

# Thematic Development Analysis on Sunday Sermon Texts in Batak Christian Protestant Church

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## Abstract

This research article investigates thematic development used on Sunday sermon texts in Batak Christian Protestant Church that were delivered by the preachers. Based on systemic functional linguistics with the framework of textual function, this research article focus on analysing how the thematic development constructed and construed on Sunday sermon texts. In addition, this research article looks and discusses how the preachers used and adapted the thematic development in delivering the Sunday sermon texts. This study was a descriptive qualitative. Model interactive data analysis was used in analysing the data. There were seventeen texts of Sunday sermon texts that were analyzed in this research article. The findings of this research article showed that only five patterns of thematic developments that were found from eight patterns of thematic development. This research article highlights how the usage of thematic development in delivering the Sunday sermon texts. It is also recommended that another preachers use thematic development in delivering their sermon to the congregation in understanding the sermon they delivered.

**Keywords:** systemic functional linguistics, textual function, theme-rheme, thematic development, Sunday sermon

## 1. Introduction

Sermon is a media of communication which is used in conveying spiritual messages to the congregation. In Christianity, the delivery of sermon to the congregation is based on the Holy Bible. In this case, the pastors in delivering the sermon message are not based on subjective understanding but the pastors convey the sermon message based on the Holy Bible. There are several patterns of sermon in Christianity such as: Christmast sermon, Easter sermon, Sunday sermon, wedding sermon, and others. This article focused on Sunday sermon as the object of the study. Sunday sermon are sermon which delivered by pastors especially on Sundays. In delivering the Sunday sermon, especially at Batak Christian Protestant Church abbreviated HKBP church, the pastors try to deliver sermon by using language that is easy for their congregations to understand. One of the important points in delivering the Sunday sermon is how the pastors compose words, phrases, and clauses into sentences that are easy for the congregation to understand so that the congregations are willing to listen to the Sunday sermon and do so in their daily life. In addition, how the pastors do the development of themes-rhemes in sentences in delivering the Sunday sermon. This study particularly aims to determine the patterns of thematic development and to find out the most dominant pattern of thematic development used on Sunday sermon texts in HKBP church. This study needs to be analyzed in order to provide information on how to show a good language on Sunday sermon in influencing the congregation to have willingness in listening the Sunday sermon in the church.

The importance of thematic development in sentences is to produce good sentences in delivering messages. Some researchers have conducted a research in dealing with the analysis of thematic development in discourse. There are some previous studies that analyze about thematic development (Yang, 2008; Hawes, 2010; Patpong, 2013; Marfuaty, 2015; Shakeh, 2016; Siahaan, 2018). The previous studies that have been mentioned previously have tried to find out how the thematic development of texts in a certain language and discourse. Research conducted by Yang (2008) showed how the thematic development analysis was employed in teaching writing. Meanwhile, Hawes (2010), Marfuaty (2015), Shakeh (2016) and Siahaan (2018) focused on how the thematic development employed on

newspaper to see how the theme-rheme development in one text in composing a cohesive and coherent text on newspaper.

From those previous studies, it was shown how the thematic development works in construing a good text and this is a gap that filled in this present study. Previous studies just focused on the thematic development of teaching and newspaper texts. Meanwhile, this present study tried to investigate the using of thematic development on another discourse especially Sunday sermon discourse in building a cohesive and coherent text in delivering the Sunday sermon texts. In addition, the findings of this study are expected to be the basis for the development of the language of preaching in delivering of spiritual messages in the church. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the use of thematic development patterns in delivering the Sunday sermon.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Textual Function*

A textual function is a language function that interprets a language as a message. The messages are construed or organized to be coherent and cohesive texts. According to Saragih (2011, p.111), textual functions are language function used to string the experiences. Realities in the universe that have been realized into linguistic experiences (experiential functions) are exchanged with speech partners in the form of interactions (interpersonal functions) then assembled into a coherent and complete text (textual function). Martin (1992) also stated that the textual meaning is a meaning as a result of the realization of lexicogrammatic elements that become the medium of the realization of a text that corresponds to a particular situation at the time the language is used.

