A STUDY OF COHESION IN VIETNAMESE EFL STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS
THROUGH THEMATIC PROGRESSION ANALYSIS (TPA)

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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นางสาวเจือง ทุย เล

Thesis Title            A STUDY OF COHESION IN VIETNAMESE EFL STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS THROUGH THEMATIC PROGRESSION ANALYSIS (TPA)

By            Miss Duong Thuy Le

Field of Study            English as an International Language

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เ จี อ ง ทุ ย เ ล :
การศึกษาการเชื่อมโยงใจความด้วยการวิเคราะห์การดำเนินใจความหลักในเรียงความโต้แย้งของผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศชาวเวียดนาม. (A STUDY OF COHESION IN VIETNAMESE EFL STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS THROUGH THEMATIC PROGRESSION ANALYSIS (TPA)) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: รักสงบ วิจิตรโสภณ, 189 หน้า.

สำหรับผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่สองหรือเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ การเชื่อมโยงความเป็นองค์ประกอบสำคัญที่จำเป็นต้องปรับปรุงในการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษเชิงวิชาการ วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยนี้คือการศึกษาการเชื่อมโยงความในเรียงความโต้แย้งของผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศชาวเวียดนาม ด้วยการวิเคราะห์การดำเนินใจความหลัก ผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัยเป็นนักศึกษาปีสองจำนวนยี่สิบคนในรายวิชาการเขียนเรียงความที่ภาควิชาภาษาอังกฤษ มหาวิทยาลัยฮานอย คำถามหลักของการวิจัยนี้คือ

1. ก่อน ที่ นัก ศึ ก ษ า จ ะ เ ริ่ ม เ รี ย น การเขียนโต้แย้งของผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่สองชาวเวียดนามมีความเชื่อมโยงในระดับใด ในตอนท้ายของวิชาการเขียนของผู้เรียนมีความเชื่อมโยงน้อยหรือมากขึ้นหลังจากการเรียนการสอนการดำเนินใจความหลัก

2. รูปแบบการดำเนินใจความหลักที่พบในการเขียนโต้แย้งของนักเรียนเวียดนามก่อนและหลังการเรียนการสอนเป็นอย่างไร

ผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัยได้รับมอบหมายให้เขียนเรียงความภายใต้สองหัวข้อที่แตกต่างกันก่อนการเรียนและหลังเรียนรายวิชาดังกล่าวจบ ระหว่างเรียนในรายวิชาผู้เรียนจะได้เรียนทฤษฎีและฝึกปฏิบัติการเชื่อมโยงความและกรอบรูปแบบการเชื่อมโยงความ ข้อมูลที่เก็บรวบรวมมาจากการเขียนของผู้เรียนจะนำมาวิเคราะห์ทั้งในเชิงปริมาณและเชิงคุณภาพ โดยการเปรียบเทียบคะแนนของนักเรียนในการทดสอบก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียนและการใช้กรอบการดำเนินใจความหลักในการวิเคราะห์การเขียนของผู้เรียนทั้งก่อนเรียนและหลังเรียนการเขียน

ผลเชิงปริมาณพบว่าคะแนนของผู้เรียนดีขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทั้งในแง่ของคะแนนรวมและคะแนนการเชื่อมโยงซึ่งเป็นส่วนประกอบของคะแนนในการทดสอบ นอกจากนั้นพบว่าการเปลี่ยนแปลงในส่วนคะแนนการเชื่อมโยงเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการเปลี่ยนแปลงในคะแนนรวม ส่วนด้านการวิเคราะห์เชิงคุณภาพ ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นจุดสำคัญของกรอบการดำเนินใจความหลักที่นำไปสู่ความสำเร็จของผู้เรียนในการสร้างการเชื่อมโยงความเป็นลายลักษณ์อักษร เรียงความที่ได้คะแนนสูงมีแนวโน้มที่จะประกอบด้วยรูปแบบการดำเนินใจความหลักทั้งสี่รูปแบบและผู้เรียนใช้รูปแบบเหล่านี้อย่างยืดหยุ่น ทำให้เกิดความเชื่อมโยงความอย่างราบรื่นตลอดตัวบท นอกจากนั้นการวิจัยยังแสดงให้เห็นการเพิ่มประสิทธิภาพของผู้เรียนในการเลือกประเภทรูปแบบความหลักซึ่งจะส่งผลต่อปัญหารูปแบบการดำเนินใจความหลักและช่วยปรับปรุงการเชื่อมโยงความ

จากผลการวิจัยนี้ การประยุกต์ใช้กรอบการดำเนินใจความหลักมีความสำคัญต่อการเรียนการสอนและการเขียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่สองหรือเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ ดังนั้น การศึกษาต่อไปควรจะมุ่งเน้นที่การพัฒนาอุปกรณ์และวิธีการสอนที่สามารถนำกรอบการพัฒนาใจความหลักเข้ามาในกิจกรรมในชั้นเรียน

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| สาขาวิชา ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ | ลายมือชื่อนิสิต _____ |
| ปีการศึกษา 2556 | ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก _____ |

# # 5587522520 : MAJOR ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

KEYWORDS: COHESION / THEMATIC PROGRESSION / VIETNAMESE EFL LEARNERS / ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

DUONG THUY LE: A STUDY OF COHESION IN VIETNAMESE EFL STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS THROUGH THEMATIC PROGRESSION ANALYSIS (TPA). ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. DR. RAKSANGOB WIJITSOPON, 189 pp.

To a large number of ESL/EFL learners, cohesion is an important element they need to improve in English academic writing. The purpose of this research is to investigate cohesion in the Vietnamese ESL argumentative writings by means of Thematic Progression Analysis (TPA). Subjects of the research are twenty second-year students at the Essay Writing 2 course in the English Department, Hanoi University. Two main research questions of this study were formulated as follows:

(1)    At the beginning of the course, to what extend are the Vietnamese EFL students' argumentative writing cohesive? At the end of the course, are the students' writing less or more cohesive after the teaching and learning of thematic progression?

(2)    What thematic progression patterns are found in the Vietnamese EFL students' argumentative writings before and after the teaching and learning of thematic progression?

The research subjects were given two writing tasks under two different topics at the beginning (pretest) and at the end of the course (posttest). Theories and practices of cohesion and theme-rheme framework were introduced to the students between the pretest and the posttest. Collected data were then analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively by comparing the scores of the students in the pretest and the posttest, and applying thematic progression framework to analyze the students pretest and posttest writing texts.

The quantitative results reveal that the students improved significantly in terms of overall scores as well as the tested component scores (cohesion & coherence), and the change in the tested component scores lead to the change in the overall scores. Regarding qualitative analysis, the findings show important points of thematic progression patterns that contribute to the success of the ESL learners in creating written cohesion. Higher-scoring essays tend to include all four TP patterns, and these patterns are located flexibly throughout the text so as to create a smooth cohesion to the whole text. Besides TP patterns, the research also show the students' enhancement in selecting theme types, which results in their progress in producing the TP problems, hence the improvement in textual cohesion.

Based on the research results, implications on the application of thematic progression framework in the teaching and learning ESL/EFL writing are concluded. In order to do so, further studies should be conducted focusing on the development of materials as well as pedagogical methodologies that can incorporate the framework into classroom activities.

Field of Study:   English as an International Language        Student's Signature  ---------------------------------------

Academic Year:  2013                                          Advisor's Signature  ---------------------------------------

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to give background information of ESL/EFL writing in Vietnam, introducing a rationale why cohesion and thematic progression are the focus of this study.

## 1.1 Background

In the 21st century of globalization, societies have confronted with an inevitable need for a bridge not only to simply exchange as a result of transnational movements (i.e. immigrant flows from countries to countries for job opportunities or family reunions), but also to overcome communicative barriers (Seidlhofer, Bohringer, and Hulmbauer, 2008). In order to meet the needs of communication, Vietnam has realized the indispensable role of foreign language learning in the current process of socio-economic integration and development; and with this strong belief towards the relationship between language and interconnectedness, the Vietnamese government has decided to put the strength on foreign language training and education. English in particular has been introduced into the national curriculum since 1972. Over the last 2 decades, more significance has been paid to English education throughout the country as the language is made compulsory for all public-school students at the lower secondary level. For those in schools for gifted students and other private schools, the subject has been made required right from primary level. Despite all efforts to bring the language into living communication, Vietnamese learners of English, for years, have been reported to ineffectively use English in real life. Even those who have studied English for seven years starting at grade six (lower secondary level) are often unable to speak English besides simple greetings such as "how do you do", and "what is your name?". Such a failure to use the real-life English has been attributed to a number of factors such as teaching methodology, and grammar-dominated exams assigned by the MoET. Teaching methodology for English language stresses the Grammar-Translation method instead of Communicative method, and teaching tends to be teacher-centered although Communicative method is at present stated as a major application in every English textbook. This explains why most Vietnamese learners of English can be described as dependent on teachers'

explanation of grammatical phenomena. Learning has been exam-oriented, focusing more on grammar and reading rather than other communicative skills such as listening, speaking, and writing.

## 1.1.1 Teaching and Learning English Writing in Vietnam

As stated earlier, an English class in Vietnam tends to focus more on English grammar teaching and learning. Most students are never taught writing skills such as planning, gathering, assessing, and organizing information, how to develop main points, how to link ideas and write cohesively, and how to sharpen thesis and topic statements in order to make papers coherent (Nguyen, 2009). Teaching and learning English writing in Vietnamese schools are not much different from doing grammar practices, i.e. rewriting sentences, making sentences, or translation exercises. When it comes to writing in the sense of making a connected written text, a great deal of difficulty emerges. It is the fact that "most EFL teachers in Vietnam find writing a complicated skill to teach, which, more or less, affects the students' leaning outcomes" (Nguyen, 2009). Therefore, EFL written proficiency owned by Vietnamese students can be considered less than good.

Despite its importance clearly stated in every secondary-level textbook which attempts to integrate all four communicative skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in every lesson, writing has not drawn much attention from both teachers and students. Since the MoET changed the English exam in the National High Graduation Examination (NHGE) and the National University Entrance Examination (NUEE) from half multiple-choice format to full multiple choice format in 2005, Vietnamese EFL learners has turned to focus on grammar and multiple-choice practices with a purpose to pass the NHGE, and later, the NHGE. Such a shift in exam formats has led to the fact that many Vietnamese students do not know how to produce a full English sentence properly, not to mention a paragraph or an essay. Most of these learners have to start learning and practicing English writing again at the tertiary level, from making simple, meaningful and grammatical sentences. Writing at this point is divided into different levels, usually six, from the sentential level to the academic research writing level. Many of my students, both English majors and non-English majors, reported that they found EFL writing an extremely tough skill to enhance.

## 1.2 Problem statement

As discussed above, writing is an essential but difficult subject for many Vietnamese learners of English. Those who have been majoring in the language for years are not excluded.  Studies on ESL in Vietnam are various; however, those that particularly deal with writing cannot be considered wide-ranged. To the best of my knowledge, up-to-date research on ESL writing by Vietnamese researchers emphasizes ESL teaching methodology (Vu, 2003; Bui, 2006; Hoang, 2007; Duong, 2008; Nguyen, 2008; Nguyen, 2009; Utsumi and Doan, 2009), and learners' autonomy and perceptions in writing classroom context (Trinh, 2005; Nguyen, 2008; Nguyen, 2008; and Luong and Nguyen, 2008). Other studies such as Nguyen (1968), Nguyen (1999) and Ho (2009, 2011) compare and contrast English written texts by ESL learners and English native speakers. In these studies, they analyze the styles of writing and focus on the cultural differences of the two subject groups. Nguyen (2008) is a rare case that discusses problems in teaching EFL writing in Vietnam. In her study she focuses on three how-to questions directing to three big issues: raising students' awareness, teaching methodology, and assessment. However, despite a number of useful facts about teaching and learning English in Vietnam, her brief discussion does not help much in terms of solving each of these three questions.

The problem of teaching and learning English as a second/foreign language lies in the fact that the teachers, right at the first moment of their career, should be aware of an appropriate framework to help their students. The framework should include what to teach or what to focus, and how to help. Schmidt (1990, 1993) has argued for a framework of teaching and learning that emphasized on the concept of "noticing." In other words, noticing students, or the motivated learners, will learn, while the ignoring ones may fall into a state of "functional fossilization" that harms their process of learning. The language teachers, he argued, have to provide the learners with what they should focus on. Vietnamese teachers are helpful as they put much effort to direct the students to noticing the differences in terms of grammaticality between Vietnamese and English. Somehow they are right because some of English grammar is considered prerequisite to intelligible writing, and the grammatical differences of the two languages have caused numerous challenges for the Vietnamese EFL writers. However, such a notice is not adequate, leading the

learners to focus excessively on grammar when they write. Furthermore, an inaccurate assumption that a writing text without grammatical errors can be considered a good text is spread among the Vietnamese learners (Nguyen, 2008). In this case, the teachers may have forgotten that grammar is only a small aspect of writing. It takes up only a minor proportion of the overall score that one student may gain for their writing assignment, and there are more important aspects to take into consideration in the assessment process.

De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) introduced their famous "Seven standards of textuality" that include (i) cohesion, (ii) coherence, (iii) intentionality, (iv) acceptability, (v) informativity, (vi) situationality, and (vii) intertextuality (Figure 1.1). Among these seven standards, cohesion and coherence are called text-centered notions, while the rest are user-centered notions of textuality.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                    │   Seven Standards of Texuality   │
                    └─────────────────────────────────┘
                       ↙                          ↘
        ┌───────────────────────┐      ┌───────────────────────┐
        │  Text-Centered Notions │      │  User-Centered Notions │
        └───────────────────────┘      └───────────────────────┘
                   ↓                               ↓
        ┌───────────────────────┐      ┌───────────────────────┐
        │  - Cohesion            │      │  - Intentionality      │
        │  - Coherence           │      │  - Acceptability       │
        │                        │      │  - Informativity       │
        │                        │      │  - Situationality      │
        │                        │      │  - Intertextuality     │
        └───────────────────────┘      └───────────────────────┘
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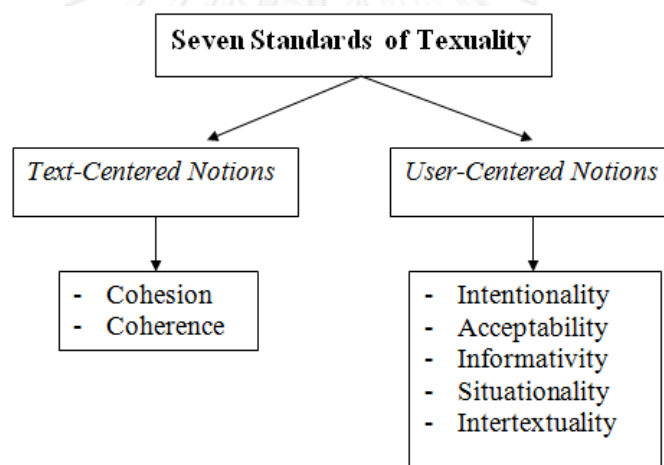
Figure 1.1 Seven standards of Textuality by De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981)

Of the seven standards, only cohesion and coherence are made significant in almost every writing textbook and reference book. The two concepts are often introduced together, thus easily mistaken. According to de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), cohesion is defined as the structural linking of text, while coherence the conceptual interrelation underlying a text. The reason why cohesion is paid as much attention as the first standard in de Beaugrande and Dressler's model is because without the connections of the structures from clause to clause, then sentence to sentence, meaning at clausal, sentential, and textual levels cannot be created.

