writers tend to switch from the pronoun "I" to "we" to "you" without making any thematic connection. Second problem is the overuse of indefinite it. Since PCG students had this problem commonly in their writings, it showed the fact that their texts were complicated and made their texts hard to read for the readers. Readers would either not understand who or what the Theme is or they would make the connections by guessing while reading the texts. Belmonte and McCabe-Hidalgo (1998) also

covered these problems related to misuse of Theme and Rheme and Thematic progression, or both in their study.

The sixth problem in student texts involves what Arunsirot (2013) name the problem of the empty Theme. Two of the PCG students omitted the subject of the sentence. Nevertheless, this problem was not seen in ELT students' texts. Arunsirot (2013) who studied Thai EFL students' writing also found the problem of empty Theme in his participants' texts.

Similarly, Kuswoyo and Susardi (2017) who studied ESL students' academic writings to analyze the problems related to thematic progression found that students had the problems of brand new Theme, empty Rheme, overuse of constant Theme pattern and empty Theme in their essays. Therefore, students need to be informed and taught about the flow of information between Theme and Rheme in thematic progression in their writing classes to improve coherence in their texts.

5.3. Limitations

Participants' language background and their department in which they study are important factors in this study. The first group are chosen from students in Psychological Counselling and Guidance department with no extensive English language education background. Nevertheless, some of them may be from private high-schools where English classes are compulsory and effective even students are not in a language class. Similarly, students in ELT department may have different exposure to target language even though they have studied language class in high school.

For the non-native participants, there were 20 students from the each department which are PCG and ELT. Further studies can be conducted with higher number of participants.

5.4. Pedagogical Implications

EFL learners need to learn and distinguish which thematic progression pattern helps to make an argument more or less distinct or convincing while learning to write essays in L2. In this process, teaching Danes' progression patterns to EFL students would be useful.

Fries (1995) claimed that use of Theme and Rheme is difficult and problematic for L2 learners because it is even hard for L1 users of the language. Therefore, thematic progression patterns should be taught explicitly for text construction to L2 learners. Moreover, as L2 learners develop their writing skills, they need to use more variety of thematic progression patterns in their written texts. Consequently, more variety of thematic progression patterns would lead to improved texts.

To improve students' texts with the help of thematic progression patterns, instructors can integrate reading activities to writing classes. When students are exposed to paragraphs with split and derived hyperthematic progression patterns they get more familiarized with the patterns. Afterwards, they can practice the patterns with writing activities.

Teaching thematic progression patterns is highly useful for students to share their ideas effectively in their written texts. Wang (2010) also supported this idea and indicated that students and instructors are not aware of the significance of thematic

progression pattern in EFL writing classes even though thematic progression patterns and its' benefits are studied widely in the field. This was consistent with Jingxia and Li's (2013) study in which Chinese EFL students were divided into two groups as experimental and controlled groups. The findings showed a positive effect on students' writing skills after teaching them thematic progression patterns explicitly. For this reason, this study aims to raise awareness of instructors who teach writing skills in EFL classes.

The previous studies indicated that teaching thematic progression patterns explicitly has a positive impact on L2 learners' writing skills. Moreover, teaching thematic patterns is a highly important and effective technique in writing classes because it helps to improve connectivity and flow of information between ideas in the text (Jalilifar, 2010). Moreover, they can be taught Theme and Rheme patterns so that their texts could be improved with regards to cohesion.

5.5. Recommendation for Future Research

The participants in this study made several mistakes related to Theme-Rheme progression patterning. Therefore, more research is suggested on how to place old and new information which creates coherence in texts to reduce student difficulties (Bloor & Bloor, 1992). Moreover, Wang (2007) also claims that Theme- Rheme is an important tool for teachers to identify students' writing difficulties and with the help of this tool teachers can teach how to distribute old and new information which will help cohesion in students' texts.

If teachers provide them necessary feedback on their problems, they may become coherent writers of English. This study indicated that instead of focusing on

sentence level while teaching writing to EFL students, language teachers need to focus more on thematic progression patterns at discourse level. Nevertheless, there has not been much specific information and investigation considering how teachers can apply Theme-Rheme and thematic progression patterns in EFL writing classes (Wang, 2007). Moreover, there have been very few studies that developed and/or studied Theme-Rheme teaching materials (Bonhnacker, 2010). Therefore, more studies should be conducted that investigate how instruction and teaching materials in Theme and thematic progression might influence learners' use in these aspects and also coherence in their writing.

There have been various studies on EFL learners' output which analyze their written texts or spoken languages. Nevertheless, their speech has not received attention in literature as much as their written products regarding thematic progression patterns. Thus, thematic progression patterns in EFL learners' spoken language could also be analyzed in further studies.

When EFL learners are writing in the target language, they sometimes tend to use structure of their native language to share their ideas. Kezmez (2015) revealed that Turkish EFL learners make numerous errors in their written products because of L1 interference. Therefore, students' written texts could also be analyzed for L1 interference and intralingual errors regarding thematic progression patterns.

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