### *2.2 Theme-Rheme*

Halliday (1994, p. 38) defines the theme as follows: “The theme is one element in a particular structural configuration which taken as a whole, organizes the clause as a message; this is the configuration of THEME + RHEME. A message consists of a Theme combined with a Rheme. Within that configuration, the Theme is the starting point for the message; it is the ground form which the clause is taking off”. In composing or organizing message at the clause level two main aspects are used: theme and rheme. These themes and rhemes are realized in the theme system. This is in line with Saragih’s opinion (2011), “in other words, the message conveyed in the clause is arranged so that the beginning of the message relates to the next message so that it becomes a unity to be easily understood. Furthermore, the message which is delivered early becomes the basis for choosing for the next message.” The elements of the theme and rheme in the clause level can be used as the basis in the development of the clause into a large and coherent text.

### *2.3 Thematic Development*

Bloor & Bloor (1995) states that there are four patterns of thematic development based on theme-rheme namely: constant theme pattern, linear theme pattern, split rheme pattern, and derived theme pattern. Meanwhile, Saragih (2011, p. 119) states that there are eight patterns of development of topics or clauses namely: Derive Rheme to Theme, Derive Theme to Rheme, Theme to Theme, Rheme to Theme, Theme to Rheme, Rheme to Rheme, Unity Theme-Rheme to Theme, Unity Theme-Rheme to Rheme.

From the two thematic development patterns offered by Bloor & Bloor (1995) and Saragih (2011), the thematic development patterns used in this article based on the thematic development pattern offered by Saragih (2011). The reason for the pattern selection is because the pattern of thematic development offered by Saragih (2011) is more suitable to use in this article because this article used data in Indonesian while the pattern offered by Bloor & Bloor (1995) used examples of thematic development in English. The eight patterns of thematic development based on theme-rheme offered by Saragih (2011) used as the basis in doing the analysis of thematic development which the pastor conducts in delivering the Sunday sermon at HKBP church in Medan-Indonesia.

## **3. Method**

This study was conducted by using descriptive qualitative study with model interactive data analysis of Miles, Hubberman & Saldana (2014, p. 10) in analyzing the Sunday sermon texts. The focus of this study was to investigate and analyze the usage of thematic development on Sunday sermon texts. The source data of this research article was five HKBP Church in Medan-Indonesia. Meanwhile, seventeen transcriptions of Sunday sermon texts were analyzed in this study. The transcriptions of Sunday sermon texts were written in Indonesian. The data collection was done by using recording technique. The preachers were recorded when delivered the Sunday sermon in HKBP Church. The seventeen transcriptions of Sunday sermon discourse were analyzed and identified to see the usage of thematic development then to investigate the most dominant type of thematic development that the preachers used in

delivering the Sunday sermon texts.

**4. Results and Discussion**

Saragih (2000) proposed that there are eight pattern of thematic development namely: Derive Rheme to Theme, Derive Theme to Rheme, Theme to Theme, Rheme to Theme, Theme to Rheme, Rheme to Rheme, Unity Theme-Rheme to Theme, and Unity Theme-Rheme to Rheme. After analyzing the data on Sunday sermon texts, it was found that from eight patterns of thematic development proposed by Saragih (2000), only five patterns of thematic development were used in delivering the Sunday sermon in HKBP church. The using of the patterns of thematic development was different in each pattern. The distribution of the patterns of thematic development is presented in Table 1 as follow.