### 1.2.1 Cohesion as a predictor of academic writing quality

This sub-title explains the significant role of cohesion in ESL/EFL writing, thus the major reason why it is selected to be on the topic of this research. Before further exemplifications, the concept of cohesion should be accurately understood as a separate yet related concept with coherence since the two concepts in De Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981) model are often confused.

Cohesion is the technical connection between texts, and is considered a vital element factor to determine whether a text is good or not. This link is often explicit throughout the text at both clausal and sentential levels. Implicit bridges are at times found, though they are not common. Witte and Faigley (1981), Alarcon and Morales (2011) considered cohesion as the ties that bind a text, and an important element that leads to coherence. Coherence has a significant role because it creates the implicit connection within the text. MacCagg (1990) and Morales (2011) have claimed that coherence depends largely on what the readers know about the topic they are reading. However, this is not always the case. When comprehension problem occurs due to limited background information about the relatedness of ideas within the topic, readers have to rely on explicit signals to compensate for their limitation. Such signals are cohesive devices, which make significant contribution to the meaning-making process of the text.

Hence, the introduction of cohesive devices by Halliday and Hassan (1976) has broadened the horizon of the field of ESL/EFL. The concept has, on one hand, helped the writers create the connection between text and context in which it is writing. On the other hand, it helps the learners as well as the investors to see the entire text as a holistic semantic entity, and to analyze how this semantic association is created. Yang and Sun's (2012) research has shown that the investigation into the use of cohesive ties facilitates this understanding. Modern studies have concluded that the use of cohesion, together with coherence, have a strong impact on the learners' score in writing exams, in particular. In other words, lacking cohesive ties in their writings may result in the students' low scores in exams (Bamberg, 1983; Wang, 2007). The association between cohesion and writing quality has been studied over

the last decades, and many of the findings have been positive. Chiang (1999), Liu and Braine (2005) proved that cohesion significantly represents the quality of text. In other relevant studies, researchers discovered that cohesion and the use of cohesive ties can be a basis for evaluating text quality (Chiang, 2003). In Chiang (2003), the rater subjects claimed that their evaluation of writing quality is based on their perception of coherence and cohesion within the text. Moreover, for both native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) rater groups, cohesion was the best predictor of writing quality. Similarly, Yang & Sun (2012) demonstrates that there is a significantly positive correlation between the correct uses of cohesive devices with the writing quality, regardless of the EFL subjects' level of proficiency.

The significant role of cohesion in the make-up of writing scores for L2 learners are more obvious if one take a look at the criteria for evaluating and assessing L2 writing texts in different L2 standardized tests. Take the rubrics designed for IELTS (writing task 2) and TOEFL writing test as examples. For IELTS writing task 2, cohesion and coherence altogether accounts for 25% of the overall score of the task (IELTS, 2012). Meanwhile, TOEFL-iBT rubrics for independent writing include detailed rhetorical support and cohesion as indispensable criteria for assessment (ETS, 2000).

To sum up, different studies have proved the significant role of cohesion in determining the quality of academic writing text in general, and argumentative writing text in particular. Such a notification, again, put a stress on the important role of cohesion; yet, due to the fact that research on cohesion and the use of cohesive ties in Vietnamese ESL writings is insufficient, I have decided to turn cohesion a focus for my study.

## 1.3 Research objectives and Research questions

The study looks into the Vietnamese ESL textual cohesion by using thematic progression analysis (TP analysis). It aims to examine the patterns of TP in Vietnamese EFL argumentative writing texts before and after the teaching of cohesion in classroom.

The main research questions of this case study are initiated by the current lack of empirical evidence with regards to the writing development of Vietnamese language learners. The research subjects are sophomores enrolling in Writing 2 course, Essay Writing, in the English Department, Hanoi University. The main research questions of this study can be formulated as follows:

(1) At the beginning of the Writing 2 course, to what extent are the Vietnamese EFL students' argumentative writings cohesive? At the end of the course, are the students' writing less or more cohesive after the teaching and learning of thematic progression?

(2) What thematic progression patterns are found in the Vietnamese EFL students' argumentative writings before and after the teaching and learning of thematic progression?

## 1.4 Research Hypothesis

Following the research questions in section 1.3, research hypotheses are as follows:

- At the beginning of the Writing 2 course, the Vietnamese EFL students can produce cohesion in their writing text; however, textual cohesion is loose at this stage of learning and teaching. After the lessons and practices of cohesion and thematic progression in writing, these students and produce more tightened argumentative texts at the end of the course.

- Within the first three weeks of the Writing 2 course, problems of thematic progression are collected and poor use of thematic progression can be observed in the Vietnamese EFL argumentative writings. At the end of the course, more linear pattern is produced, and a mixture of three thematic patterns (i.e. constant, linear, split rheme, and derived theme) can be found in these students' writings.

## 1.5 Scope of the research

The study involves 20 Vietnamese sophomores of the same class at the English Department, Hanoi University. All of them have successfully finished the two previous required courses on Academic Writing, Paragraph Writing and Essay Writing 1, and are, at the time of study, enrolling into the required Essay Writing 2 which focuses on argumentation throughout the course. Data collection is from giving the students argumentative writing tasks, of which prompts are retrieved from English Model Essay or IELTS Writing topics. Data will be collected two times during the whole semester one of academic year 2013-2014. The first one is at the beginning of the course, and the second time of study is conducted at the end of the course, after the students are taught about cohesion and trained to use cohesive devices in their writing several times. Thus, a total number of 40 English argumentative writing essays by the participants are collected. Data analysis focuses only on cohesion, and relies on the Thematic Progression framework developed by Halliday (2004) and Eggins (2005).

## 1.6 Definition of terms

A number of terms need to be clearly described and understood within this study. They are "argumentative writing", "clause", "cohesion", "theme and rheme", and "thematic progression framework".

*Argumentative writing*: is a type of writing that follow a formal style with its own sets of rules and practices served among scholars and the academia. Pham (2007) defines argumentative writing as the genre that attempts to convince the readers that they should accept the writer's views or do what the writer ask them. Argumentative writing includes argumentations that are mostly found in standardized essay tasks and academic papers (Ho, 2011). More literature on these major concepts are further discussed in the next part of this study.

*Clause*: A clause in this study can be defined as equal to a t-unit, or the smallest grammatical unit that expresses a propostition. In many cases, a clause is a

simple sentence that consists of a subject and a predicate. In other cases, it can be a dominant clause with other dependent clauses attached to it (Hunt, 1965).

*Cohesion*: *cohesion* refers to text features that help create a sequence of sentences. Cohesion is concerned with how text components are connected, and it occurs when cohesive devices are used across sentences. In this study, cohesion will be seen as the connected flow of text which is analyzed by the use of thematic progression analysis.

*Theme-Rheme*: *Theme* is the starting point from which the sentence proceeds, and *Rheme* is the rest of the sentence. The concepts of Theme and Rheme are in many times referred to the given-new concepts of which theme is supposed to be known or given information while rheme is of the new one. However, according to Halliday, the Theme of a sentence may, but does not necessarily, correspond to given or known information.

*Thematic progression framework/analysis*: The second concept worth mentioning is the framework of "Theme" and "Rheme" developed by Halliday (1985, 2004) in his respectable theory of Systemic Functional Theory. The concept of Theme-Rheme framework was, in fact, defined and discussed before Halliday. It is not until these days that the relationship between Theme and Rheme catches more attention in the teaching and learning of academic writing (Witt and Faigley, 1981; Wang, 2007). Fries (1983) argued that thematic progression and thematic content correlate with the structure and method of development of a text. A thematic progression analysis (TPA), a method based on the fundamental concepts of Theme and Rheme by Halliday (2004), is used to assess ESL learners' effectiveness in applying Theme-Rheme framework. Further reviewing on this method, McCarthy (1991), McCarthy and Carter (1994), and Ho (2011) remarkably point out the contribution of thematic organization to cohesive development of the text and helps demonstrate the organization of paragraphs throughout the text and across sentence boundaries as Themes and Rhemes of successive sentences are linked and merged into a text structure. Therefore, applying this framework of analysis, one can explain why a seemingly well-organized text turns out to be incomprehensible or rather

irrational. More explanations and demonstrations of TPA will be provided in the next chapter.

## 1.7 Expected outcomes

The expected outcome is that both teachers and learners would benefit from this study, although teachers may find it more applicable. On the one hand, teachers will learn about the *application* of TP analysis in order to help their students improve the quality of text in writing, particularly in terms of developing recommended Theme-Rheme pattern and boosting appropriate use of cohesive devices in their academic writing. On the other hand, the study is hoped to raise the *learners' awareness* of the concepts of Theme-Rheme framework and Cohesion in order to boost further practices and development in their writing skills.

## 1.8 Significance of the study

The research is hoped to benefit the teaching and learning ESL/EFL writing. These contributions can be listed as follows:

(1) Help teachers and researchers to determine how textual cohesion is constructed by identifying the most common patterns of thematic progression made by Vietnamese ESL learners.

(2) Raise awareness among the learners of theme/rheme and how to apply the patterns to their writing in order to score better and make their writings connected and sound native-like.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents details of academic ESL writing, cohesion, and thematic progression in academic ESL writing. The first section provides fundamental concept of ESL writing and academic writing. The next two sections respectively discuss the concepts of cohesion and thematic progression in writing. The last section explains the connection between these two concepts in academic writing.

## 2.1 Second Language Writing and Academic Writing

Second language writing is defined by Hyland (2003) as the study of writing performed by non-native speakers or writers of a language as a second or foreign language. The main purpose of academic writing is to serve the academia, or, in other words, it is made by scholars for other scholars. Academic writing diverse from paragraphs to essays, research papers and so on; however in most text analysis, academic writing is divided into two categories: (a) published academic papers, and (b) written assignments and essays (i.e. IELTS writing task 2). The analysis of text, or the assessment process of text, has been designed to deal with two levels of text construction: macro level, and micro level. Macro level includes the organization of ideas and information in discourse, while micro level deals with syntactic and lexical features (Coulthard, 1985; de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981; Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Take the IELTS writing task 2 as an example. The assessment rubrics of the text contain four important criteria: (i) task response, (ii) coherence and cohesion, (iii) lexical resource, and (iv) grammatical range and accuracy. The first two criteria deal with the macro level of text, whereas (iii) and (iv) micro level of text.

Learners who are committed to academic writing have to bear in mind a number of rules regarding written stylistics, ideas' structures and organization. For example, the three best stylistic rules among ESL learners in Hanoi University are given as follows:

1. Academic writing must be objective, thus, write in the third person. The focus should be on the topics and ideas to be developed.

2. Academic writing must not be culturally biased. Therefore, avoid abbreviations and slangs.

3. Academic writing focuses on formal-register language in order not to cause any ambiguity or hardship regarding to differences in English varieties to the readers.

(Pham, 2004)

In terms of ideas distribution, all kinds of essays as well as research papers must consist of three parts: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion, without one of which, the writing cannot be considered completed.

Argumentative essay writing is an academic genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic, collect evidence, and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner (Zemach and Rumisek, 2005). Authors of this genre are required to establish a clear thesis statement and follow good reasoning. The core text type of academic writing is argumentations and reasoning; therefore, argumentative writing is frequently tested in standardized tests such as TOEFL and IELTS. However, this genre proves to be difficult both technically and culturally to L2 learners (Bliss, 2001; Ho, 2011). This explains why argumentative writing, among other genre, is chosen to be studied in my research.

Argumentative writing genre taught in the English Department, Hanoi University, is also called persuasive essay that requires a "persuasive strategy" (Pham, 2007) based on an anticipation of audience response, the reason for persuading, and the persuasive appeals it include:

a. *Audience response*: the writer has to acknowledge the audience's opposing beliefs about their subject matter. These beliefs should be stated at the beginning of the argument to demonstrate that the writer is reasonable and fair.

b. *Reason for persuading*: this is the goal of the writer, or what the writer wants to do, and it should be stated early in the argument. A claim on the writer's goal should be made in the thesis statement, and then developed in the body of the essay.

c. *Persuasive appeals*:  these are the solid evidence, i.e. facts, figures, and examples, to support the writer's claim in the thesis statement. These appeals should be presented in an appropriate way so as not to cause any negative feelings to the readers.

Two recommended ways to organize an argumentative essay are shown in Table 2.1 as follows:

Table 2.1 Two recommended ways to organize an argumentative essay

| Overall structure 1: | Overall structure 2: |
|---|---|
| I. Introduction (thesis) | I. Introduction (thesis) |
| II. Weakest argument that supports the writer's opinion | II. Counterargument and refutation |
| III. Stronger argument that supports the writer's opinion | III. Weakest argument that supports your opinion |
| IV. Strongest argument that supports the writer's opinion (if any) | IV. Stronger argument that supports your opinion |
| V. Counterargument and refutation | V. Strongest argument that supports your opinion (if any) |
| VI. Conclusion | VI. Conclusion |

(Pham, 2007)

Of the two above organizations, overall structure 1 is more commonly-produced (Pham, 2007).

### 2.1.1   L2 Writers and the Impact of their Writing Experience

For many ESL/EFL learners, English academic genre is considered their weakness because they have to write in another language and a new genre that

contains unfamiliar rules and different cultural values as well as criteria (i.e. of a good academic text) from that of their mother tongue. In order to address the students' need, it is essential that ESL writing teachers get to know the learners' cultural and educational backgrounds (i.e. what kind of writing training and education the learners have been exposed to) (Matsuda, 1997).

One challenge of ESL writing lies in the fact that a learner's experience of first language (L1) plays an important role in shaping the learner's assumptions of their writing in the L2 language (i.e. English). Let us take a look at some ESL writing rhetoric examples from Asia. Kaplan (1966) and Hinds (1984, 1990) observed that Asian rhetorical approaches share many text features that are employed in ESL writings. ESL writers from China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam share a similarity of being indirect in their L2 essays as the writers' position is implied instead of being directly stated. The explanation for this phenomenon lies in the fact that these writers' are strongly influenced by traditional Chinese rhetorical approach, the Confucian approach, which is far different from the Anglo-American rhetoric tradition. The Chinese rhetoric directs the writers to exchange ideas with the readers in a harmonious manner instead of any individual holding their own ideas. Consequently, L2 essays by these learners are often hedging, and "include too many rhetorical questions, denials and refutation, and indirect syntactic constructions, such as the passive voice, indefinite pronouns, and demonstratives" (Hinkel, 1995, 1997).

## 2.1.2 Vietnamese L2 argumentative writing rhetorical features

Argumentative writing is confirmed to be the toughest genre of academic writing, compared to descriptive and narrative writing in both L1 and L2 writing by Gleason (1999), Ferretti, Andrews-Weckerly, and Lewis(2007), and Yang and Sun (2012). Problems encountered by Vietnamese ESL writers lie in the fact that the model and organization of composition in L2 is different from the one written in their L1, yet their L1 experience has a strong influence on their production of L2 essays. The common features found in Vietnamese L2 argumentative essays are as follows:

- The thesis statement in argumentative essay is delayed until the end of the writing text instead of being stating right at the beginning. This results

from the indirect approach of Confucian tradition discussed in the last section. In this case, the writer assumes that it is the readers', not the writer's, responsibility to clarify the meaningful flow of the text (Taylor, 1995; Nguyen, 1987).

- For Vietnamese ESL learners, several independent clause can be connected by a connective (i.e. and, but, however) or maybe linked without any connective in a sequence (Nguyen, 1987). Conjunctions such as "and", "but", and "yet" are most common at the phrase level; however, they are also used at the sentence level instead of transitions (i.e. first, second, moreover, therefore) (Hinkel, 2002).

