CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the area of the study that will be covered in some headings; background of study, research question of the study, objective of the study, significance, scope and limitation, then definition of the key terms.

A. Background of Study

In educational issues, learning foreign language takes one of the important things. English as the foreign languages has become one of the compulsory subjects for Indonesian students from the junior high school level to university level. Thus, Indonesian students are called English as second language (EFL/ESL) learners. ESL learners may face difficulty in writing the foreign language itself.[1] According to Nunan, the difficulty is to produce a coherent, fluent, and extended piece of writing.[2] Therefore, to solve the difficulty the learners need to have conscious effort and much practice in organization, language use and writing techniques.

According to Thuy Le and Raksangob, the ESL/EFL learners particularly are those who studying English for academic purposes and have found that writing is full of difficulty among other skills; also improving this skill requires hard work, much time and efforts.[3] Additionally, the ability to write in-depth academic essays is widely regarded as one of the hallmarks of a higher education; students suffer from "writers' block", awed by

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[1] Zuhour Bani Younes – Fatima Salamh Albalawi. "Exploring the Most Common Types of Writing Problems among English Language and Translation Major Sophomore Female Students at Tabuk University". *Asian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*. Vol. 3 No. 2, 2015

[2] Ibid

[3] Duong Thuy Le – Raksangob Wijitsopon. "Using Theme-Rhemeto Analyze ESL/EFL Learners' Academic Writing".

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the fact that they have to write out their thoughts on a blank piece of paper.[4] Moreover, Alonso and McCabe also pointed out that English learners are often wrote essays that consisted of sentences which did not seem to connect into a cohesive text and more attention should be paid to the progression of information in texts.[5]Therefore, those things define how difficult writing skill is.

Regarding those statements, Harmer stated that students have to follow various stages that any piece of writing goes through, such as pre-writing phases, editing, re-drafting, and finally producing a finished version of their work.[6] Reflecting those three stages, Harmer argued that editing and re-drafting are even more important when we are writing in a foreign language than when we are writing in our first language.[7] Additionally, Brown also stated that written products are often the results of thinking, drafting and revising procedures that require specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develops naturally.[8]It means that there are many things to be prepared before doing writing itself.

Reflecting the reason above, thematic progression (TP) consider as appropriate way to generate how cohesive and coherence the writing is. Studies have illustrated the usefulness of TP is that as a tool to characterize EFL/ESL writing as successful or less successful in terms of coherence.[9] Furthermore, Not stated that TP is necessary for the construction of an

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[4]Nada Salih Abdul Ridha. *Theme and Rheme: Types and Problems in EFL University Students' Written Texts.* College of Education for Humanities. University of Basra, 96

[5]A. McCabe – S. Alonso. "Improving text flow in ESL learner compositions". *The Internet TESL Journal, 9 (2).* Available at http://iteslj.org/Articles/Alonso-ImprovingFlow.html

[6]Jeremy Harmer. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. (London: Longman, 2007), 326

[7]Ibid

[8]H. Doughlas Brown.*Language Assessment Principles and Classroom Practices*. (New York: Pearson Education, 2001), 335

[9]M. Bloor – T. Bloor. "Given and new information in the thematic progression of text: An application to the teaching of academic writing".*Occasional Papers in Semantics Linguistics*, 6 (1), 33-34

optimally coherent and grammatically cohesive structured text.[10] TP is also a major aspect of the way the speakers construct their messages in a way which makes them fit smoothly into the unfolding language event.[11] It indicates that without having TP, the text will look like no unity of ideas in it.

Furthermore, Wang claimed that the theory of TP was a valuable tool for teachers to diagnose writing difficulties and students should be taught how to arrange old and new information to help them improving their cohesion and coherence in writing.[12] It shows that it is really necessary for lectures to include TP in their teaching for students to construct their writing in English in order to help the students organizing their writing thematically.