Table 1. Distribution of Thematic Development

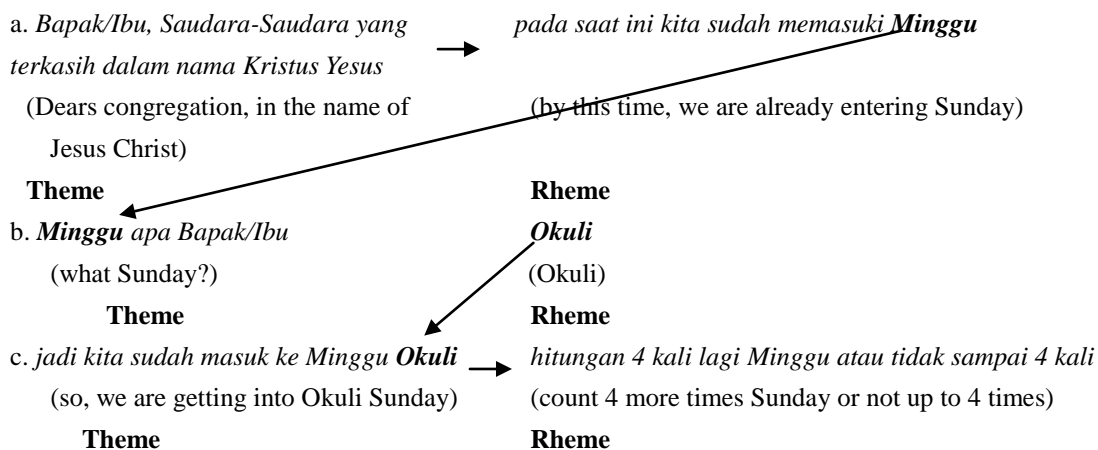
Patterns of Thematic Development	Number	Percentage (%)
Derive Rheme to Theme	36	4,1
Derive Theme to Rheme	0	0
Theme to Theme	393	44,8
Rheme to Theme	283	32,3
Theme to Rheme	48	5,5
Rheme to Rheme	117	13,3
Unity Theme-Rheme to Theme	0	0
Unity Theme-Rheme to Rheme	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on Table 1, it was found that only five patterns of thematic development were used in delivering the Sunday sermon texts namely: derive rheme to theme with the percentage 41,%, theme to theme with the percentage 44,8%, rheme to theme with the percentage 32,3%, theme to rheme with the percentage 5,5% and rheme to rheme with the percentage 13,3%. Meanwhile, three patterns of thematic development were not found namely: derive theme to rheme pattern, unity theme-rheme to theme pattern and unity theme-rheme to rheme pattern. The five pattern of thematic development found on Sunday sermon texts showed that the most dominant pattern of thematic development used in delivering the Sunday sermon was theme to theme pattern with the number of occurrences as many as 393 with a percentage of 44,8%. The discussion analysis of the five pattern of thematic development that was found on Sunday sermon is shown as follows.

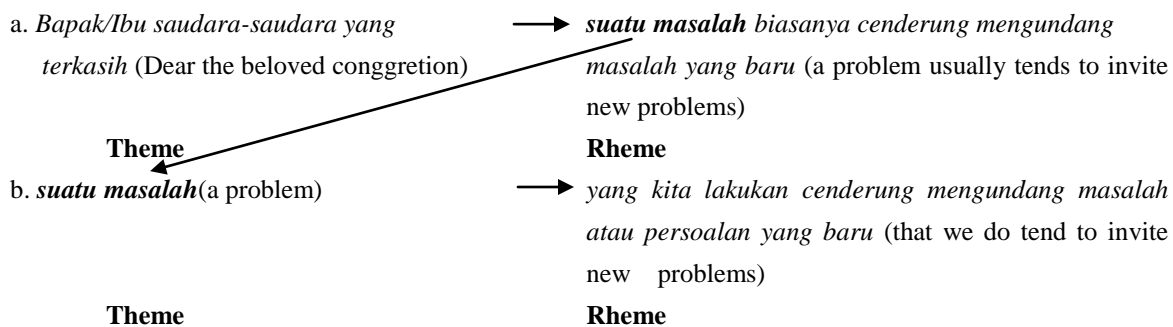
*4.1 Derive Rheme to Theme*

The patten of topic development with the derive rheme to theme pattern is a pattern of the development pattern from rheme to theme. Based on the rheme in the first clause, the theme appears on the second clause followed by the appearances of the rheme in the second clause. Furthermore, the rheme from the second clause becomes a reference for the theme’s appearance in the third clause followed by the appearance of the rheme in the third clause and so on. From the results of the data analysis that conducted on Sunday sermon, it was found that the percentage of occurrences of this pattern is 4, 1%. The examples analysis of this derive rheme to theme pattern are as follows.