  E.g. Going to marry is a happy ending for couples who are falling in love. And I am convinced that gay marriage should be legalized.

- Vietnamese ESL writers, influenced by their L1 or Confucian rhetoric tradition, find it appropriate to use rhetorical questions in their L2 writing. They often consider these questions as an appealing way to convey uncertainty or facts that can draw the attention of the readers (Taylor and Chen, 1991). Meanwhile, the rules that govern English written academic texts count the use of rhetoric questions as an inappropriate strategy since it is personal and subjective (Swales and Feak, 1994; Myer, 1989).

- Traditional Vietnamese writing encourages the use of third personal pronouns such as "they" and "it" as a rule of formal writing style and to create ties throughout their writings. Therefore Vietnamese ESL writers tend to apply this rule to their English writings, using third personal pronouns to elaborate their arguments so that it can draw the attention of the readers. However, such an application is considerably different from the strategy used by native speakers of English to construct cohesiveness in written texts. The NS writers tend to utilize lexical devices (using synonyms, collocations, etc) to establish the links between their texts (Hinkel, 2002).

Aside from the above features, there is also an issue of textual stylistic differences in which Vietnamese ESL writers applied the writing style in their own language to essays in English. Ho (2009) found problems related to idea linkages, development and organization. He explains that Vietnamese ESL learners tend to

start a sentence by introducing the topic before proceeding with something about it. Consider this example:

*"The book you gave me last week, I already finished."*

One may argue that this sounds common among native speakers of English; this is true in spoken contexts while in written contexts, this can be considered unacceptable. The above sentence sounds much like Vietnamese because of the existence of topicalization (Nguyen, 1987). In this case the topic or the focus of the sentence is stressed on "the book you gave me last week". The sentence would be more written English as "I already finished the book you gave me last week." A native Vietnamese user of English does not have any difficulty understanding the following sentence taken from Ho (2011):

*"In the yard there is a cat. A mouse is chased by it."*

An English native speaker may not expect such a shift of topic, from the "yard" which is the focus of the first scene to "mouse" which is the focus of the second sentence. A more natural English version should be "There is a cat in the yard. It is chasing a mouse." However, the previous version may be perfect to a Vietnamese writer since probably in their logic, it is "mouse" in the second scene that catches most attention as a focus of action. Moreover, concerning cohesion, there is an implicit connection between a cat and a mouse according to the Vietnamese progression, which can be seen as a cohesive device according to the Vietnamese native learner of English.

Implicit link is another headache-causing problems in Vietnamese ESL learners' writings since many students assume that the readers share similar knowledge, understanding, and/or from the same cultural background with them (Ho, 2011). Let us look at the following example:

*"Those who keep at working iron will eventually make needles. Perseverance is a key to success."* (extracted from Ho, 2011)

This example illustrates a Vietnamese famous metaphor that making needles out of iron is comparable to a human's determination and perseverance for success. Obviously there is an implicit link between "needle" and "iron", and patient readers of different cultural background would finally understand what these sentences mean. Even though, the process may take time. Meanwhile, readers from Vietnam, or those who come from other cultures that share similarities with Vietnamese culture,

are more likely to find the meaning and the connection of the two sentences without any attempts. However, those from another culture may find it problematic, and thus needs more background input to understand the comparison in a correct way. Besides, concerning textual quality, explicit links within text boundaries should be more emphasized rather than implicit ones since they create the first standard of textual quality, cohesion (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). Ho (2009, 2011) assumes that a good English argumentation should be direct, linear, and unambiguous, which is hard to attain without explicit cohesion among text.

## 2.2 Thematic Structure

Theme-Rheme is a structure that carries a "line of meaning", hence assigning a clause a message that it has to bear. Theme and Rheme are actually not new concepts and have been issues of debate since the eighteenth century when Weil (1844) introduced a clausal structure consisting of a point of departure and enunciation (Wang, 2007). Also known in different terms such as Topic and Comment, or Topic and Dominance, Theme and Rheme come from the terminology of the Prague school of linguists, and are used favorably by Halliday (2004) in his theory of Systemic Functional Grammar.

The structure, known as thematic structure, presents the distribution of information within a clause as well as within a sentence. Information is allocated in two parts of the clause namely Theme and Rheme. Theme is defined as "the point of departure" of the message (Halliday, 2004), and frequently serves to present given information which has already been mentioned somewhere in the text, or understood as a common knowledge from the particular context. In other words, Theme provides a setting which often contains familiar or old information. The setting is followed by the remainder of the message – Rheme. Rheme is the second part of the clause in which Theme is developed, and usually contains unfamiliar information, or new knowledge that a writer assumes his/her readers do not know. New information, or Rheme, is indispensable in order to follow the progression of the argument.

Theme and Rheme can be recognized by looking at their distinct positions in a clause: Theme occurs first, followed by Rheme. Theme is not necessarily the subject of a sentence, nor is Rheme equated with the predicate. Have a look at the following example:

| No. | Theme | Rheme |
|-----|-------|-------|
| 1 | The lion | chased after the deer in the forest |
| 2 | Before my eyes | he appears crying |
| 3 | However, the man in black | did not even say a word to me |
| 4 | When police are not sufficient | the crime rate definitely rises |
| 5 | My parents and I | were watching a drama when he came |
| 6 | It was important | that the study of cohesion in argumentative writing is conducted |

When Theme and Rheme overlap with sentential grammatical components (subject and predicate), like sentences 1 and 5 in the above example, the Theme is called "unmarked Theme" (Halliday, 2004). On the other hand, a Theme that does not coincide with the subject of a sentence is called "marked Theme". Examples for marked Theme can be "All around the town" in sentence 2 in the example, which is actually a prepositional phrase. Moreover, Theme can be "*realized by a nominal group, verbal group, adverbial group, prepositional phrase or a dependent clause*" (Wang, 2007). Whether a Theme is represented in one way or another, its distinct characteristic that Theme appears first in a clause and presents given information is preserved.

As Halliday (2004) stated in his influential theory, the Theme is the element "*which locates and orients the clause within its context*". Since the initial place has an enormous importance in a clause, whatever chosen to be the Theme will

influence how readers interpret every piece of information that follow. Given or familiar information presented in Theme position functions as a signpost so that the readers know where the messages are from and where they are heading to. Meanwhile, new information is distributed in Rheme position. Such allocation of information in Theme-Rheme structure is a base that contributes to the success of a cohesive writing. Consider the following example:

*Example:*

　　　　**Keeping senior employees in organizations (TH1)** can help ease the financial burden of welfare services for old people (RH1). **Welfares such as medical care and pension for retired people in many developed countries (TH2)** grab a considerable piece of the "budget cake" of the government (RH2). **So issues such as poverty and education system (TH3)** can be addressed if job opportunities are created for the old (RH3).

*The text above can be analyzed as followed:*

| Clause 1 | TH1 ——————————→ RH1 |
|---|---|
| Clause 2 | TH2 ——————————→ RH2 |
| Clause 3 | TH3 ——————————→ RH3 |
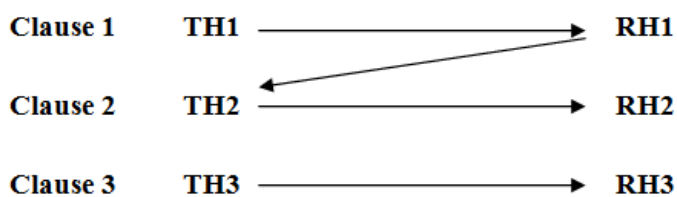
　　　　From the above analysis, TH2 is a reiteration of RH1 (repetition of the word "*welfare*"), and thus according to the theory discussed above, Theme 2 is considered as known or familiar theme, while Rheme 2 is the new one. Since reiteration or repetition lies among cohesive devices, the first two clauses are tightly bound with each other. However, Clause 3 cannot be considered cohesively connected with either of the two prior ones, although their relation can be inferred. As analyzed, Theme 3 includes textually totally new and unfamiliar information, and therefore it is not cohesively tied to the whole text.

　　　　The disconnection of Clause 3 in the above example can be seen as a less than good example of producing an appropriate Theme-Rheme distribution of information. In some cases, this may result in unclear and confusing texts that cause difficulties for readers to follow the progression of ideas and/or arguments (Wang,

2007). An explanation of such an appropriation of delivery is provided in the next section.

## 2.2.1  Types of Themes

In textual analysis and the Theme-Rheme structure, Halliday (2004) describes a clause as construing "*a quantum of human experience*" of a process, the participants in that process, and/or any circumstantial factors involved. He stresses the Theme of a clause always contain "*one, and only one, of these experiential elements*", that is either process, participant, or circumstance. Such theme is called **topical Theme**, or experiential Theme. Topical Theme can be preceded by other elements which are textual and/or interpersonal themes. **Textual Theme** includes categories of continuative, conjunction, and conjunctive adjunct; whereas **interpersonal Theme** modal or comment adjunct, vocative, and finite verbal operator. Take the following as an example:

| Well | but | then | *surely* | *Jean* | *wouldn't* | *the best idea* | *be to join in (?)* |
|------|-----|------|----------|--------|------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Cont | Stru | Conj | Modal | Voc | Finite | Topical | |
| Theme | | | | | | | Rheme |

(Halliday, 2004)

Accordingly, "the best idea" is topical theme since it is the core content of the above utterance. Preceding elements such as "well", "but", and "then" are Textual themes, while "surely", "Jean", and "wouldn't" are interpersonal themes.

The classification of themes can be summed up as the Table 2. 2:

Table 2. 2 The classification of themes

| Textual Theme | - Conjunctions (e.g. or, but, and)<br><br>- Conjunctive adjuncts (e.g. nevertheless, however, so, therefore)<br><br>- Continuatives (e.g. well, yes, oh, no)<br><br>- WH-relatives (1/2 text, 1/2 top) |
|---|---|
| Interpersonal Theme | - Modal adjuncts (e.g. importantly, perhaps, frankly)<br><br>- Vocatives (e.g. madam, Mr., Dear)<br><br>- Finite elements (auxiliaries in Yes/No interrogative clauses, elements in imperatives)<br><br>- WH-question words (1/2 inter, 1/2 top) |
| Experiential/Topical Theme | - Participant<br><br>- Process<br><br>- Circumstance |

Take a look at this example:

*Well, but unfortunately, Sir, surely the best thing (TH) would be to wait (RH).*

Textual Theme          Interpersonal Theme          Topical Theme

### 2.2.1.1 Marked and Unmarked Themes

"Markedness" literally means the degree to which a phenomenon is less or more typical. If a theme is marked, it is less typical to be produced in that way. The opposite happens with unmarked theme.

Markedness of theme occurs to only topical themes, not textual and interpersonal themes. Whether a topical theme is marked or unmarked depends on the clausal mood, that is, whether the clause is declarative, interrogative, or imperative. The following gives more details for the decisions on whether a theme is marked or unmarked:

*Declarative clauses:*

- When theme is the subject, it is UNMARKED as in:

  **The PhD student (TH)** *is now rushing for his proposal defense exam (RH).*

- When theme is any of the other constituents, it is MARKED as in:

  **His proposal defense exam (TH),** *the PhD student is now rushing for (RH).*

*WH- interrogative clauses:*

- When theme is WH-word, it is UNMARKED as in:

  **What time (TH)** *did you go to sleep last night (RH)?*

- When theme is NOT WH-word, it is MARKED as in:

  **Last night (TH),** *what time did you go to sleep (RH)?*

*YES/NO interrogative clauses (Finite operator):*

- When an interpersonal theme is realized by a finite element and a topical theme is realized by a subject, theme is UNMARKED as in:

  **Have you (TH)** finished your paper for submission yet (RH)?

- When theme is any of the other constituents, it is MARKED as in:

  **The paper for submission (TH),** have you finished it yet (RH)?

Research on markedness and unmarkedness of themes considerably assists the understanding of the construction of thematic progression patterns that establish the cohesive flows throughout a text. Later findings of this study reveal that the emergence of marked and unmarked themes from certain structures is strongly related to the degree to which a text is cohesive or not.

### 2.2.1.2 Identification of Themes

The identification of themes can be conducted as follows:

a.  <u>In simple clauses</u>: Theme is the first constituent of the clause, and extends up to the first experimental point of the message. Take a look at the following examples, the bold italic parts are themes.

In declarative clauses:

-   ***I*** wish all the best for you.

-   ***All the best,*** I wish for you.

    In WH- interrogative clauses:

-   ***When*** did you come home last night?

-   ***Last night,*** when did you come home?

    In YES/NO interrogative clauses:

-   ***Have you*** finished the book I gave you?

-   ***Last week***, did you come to see her?

    In imperative clauses:

-   ***Open*** the door, please.

-   ***Let's*** go the party.

-   ***When you listen,*** do not give any comments.

    In exclamations:

-   ***What a beautiful dress*** you are wearing!

b.  <u>In clause complexes</u>: when the dependent clause comes before the independent clause, the dependent clause is the theme. When the independent clause precedes the dependent clause, the theme of the independent clause is the theme of the whole complex. For example,

-   ***When I came,*** he was aggressively arguing with his sister.

-   ***He*** was aggressively arguing with his sister when I came.

c.  <u>Special thematic structures</u>:

1.  Thematic Equative: theme is a group of more than one element.

-   ***What he told me*** was confidential news.

-   ***The book of Jane Austen which had a lady-in-pink cover*** was what he gave me.

2. Predicated theme: theme is the first part of the message that plays a role of emphasizing the element it contains.

- *It was my brother* that gained high score for Candy Crush.

3. Thematized comment: theme allows the writer/speaker to emphasize their comments.

- *It is true* that the insufficiency in the police force leads to an increase in crime rate.

4. Preposed theme: theme stands separately from the other parts of the message.

- *A ballad by Vanessa Williams*, it is the kind of music I would like to have in such a wonderful night.

5. Passive clauses: like in declarative clauses, theme is the first part of the message.

- *My brother* was chased to the end of the street by the neighbor's dog.

6. Existential clause (There + be...):

- *There is* a woman waiting for you on the first floor.

**2.2.2 Thematic Progression**

According to Eggins (2005), Thematic Progression refers to the exchanging flow of information between consecutive Theme-Rheme pairings in a text. As mentioned above, the success of a cohesive text depends heavily on whether the arrangement of given and new information is effective or not. The distribution of information needs to follow certain patterns of thematic progression. Eggins (2005) classifies three main patterns of thematic development:

1. *Theme reiteration/constant theme pattern:*

This pattern has a purpose to create the links between individual clauses in the text. The pattern occurs when the first theme is repeated in the beginning of the next clauses:

**Whales (TH 1)** are facing extinction. **The few whales which are left (TH 2)** travel along the coastlines of many countries. **The whales (TH 3)** travel in large groups. **Whales (TH 4)** are large mammals. **They (TH 5)** have a layer of skin, blubber, meat, then, their bones.

