

Thematic Progression Analysis in CNN Sport News “World Cup Qatar 2022”

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Abstract - This study was conducted to identify the Thematic Progression Pattern observed in CNN Sport News that highlight the final world cup 2022 match between Argentina vs France. The study focuses to investigate Thematic Progression Patterns present in news articles, particularly focusing on the 2022 World Cup Grand Final in Qatar as reported on edition.cnn.com. Employing a descriptive-qualitative research design, the data analysis utilizes Partridge’s (2012) theory to identify the Thematic Progression Patterns. The findings reveal three distinct patterns: Constant Theme, Linear Theme, and Split Rheme. In addition, Constant Theme emerges as the predominant pattern, observed in five sentences for each theme and rheme.

Keywords: *thematic progression, CNN, sport news*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Discourse analysis studies language patterns in texts, exploring the interplay between language and its social and cultural contexts. It delves into how language usage reflects diverse perspectives and understandings of the world. This analysis also investigates the impact of language on social identities and relationships, examining how discourse shapes views of the world and constructs identities Paltridge (2012). According to Halliday (2003) Discourse analysis aims to depict authentic human experiences through examining how they are conveyed, connected, shared, and structured within text and its contextual framework. Based on Snape and Spencer (2003:200) assert that discourse analysis has its roots in sociology and involves the investigation of how knowledge is generated across various discourses. It focuses on analyzing the performances, linguistic styles, and rhetorical devices employed in specific narratives. While Matthews (2005:100) stated, Discourse analysis involves the creation and organization of language

segments, extending beyond individual sentences. This term encompasses both spoken and written language for various purposes. Discourse is not confined to sentence boundaries but represents any coherent succession of sentences, whether spoken or written.

As stated by *georgiaencyclopedia.org* (2013), Cable News Network (CNN) marked a milestone in broadcast journalism as the world's first 24-hour cable news channel, officially established in 1980. With its headquarters in Atlanta, CNN expanded its reach internationally and played a crucial role in shaping modern journalism. Founded by businessman Ted Turner, the network revolutionized the dissemination of news through the use of satellite communication and cable technology. Prior to CNN, Turner developed WTCG, a national "Superstation," which laid the foundation for the network's creation. In 1978, Turner collaborated with Reese Schonfeld, formerly of UPI Television News, to establish CNN, which was publicly introduced in May 1979 and envisioned as a landmark achievement in journalism.

According to *rookieroad.com* (2022), the FIFA World Cup, commonly referred to as the World Cup, is an international football tournament held every four years to identify the world's top national team. With a history extending close to one hundred years, the tournament has developed into the most globally viewed sporting event, drawing audiences numbering in the billions. Established in the early twentieth century under the authority of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the first World Cup matches were held on July 13, 1930, in Montevideo, Uruguay. The tournament's first final occurred on July 30, 1930, where host nation Uruguay triumphed over Argentina. Since its inception, the World Cup has occurred every four years, with exceptions during World War II. Structured like other major international sports events, it involves sectional tournaments leading to a final elimination stage. In the ultimate phase, 32 national teams compete until two remain for the title match. Unlike Olympic soccer, there are no age restrictions or amateur status limitations for players, contributing to the World Cup's reputation as a premier competition among the world's top players.

Thematic analysis is one of the important factors in functional verbal analysis. With this analysis, it allows the experimenter to be suitable to know and see qualitative data in a certain way. It is generally used to describe a group of textbooks, similar as an interview or a set of reiterations. In assaying thematic progression, there are several studies that have been conducted related to thematic progression analysis. Ventola and Mauranen (1991) assert that thematic progression plays a vital role in enhancing the clarity and readability of textbooks. Supporting this view, Grasier and Studley (2001) and Light (2001) argue that thematic progression also functions as an effective organizational tool for academic note-taking, enabling writers to present ideas systematically within coherent paragraphs. According to Paltridge (2006:148), thematic progression refers to the way a

clause theme is maintained or developed by drawing on meanings introduced in preceding themes or rhemes. Similarly, Eggins (1994) explains that thematic progression involves the interaction between Theme and Rheme across clauses, contributing to textual cohesion and coherence. To ensure consistency and effectiveness in writing, theme development follows specific patterns. Paltridge (2006) further classifies thematic progression into three main types: constant theme or theme repetition (T–R), linear theme or zigzag pattern (Z–Z), and multiple theme or split-rheme pattern (M–R).