[1]



[2]

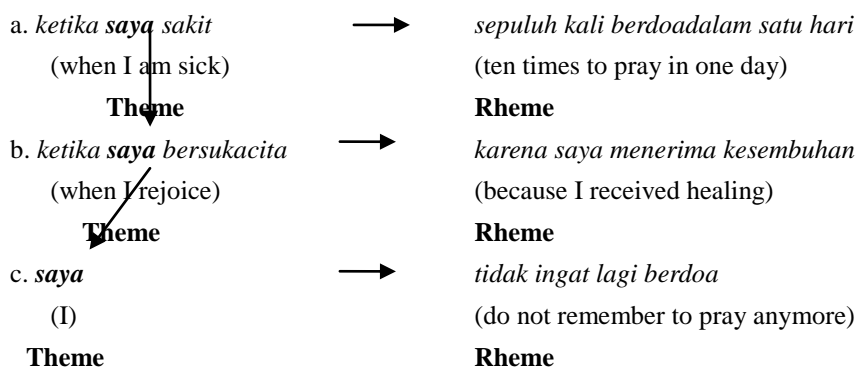


In examples [1] and [2] can be detailed as follows. In example [1], the first clause has a theme ‘*Bapak/Ibu, Saudara-Saudara yang terkasih dalam nama Kristus Yesus*’ with the rheme ‘*pada saat ini kita sudah memasuki Minggu*’. From the rheme on the first clause derived the theme for the second clause namely. ‘*Minggu apa Bapak/Ibu*’ with the rheme ‘*Okuli*’, then from the second clause rheme derived the theme for the third clause namely ‘*jadi kita sudah masuk ke Minggu Okuli*’ with the rheme ‘*hitungan 4 kali lagi Minggu atau tidak sampai 4 kali*’. Meanwhile, in example [2], the first clause has a theme ‘*Bapak/Ibu saudara-saudara yang terkasih*’ with the rheme ‘*suatu masalah biasanya cenderung mengundang masalah yang baru*’. Rheme in the second clause is used as a reference for the appearance of the theme in the second clause, namely ‘*suatu masalah*’ with the rheme ‘*yang kita lakukan cenderung mengundang masalah atau persoalan yang baru*’. That is the explanations for the example presented in terms of the thematic development with derive rheme to theme pattern.

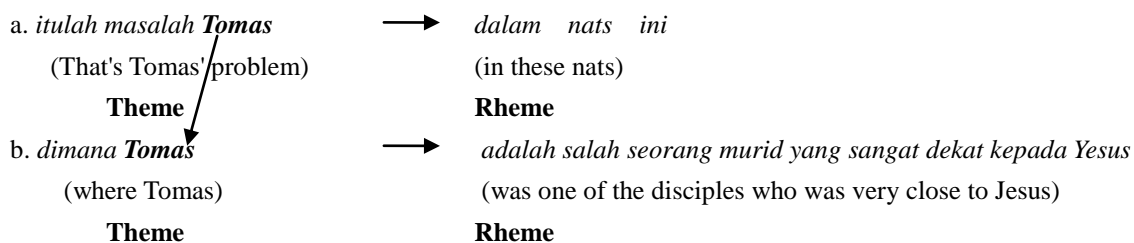
4.2 Theme to Theme

Topic development patterns with theme-to-theme patterns are irregular topic development patterns that develop the topic from theme to theme. In other words, the development pattern from theme to theme shows that from the theme of the first clause are derived several themes based on the theme of the first clause. Based on the data analysis that was done previously, it was found that the percentage of the appearance of topic development patterns with theme-to-theme patterns is 44.8%. The following is presented an example of the pattern data of the topic from theme to theme.