The example abides by the following pattern of thematic progression:
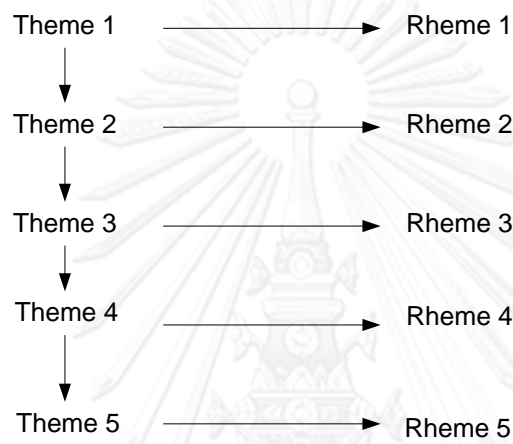


Accordingly, this thematic progression pattern exhibits repetition of Themes. As can be seen from the example, given and known Themes are actually one Theme, while Rhemes vary and include new information. These clauses can be considered cohesive since they are linked with each other by the devices of reference (they, their) and linguistic reiteration (whales, the few whales that are left, the whales, and whales). However, overusing this pattern makes the text sounds repetitive and boring, and maybe "strange" when it is repetitively fabricated in comparative or argumentative writings. To illustrate this case, a sample essay and an analysis on it will be provided in *Section 2.2.3.*

2. *A zigzag/linear theme pattern*

This pattern constructs a strong link between clauses. It happens when the Rheme of one clause is taken up as Theme of the subsequent clause:

**Outside my window (TH 1)** *is a big lawn (RH 1) surrounded by trees,* and **in the middle of the lawn (TH 2)** *is a flower bed (RH 2).* **The flower bed (TH 3)** *is full*

*of daffodils and tulips in the spring (RH3).* **Daffodils and tulips (TH 4)** *are my favorite flowers (RH 4).*

The example abides by the following pattern of thematic progression:
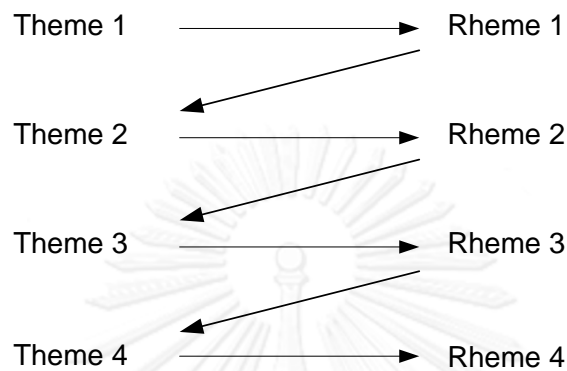


In this case, Themes are familiar since each of them is a repetition of the previous Rheme. Consequently, this makes the text particularly cohesive as the following clause is tightly bonded to the previous one, while ideas do not appear to be boring and enumerative as in the constant theme pattern. As a consequence, linear pattern makes the text sound more flexible and interesting than its prior counterpart. See sample essay (see *Section 2.3.2*) provided latter.

*3. Multiple theme/split rheme pattern*

Apart from the other two patterns, split rheme pattern helps create the cohesive flows across the text, among different parts of the text. In this pattern, the Rheme of a clause has more than one idea, each of which is taken in turn as Theme of the subsequent clauses:

> **The textual theme (TH 1)** *is any combination of continuative, structural and conjunctive, in that order (RH 1).* **A continuative (TH 2)** *is one of a small set of discourse signalers which signal that a new move is beginning (RH 2).* **A structural theme (TH 3)** *is any of the obligatory thematic elements (RH 3)...*

The example above exhibits the following pattern of thematic progression:
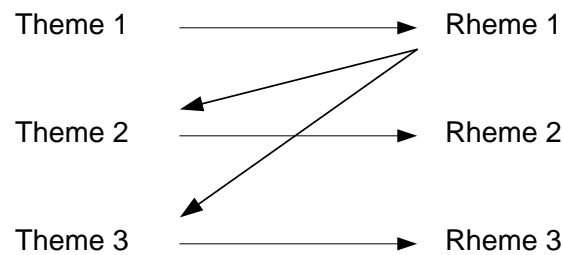
In this example, clearly this pattern of Thematic Progression provides cohesion for the text since the use of reiteration or repetition is still found. However, the clauses are less cohesively connected in comparison with the other two patterns. Obviously, the links between Clause 1 and Clause 2, Clause 1 and Clause 3 are created; nevertheless, Clause 2 and Clause 3 are unambiguously not connected. Consider the case when one has to trace back to see whether Theme 10 and 20 are Rheme 1. This can cause big trouble when the text is more complex.

*3.1 Derived theme pattern*

One sub-pattern which can be seen as an add-on to the third pattern mentioned earlier is *derived theme*. This pattern allows the theme to be related to the previous rheme of the earlier clauses. Let us have a look at the following example:

**First of all, the building of a university** requires a huge budget, either from the state or private investors (1). **The investment** is somehow limited in case of public universities (2), **since the state budget** has to cover other essential issues beside education, such as infrastructure development, public health and so on (3).
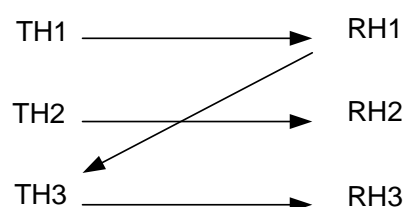


As can be seen from this example, there is a disconnection at the point of clause 2. Clause 1, instead of being connected to clause 2, is linked to clause 3 as

rheme 1 is repeated in theme 3. The illustrated diagram shows a progression of derived pattern.

Eggins' (2005) proposal of the above three TP patterns resembles the Danes' TP pattern system (1974 as adapted in Ho, 2011). Accordingly, Eggins' Theme Reiteration pattern, Zigzag pattern, and Multiple Theme pattern are respectively similar to Danes' Repeated-Theme (or Parallel) pattern, Rheme-Theme (or Linear) pattern, and New-Theme (or Circular) pattern (Table 2. 2). Interestingly enough, Danes' patterns as well as Eggins' patterns roughly correspond to the linear, parallel, and circular patterns of writing text organization visualized by Kaplan's drawings (1966).
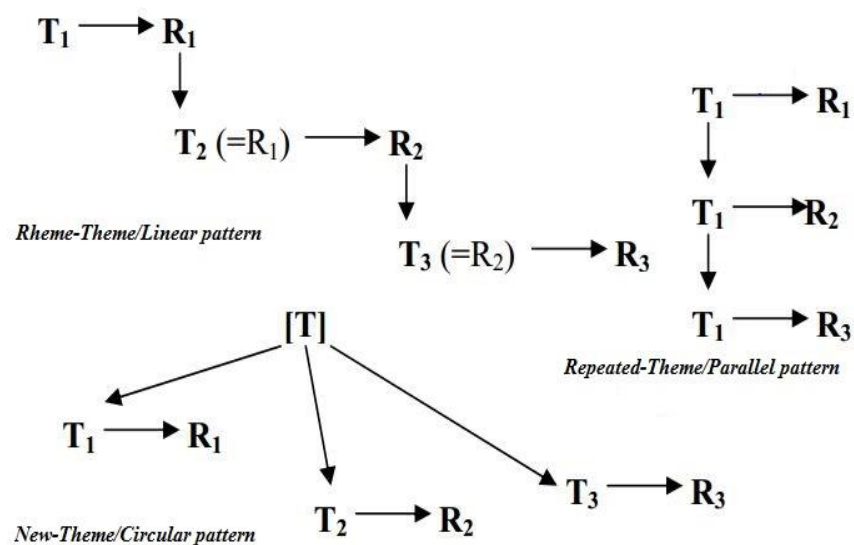


Figure 2.1 Danes' TP pattern system as adapted in Ho (2011)

Eggins (2005) argues that the Theme Reiteration pattern keeps a clear focus for the written text as Theme is not changed. The zigzag pattern or linear pattern, on the other hand, "gives the text a sense of cumulative development" (Ho, 2011). Meanwhile, Multiple Theme pattern is often found in longer texts, particularly with supports of the other two patterns for further elaboration. Discussing the roles of these patterns, Fries (1983 as quoted in Wang, 2007) implies that the linear pattern of thematic development is favored and recommended. Accordingly, the thematic

progression of an English academic text has a high frequency of cross-referential links from the Rheme of the preceding clause to the Theme of the next clause. Such a notice about the linear progression is discussed in most ESL writing class; however, the effectiveness of learners' production of Theme-Rheme structure depends on how fast and properly they can understand and apply the theory. At times, they find difficulties in handling the exchange of information between Theme and Rheme.

## 2.2.3 Thematic progression problems

The common problems are divided into three categories (Bloor and Bloor, 1992, Wang, 2007, and Mellos, 2011): problem of brand new Theme, problem of double Rheme, and problem of the empty Rheme.

- *Brand new theme:* this problem occurs when new information is put in the theme position. This information has never been mentioned before in the text. The problem leads to a disruption in the cohesive flow in the text as no thematic progression pattern is constructed at the theme position of the clause where it is contained.

- *Empty rheme:* Normally, a rheme includes one or more than one sets of new information that can be developed in the rheme position of the next clause. However, when the new information cannot be presented in the rheme part of the clause, the problem of empty rheme happens. In this case, cohesive flow of text may still be possible by the construction of the constant theme pattern between the clause with the previous and the following clauses. However, patterns of linear theme and split rheme cannot be established. In this case, the tie between the clause that includes this problem and the other parts of the text can be limited.

- *Double rheme:* this problem happens when the rheme part of the clause contains two (or more) pieces of information, one of which has never been mentioned before, or is mentioned later in the text. This problem leads to the fact that the split rheme pattern that helps connect one part and the other parts of the text cannot be constructed.

Take a look at the following examples:

a. **Exams** are the results of cramming. **Most of them are** tests of memories, working under pressure, not ability. **Teachers** (1) would teach students exam techniques (2). **The heavy pressure of exams and anxiety** has increased number of suicide dropouts.
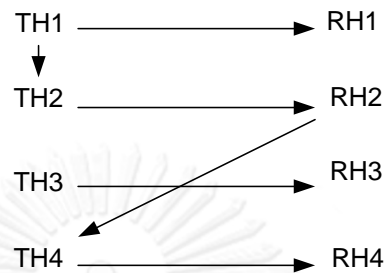


In this example, (1) illustrates the problem of brand new theme because the theme has never been mentioned before in the other clauses. Thus, there is a disruption of cohesive flow at the point of this theme (TH3-RH3) as can be observed in the TPA above.

Number (2) indicates the problem of empty rheme as the rheme fails to present new information. The problem can be solved if the writer can elaborate what "exam techniques" are there specifically.

b. **The expanding number of out of school youths** had a big impact on the economy and the parents are faced with unemployment (3).

In this example, there are two rhemes in the rheme position: "big impact on the economy" and "unemployment faced by the parents". The problem of double rheme happens if one of these two rhemes has not been mentioned before, nor is it mentioned later in the text.

## 2.3 Cohesion and Thematic Structure

As mentioned earlier, both cohesion and Theme-Rheme framework are important aspects of texture. However, in principle, the two phenomena can be considered quite distinct, and there is no necessary connection between them. Theme-Rheme arises at the clause level, while cohesion can occur across clausal boundaries (Fries, 1995, and Hasselgard, 2000). Every clause has thematic structure whether or not it contains cohesive ties, and whether or not it is part of a coherent

text. Besides, Theme-Rheme as a clause-level phenomenon is dependent on grammatical structure while cohesion is not (Hasselgard, 2000). Cohesive ties may occur anywhere in a sentence, not only in the thematic part – one may argue.

However, since the role of Theme-Rheme framework is to determine the relevance of a message to its textual environment, there has to be some interaction between thematic progression and cohesion. According to Mathiessen (1995), both thematic progression and cohesion belong to the textual metafunction, or in other words, both act as an enabling function that allows ideational and interpersonal meanings to be expressed linguistically. For more comprehensible explanation, this metafunction refers to linguistic and grammatical choices that enable the writers to convey meanings about the world around and inside them, as well as their complex and diverse interpersonal relations with others. Thus, both thematic perspective and cohesion are important to the process of creating and interpreting texts. Thematic framework tells the readers where to start from in the interpretation of a message, and the cohesive ties signal how the message is followed by the other parts of the discourse.

One more relation between the two concepts lies in the fact that altogether, they help create smooth connection throughout the text. As reviewed earlier, cohesion represents textual binding at a holistic level that makes all elements of the text bind together. At the same time, theme-rheme structure helps create connection at the clausal level, of which several connected clauses compose the entire text. Therefore, thematic progression and cohesion have to be seen closely related as they both help create a strongly linked writing text.

The aim of this investigation is to explore how these two components of texture interact in ESL learners' writing text, and whether there is a positive correlation between the two phenomena when learners' performances are improved.

**2.4 Summary**

Chapter 2 consists of an in-depth exploration into the stylistic problems in the Vietnamese ESL academic writings, and the concept of thematic progression framework. The review reveals a close relationship between textual cohesion and thematic structure. It is argued that thematic progression should be utilized in the learners' argumentative writing texts in order to improve their textual cohesion, and thus enhance the obtained writing scores. Although the three problems of thematic progression have been discussed many times in other researchers' studies, it is undeniable that these problems are still found in even the high-scoring ESL/EFL writings. Therefore, it is still on debate whether these so-called problems may be problematic to the constitution of textual cohesion in the ESL/EFL argumentative writing texts. The case study on Vietnamese EFL learners may help answer this question. The next chapter provides information about the research methodology that is applied to this study.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology to analyze Vietnamese EFL learners' writing texts quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative analysis was based on the scores obtained by the participating students. Qualitative analysis was conducted by applying Thematic Progression framework by Halliday (2004) and Eggins (2005).

## 3.1 Participants

The study involves 20 Vietnamese sophomores from an academic writing class at the English Department, Hanoi University. The selection of this class resulted from discussions with the teachers at the English Department and the data selection can be explained by the accessibility to data as well as the homogeneity of data in terms of level of English proficiency, hours of learning theory and practice during the teaching course.

The subjects, aged 19, were in their last step of the Foundation stage which is three semesters long. This Foundation stage aims at providing the students with a strong base of academic skills including Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening. For assessment, all students at the English Department have to take an institutional IELTS test at the end of each semester during this Foundation stage. Regarding writing, the students have to pass the compulsory Paragraph Writing course dealing with basic writing skill and issues of grammar at clause and sentence levels, and Essay Writing 1 and 2 courses that teach students different genres of academic essays. At this final step, the subjects of the study were enrolling in Writing 2 which focuses only on the argumentative genre.

Concerning their English level of proficiency, all subjects were described as being intermediate by their teachers.

## 3.2 Data Collection

Research on a class of 20 Vietnamese learners of English was carried out within the first semester of academic year 2013-2014 at the English Department, Hanoi University. Data were collected from two writing tasks assigned to the students, all of which were of the argumentative genre. The writing tasks were adapted from English Model Essay prompts or IELTS writing topics. This research is considered to be quantitative since it used data and statistics from a pretest/posttest research design, and qualitative in the sense that it also relied on the analysis of the students' writing works.

Corresponding with the quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, two levels of analysis were then conducted: holistic and textual. The holistic analysis was based on the scores the participating students obtained in the pretest and posttest of their writings. This level is a quantitative analysis which aims to ascertain whether the students' argumentative writing competence has improved or not. Data from this level was statistically processed by SPSS16.0. The textual level is a detailed analysis of students' texts using Thematic Progression Analysis (TPA) method focusing on the flow and cohesion of text. This analysis deals with different aspects including the students' choices of thematic progression patterns, theme types and the thematic progression problems they created in the pretest and posttest writings.

## 3.2.1 Instrumentation

Two performance writing tasks were provided with two different topics:

- Pretest: write an essay of 250 words on ONE of the following topics:

a.  College and University students should have complete freedom to choose their own courses.

b.  Gay couples should be able to marry.

- Posttest: In some countries the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 60, while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70. Should retirement at 60 be compulsory? Tell which position you agree with and why? Make sure to include your counterargument and refutation. (at least 250 words)

The students were given the tasks and were asked to produce an essay of at least 250 words within 50 minutes each time. The students' writing were then evaluated and scored by two raters, both of whom work at the English Department, Hanoi University. The selection of raters was based on their experience in teaching writing, evaluating and scoring students writing texts. The two raters, respectively, have three and five years of experience in teaching argumentative writing, as well as evaluating and scoring writing texts at the English Department.