Various researchers have examined the subject, employing three articles to provide an overview and comparative analysis of approaches to thematic progression in order to scrutinize the data. The first article is conducted by Kadek Dwi Larasati (2022). This study focuses on the analysis of Theme–Rheme organization and patterns of thematic progression in speeches delivered by Boris Johnson during his tenure as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The analysis is grounded in the theoretical frameworks proposed by Halliday (1994, 2004) and Paltridge (2006). The study identifies five classifications of theme and rheme: participant functioning as a topical theme, adjunct as a topical theme, process as a topical theme, textual theme, and interpersonal theme. Furthermore, thematic progression is examined through three principal patterns, namely constant or reiterative theme, zigzag or linear theme progression, and split or multiple rheme pattern. The findings reveal that the study's analysis consists of six sentences classified as participant, two sentences as circumstantial adjunct, five sentences as textual theme, and one sentence as interpersonal theme. Dewi et al. (2019) investigated thematic progression patterns in descriptive texts written by eleventh-grade students at SMK N 1 Cimahi. Using a descriptive qualitative design, the study analyzed nine student texts and identified three types of thematic progression: Constant Theme, Linear Theme, and Split Theme. The results indicated that the Constant Theme pattern was predominant, occurring 98 times (90.7%), while the Linear Theme pattern appeared less frequently, with seven occurrences (6.48%). Split Theme pattern was used only 3 times or 2.77% of the total. The third article was written by Siti Sulatri (2022), the article explores the development of a student's short story through theme progression analysis. The research chose complete paragraphs from the narrative to illustrate developmental techniques and employed descriptive qualitative methods to examine the evolution within the storyline. The data were derived from the short story entitled “2050,” taken from *Assorted Literature* for class XII IBB in the 2020/2021 academic year. Data analysis was conducted using the three-step framework proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and the drawing or verification of conclusions. The results revealed three types of thematic progression in the short story: theme reiteration, zigzag pattern, and multiple rheme pattern. Each paragraph contained clause-level information presented in the form of questions. Among the identified patterns, the multiple rheme pattern was the most prevalent, occurring 16 times (66.67%), followed by theme reiteration with 20 occurrences (20.83%) and the zigzag pattern with

three instances (12.50%). Overall, the findings indicate that all categories of thematic progression were employed in the short story.

The previous studies contribute to helping students produce coherent and well-structured paragraphs while improving their overall writing abilities. They also serve to motivate learners and broaden their understanding of thematic progression. In contrast to earlier research, the present study focuses on analyzing thematic progression patterns in CNN Sports News, specifically reporting on the final match of the 2022 FIFA World Cup between Argentina and France. This research seeks to examine how thematic progression patterns are utilized in CNN's sports news coverage.

2. METHOD

This research used descriptive-qualitative design which focused to identify various patterns of thematic progression. The data for this study is derived from CNN Sport News website that highlight the final world cup 2022 match between Argentina vs France. The full text is found by searching for football news 2022 world cup on the edition.cnn.com website. Before analyzing the data, the first step is to quote the content of the text on the CNN News website, then read the entire content of the text carefully. The information was examined to find the underlying themes within the news content on the CNN News Sport website. The findings from the analysis are conveyed through tables and going with descriptions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed the presence of thematic progression patterns in CNN's sports news text. Three types of thematic progression were identified: Constant (Reiterated) Theme, Zigzag (Linear) Theme, and Split (Multiple) Theme patterns. A total of eleven sentences reflected these patterns, with five instances of the Constant Theme pattern, two instances of the Linear Theme pattern, and four instances of the Split Theme pattern. The distribution of these patterns across the paragraphs is presented in table below.

a) Theme Reiteration/Constant Theme pattern

According to Paltridge (2012:131), the Constant Theme pattern is characterized by the repeated use of the initial theme, whereby *Theme 1* is restated at the beginning of successive clauses, signaling that each clause elaborates on the same thematic focus.