[3]



[4]



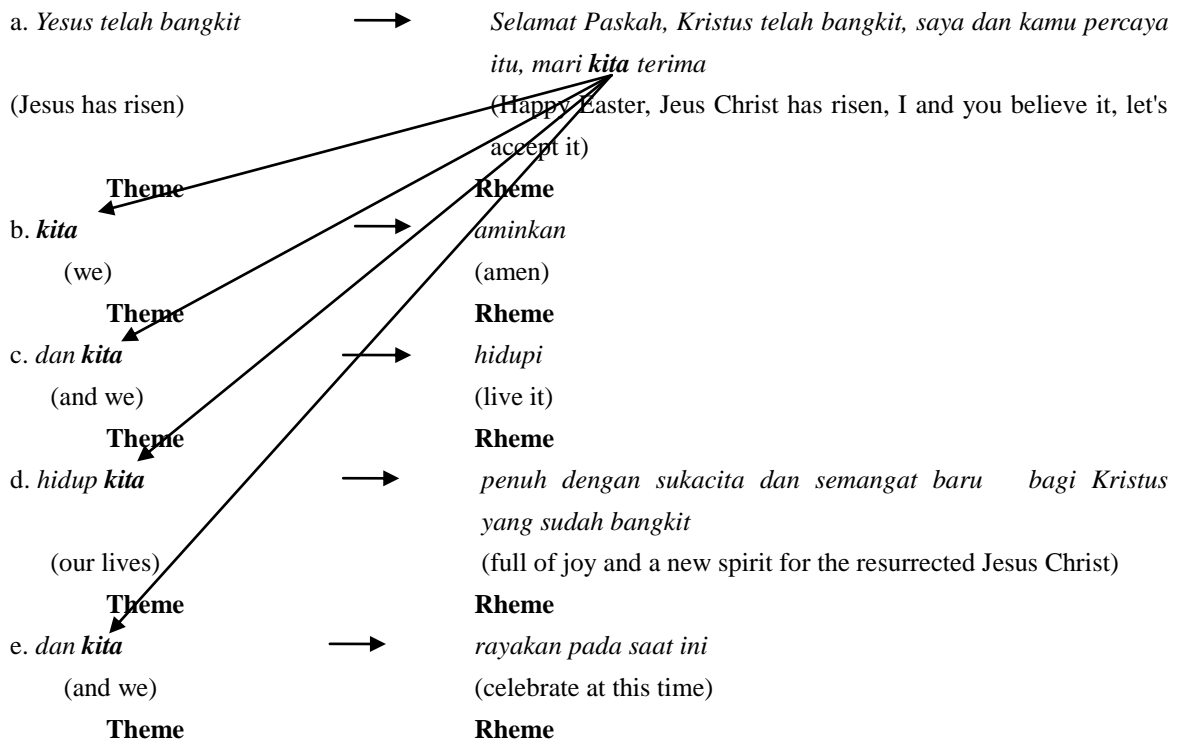
In the examples [3] and [4] it can be seen that topic development uses patterns from Theme to Theme. In the example [3] is shown in detail as an initial or first clause is ‘*ketika saya sakit sepuluh kali berdoa dalam satu hari*’, with the theme is ‘*ketika saya sakit*’ and the rheme is ‘*sepuluh kali berdoa dalam satu hari*’. The theme of the second clause

is derived from the Theme *'ketika saya sakit'*, that is *'ketika saya bersukacita'*, which is the rheme is *'karena saya menerima kesembuhan'*. Furthermore, the theme of the third clause is derived from the theme that refers to the theme of the first clause, namely: *'saya'* which is the rheme is *'tidak ingat lagi berdoa'*. Similarly with the example [4], the theme is shown in the first clause, namely; *'itulah masalah Tomas'* which is the rheme is *'nats ini'*. The second clause has the same Theme as the first clause, namely: *'dimana Tomas'* which is the rheme is *'adalah salah seorang murid yang sangat dekat kepada Yesus'*.