### 3.2.1.1 The Scoring Rubrics

The writing scoring rubric in the English Department, Hanoi University was adapted from the IELTS writing task 2 scoring rubric (see Appendix 1). The rubric consists of four component scores including Content and Organization (C&O), Coherence and Cohesion (C&C), Vocabulary (V), and Grammar and Accuracy (G&A). The first two component scores are considered to assess the global constitution of the texts, while the last two component scores are used to judge the local aspects of the texts. Each component score takes up 2.5 score units, and the four make up a total of 10 score units for the writing essay. According to this scoring rubric, cohesion is integrated with coherence in the second component score (C&C). This component score assesses the students' ability to create ties among different parts of the text, hence contributing to the development of sequences of ideas logically and clearly.

### 3.2.2 Procedure

Within the first three weeks, the subjects were asked to practice writing a first argumentative task which was adapted from the English Essay Writing or IELTS writing topics. There were two optional topics for them to select, and out of 20 students, 18 of them chose topic (b) "Gay couples should be able to marry", while only two

students chose topic (a) "College and University students should have complete freedom to choose their own courses".

During the next 16-17 weeks, explanations of a proper organization of argumentative essays as well as discussions to elicit errors in the students' writings were conducted in class. Moreover, inputs of cohesion and theme-rheme framework, together with practices in thematic progression, were also conducted with clarification for further understandings (see Appendix 2). To be more specific, each writing class lasted in three hours, thus the teaching of cohesion and TPA accounted for about 45 minutes each class. The teaching started with an introduction to the TPA and cohesion, and the relationship between the two. Practice exercises ranged from identifying themes and rhemes in sentences to drawing the TPA in a given essay. An example of in-class TPA practice is provided below:

Do you want a garden feature that everyone will remember? Then, dear friend, decorate your own garden pots with colorful mosaics. How funny it is! Our starter kits contain step-by-step instructions and, obviously, it also contains all the materials you need. If you are ready to create your own design, then don't go past our popular mixed media bags. In them, you'll find several hundred colorful and unusual mosaic pieces.

| No. | Textual | Interpersonal | Topical | M/UM | Rheme |
|-----|---------|---------------|---------|------|-------|
| 1   |         |               |         |      |       |
| 2   |         |               |         |      |       |
| 3   |         |               |         |      |       |
| 4   |         |               |         |      |       |

Figure 3.1 Example of TPA practice in class

The model essays to be analyzed in class were taken from the previous academic years' argumentative essays as well as those written by the students themselves. The students were firstly asked to read the essay and judge whether that was a good essay or not in their opinions. Then, they had to use TPA to analyze whether the textual ties were created throughout the text or not, and give a solutions for improvement in case any disruptions were found.

The second data collection concurred with the final-semester exam writing task which takes place on week 20 of the semester. The purpose was to assess learners' ability to produce cohesion and develop theme-rheme framework in the writing texts after a given period of time practicing with argumentation.

Analyses of data (both pretest and posttest) include four steps. The first three steps are parts of the quantitative analysis, and the last step is involved with the qualitative analysis.

<u>Quantitative Analysis:</u>

1.  *Judging and scoring the students' argumentative texts*: Judgments were based on the raters' impression on the students' writings (i.e. whether the writings are good or not). Their judgments will be realized by the overall score given to the student's text. There will be scorings of one component score – "cohesion and coherence" scores. IELTS writing task-2 rubric with some slight modifications was adapted in the scoring process (See <u>Appendix 1</u>).

2.  *Measuring inter-rater reliability and compare the scores* (overall scores, and cohesion and cohesion scores) between the pretest and the posttest. This step involves the use of Pearson correlation coefficient (r) and the paired-samples t-test.

    - The Pearson's "r" is a measure of how strong the linear relationship between two variables is. The value of "r" ranges from -1 to 1, indicating the linear relationship between variables. The value of -1 means a perfect negative relationship between variables, "r" of 0 means no linear relationship between variables, and "r" equal to 1 indicates a perfect positive linear relationship between variables. In this research, Pearson correlation coefficient is used to decide the degree to which the ratings of the students' pretest and posttest texts are correlated. The closer the values of "r" approach to 1, the more reliable the raters.

    - The paired-sample t-test aims to compare the values of means from two related samples. In the case of this research, the samples are writing scores gained from the students' pretest and posttest writings. The results of the t-test are reported as a probability of the differences in the data from the same population. This probability is called the p-value. The lower the p-value, the more likely to reject the null hypothesis. The significance level of p-value that is usually set is 0.05 or 0.01. In this

research, paired sample t-test is used to investigate whether the change in the overall scores and the change in the tested component scores (cohesion and coherence) in the pretest and posttest are significant or not. The p-value is automatically set at 0.05.

In this research, the Pearson's "r" and the paired-sample t-test is processed by means of SPSS 17.0.

3. *Measure the linear regression* between the change in cohesion and coherence scores and the change in overall scores to see how the former and the latter are related to each other. Linear regression is an important model that helps to find the best linear relation between the two variables so as to decide whether one variable can predict the other. The model involves a function as below:

$$Y = aX + b$$

In the research, let us make an assumption that the change in the tested component scores leads to the change in the overall scores. Then, in the above function, Y is the change in the overall scores, while X is the change in the tested component scores. X is an independent variable, and Y is a dependent variable. "a" and "b" are constants.

In this study, the linear regression is conducted by means of SPSS 17.0.

Qualitative Analysis:

4. *Analyzing the students' argumentative texts*: This is the qualitative analysis in which the thematic progression framework is applied. This step demonstrates the text flow and cohesion produced by the Vietnamese EFL students. Comparison between the pretest and the posttest was based on the occurrence of problems of thematic progression (problem of brand new theme, problem of double rheme, and problem of empty rheme) and the application of thematic progression in the students' writing.

### 3.2.2.1 Guidelines for Textual Analysis

The textual analysis implemented in this research is based on Halliday (2004) and Eggins' (2005) framework of thematic progression. Therefore it is also called thematic progression analysis (TPA).

*Identifying Themes:* themes are classified into three types: textual, interpersonal, and topical theme. In terms of markedness, topical themes can be marked or unmarked (Section 2.2.1). Use the following table to realize themes that are created in the students' texts.

Table 3.1 Theme classification for TPA

| No. | TEXTUAL | INTERPERSONAL | TOPICAL | M/UM | RHEME |
|-----|---------|---------------|---------|------|-------|
| 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| ... | | | | | |

In the analysis, the kinds of themes were coded as follows:

Table 3.2 Codes of themes

| Full names | Codes |
|------------|-------|
| 1. Textual theme | TT |
| 2. Interpersonal theme | I |
| 3. Topical theme | TP |
| 3.1. Marked theme | M |
| 3.2. Unmarked theme | UM |

Theme identification plays an important part in explaining the improvement of the students in their argumentative writing in the pretest and the posttest. The understanding of their choices of themes can help explain the problems of thematic progression in their writings. Thus, this also help to explain why at times the textual cohesion is made disconnected or weakened in the students' essays. Results in Chapter 4 will reveal a number of improper structures in which marked and

unmarked themes occur that do not help create cohesion within the text, and hence should be avoided by the learners.

*Identifying Thematic Progression and Thematic Progression Problems:* As illustrated in section 2.2.2, there are three main patterns of thematic progression namely *reiteration theme/constant theme pattern, zigzag/linear theme pattern*, and *multiple theme/spit rheme pattern*, and *derived theme pattern* as a minor pattern of thematic progression.

In the analysis, the patterns of thematic progression were coded as follows:

Table 3.3 Codes of thematic progression patterns

| Full name | Codes |
|---|---|
| 1.  Reiteration theme/Constant theme pattern | CP |
| 2.  Zigzag/Linear theme pattern | LP |
| 3.  Multiple theme/Split rheme pattern | SRP |
| 4.  Derived theme pattern | DP |

Three common problems of thematic progression found in ESL/EFL writings include: brand new theme, double rheme, and empty rheme (section 2.2.2). These problems are coded as follows:

Table 3. 4 Codes of thematic progression problems

| Full name | Codes |
|---|---|
| 1.  Brand new theme | BNT |
| 2.  Double rheme | DbR |
| 3.  Empty rheme | ER |

The identification of thematic progression patterns and the TP problems facilitate further understanding of the cohesive flows established within the learners'

essays. The choices of TP patterns help to see whether the students improve or not regarding their ability to create a cohesive text. The identification of the TP problems has an important meaning in the cause of ESL writing teaching and learning. It raises the awareness of the teachers and the students of further practices to avoid these problems.

To sum up, section 2.1 and 2.2 provide a description of the participants and an outline of how the research was conducted. Besides, the selection of raters as well as the writing assessment rubrics was explained in detail. A set of guidelines were also provided to elaborate the process of identifying themes, thematic progression as well as TP problems. The next section illustrates how the data can be analyzed.

## 3.3 Pilot Analysis

This section provides a pilot analysis of a Vietnamese EFL learner's argumentative writing work. The pilot analysis is carried out on An, a Vietnamese EFL learner. An is an undergraduate student at the English Department. At the time of data collection, she was also a second year student, sharing similar educational background and experience with the research subjects. Her English proficiency is considered intermediate at the beginning of the course Writing 2. However, to do the pilot analysis, two of her argumentative writing texts were collected, both of which are written under the same topic:

*"Should every town have each own's university? Explain your agreement."*

The first text was produced on week 4 of the semester, and the second text which is a reproduction of the same topic was collected on week 17 of the semester. During week 5 to week 16, An had individual tutoring with the Writing 2 teacher of the studied class where she learned and practiced more about cohesion and thematic progression. The practice exercises were the same as those provided to the studied participants.

The two texts were then scored by only one rater who teaches her in the Writing 2 class to see whether her score improves. The English Department rubrics were used in the scoring process. Then the two texts went through TPA for textual analysis to see whether there is any difference between the first and the second time of writing. The occurrences of thematic progression patterns as well as the problems of textual TP were counted to measure the change.

The following table shows the two written texts by An.

Table 3.5 Pilot analysis: Score of Before and After texts by student An

|  | BEFORE | AFTER |
|---|---|---|
|  | **There is (M/TP)** a variety of different perspectives on the question of whether or not each town has its own university (1). **I am convinced (M/TP)** that there should not be a university per town for these following reasons (2).<br><br>**First of all (TT), building a university (UM/TP)** costs a lot of money (3). **The government (UM/TP)** can pay for a small money (4) **since (TT) the amount (UM/TP)** is limited (5). **There are (M/TP)** still many problems at hand to deal with (6). **As a result (TT), the teaching facilities (UM/TP)** would be somehow affected (7). **There won't be (M/TP)** enough students to form a class (8). **No parents (UM/TP)** want their sons and daughters to study in such a poor condition (9). **Teaching staff (UM/TP)** is also | **There is (M/TP)** a variety of different perspectives on the question of whether or not each town has its own university (1). **In my opinion (M/TP)** there should not be a university per town for these following reasons (2).<br><br>**First of all (TT), the building of a university (UM/TP)** requires a huge budget, either from the state or private investors (3). **The investment (UM/TP)** is somehow limited in case of public universities (4) **since (TT) the state budget (UM/TP)** has to cover other essential issues beside education, such as infrastructure development, public health and so on (5). **This (UM/TP)** may lead to inadequate provision of facilities within the university if it is constructed (6). **For example (TT), insufficient educational equipment (UM/TP)** cannot guarantee educational |

| | BEFORE | AFTER |
|---|---|---|
| | something to consider (10). **How many teachers (I & UM/TP)** would be willing to leave the urban areas to the rural ones(11)? **More opportunities (UM/TP)** happens in big cities (12). **However (TT), something like that (UM/TP)** could not happen in the countryside at least in terms of the high salary (13).<br><br>**Some may claim that (M/TP)** if only one university was built in a town, the economy of that town would be developed (14). **This (UM/TP)** is true to some extents (15) **because (TT) the local people (UM/TP)** have works (16). **How (I & UM/TP)** could they work if the university could not recruit enough students because of the substandard condition mentioned above (17)? **It (UM/TP)** is a vicious circle with no end in sight (18).<br><br>**In conclusion (TT), the universities (UM/TP)** should be located in big cities (19). **It (UM/TP)** is better to have a high-quality university than many unqualified ones (20). | environment for teaching and learning (7).<br><br>**Another problem to consider (UM/TP)** is the qualification of the teaching staff (8). **As a common sense (TT), teachers of good quality (UM/TP)** are more likely to settle in urban rather than rural areas (9), **which (TT)** provide them with plenty of promotion opportunities (10). **Moving to the countryside to work in a new unknown university (UM/TP)** may not be a wise choice for any of them (11).<br><br>**The opponents of my viewpoint claim (M/TP)** that a newly-constructed university brings about job opportunities for the rural people (12). **This (UM/TP)** is true to some extent (13) **since (TT) newly created jobs at the university (UM/TP)** offer more choices for the local job-seekers (14). **However (TT), such a new university with insufficient facilities and inadequate quality staffs (UM/TP)** may not draw the attention of students, not to mention acquiring sufficient budget for extensive recruitment (15).<br><br>**In conclusion (TT), the universities (UM/TP)** should be located in big cities rather than in |

| | BEFORE | AFTER |
|---|---|---|
| | | small towns due to the issues provided above (16). **Furthermore (TT), it is important (M/TP)** that well-developed universities tend to be more appreciated than the unqualified ones (17). |
| OVERALL SCORES | 6.0 | 8.0 |
| C&C SCORES | 1.0 | 2.0 |

In terms of the original text, the overall impression is that the text does not flow smoothly as it should be even though the student possesses a range of academic vocabulary and grammar, and despite her attempts to use cohesive devices to link the ideas within the texts. Blanks where disconnections of messages and problems of progressions are clearly illustrated in the diagram below. On the contrary, the after text generally shows a great enhancement in the flow of the text as ideas are closely bridged together, clauses made more complex, more academic vocabulary and grammar used. If the before text received 6.0 for the overall score, the revised text made an improvement to 8.0, with a double in the cohesion and coherence score from 1.0 to 2.0 (over a total of 2.5 score for Cohesion and Coherence according to the rubrics, see chapter 4).