Table 1.

Theme	Rheme
The 2022 World Cup final	will go down as one of the most exciting, dramatic and memorable matches in the history of the game.
It	was the scene of Lionel Messi's greatest moment on a soccer pitch, in which he cemented his legacy as the best player of his generation after finally guiding Argentina to World Cup glory.

(The sentences in the table above are officially quoted from the CNN News Website)

The table above illustrates the use of the Constant Theme pattern, in which the sentences demonstrate a consistent process of thematic repetition. The progression begins with an initial theme focusing on “*the 2022 World Cup Final*,” followed by a rheme that refers back to this theme. This pattern continues in the subsequent clause, where the theme restates the same topical focus and is further developed through its rheme. Both sentences are therefore categorized as instances of Constant Theme progression, as the second theme is closely linked to and reiterates the meaning introduced in the first theme. The thematic progression of the text is presented below.

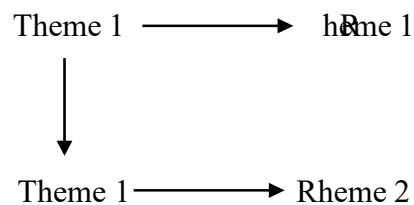


Table 2.

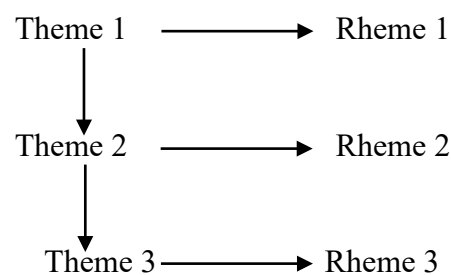
Theme	Rheme
Al-Haddad	She accuses those who criticized Qatar of hypocrisy – referencing nations and organizations who she says have failed to adequately help Palestinians amid Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza.
She	says a lot of tourists left the tournament with a newfound respect for both Qatar and the Middle East, adding that she's seen a slight increase of visitors in the months since.

She	She says the younger generations have been inspired by the tournament and says she sees more children playing soccer than ever before.
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(The sentences in the table above are officially quoted from the CNN News Website)

Similarly, to the analysis results from table 1, this table has also found several sentences that can be categorized as constant/reiteration theme pattern. The sentence in theme 1 starts with the word "AL-Haddad" as the name of a person, followed by rheme 1 which refers to her statement to CNN about the 2022 world cup.

Meanwhile, the sentence prefixes of theme 2 and theme 3 both use the word "She" then continues with the rheme. These two sentences use the word "She" which represents Al-Haddad, because it reiterates the sentence found in theme 1. In addition, these 2 sentences are also connected because they are continued from the sentence in theme 1. Therefore, it can be categorized as a reiterated/constant theme.



b) Zig-zag/Linear Theme pattern

According to Paltridge (2012:131), the zigzag pattern occurs when information introduced in the rheme of a clause is taken up and becomes the theme of the subsequent clause.

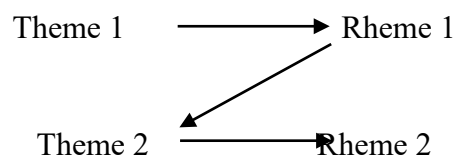
Table 3.

Theme	Rheme
He	clarified that three work-related deaths were linked specifically to the construction of World Cup stadiums, as were 37 non-work-related deaths.
Hassan Al Thawadi	the man in charge of leading Qatar's preparations, told CNN's Becky Anderson that the Guardian's 6,500death

	figure was a “sensational headline” that was misleading and that the report lacked context
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(The sentences in the table above are officially quoted from the CNN News Website)