Thematic Progression consists of Theme and Rheme. Halliday stated that Theme is the point of departure for the message which the element of the speaker selects for grounding.[13] It means that a Theme is a starting point of a sentence that can be the main information of the sentence itself. Thus, Theme needs Rheme to be the remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed.[14] It is noticed that as a message structure, a sentence is consisting of Theme and accompanied by a Rheme; which the structure is expressed as the Theme is put first. Herriman stated that the concept of Theme as point of departure of a single utterance (clause) to that explaining the inner connectivity of text, which is represented by thematic

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[10]Elena Not.*Implementation of the Thematic Progression and Realization Component*. (LRE Project 062-09, 1996), 4

[11]M. Bloor – T. Bloor. "Given and new information in the thematic progression of text: An application to the teaching of academic writing".*Occasional Papers in Semantics Linguistics*, 6 (1), 33-34

[12]L. Wang, "Theme and Rheme in the Thematic Organization of Text: Implications for Teaching Academic Writing". *Asian EFL Journals.* 9 (1), 164-176

[13]M.A.K Halliday. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar (4th ed.)*. Revised by C.M.I.M Matthiessen. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 83

[14]Ibid, page 89

progression.[15] It goes to show that thematic progression can make a significant contribution to the coherence and cohesion of the text.

This research is conducted at thesis proposal writing in Faculty of English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Taking specifically thesis proposal as locus of this research was considered by two reasons. First, as the senior student of English Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya who will graduate from university-life have to fulfill some requirements; one of it is about writing a thesis. Before the students have to take thesis proposal writing course, they had to pass some writing courses; those are paragraph writing, essay writing, and argumentative writing. Thus, it is as a part of compulsory subject in English Teacher Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.[16] Therefore, it tends to an institution-directed course that obligates the students to learn how to write a good thesis proposal.

Second, based on preliminary research that done through interviewing some students who had enrolled to thesis proposal writing at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya shows that among all chapters of thesis writing, background of study in chapter one has mostly occurred as the most difficult part among others.[17] That problem is forms of their difficulties in defining the background of study. It is the statements to show the important phenomena and indicates that it is really crucial to be conducted. Additionally, they assumed that the content of background will be the summary of the other chapters; which is needed more energy to read any references

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[15]Wei Jing. "Theme and Thematic Progression in English Writing Teaching". *Journal of Education and Practice*. Vol.6 No.21, 2015

[16]http://siakad.uinsby.ac.id/akademik/siakad/index.php?page=list_kurikulum, accessed on Thursday, October 27, 2016

[17]Preliminary research conducted on March, 13th 2017 to eight semester students of English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

dealing with those arguments. Furthermore, they feel worry about their statements; whether it is as good enough or not. Moreover, they are confused to connect between each paragraph to other paragraphs. Thus, they realize that the key success of thesis proposal is in the background. Therefore, they should write their background of study carefully. Indeed, it will be crucial to analyze students' thesis proposal in English Teacher Education Department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

Then the objects of this research are the students' thesis proposal written by eight semester students at English Teacher Education Department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. It is caused that the students are supposed to be able to write a thesis as the final exam to accomplish their bachelor degree before they graduate from the university. It may lead the students to be more challenging to make an understandable final thesis writing for the readers.

Despite of that, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya has also a vision, as an Islamic university that prepares excellent and competitive students' outcome as international students.[18] Furthermore, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya is ongoing process to be the World Class University after upgrading from Islamic State Institute several years ago. Becoming the World Class University, it requires preparing the students outcome as well. Automatically, it boosts the students to have the writing ability be better continuously. Ultimately, it goes to show that the thesis proposal course and university has mission to prepare students to be able to communicate and compete with other nations over the world.

There are seven researchers which deal with thematic progression. One researcher finds that the employment of constant thematic progression proved students experienced in

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[18]Visi,Misi, dan Tagline UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya,(http://www.uinsby.ac.id/index.php/uinsa/visimisi, accessed on December 27th, 2016)

writing thesis abstract.[19] One another researcher used Jingle Button technique to improve students' writing skill and learning motivation.[20] Four other researchers focus on research done on the application of the types of themes (interpersonal, topical, and textual) in the texts. They used theme-rheme choices on DRET (Department Required Test), news item of presidential electoral campaign in the Jakarta Post, pre and post experimental theme choices and in the text of Singapore secondary students' exposition text types.[21] Last one, Hawes and Thomas in their research find that there is difference between Malaysian students level, advanced and intermediate level in using marked and unmark of topical themes.

