

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. 1. Background of the Study

Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) awards, as one of the top tier global investigative journalism awards, provide the best selection of investigative journalists, in a form of Online or printed version, audio and broadcast categories, book publications, and two student categories in large and small institutions. Among the top global of the highest recognition of investigative journalism awards, which include *Barlett and Steele Awards for Investigative Business Journalism*, *Documentari Inchieste Giornalismi (DIG) Awards*, *Global Shining Light Awards*, and a lot more of the investigative-only journalism awards section, as it was mentioned by the chairperson of IRE Inc., the company focuses on finding the highest quality of global investigative journalists through their reports on a particular issue, such as politics, social, economy, or even global issue (Grey, 2022). As one of the specifications of the current study, the awardee of investigative journalism can provide the technique of clarity in academic writing.

Black and Yeschke (2014) emphasize a good investigation is created with two types of information—hard and soft, in which the “hard” term is referred to a clause that consists of simple fact, and is followed with clauses as the supporting detail, namely “soft” term. A good investigation is conveyed by Financial Crime Academy: Forensic and Investigation (2023) that the significance of investigation in research takes a deep process from collecting the data based on the survey gathered, analyzing the data, until it comes to the validation part of the analysis.

In this case, the hard information, as in the simple fact, will be elaborated more by the supporting details, which is soft information. Integrated research is considerably required to concern with a valid and clear investigation process (Vitse & Poland, 2017). In a way to achieve such a good investigation, one must understand how to do it correctly, especially for students in formal writing or academic purposes. Investigative journalism can inspire university students in writing for academic purposes based on the textual structure of its reports in creating clarity from its investigation process (Duffy, 2015). This creates a correlation between journalism and academic writing in which concern with the clarity of the ideas flow through investigation. Therefore, IRE awardee is considered to be analyzed as they can provide a good ideas flow from the perspective of investigative journalism.

In the case of using investigative journalism as the object of the research, its reports are able to produce such a constructive clause which can be used as a source of writing techniques. Vergeer (2018) exposed the list of journalists' duty and showed 83.3% of the majority of their job is writing as it can indicate the experience and throughout the experience will come the better construction of their textual structure. According to Masterclass (2021), there are eight writing techniques of journalism that include giving an attractive opening as a hook for the readers, use short and clear clause, quoting, and five others that concern more non-grammatical techniques. These techniques can deliver a clear idea of the information flows, though there are no other specific ways to create such a clear flow of information when a clear and valid way can offer it (Withers, Johnson, & Martin, 2020). As the writing techniques of journalism can inspire writers to

create such an informative text, university students in academic purposes or in journalism class can also be inspired by investigative journalism.

The intention of looking through reports, based on the writing of the investigative journalists who got awarded by the IRE awards in 2022, can provide a significant source of inspiration of a structural writing through their report for university students to be able to learn how to write neatly for their academic purposes through clear flow of information, such as for research or any academic writings. This argument can be supported by looking at the ethics of journalism by Lestari (2019) who explains one of the concepts, namely “self-plagiarism” in which a technique of repetition and paraphrasing of a clause. Not far from the discussion of the significance of the journalist’s report for students, one must observe the right objects for the study. That will include the experience from the investigative journalists in producing their reports who also got awarded with one of the most global recognitions of an award. Taken by Statista, 29% of journalists from around the world have consistently submitted their works for 10 articles and is counting per week by the year 2022 (Watson, 2023). When writers can produce their writings daily or weekly, it means they have improved their specific skill, i.e., writing skill, for every work done and this can lead to them being one of the experts on their structure of the writing. By doing the cross-check between the object for the current study needed and sources that are available Online, IRE awards can be considered to be the object data for the current study.

A good writing is an effective writing when one can provide a logical construction of a writing (Syharizal, Fitriani, & Anggraeni, 2018; Caulfield, 2023). In knowing good writing, the strategy of using a correct Theme can provide a better pattern to

give idea flows, because learners, especially students need to understand how to understand how to write a correct sentence to create a good writing (Gulö & Rahmawelly, 2018). It can be seen through systemic functional linguistics which is proposed by Halliday (1985) as he explains that it concerns the social context in a language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Furthermore, in the status quo where university students tend to frequently write formal writings, such as essays, research, or any other academic writings, the theory of systemic functional linguistics looks into the perspective of idea flows in the writing.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explain how a language has three functions called metafunctions. As language is the way human perceived ideas from the speaker (Rido, 2020), Halliday (1994) proposed the idea of identifying a subject of a clause through three different senses: 1) psychological subject can be seen through the Theme; 2) grammatical subject is positioned as the subject of the clause; and 3) logical subject is displayed in the clause as the actor. Moreover, the current study will focus at Themes and multiple Themes in the textual context to unveil an effective writing based on the variety of thematic progression as it concerns with the flow of the information given from a clause based on the use of Themes and Rhemes (Eggins, 2004). It is best to know how to differentiate the Theme and other senses as it will be crucial in determining the Rheme in a clause to make sense of a text. Although, unable to know the difference of a correct Theme, writers will not be able to deliver the message cohesively (Rosa, 2018). In other words, knowing the choice of Themes can bring a comprehensive way to share information through the investigative journalism report.