The provided table reveal the outcomes of the linear/zig-zag theme pattern identified in news text. The analysis indicates that theme 1 initiates with the word "He" and is succeeded by a rheme. In this context, rheme 1 imparts fresh information for the subsequent theme, namely theme 2. Based on the information in the first sentence, theme 2 starts with the word "Hassan Al Thawadi" which refers to the word "He" in theme 1 and then continues with the rheme. The sentences shown in rheme 1 and rheme 2 are referring to a person named Hassan Al Thawadi. In addition, the sentence in rheme 2 is a continuation of the first sentence in theme 1 and rheme 1, in which Al Thawadi clarifies the number of occupational deaths associated with the construction of the world cup stadium. So, the two sentences above can be categorized as a linear/zig-zag theme pattern, because the statement suggests that in order to create a zig-zag pattern, the sentence in rheme 2 makes reference to theme 1. The sentence above outlines the structure or format of the analysis results for a given statement.



c) Multiple/Split – Rheme pattern

Paltridge (2012:131) explains that a text may also employ alternative forms of thematic progression, including multiple-theme or split-rheme patterns. In this configuration, a single rheme contains several elements of information, each of which can subsequently function as the theme in following clauses.

Table 4.

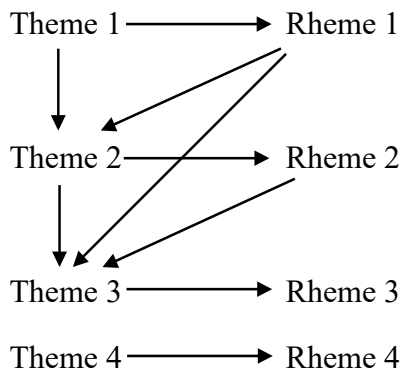
Theme	Rheme
He said	I'll be back, we'll be here to check, don't worry, because you will be gone.

FIFA president	challenged the room of journalists, stressing FIFA will protect the legacy for migrant workers that it set out with the Qatar authorities.
Gianni Infantino	launched into a near hour-long tirade to hundreds of journalists at a press conference in Doha, where he accused Western critics of hypocrisy and racism.
Reform and change	It took hundreds of years in our countries in Europe. It takes time everywhere, the only way to get results is by engaging, not by shouting figure was a “sensational headline” that was misleading and that the report lacked context.

(The sentences in the table above are officially quoted from the CNN News Website)

The results related to the multiple or split rheme pattern are presented below. As shown in the table, four sentences demonstrate the use of multiple or split rheme progression. In the first clause, the theme begins with “*He said,*” which functions as the initial theme before the clause develops its rheme. This pattern recurs in the third theme, where “He said” is reiterated with different references but pertains to the same subject. The second theme, “FIFA President,” is a continuation from the first theme and is followed by its respective rheme. The third sentence starts with the word “Gianni Infantino”, which causes the repetition from theme 1 to theme 2, because both themes refer to one person who is Gianni Infantino as FIFA President. In addition, the sentences in rheme 1 and rheme 2 refer to theme 3 because they are both statements referring to Gianni Infantino.

So, the initial and subsequent themes follow a consistent or reiterated pattern, as the first and second themes share identical content. Theme 1 is replicated in the subsequent theme until Theme 3. In Theme 4, the fourth sentence commences with the phrase “Reform and change,” followed by the development of the rheme. This sentence is still related to the previous sentence, because rheme 4 is a continued statement from Gianni Infantino in the third sentence, which is in theme 3 and rheme 3. The multiple or split rheme development pattern derived from the four previously analyzed sentences is presented below.



4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that CNN's sports news coverage of the 2022 World Cup Final between Argentina and France employs three types of thematic progression patterns: Constant Theme, Linear Theme, and Split Rheme. Among these patterns, Constant Theme is the most frequently used, followed by Split Rheme and Linear Theme. The dominance of the Constant Theme pattern indicates CNN's approach to preserving clarity and coherence while directing readers' attention toward the main focus of the report, including the match itself, the key participants, and its historical importance. The use of Linear Theme reflects CNN's effort to ensure logical development of information, where new details are directly connected to previous statements, thus creating a smooth flow of narration. Meanwhile, the Split Rheme pattern enables CNN to expand multiple pieces of information from a single statement, which is crucial in covering complex events such as the World Cup final, where one highlight may generate several implications. The application of these three patterns indicates that CNN prioritizes **clarity, logical progression, and comprehensive detail** in its reporting. By combining these strategies, CNN is able to deliver sports news that is cohesive, informative, and accessible to a wide readership.

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