However, this research has different focus from those previous researches. This research takes the thesis proposal written by the eight semester student of English Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya and it focuses on the thesis background which stated in the chapter one, while other previous studies conducted their researches to the thesis abstract, narrative text, exposition text, news item text, DRET reading text, and presidential electoral campaign in the Jakarta Post. While those two previous studies about the effectiveness technique using the thematic progression to improve students' writing skill and students' learning motivation through Jingle Button and constant thematic progression technique. Then those techniques are given to control and experimental class to measure

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[19]Lilek Soepriatmadji. "Thematic Progression in Thesis Abstract written by English students of FBIB UNISBANK Semarang"

[20]Farikah. "The Effectiveness of Thematic Progression Patterns with Jingle Button Technique in Teaching Writing of Narrative Texts". *Arab World English Journal*. Vol. 6 No. 1. 2015

[21]YANG Yan. "On The Patterns of Thematic Progression in The Argumentative Writing of Non-English Majors". *US-China Foreign Language*.Vol. 13, 2015., Chun Mei et al. "Thematic Progression Pattern and the Text of the Department Required English Test". Department of Applied English at National Pingtung National Institute of Commerce., Alvin Leong Ping. "Developing the Message: Thematic Progression and Student Writing". *The Journal of ASIA TEFL.* Vol. 4 No. 3, 94., Ni'mah Izzatun, Thesis: "*Thematic Organization on News Item*". (Semarang: Dipenegoro University, 2009).

that effectiveness, while this research takes the new idea of investigating thematic progression occurred in the final period students' writing. Indeed, this study has new focus which is obviously different from the previous studies on investigating thematic progression of thesis proposal written by English Education Department students at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Knowing those reasons above, this research is important to examine the thematic progression of thesis proposal written by English Teacher Education Department students at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Essentially, this study will give some benefits for both current and upcoming teachers who teach writing as information to be aware of making cohesive and coherence writing to their students.

B.   Research Question

In relation to the background of the study previously outlined above, the problem of the study can be formulated as this following question:

1.   How is the thematic progression in students' thesis proposal of English Teacher Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya Academic Year 2016/2017?

C.   Objective of the Study

To investigate the thematic progression in students' thesis proposal of English Teacher Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya Academic Year 2016/2017.

D.   Significance of the Study

By conducting this study, the researcher hopes it can give the big contribution as the practical implication of the study to the upcoming and recent teacher to guide the students to know the importance of forming good starting point in their writing in order that the remains of the message can be establish appropriately. Furthermore, teachers could help students to

construct a message, and the challenge that faced by all writers is to get the message right. Therefore, it assists the English teacher to make the students aware of the message components of language (ie. theme-rheme and thematic progressions) and how they can be implicated at the sentence and text level can go some way to ease this struggle. Importantly, it guides the student' attention to the message structure of their text and enhances their awareness of truly matters in writing, which is getting the message right. Therefore, the researcher also hopes to be able to share the information and the result of this study to other teachers in order to be the reference for them to conduct the further research dealing with thematic progression.

E.   **Scope and Limits of the Study**

This study confines its self to the study of thematic progression in thesis proposal writing. This research does not observe overall of the thesis proposal. The researcher determines the scope of this study on the first paragraph of background of study in the thesis proposal. As stated by William and Collomb that one first paragraph of background of study is first impressions matter. The reader will be more inclined to read a paper and consider a position if the initial paragraph is clear, organized, and engaging and for the writer, a carefully crafted first paragraph acts as a springboard, establishing the order and direction for the entire paper.[22] Hence, it challenges the students to write well since the one first paragraph of their background of study. Moreover, the focus of this study is on investigating thematic progression in thesis proposal which have been examined during the even semester of academic year 2016/2017specifically starting from February 2017 to March 2017. Twenty one students had been followed in thesis proposal examination, and then only twelve students are in the eighth

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[22]Joseph M. Williams & Gregory G. Colomb. *The Craft of Argument; Introduction and Thesis Statements, Concise Edition*. (New York: Longman Publishers, 2003)

semester, while the other nine students are from tenth semester students. The researcher does not analyze the other nine backgrounds of study due to the researcher got some difficulties to get their text. Therefore, the researcher only uses twelve backgrounds of study of students' thesis proposal.

F.   Definition of Key Terms

In case of different perspectives of the readers, the researcher shows the definition of important terms used in this study as an attempt to avoid misinterpreting among readers toward the concept of this study. In this early discussion, the researcher finds out the term that should be recognized first by the readers as follows:

1.   Thematic Progression

Thematic Progression is the way the themes interact each other with the rhemes in order to provide continuity in discourse and to organize the text.[23] In this study the thematic progression is used to analyze the student' thesis proposal in order to know more the students' cohesiveness of their writing, help them become aware of how information and ideas should flow a text so that it could be easily understood by the readers.