As the current study discusses the existence of a variety of Themes and the pattern of each type of Theme, Chen and Shuo (2018) support the theory of both types of Themes by M. A. K. Halliday (1985) and thematic progression by Zhu Yongsheng (1995) on a speech made by Ivanka Trump in the 2016 presidential election. In relation to the current study, a quite similar object of research had been made by Drid (2019) in analyzing through Algerian journalist's newspaper in finding the coherence of the text. According to Kuswoyo, et. al. (2020), choosing the right Theme and thematic progression are significant in understanding the information given by a speaker based on their analysis. More research has been done by Sulastri (2022) who analyzes students' short stories in knowing how they can develop the paragraph through thematic progression.

On this matter, the current study aims to investigate the type of Themes and thematic progression from the 2022 IRE awardee based on the investigative report "The Price Kids Pay: Years After Being Ticketed at School for a Theft She Said Never Happened, Former Students Prevails in Court" by Ruth Talbot, Jennifer Smith Richards, and Jodi S. Cohen, featuring Chicago Tribune and ProPublica who placed as the first winner of the Online/printed of the first division. As a news applications developer, Talbot is concerned with developing interactive stories of the series "The Price Kids Pay". Furthermore, Richards and Cohen are positioned as the active writers for Chicago Tribune and ProPublica, respectively, where both are dealing with the investigation of the school justice system. Inspired by someone's writing can make each individual a better writer by reading (MasterClass, 2021). Being one of the top tier investigative journalism awards, the writing in the report series "The Price Kids Pay" could be used as another source

of writing technique in producing a good idea flow for university students. Moreover, based on the four previous studies, there is still a limitation about research on the type of Themes and thematic progression in a report of investigative journalism.

1. 2. Research Questions

1. What are the types of Themes constructed by the 2022 IRE journalism awardee in “The Price Kids Pay” report series?
2. What are the thematic progressions that were constructed in the report series of the IRE journalism awardee in “The Price Kids Pay”?

1. 3. Research Objectives

1. This study aims to investigate types of Themes in the investigative journalism report series that are written by the reporters of Chicago Tribune and ProPublica as being the 2022 IRE awardee for “The Price Kids Pay”.
2. As the structural clause of one of the report series will be analyzed, each major clause will create a pattern in which the current study will look into through thematic progression analysis.

1. 4. Uses of the Study

1. 4. 1. Theoretical Uses of Study

Choosing the right Theme and Rheme is considerably necessary to construct an integrated text. This study can offer students, who require writing skill, a writing technique by the IRE awardee for writing a research based on the perspective of investigative journalism by using the right Theme and Rheme

as it is shown in “The Price Kids Pay” report series. As it is essential to choose the correct type of Themes in a text, university students can produce such a clear flow of information through the pattern of the text.

1. 4. 2. Practical Uses of Study

Practically, thematic progression can be applied into any types of writings, especially in academic writings, such as journal articles. This study is applicable for university students, or students who took journalism class, in knowing how to construct a good paragraph for a clear ideas flow by applying the correct use of Theme and Rheme, and the patterns of the clauses based on the perspective of investigative journalism. In relation to formal or academic writings, writing research can be implemented by thematic progression through this analysis. Therefore, applying a good thematic pattern can create a good flow of information for the readers.

1. 5. Scope of the Study

The study will focus on analyzing the types of Themes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) and thematic progression (Bloor & Bloor, 2013) under the textual metafunctions section of systemic functional linguistics in one of the investigative journalists report series “The Price Kids Pay: Years After Being Ticketed at School for a Theft She Said Never Happened, Former Students Prevails in Court”. Major clauses, which consists of a subject and a predicate (Gulö, 2017), is the scope due to the limitation of the time given for the research. As the study focuses on the development of each major clause, the study will see the flow of information built up, instead of focusing on the structure of the text in which both journalism writings and academic writings are respectively different structures.