**BEFORE**                                          **AFTER**
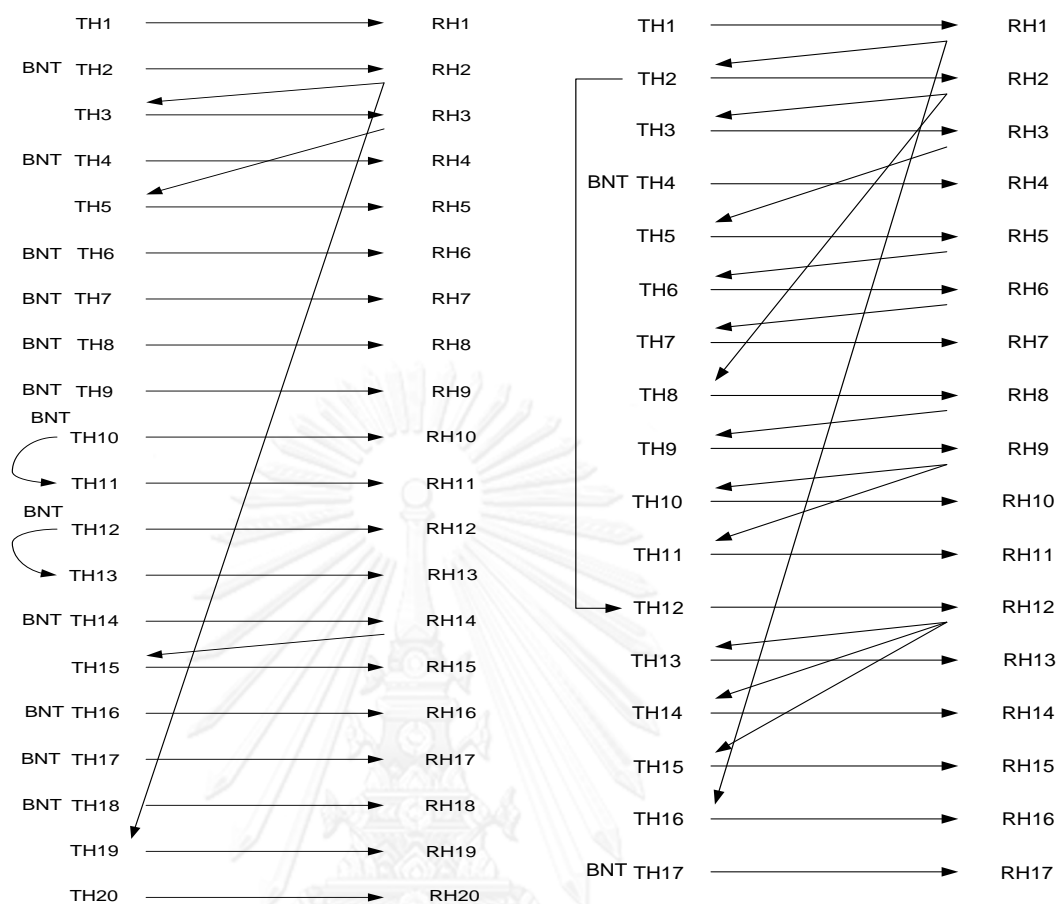
Figure 3.2 Pilot Analysis: TPA of Before and After texts by student An

To start the qualitative analysis, the student's choices of themes are listed in the table below:

Table 3.6 Pilot Analysis: Classification of themes in Before (1) and After (2) texts by student An

| No. | Clauses | TEXTUAL | INTERPERSONAL | TOPICAL | M | UM |
|-----|---------|---------|---------------|---------|---|----|
| 1 | 20 | 6 | 2 | 20 | 5 | 15 |
| 2 | 17 | 9 | 0 | 16 | 4 | 12 |

As can be seen from

Table 3.6, the number of clauses experiences a downward change from 20 to 17 clauses in the student's argumentative text. The total number of themes in "before" text is 28 while the number of "after" text is 25, among which interpersonal themes move from 2 to 0. This is the first aspect of improvement made by the student in her "after" argumentative essay. It can be noticed that the "before" text used two WH-questions in which interpersonal themes were created while none of the questions were created in the revised text.

<u>**Before text:**</u>

*Clause 11:* **How many teachers (I & UM/TP)** would be willing to leave the urban areas to the rural ones?

*Clause 17:* **How (I & UM/TP)** could they work if the university could not recruit enough students because of the substandard condition mentioned above?

The use of questions in academic writings may originate from the tendency of question usage in Vietnamese writing rhetoric (Taylor and Chen, 1991), hence the Vietnamese EFL student possibly apply this into her English writing as a way to set up argumentations so that their points sound more appealing to the readers. However, as discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.1.2), the use of rhetorical questions is considered to be improper in English academic writing tradition (Swales and Feak, 1994; Myer, 1989). Besides, this theme type is only used to raise the writer's personal concerns or view so as to attract the readers instead of creating a tie between the existing clauses with the previous or latter ones.

Since the "before" and "after" texts contain different number of clauses, it is necessary to count the proportion of occurrence of theme type in order to explore the changes in the students' choices of themes in her "before" and "after" texts. The proportion of four types of themes (marked topical theme, unmarked topical theme, textual theme, and interpersonal theme) are measured in percentage, under the following formula:

**Proportion = (Theme Type/Total Themes)*100%**

The results are shown in Table 3.7 as follows:

Table 3.7 Pilot analysis: Proportion in percentage of four types of themes

| | Before | | After | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | Percentage | No. | Percentage |
| Marked Topical Theme (M/TP) | 5 | 18% | 4 | 16% |
| Unmarked Topical Theme (UM/TP) | 15 | 53.5% | 12 | 48% |
| Textual Theme (TT) | 6 | 21.5% | 9 | 36% |
| Interpersonal Theme (I) | 2 | 7% | 0 | 0% |
| Total No. of Themes | 28 | | 25 | |
| Total No. of Clauses | 20 | | 17 | |

Textual themes' occurrence nearly double from 21.5% (before) to 36% (after). This is a significant change in the student's improving capability to use conjunctions and conjunctive adjuncts which can be found widely in the after text. These are also important devices that help create the cohesive thematic patterns that flow throughout her text.

Interpersonal themes drop to 0% in the after text as no more personal questions are found in the improved version. This also means An's writing becomes less personal and interactive and her arguments become less hedging than originally.

Meanwhile, occurrence of topical themes slightly falls by 2% for marked themes, and approximately 5% for unmarked themes. However the proportion of marked theme over unmarked theme does not change, leveling off at 1/3. Important findings reveal a number of structures containing marked themes that do not help establish cohesive connection within the students' writing texts. Specifically, among the marked topical themes found in the texts, those of thematized comment structure and existential clause structure can be considered inappropriate to create cohesive knots to the text. These structures do not contain familiar information in the theme position, thus these themes are considered brand new themes. It is these themes that create the problem of brand new theme that is discussed later in this section, and weaken the tie between the clause in which they occur and the other

part of the essay. Three out of five marked themes in "Before" text and one out of four in "After" text are found problematic.

<u>**Before text:**</u>

*Clause 2:* **I am convinced (M/TP)** that there should not be a university per town for these following reasons. *(thematized structure)*

*Clause 6:* **There are (M/TP)** still many problems at hand to deal with. *(existential clause structure)*

*Clause 14:* **Some may claim (M/TP)** that if only one university was built in a town, the economy of that town would be developed. *(thematized structure)*

<u>**After text:**</u>

*Clause 17:* **Furthermore (TT), it is important (M/TP)** that well-developed universities tend to be more appreciated than the unqualified ones. (thematized structure)

It is at these clauses, the problems of thematic progression are found. These problems will be discussed in the later part.

Regarding thematic progression patterns, the choices made by the student also indicate her enhancement in producing textual cohesion. First, let us have a look at the statistics of TP patterns used by An in her "before" and "after" essays in the following table:

Table 3.8 Pilot Analysis: Patterns of TP in Before and After texts by student An

|  | CP | LP | SRP | DP | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Before | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| After | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 11 |

As mentioned in the previous section CP, LP, SRP, and DP respectively stand for "Constant theme pattern", "Linear theme pattern", "Split rheme pattern", and "Derived pattern".

Descriptively, the total number of thematic progressions in An's texts nearly doubles from 6 to 11. Noticeably, none of the SRP was created in the before text,

while in the after text the student made 3 SRP points among clause 2-clause3-clause 8, clause 9-clause 10-clause 11, and clause 12-clause 13-clause 14. These points are where elaborations of the main ideas are made and the student delivers supportive developments for her argumentations. Changes also occur with constant, linear, and derived patterns, among which important is the increase in the use of linear pattern. The interchangeable use of all types of themes, especially the progress in the production of LP and SRP indicate the improvement of cohesion and textual quality of the student (Eggins, 2005; Mellos, 2011).

In order to assure the improvement of the student in creating textual cohesion, the occurrence proportion of each pattern should be explored. This proportion is calculated under the following formula:

**Proportion in percentage = (Pattern/Total Patterns)\*100%**

The proportion of TP in percentage is presented in Table 3.9. Accordingly, the occurrence of CP over the total number of TP patterns in the before text is 33.3%, however, this figure drops significantly in after text that only reach 9%. The occurrence of LP rises from 33.3% to 36.4%, and that of DP comparably changes from 33.3% to 27.3%. The production of SRP significantly rises from zero to 27.3%. Considering the ratio of TP patterns over the total number of clauses, there is a clear improvement regarding the construction of TP pattern from the before text to the after text. The ratio shows that only one TP pattern is created in every four clauses (6/20) in the before text, whereas one TP pattern per 1.5 clauses (11/17) in the after text. These results strengthen the previous observation that the student develops a flexible use of all types of TP patterns throughout her essay. Besides CP and LP that create the cohesive ties between clauses, the use of SRP and DP helps strengthen the ties not only between clauses but also among paragraphs and throughout the "after" text (Eggins, 2005).

Table 3.9 Pilot analysis: Proportion in percentage of thematic progression in "Before" and "After" texts by student An

|  | Before | | After | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | No. | Percentage | No. | Percentage |

|  | Before | | After | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | No. | Percentage | No. | Percentage |
| Constant Theme pattern (CP) | 2 | 33.3% | 1 | 9% |
| Linear Theme pattern (LP) | 2 | 33.3% | 4 | 36.4% |
| Split Rheme pattern (SRP) | 0 | 0% | 3 | 27.3% |
| Derived Theme pattern (DP) | 2 | 33.3% | 3 | 27.3% |
| Total No. of Patterns | 6 |  | 11 |  |
| Total No. of Clauses | 20 |  | 17 |  |

Generally, together with Figure 3.2, the statistics shows an important change in the flexible use of thematic progression patterns. It is this interchangeable use of TP patterns that create close connection throughout the whole revised text. By contrast, although CP, LP and DP are used at some points of the "before" text, this text appears to be unlinked and becomes chunks at many parts. At these parts occur so-called problems in TP as shown in the following table:

Table 3.10 Pilot study: Classification of TP problems in "Before" and "After" texts by student An

|  | BNT | DbR | ER | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Before | 13 | 0 | 5 | 18 |
| After | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

As coded in the earlier section, BNT, DbR, and ER are respectively abbreviations of the TP problems namely "Brand new theme", "Double rheme", and "Empty rheme".

Accordingly, the most common problem of TP in An's argumentative writing is "brand new theme" as it takes up 13 over the total of 18 problems in her "before" text, and 2 over the total of 2 in the "after" text. In the original text, another problem to be noticed is empty rheme as it accounts for 28% of the problems; however the improved text no long witnesses this type of problem in the student's creation of TP. The occurrence of these problems in An's essays obviously indicates her progress in terms of creating textual cohesion in argumentative writing. Specifically, brand new theme as An's most frequent problem happens when the

theme of the clause include the information that has never been mentioned anywhere in the previous clauses. It is at these points that clausal as well as textual cohesion is disrupted. This problem is caused by the production of marked themes in thematized and existential structures that were discussed above. In addition to the BNT, empty rheme is another problem of An in her "before" text. This problem occurs when the rheme of one clause does not contain any new information that can be developed in the following clauses. This means the production of linear theme in case of empty rheme is impossible. Although cohesive flow of the text can be made through the theme part, but if this problem is multiplied in the student's text, the strong connection of clauses can decline. Linear pattern is considered the strongest tie among clauses anyhow (Eggins, 2005).

The following table indicates the improvement in the occurrence of TP problems by calculating the proportion in percentage of each problem:

Table 3.11 Pilot study: Proportion in percentage of TP problems in Before and After texts by student An

|  | Before | | After | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | No. | Percentage | No. | Percentage |
| Brand New Theme (BNT) | 13 | 72% | 2 | 100% |
| Double Rheme (DbR) | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Empty Rheme (ER) | 5 | 28% | 0 | 0% |
| Total No. of Problems | 18 | | 2 | |
| Total No. of Clauses | 20 | | 17 | |

Proportion in percentage = (problem/total problems)*100%

Regarding the proportion of BNT occurrence, there is a significant change from the "before" to the "after" text since in the "after" text, BNT is the only TP problem that can be found in the student's text. There is a major reduction from 13 problems in the before text to only two problems in the after text. The ratio of problems over clauses also drops from 13/20 (0.65) to only 2/17 (0.11). The problem of ER also show a major decline from 28% to zero from the "before" text to the "after" text.

In general, the student improves in terms of overall score, writing quality, and production of proper TP, and reduces TP problems after receiving tutorials and practices about thematic progression. However, it is difficult to conclude whether the results are significant, particularly in a context of more research population. This pilot study therefore only serves as a trial analysis for further study on a larger scale. The next chapter introduces the results of the research.

## 3.4  Summary

This chapter provided a detailed description of the methodology employed in this research. Following the description of the participants, the study instruments and data collection were defined. The procedure of data analysis including the steps to analyze data was also discussed. The final part of the chapter provided a pilot analysis so as to facilitate the readers' understanding of how data of the study can be analyzed. The next chapter consists of the research findings and discussions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports on the results of the holistic and textual analysis of the 40 argumentative essays written by second-year students in the English Department, Hanoi University. The first section includes the students' scores in the pretest and posttest writings, then investigate the correlation between the scores to decide whether the students improve in writing or not. The second section involves the qualitative analysis of thematic patterns within the students' texts, using TPA. The final section provides a summary of the findings.

## 4.1 Holistic Analysis

This section will explain the general impression on the selected subjects' argumentative essays, which can be shown through the scorings of the collected writing works. It looks at the performance of the students to decide whether they have learnt what they were taught throughout the semester and whether they have improved or not. Their overall scores for both times' assignments as well as component scores on cohesion and coherence will be included in the analysis.

## 4.1.1 The Scoring process

As mentioned in Chapter 3 (section 3.2.1), two raters, none of whom taught the selected subjects in any skills, scored the students' argumentative writing texts using the same rubrics (Appendix 1). However, they were not informed about which set of writing texts was of the pretest or posttest in order to avoid any assumption of the students' improvement that can affect the results. The writing scores were then calculated for mean scores as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Writing scores from the Pretest and Posttest

| No. | PRETEST | | | POSTTEST | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Score 1 (Rater 1) | Score 2 (Rater 2) | Mean 1 | Score 1 (Rater 1) | Score 2 (Rater 2) | Mean 2 |
| 1 | 5.0 | 5.5 | 5.25 | 6.0 | 6.0 | **6.0** |
| 2 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 | **7.0** |
| 3 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | **6.5** |
| 4 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 5.75 | 7.0 | 7.0 | **7.0** |
| 5 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 5.75 | 7.5 | 8.0 | **7.75** |
| 6 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 6.5 | 6.5 | **6.5** |
| 7 | 6.0 | 7.0 | 6.5 | 8.0 | 7.5 | **7.75** |
| 8 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 6.5 | 6.5 | **6.5** |
| 9 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 7.0 | 6.5 | **6.75** |
| 10 | 6.0 | 6.5 | 6.25 | 7.5 | 7.5 | **7.5** |
| 11 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 7.0 | 6.5 | **6.75** |
| 12 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 8.5 | 9.0 | **8.75** |
| 13 | 6.0 | 6.5 | 6.75 | 7.0 | 7.0 | **7.0** |
| 14 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | **6.0** |
| 15 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 6.5 | 6.5 | **6.5** |
| 16 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | **6.0** |
| 17 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 4.25 | 6.0 | 6.0 | **6.0** |
| 18 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 6.5 | 6.5 | **6.5** |
| 19 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | **6.0** |
| 20 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | **6.0** |

Table 4.2 provides the descriptive statistics for the 20 students' overall scores in the pretest and the posttest.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics on Pretest and Posttest Overall Scores

**Descriptive Statistics**

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OS1 | 20 | 3.50 | 6.50 | 5.0500 | .84527 |
| OS2 | 20 | 6.00 | 8.75 | 6.7375 | .74107 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 20 |  |  |  |  |

According to Table 4.2, there is a tendency of improvement in terms of the students overall scores from the pretest to the posttest. Both Min score and Max score witness a 2.5 score unit rise from the pretest and the posttest. Mean score is improved by 1.7 score units in the students' posttest essays.