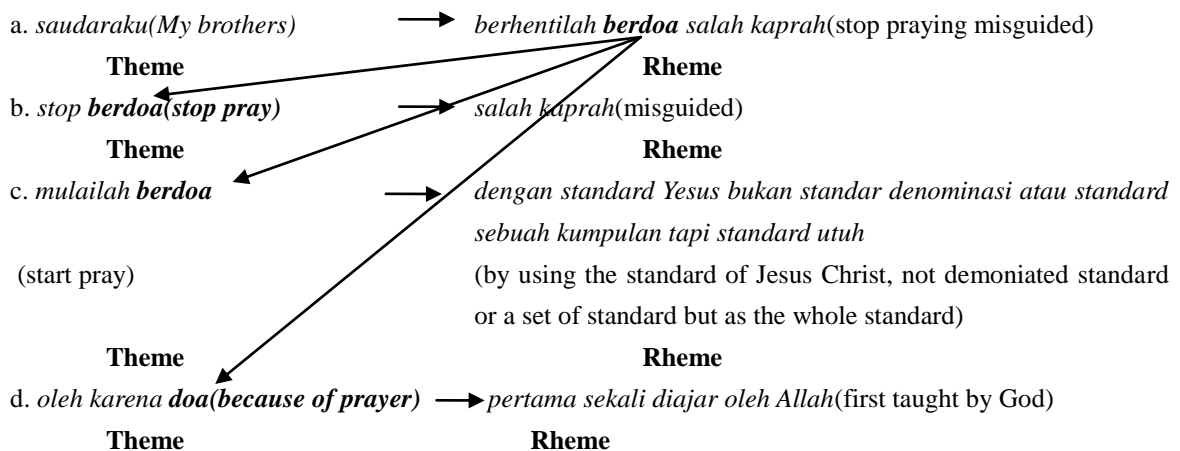
4.3 Rheme to Theme

Topic development with rheme to theme pattern is a topic development pattern from the rheme of the first clause that developed a number of themes for the next clauses. Based on the data analysis that has been done previously, the occurrences of using this thematic development pattern is 32.3% and some examples of topic development by using rheme to theme pattern are presentend in the following sample.

[5]



[6]



The examples [5] and [6] presented can be described in detail as follows. In the example [5], showed that the theme of the first clause is *'Yesus telah bangkit'* and the rheme is *'Selamat Paskah Kristus telah bangkit saya dan kamu percaya itu, mari kita terima'*, from this first clause developed a number of themes in the second, third, fourth and

fifth clauses and followed by each rheme for each clause. As the reference for the developing theme for the next clauses is rheme from the first clause is 'kita'. So the Theme in the second clause is 'kita' with the rheme is 'aminkan', The theme of the third clause is 'dankita' with the rheme is 'hidupi', theme of the fourth clause is 'hidup kita' with the rheme is 'penuh dengan sukacita dan semangat baru bagi Kristus yang sudah bangkit' and then the fifth clause has a theme namely 'dankita' with the rheme is 'rayakan pada saat ini'.

Meanwhile, in the example [6], the first clause has a theme namely: 'saudaraku', with the rhemeis 'berhentilah berdoa salah kaprah'. From rheme in the first clause, developed a number of themes for the second, third and fourth clause. Theme in the second clause is 'stop berdoa' with the rheme is 'salah kaprah'. Theme in the third clause is 'mulailah berdoa' with the rhemeis 'dengan standard Yesus bukan standar denominasi atau standard sebuah kumpulan tapi standard utuh'. Theme in the fourth clause is 'oleh karena doa' with the rheme is 'pertama sekali diajar oleh Allah'. Thus the two examples of the thematic development patterns are explained by using rheme to theme pattern.