2.   Thematic Progression Analysis

Analysis is to ask what that something means and it is a kind of thinking you will most often be asked to do in your work.[24] Furthermore according to max-weber that analysis is a detailed examination of anything complex in order to understand its nature.[25] Therefore, thematic progression analysis in this study means the way of

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[23]Wei Jing. "Theme and Thematic Progression in English Writing Teaching". *Journal of Education and Practice*. Vol. 5 No. 21, 2015

[24] http://www.indiana.edu/~bestsell/1.pdf (accessed on Monday, 7th August 2017)

[25] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/analysis, (accessed on Monday, 7th August 2017)

analyzing theme and rheme in detail though the pattern of thematic progression. Thus, the backgrounds of study in thesis proposal of the students are analyzed through the pattern of thematic progression to know the coherence and cohesion of the texts.

3. **Theme**

    According to Halliday, theme in English is a position-bound, clause-initial element and whatever is selected as theme is always positioned first in the clause.[26] Indeed, based on Halliday's theory theme meant in this study is first information in each clause of Thesis Proposal of eight semester students of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

4. **Rheme**

    Rheme is simply defined part of the assembly new information that the text offers.[27]Regarding Cummings' theory, rheme in this study is defined as what you are saying about conventionally comment used on the theme. It is the rest of the clause or it is the supporting information of the theme that occurred in seminar proposal thesis background of eight semester students of English Teacher Education Department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

5. **Thesis Proposal**

    Thesis proposal in this case is focuses on background of study in the chapter one. Background in thesis is a state of art review of the field of study, including current developments, controversies and breakthroughs, previous research and relevant background theory, what Pis being researched and why, justification for the choice of data,

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[26]M.A.K Halliday,& C.M.I.M Matthiessen. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (3rd ed). (London: Arnold, 2004), p. 65

[27]M. Cummings. *The Role of Theme and Rheme in Contrasting Methods of organization of texts. In Butcler, C. (Ed.) Dynamics of Language Use: Functional and Contrastive Perspective* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2003), 133

and importance of the project for the field of study.[28] In this study, the researcher defines the definition of thesis background as the phenomena happened around the researcher's society. The background of study here means as an opening part of the chapter one in thesis proposal written by eight semester student of English Teacher Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

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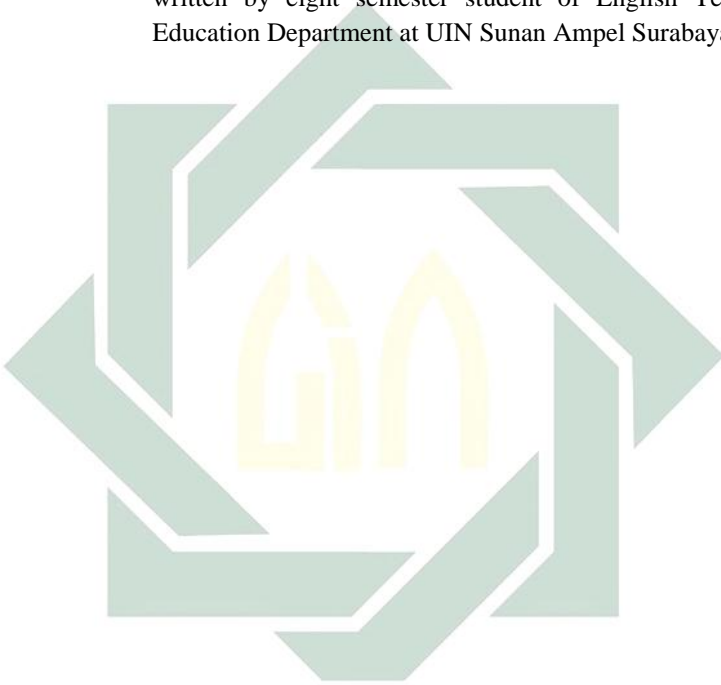
[28]Brian Paltridge. *Writing the Background Chapters of Your Thesis*. (The University of Sydney: Phillips and Pugh, 2005), 1