After receiving the scores, it is important to measure the inter-rater reliability coefficients for both before and after texts in order to make sure that the ratings agree with each other, and that there is a high degree of consensus in the ratings of the two raters. The measurement of inter-rater reliability coefficients uses the students' writing overall scores of the pretest and the posttest. Using Pearson correlation, the inter-rater reliability coefficients of the two raters in the pretest and posttest were respectively 0.962 and 0.946 ($p<0.01$) as shown in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4.

Table 4.3 Inter-rater reliability coefficient in the Pretest

**Correlations**

|  |  | Rater1T1 | Rater2T1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rater1T1 | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .962[**] |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 20 | 20 |
| Rater2T1 | Pearson Correlation | .962[**] | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 20 | 20 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.4 Inter-rater reliability coefficient in the Posttest

**Correlations**

|  |  | Rater1T2 | Rater2T2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rater1T2 | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .946[**] |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 20 | 20 |
| Rater2T2 | Pearson Correlation | .946[**] | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 20 | 20 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The figure 0.962 (Table 4.3) and 0.946 (Table 4.4) mean a positive correlation between the scorings of rater 1 and rater 2 in the pretest and posttest. In other words, there is a significantly strong degree of consensus between rater 1 and rater 2 in their scorings. Therefore it can be concluded that the ratings of the collected argumentative writing works are reliable for further analysis.

**4.1.2 Analysis of Writing Scores**

This section is divided into two parts. The first part includes a presentation of students' scores after their first and second times producing the argumentative essays. Then changes of scores between the two times will be presented. It must be noted that this includes both changes in the overall scores as well as changes in the component scores of cohesion and coherence. Last but not least, further analysis will be essential to decide if the change in the component scores can impact or predict the change in the overall score.

*4.1.2.1 Presentation of Scores*

Followings are the overall scores gained after the pretest and posttest:

Table 4.5 Holistic Analysis: Students' Overall Scores of Pretest and Posttest

| No. | PRETEST | | | POSTTEST | | | Change OS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Score 1 (Rater 1) | Score 2 (Rater 2) | Mean 1 | Score 1 (Rater 1) | Score 2 (Rater 2) | Mean 2 | |
| 1 | 5.0 | 5.5 | 5.25 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 0.75 |
| 2 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 2.00 |
| 3 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 3.00 |
| 4 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 5.75 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 1.25 |
| 5 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 5.75 | 7.5 | 8.0 | 7.75 | 2.00 |
| 6 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 1.50 |
| 7 | 6.0 | 7.0 | 6.5 | 8.0 | 7.5 | 7.75 | 1.25 |
| 8 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 2.50 |
| 9 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 7.0 | 6.5 | 6.75 | 1.75 |
| 10 | 6.0 | 6.5 | 6.25 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 1.25 |
| 11 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 7.0 | 6.5 | 6.75 | 2.25 |
| 12 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 8.5 | 9.0 | 8.75 | 2.75 |
| 13 | 6.0 | 6.5 | 6.25 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 0.75 |
| 14 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 0.50 |
| 15 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 1.50 |
| 16 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 1.50 |
| 17 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 4.25 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 1.75 |
| 18 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 2.5 |
| 19 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 1.50 |
| 20 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 1.50 |

Regarding the overall scores, Table 4.5 shows that all students improve their scores from the pretest to the posttest. Changes of scores range from 0.25 to 3.00 score units. Among the 20 selected students, only three of them made changes of less than 1.00 score units. Meanwhile, the rest 17 students, received score changes of more than 1.00 score units. The biggest change of 3.00 score unit is made by only student 3.

In addition to the overall scores, the tested component scores (cohesion and coherence) are also taken into accounted. These scores are presented in Table 4.6 as below:

Table 4.6 Holistic Analysis: Students' Component Scores (Cohesion and Coherence) of Pretest and Posttest

| No | Pretest | | MeanCC1 | Posttest | | MeanCC2 | Change |
|----|-----|-----|---------|-----|-----|---------|--------|
|    | CC1 | CC2 |         | CC1 | CC2 |         | CC     |
| 1  | 1.25 | 1.25 | **1.25** | 1.5  | 1.5  | **1.5**  | **0.25** |
| 2  | 1.0  | 1.0  | **1.0**  | 2.0  | 2.0  | **2.0**  | **1.00** |
| 3  | 0.5  | 0.5  | **0.5**  | 1.75 | 1.75 | **1.75** | **1.25** |
| 4  | 1.0  | 1.0  | **1.0**  | 2.0  | 2.0  | **2.0**  | **1.00** |
| 5  | 0.75 | 1.25 | **1.0**  | 2.25 | 2.25 | **2.25** | **1.25** |
| 6  | 1.0  | 1.0  | **1.0**  | 1.75 | 1.75 | **1.75** | **0.75** |
| 7  | 1.25 | 1.25 | **1.25** | 2.0  | 2.0  | **2.0**  | **0.75** |
| 8  | 0.5  | 0.5  | **0.5**  | 1.5  | 1.5  | **1.5**  | **1.00** |
| 9  | 0.75 | 0.75 | **0.75** | 1.5  | 1.5  | **1.5**  | **0.75** |
| 10 | 1.25 | 1.25 | **1.25** | 2.0  | 2.0  | **2.0**  | **0.75** |
| 11 | 0.75 | 0.75 | **0.75** | 1.75 | 1.75 | **1.75** | **1.00** |
| 12 | 1.25 | 1.25 | **1.25** | 2.5  | 2.5  | **2.5**  | **1.25** |
| 13 | 1.25 | 1.25 | **1.25** | 1.5  | 1.5  | **1.5**  | **0.25** |
| 14 | 1.0  | 1.0  | **1.0**  | 1.25 | 1.25 | **1.25** | **0.25** |
| 15 | 1.0  | 1.0  | **1.0**  | 1.5  | 1.5  | **1.5**  | **0.50** |
| 16 | 0.75 | 0.75 | **0.75** | 1.25 | 1.25 | **1.25** | **0.50** |
| 17 | 0.75 | 0.75 | **0.75** | 1.0  | 1.0  | **1.0**  | **0.25** |
| 18 | 0.75 | 0.75 | **0.75** | 1.5  | 1.5  | **1.5**  | **0.75** |
| 19 | 1.0  | 1.0  | **1.0**  | 1.0  | 1.0  | **1.0**  | **0.00** |
| 20 | 0.75 | 0.75 | **0.75** | 1.0  | 1.0  | **1.0**  | **0.25** |

In terms of the component scores, 19 out of 20 selected subjects made changes ranging from 0.25 to 1.25 score units. Only one subject, student 19 did not

create a change in cohesion and coherence (C&C) score. However, statistics from Table 4.6 illustrate that although there is not a change in this component score, the overall score of this student still pluses 1.50 score units. This means, his other component scores namely content and organization, vocabulary, and/or grammar and accuracy must have changed, that contributes to his enhancement in the overall scores.

Three students, student 3, student 5 and student 12, achieved the highest change of C&C scores: 1.25 score units. This can be an influential attribute for their improvement of 3.00 and 2.00 score units in terms of the changes in their overall scores. Noticeably, student that had the lowest score in the pretest (student 3) and the student that gained that highest score in the posttest (student 12) are the ones that hit the highest change scores for both overall scores (3.00 and 2.75 score units respectively) and C&C component scores (1.25 score units each). For other cases beside these students, it is possible that the improvement in the overall scores can be attributed to the changes in the C&C scores. The correlation between the two categories of scores is analyzed more deeply in the later section.

*4.1.2.2 Correlation between Scores*

Although the presentation of the students' scores demonstrates that both overall scores as well as C&C component scores have a tendency to increase, what is important is to decide whether this trend is significant. In other words, the researcher has to investigate the degree to which the scores of pretest and posttest correlate with each other. Such an investigation can be accomplished by means of paired-samples t-test.

First of all, a paired sample t-test is conducted in order to decide whether the change in the overall scores is significant or not. The result is indicated in the following Table:

Table 4.7 Paired T-test for the Overall Scores of the Pretest (1) and Posttest (2)

**Paired Samples Test**

| | Paired Differences | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | Lower | Upper | t | df | |
| Pair 1 OS2 - OS1 | **1.68750** | .67315 | .15052 | 1.37246 | 2.00254 | 11.211 | 19 | **.000** |

As shown in

Table 4.7, the T-value obtained from the T-test analysis of the students' overall scores of the pretest and the posttest is 1.68750 (p<0.05). This result means that the difference between overall scores in pretest and posttest is significant at 5% level of significance. In other words, the students' overall scores of the posttest is averagely 1.68 score units higher than in the pretest. It is possible to conclude that the students' overall scores in the posttest are significantly higher than in the pretest.

Secondly, the degree of significance of the change in the C&C component scores is illustrated in the following Table (Table 4.8):

Table 4.8 Paired T-test for the C&C Component Scores of the Pretest (1) and Posttest (2)

**Paired Samples Test**

| | Paired Differences | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | Lower | Upper | t | df | |
| Pair 1 CC2 - CC1 | **.68750** | .38793 | .08674 | .50594 | .86906 | 7.926 | 19 | **.000** |

Accordingly, the T-value gained from the analysis of the students' cohesion and coherence (C&C) component scores in the pretest and posttest is 0.68750

(p<0.05). This means there is a significant difference between the students' component scores in the pretest and the posttest at 5% level of significance. In other words, the students' C&C component scores of the posttest is averagely 0.68750 score units higher than of the pretest. It is possible to conclude that the students C&C component scores in the posttest is significantly higher than in the pretest.

Concerning the students' improvement, it is impossible to conclude whether an improvement in the C&C component scores considerably contribute to the enhancement of their overall scores only by looking at the quantitative data. In order to make such a conclusion, linear regression is an indispensable tool. This is because it helps us find the best linear relation between the two variables so as to decide whether one variable can predict the other. Before applying linear regression, let us make an assumption that the change in the C&C component scores leads to the change in the overall scores. Then, a function can be obtained as follows:

$Y = aX + b$ (a and b are constants) (*)

In this function, X is the change in the C&C component scores, and Y is the change in the overall scores. X is an independent variable, and Y is a dependent variable.

Using linear regression, the values of "a" and "b" in (*) formula come out as follows:

Table 4.9 Linear Regression Analysis of Students' Changes of Scores

**Coefficients[a]**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | **.850** | .228 | | 3.719 | **.002** |
| | ChangeCC | **1.219** | .291 | .702 | 4.185 | **.001** |

a. Dependent Variable: ChangeOS

The analysis results in the values of "a" and "b" are respectively 1.219 and 0.850, and thus the function (*) can be rewritten as:

$Y = 1.219X + 0.850$

The results show that there is a positive trend between the change in the students' C&C component scores and the change in the students' overall scores at 1% level of significance (p<0.01). This means 1.00 score unit of change in the C&C component scores predictably leads to 1.219 score units of change in the overall scores. In other words, the increase in the students' overall scores can be significantly predicted by the increase in their C&C component scores.

To sum up, this section deals with analyses of the students' scores used as a means to judge whether the students improved throughout their study term, and whether their cohesion scores have a constructive impact to the increase of their overall scores in argumentative writing. The positive results illustrate the students' improvement in writing argumentative essays in general as well as creating cohesion within their written texts. Although the analysis also shows that a change in the cohesion and coherence component scores is related to the change in the overall scores, it is necessary to keep in mind that this is a mono independent variable analysis. The results may change if other independent variables (i.e. content and organization, vocabulary, and grammar and accuracy) were added. In that case, the function can be more complicated:

$$Y = aX_1 + bX_2 + cX_3 + dX_4 + e$$

This results in a suggestion that further studies should be conducted; in which other variables are included so as to have a more comprehensive picture of how the change in each variable can have an impact on the overall scores of the students. In addition the tested component score in this research involve both cohesion and coherence, of which only cohesion is the focus of this study. However, it is difficult to define which proportion cohesion might account for as it is involved with coherence. Therefore, one cannot 100% conclude that it is the improvement in the textual cohesion that predict the increase in the students' overall scores. This is a limitation of this research, and hence further studies should be done in order to ascertain the influence of cohesion, as a single independent variable, on the textual quality.

## 4.2 Textual Analysis

This section deals with the qualitative aspect of the students' writing texts, focusing on the thematic progression analysis (TPA). The section is divided into three parts. The first part investigates the uses of themes and theme types. Part two deals with the development of thematic patterns in the students' texts that occur in the analyzed texts. In the last part, thematic progression (TP) problems are analyzed. The investigation of the uses of different types of themes in the students' text can be considered as the basic step that facilitates the understanding of the students' choices of different thematic patterns as well as the occurrence of TP problems in their essays. Moreover, the changes in the occurrences of thematic patterns and TP problems in the pretest and posttest essays are related to the change in the C&C component scores, which significantly predict the change in the students' overall scores, according to the findings in section 4.1.2.2.

### 4.2.1 Types of Themes

The investigation of the allocation of themes, rhemes, and thematic patterns in the ESL learners' writings can make a considerable contribution to the understanding of the development of cohesion within the students' texts. The learners' selection of theme types and rhemes in 40 argumentative writing essays is analyzed. These 40 argumentative writings are collected from two performance tests, each of which consists of 20 texts. For the first 20 argumentative essays, theme types are analyzed from 333 clauses. For the second 20 essays, theme-rheme choices are analyzed from 459 clauses. The following table shows the selections of theme in learners' texts from the pretest and posttest:

Table 4.10 Classification of Themes in Students' Argumentative Written Texts from the Pretest and Posttest

|  | Clauses | TT | I | M/TP | UM/TP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest | 333 | 149 | 13 | 105 | 225 |
| Posttest | 459 | 194 | 11 | 107 | 350 |

In this table, TT, I, M/TP, and UM/TP are respectively short for Textual Theme, Interpersonal Theme, Marked Topical Theme, and Unmarked Topical Theme. Markedness and unmarkedness actually belong to the category of Topical Theme. The categorization of themes aims at exploring which type(s) of themes would have

strong influences on the making of the thematic progression patterns, and thus creating textual cohesion in the students' essays.

Although there is an upward trend in the students' ability to produce most types of themes as shown in Table 4.10, it is necessary to have a look at the descriptive analysis that illustrates the proportion of occurrence for each type of themes so as to decide whether the type does occur more often in the higher-rated texts than in the lower-rated. Table 4.11 shows the proportion of occurrence in percentage of each theme types produced by the students in the pretest and posttest argumentative essays.

Table 4.11 Proportion in percentage of theme types by students in the pretest and posttest argumentative essays

|  | Pretest | | Posttest | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | No. | Percentage | No. | Percentage |
| Marked Topical (M/TP) | 105 | 21% | 107 | 16% |
| Unmarked Topical (UM/TP) | 225 | 46% | 350 | 53% |
| Textual (TT) | 149 | 30% | 194 | 29% |
| Interpersonal (I) | 13 | 3% | 11 | 2% |
| Total No. of theme types | 492 | | 662 | |
| Total No. of Clauses | 333 | | 459 | |

Formula: Proportion = (Theme/Total Theme types) * 100%

Accordingly, only unmarked topical themes made an increase of 7%, whereas the other three types decrease in their proportion of occurrence. Specifically, marked topical themes drop by 5%, textual theme and interpersonal theme by 1%. Among these three types of themes, topical theme and textual theme are closely related to the establishment of textual cohesion (Eggins, 2005; Mellos, 2011). Textual themes can be considered as technical cohesive devices in the text since this type covers a large amount of conjunction uses in the students' texts. Topical themes involve the use of other cohesive devices such as references, lexical reiteration and collocations. If topical themes are directly related to the establishment of thematic progression patterns that are discussed in the next section, textual themes strengthen the

cohesive flows between individual clauses, and between the clauses with the text as a whole. Meanwhile, interpersonal themes are considered personal, and this type is used with a purpose to create an interaction between the writer and the readers instead of building a textual tie within the text.