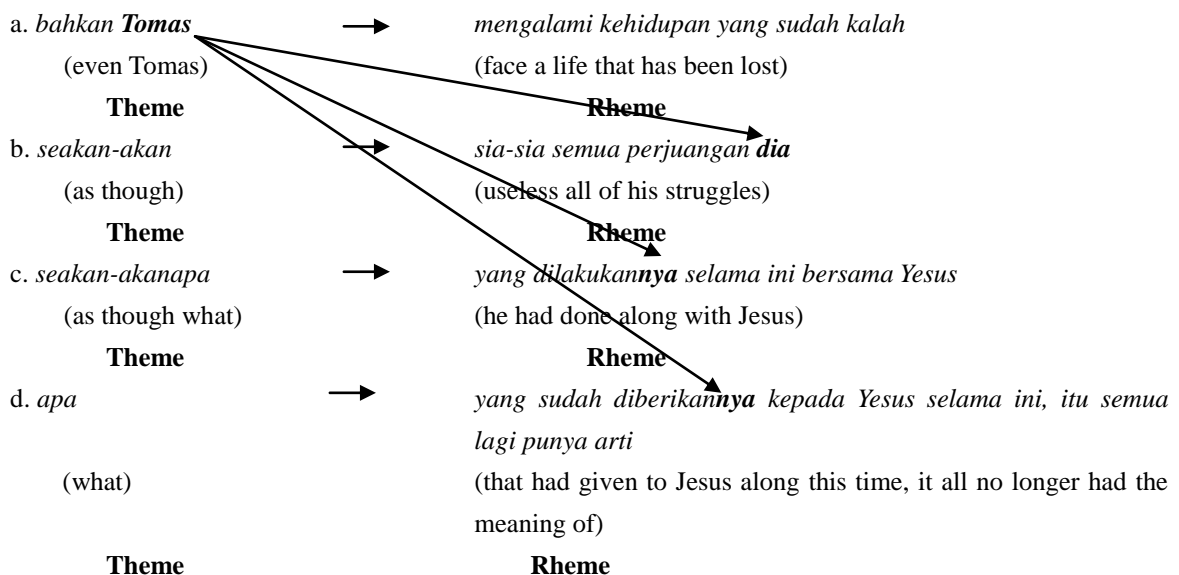
4.4 Theme to Rheme

The theme to rheme thematic development pattern indicates that the theme in the first clause develops rheme for the second, third, and fourth clauses. From the analysis of data that has been done previously, it was found that the percentage of occurrences of this pattern is 3.93%. The examples of theme to rheme topic development presented as follows.

[7]



[8]



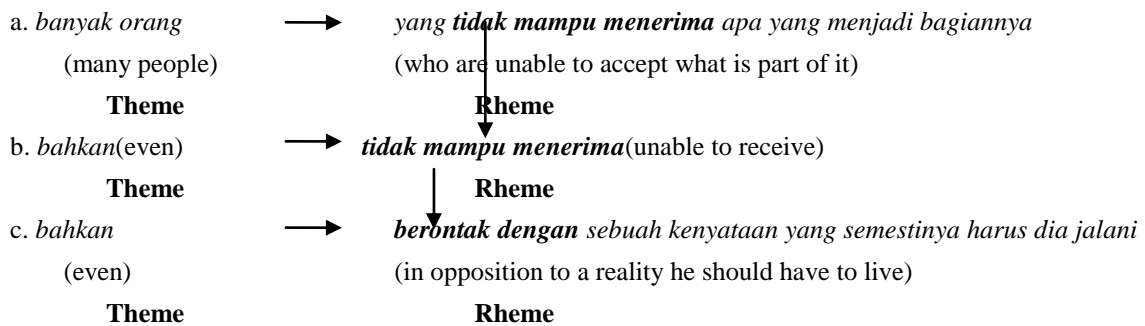
Examples [7] and [8] that have been presented can be detailed as follows. In example [7], the first clause has a theme 'orang-orang berdoa' with the rheme is 'ditengah-tengah kesulitannya, di tengah-tengah kerepotannya'. From the theme of the first clause derived rheme for the second clause namely: 'stop berdoa salah kaprah' with the theme is 'saudaraku yang dikasihi oleh Tuhan Yesus'. Meanwhile, in example [8] it consists of four clauses. In the first clause, the theme is 'bahkan Tomas' with the rheme is 'mengalami kehidupan yang sudah kalah'. From the theme on

the first clause is derived a number of rhemes for the second, third and fourth clauses. The rheme of the second clause is ‘*sia-sia semua perjuangan dia*’ with the theme is ‘*seakan-akan*’. The third clause has a rheme namely: ‘*yang dilakukannya selama ini bersama Yesus*’ with the theme is ‘*seakan-akan apa*’. Then, the rheme in the third clause is ‘*yang sudah diberikannya kepada Yesus selama ini, itu semua tidak lagi punya arti*’ with the theme is ‘*apa*’. Thus the two examples of the thematic development patterns are explained by using theme to rheme pattern.

4.5 Rheme to Rheme

Thematic development by using rheme to rheme pattern is a pattern of topic development that uses rheme in the first clause to be a reference, basis, association or focus in applying a number of rhemes in the second, third, fourth clause and so on. In other words, it can be said that rheme at the first clause becomes a control in the development of rheme for all subsequent clauses. From the results of the data analysis, it was found that the percentage of occurrence of this pattern is 13.3%. As the examples of rheme to rheme pattern of topic development are presented as follows.

[9]



[10]



Examples [9] and [10] that have been presented can be detailed as follows. In example [9], the first clause has a theme ‘*banyak orang*’ with the theme is ‘*yang tidak mampu menerima apa yang menjadi bagiannya*’. From the rheme of the first clause becomes the basis or the focus to derive the rheme for the second and third clause. For the second clause, the rheme is ‘*tidak mampu menerima*’ with the theme is ‘*bahkan*’. Meanwhile, the rheme in the third clause is ‘*berontak dengan sebuah kenyataan yang semestinya harus dia jalani*’ with the theme is ‘*bahkan*’. Then, the example [10], the first clause has theme ‘*apapun pengertian*’ with the rheme is ‘*yang orang katakan tentang pengertian doa*’. The rheme in the first clause used as the basis for developing the rheme as the new rheme for the second and third clause. The rheme in the second clause is ‘*doa komunitas, doa percakapan, doa nafas*’ with the theme is ‘*yang orang katakan*’. Meanwhile, the second clause has the rheme ‘*kita harus menstandarkannya dengan standard Yesus*’ with the theme is ‘*apapun pengertian-pengertian itu*’. Thus the explanation for the two examples of the topic development patterns by using rheme to rheme pattern.

The findings of this study support the findings of the previous research that has been conducted by Sukarno (2014) who also found that the thematic pattern in Friday sermon showed that theme to them pattern was dominantly used in the delivery of Friday sermon. However, the difference between previous research and this present study lies in the amount of thematization found in the study. The previous research found only three patterns of thematization in delivering the Friday sermon: 1) theme to theme pattern, 2) theme-rheme-theme pattern, and 3) theme-theme-rheme-theme pattern. Meanwhile, this present study found five pattern of thematic development in delivering the Sunday sermon, namely: theme to theme pattern, 2) rheme to theme pattern, 3) rheme to rheme pattern,

4) theme to rheme pattern and 5) derived rheme to theme pattern. The pastor carries out these thematic development patterns carries out these thematic development patterns with the aim that message of the Sunday sermon that wants to be conveyed to the congregation can be conveyed well and can be understood by the congregation who listen to the Sunday sermon. Besides that, the congregations have a willingness to do the commandment of Jesus Christ in their daily lives.

## 5. Conclusion

Textual functions have a function to knit or string together the human experiences in the form of delivered messages. In the delivery of the message, the earlier message needs to be arranged to be related to the next message so that it becomes a unity of messages that are easy to be understood. The earlier delivery messages are the basis for selecting the next message to be delivered. In this case the pastors first think about what will be the initial message so that it will lead them in the delivery of the next message so that the intention or message of Sunday sermon that will be delivered to the congregation becomes a whole message so that it is easy to be understood by the congregation. The realization of the textual functions in stringing experiences is the using of Theme - Rheme. Theme is the starting point of the message and rheme is the rest of the message that will be delivered. Theme – rheme became the basis in the thematic development in arranging the human experiences in delivering the message. The pastors carried out the variation of the thematic development patterns of theme-rheme in the delivery of Sunday sermon to the congregation with the aim that the congregation who listened to the sermon felt interested in listening to the sermon and do not feel bored when listening to Sunday sermon. This article found that the development pattern of Theme – Rheme with theme to theme pattern is more dominantly used by pastors in the delivery of Sunday sermon with the purpose that the congregation focuses on the message of the sermon that the pastor wants to convey. This relates to the theme in the first clause being the basis for delivering a sermon message to lower a number of themes in subsequent clauses. Thus, the congregation remains focused on the theme conveyed by the pastor at the beginning. However, to provide some variations on the delivery of Sunday sermon, the pastors also used several development patterns of Theme – Rheme with different patterns as previously stated. It is recommended to further research in dealing with Sunday sermon because this article just focuses to the usage of thematic development in delivering the message of Sunday sermon.

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