The following analyses reveal important points in the choices of each theme type in the students' argumentative essays.

### 4.2.1.1    *Marked and Unmarked Topical Themes*

The uses of marked and unmarked topical themes in the students' pretest and posttest argumentative essays change in opposite ways. According to Table 4.11, while the subject students use approximately 10% more unmarked theme in posttest writings, their use of marked themes falls by the same amount. This result does not seem consistent with previous studies on theme-rheme choices in academic paper which show that unmarked themes appear less frequently in high-scoring essays while marked themes occur more frequently in more successful writings (Eggins, 2005; Mellos, 2011). However, the important value of this research lies in the fact that besides the quantitative statistics, the findings lead to an explanation for the occurrence of markedness and unmarkedness in the students' pretest and posttest writings.

Regarding the use of **marked themes**, the research shows a number of points worth considering. First, it is noticeable that the use existential and thematized structures as marked themes in both pretest and posttest essays result in disconnections within the students' texts. Specifically, 16 *existential clauses* are found in the students' pretest papers, including essays 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 18, and 20 (see Appendix 3). The figure reduces by half to only seven existential clauses in the students' posttest essays, including essays 8, 11, 17, 18, 19, and 20 (see Appendix 4). Among these cases, existential clauses are still detected in papers written by students 8, 11, 18, and 20. Examples of existential clauses as marked themes are shown as follows:

<u>**Pretest essays:**</u>

*Essay 3:* **There is (M/TP)** no culture or tradition in the world to let men get married together *(clause 5)*.

*Essay 8:* … **there are (M/TP)** many arguments in support of getting married among gay couples *(clause 13)*.

*Essay 11:* …**there are (M/TP)** many benefits only available to married couples… ending *(clause 6)*.

## Posttest essays:

*Essay 8:* … **there are (M/TP)** undoubtedly many benefits to retire for people at the age of 60 *(clause 21)*.

*Essay 18:* … **there should be (M/TP)** a specific time to put an end to people's working process *(clause 2)*.

*Essay 20:* … **there are (M/TP)** many diseases like heart attack, spinal pain they can get because of pressures of works *(clause 11)*.

As shown in the examples, the marked themes are structured: there + be, which in the students text does not refer to any content mentioned before it. One may argue that cohesive devices can still be found in the rheme position of this structure. However, since thematic progression analysis put more stress on the ties established in the theme position, a structure starting with a non-referential theme ("there") can weaken the ties within the text. In other words, the occurrence of existential structure does not help create cohesive flow, or thematic progression pattern within the students' texts, yet even may lead to a reduction in the cohesion and coherence component scores.

The placement of *thematized structure* in marked themes is found in both times' essays, seven in the pretest writings (essays 7, 12, 13, 15, and 16) and eight in the posttest writings (essays 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 16, and 20) (see Appendix 3 and 4). Among these students, students 7 and 16 repeat the production of thematized structure in his writing. Examples of thematized structure placing in marked themes are shown as follows:

## Pretest essays:

*Essay 12:* … **it can't be denied (M/TP)** that ancestor's preservation is the most significant mission to maintain our race (clause 15).

*Essay 16:* **It is alright (M/TP)** [that] they love by heart and have [a] happy life (clause 19).

**Posttest essays:**

*Essay 16:* **… it is time (M/TP)** for them to enjoy the life with their children and so on (clause 8).

**… it is not worth (M/TP)** retiring them when they are 60 years old (clause 14).

"It" in thematized structure is similar to "there" in existential structure in the sense that they are both non-referential subjects. They only function as subjects in syntactic structures, but do not bear any meanings (Hinkel, 2002). Therefore, placed in the marked theme position, "it" and "there" in these cases do not help establish a strong cohesive ties between the clause (sentence), in which they are in, with the previous clauses (sentences). One may argue that cohesive devices such as reference (i.e. they, them) and reiteration (i.e. mission to maintain our race, retiring, 60 years old) can be found in the rheme parts of the structure. Nonetheless, similar to the existential structure, thematized structure with a non-referential theme does not help create a thematic progression flow that connects the clause in which it is contained with the previous ones. In this case, a disruption occurs in the thematic progression analysis (TPA) of the student's text.

In addition, non-referential subject "it" also exists three times in the pretest essays of students 2, 4, and 17 while it is no longer found in the students' posttest texts. Examples are presented in the followings:

**Pretest texts:**

*Essay 2:* **As it is proven (M/TP),** gays are normal human beings (clause 12).

*Essay 4:* **… it (M/TP)** is regarded as an act of selfishness to satisfy their [own] feeling (clause 14).

*Essay 17:* **… it (M/TP)** is supposed that gay couples should be able to marry (clause 3).

The use of "it" in academic writing is not anything unusual. However, the use of "it" in the studied pretest texts can be considered a problem as "it" does not refer to any information earlier in the texts. Thematic progression analysis (TPA) show that this non-referential use does not contribute to the making of thematic

progression patterns that require the information in the theme should be familiar or related to the information mentioned earlier. Again, similar to the other structures presented above, the use of non-referential "it" leads to a disconnected cohesive flow in the TPA of the students' writings. At these points appear the problems of brand new theme which will be discussed in more details in section 4.2.3.

Another remarkable point is demonstrated in the students' uses of *adverbials* in the position of marked topical themes. Adverbials, such as "in the recent years", "over the last decades", "nowadays", and "in some countries", are found six times in the introduction paragraphs of the pretest essays. The figure triple as there are 16 times of occurrence of adverbial marked themes including "now", "nowadays", and "in some countries" in the introduction of posttest essays. The placement of adverbials in the marked theme positions also lead to a disconnection of cohesive flow within the introduction part of the essays because these contains brand new information, and thus the TPA of text reveals disruptions in the establishment of theme-rheme pattern at these points. Examples of using adverbials as marked topical themes are shown as below:

<u>Pretest essay:</u>

> *Essay 8:* Have someone ever asked you [if] gay couples should be able to marry? (1) **Nowadays (M/TP),** this question remains controversial (2).

<u>Posttest essay:</u>

> *Essay 4:* Retirement issue remains controversial (1). **In some countries (M/TP),** the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 60 while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70 (2).

The adverbials "nowadays" and "in some countries" appear abruptly while not a clue related to these was mentioned in the previous clauses. One may argue that in the first example, there is still a connection since "question" in clause 2 can be bridged with the information before it. Similarly, in the posttest example, the words "retirement" in the first clause can be seen as a collocation of "worker" and "work" in the second clause. They are right to some extent; nonetheless, undeniable is the disruption of textual flow in these points that can weaken the cohesiveness of the whole. Moreover, the important role of the introduction is to raise the topic and to draw the attention of the readers. Therefore, it worth noticing that the writer should be very clear about the points they are establishing in the first, also referred

to as the guidance paragraph of the whole essay. To demonstrate, the clauses above can be rewritten as follows:

> *Pretest:* Have someone ever asked you [if] gay couples should be able to marry? (1) **Such a question (UM/TP)** remains controversial until now (2).

> *Posttest:* Retirement issue remains controversial (1). **Workers in some countries (M/TP)** are obliged to retire at the age of 60 while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70 (2).

In terms of *Unmarked Topical Themes*, TPA findings reveal that the pretest essays include a large amount of referencing and lexical reiteration in the place of unmarked themes in order to create cohesive ties among individual clauses. Besides these two cohesive ties, the posttest texts also cover more sophisticated use of collocations in the unmarked theme position. Among these, the use of third personal pronoun "they" as a referencing cohesive device in both pretest and posttest essays should be noticed. The research shows that this pronoun is used as a cohesive tie among the clauses, which constructs the patterns of thematic progression. This construction will be explained more in the later section discussing the patterns of thematic structures. Let us take a look at the following examples:

**Pretest essay:**

> *Essay 2:* **To begin with (TT), gay (UM/TP)** are just normal human beings (4). **Therefore (TT), they (UM/TP)** deserve every right to be happy (5). …**Gay (UM/TP)** is [a] term referring to groups of people who are sexually or romantically attracted to others in the same gender (8). **They (UM/TP)** are normal and healthy being who loves and deserve to have the commitment of their loves (9).

**Posttest essay:**

> *Essay 13:* **The second reason (UM/TP)** is that old employees are not able to guarantee the quality of job (10). **They (UM/TP)** are not quite as flexible as youngsters in learning new technology which plays an indispensible role in working today (11). **They (UM/TP)** maybe lack of adventurousness and attempt to try something new and get higher productivity (12). **Besides (TT), their retirement (UM/TP)** will create more opportunities and options for jobs for youngsters, especially in high unemployment stage as recently (13).

The use of third personal pronoun "they" in the examples is actually categorized as one cohesive device, the reference. In both cases, backward reference is observed as "they" in the first example refers to the word "gay" mentioned previously. "They" and "their" in the second example refers to "the employee" in the rheme of clause 10. The repetition of the pronoun leads to an establishment of constant theme pattern that created a direct cohesive flow from the theme of the previous clause to the theme of the next clause. This is a good way to create cohesive links among individual clause; however, such links focus so much on the theme position that the rheme parts may be forgotten. The excessive reiteration of this pronoun leads to the fact that other thematic progressions such as linear pattern and derived pattern may not be constructed as in the above example from Essay 13. Furthermore, the excessive use of constant theme pattern may cause a difficulty for the reader to follow the development of the text. This will be discussed more in section 4.2.2.

As discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.1.2), the use of "they" in these Vietnamese ESL argumentative essays is strongly influenced by their first language, the Vietnamese. As in Vietnamese academic writings, it is more proper and convincing if the writers use third personal pronouns to exemplify their points. Such a strategy is considered harmonizing and appealing to the readers (Hinkel, 2002). Therefore, these students may have applied this rule to both of their pretest and posttest essays. However, it is recommended that in the cause of learning writing, the L2 learners should practice using more lexical devices (i.e. collocations) in establishing links throughout their texts. Moreover, instead of repeating the information in the theme position, the learers should practice with using the information in the rheme part of a clause to start the next clause. By that way, they can reach a point of native-like writing that contains a great degree of flexibility in using accurate lexicology as well as thematic progression patterns throughout the written text.

### 4.2.1.2    Textual Themes

Textual themes are themes that includes conjunctions (and, but, or), conjunctive adjuncts (however, moreover, therefore), continuatives (yes, uhm, well),

and WH-relatives (who, which). The investigation of textual themes in the Vietnamese students' pretest and posttest argumentative essays reveals the three types of textual themes as shown in the following Table:

Table 4.12 Categories of textual themes in the students' pretest and posttest argumentative essays

|  | Pretest | Posttest |
|---|---|---|
| **Conjunctions** | 31 | 14 |
| **Conjunctive Adjuncts** | 118 | 179 |
| **WH-relatives** | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 149 | 194 |

The three types of textual themes in the Vietnamese argumentative writings are: conjunctions (and, but), conjunctive adjuncts (first, next, moreover, however), and WH-relatives. The use of these textual themes makes an enormous contribution to the textual cohesion since these themes can be considered as technical cohesive ties that not only link individual clauses but also connect the clauses from one paragraph to the other paragraphs of the text. The investigation in the textual themes in this research reveals essential points for teaching and learning theme-rheme framework. The use of conjunctive adjuncts should be stressed on since it helps establish the patterns of thematic progression, and hence cohesive flows throughout the students' texts. In addition to the ties between individual clauses, the use of conjunctive adjuncts also results in the construction of split rheme pattern and derived pattern that connect paragraphs into an entity, a text. The establishment of these patterns will be discussed in more details in section 4.2.2.

Accordingly, conjunctive adjuncts are most used in both times' essay, making an increase of 60 themes from the pretest to the posttest. Meanwhile, there is a slight decrease in the number of conjunctions used from pretest to posttest, from 31 down to 14. The results are quite consistent with previous studies in which they found that the use of conjunctions is more limited while the use of conjunctive adjuncts is expanded in more successful academic essays (Vande Kopple, 1991; Mellos, 2011). In later analysis, the research also reveals an improvement in the students' use of textual themes in establishing cohesion throughout the students'

essays. This is because they are used more properly in the posttest, compare to that in the pretest. The cohesive flows created will be illustrated in the next section on thematic progression patterns.

Another remarkable point is that among the 31 conjunctions used in the students' pretest essays, 23 of them are used at the clausal level while the other eight conjunctions are used at the sentence level (See Appendix 3, essays 3, 6, 12, 18, and 19). This number drops to only three conjunctions used at the sentence level in the posttest essays (See Appendix 4, essays 7, 8, and 9). Such curious cases are consistent to the Vietnamese ESL writing features discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.1.2). Accordingly, the students' usage of conjunction textual themes at the sentence level may be originated from the Vietnamese language's formal writing style (Nguyen, 1987; Hinkel, 2002).

### 4.2.1.3    Interpersonal Themes

Concerning the use of interpersonal Themes, results show that there are two types of interpersonal themes in the Vietnamese students' argumentative essays. They are: Modal adjuncts, and WH- and finite elements in questions.

Table 4.13 Types of interpersonal themes in the students' argumentative essays

|  | Pretest | Posttest |
|---|---|---|
| **Modal Adjucnts** | 11 | 7 |
| **WH- and Finite Elements** | 2 | 4 |
| Total | 13 | 11 |

Noticeable is the difference in the use of finite elements and WH-question words. In the first time, the students produced only two questions throughout their study, whereas this number double in the posttest essays which receive higher ratings in general. As discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.1.2), one of the distinctive feature of Vietnamese L2 argumentative writing is the learners' use of rhetoric questions, which is influenced by their L1 writing styles. Accordingly, questioning is an appealing way to engage the readers to the writer's argumentative points in Vietnamese writing rhetoric. Probably, some of the Vietnamese subjects of this

research may have overgeneralized this rule to their L2 writing, not concerning that this rule is not appropriate and even considered subjective for the English academic writings (Swales and Feak, 1994; Myer, 1989).

The use of modal adjuncts such as "perhaps", "maybe", "properly", and "of course" can be explained as the students' safe strategy to elaborate their points of arguments. Also discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.1.1), the Vietnamese writing tradition is strongly influenced by the Chinese Confucian approach which suggests that the writers should present their arguments in a harmonious way so as not to create any negative feelings from the readers (Hinkel, 1995, 1997). As a result, the students in this research may have applied this strategy to their writings. They probably assume that these interpersonal themes help them to avoid being extreme and personal, thus causing disrespectful feelings to the readers. In other words, modal adjuncts would make their arguments sound more reasonable and approachable to the readers.

The research shows that either the use of finite elements and the WH-words or the use of modal adjuncts does not have any transparent influence on the establishment of the cohesive flow throughout the students' texts.

### 4.2.2 Thematic Progression Patterns

This section mainly discusses the development of thematic progression patterns in the Vietnamese students' argumentative essays. The results reveal which pattern is most commonly produced in the students' text. Besides, statistics from textual analyses of the student text by mean of thematic progression analysis (TPA) will be presented so as to see whether the students improve or not in their theme-rheme choices.

Firstly, the students' textual performance is illustrated in Table 4.14. In this table, CP, LP, SRP, and DP respectively stand for constant theme pattern, linear theme pattern, split rheme pattern, and derived theme pattern. The construction of each type of thematic progression (TP) in the pretest and posttest essays is shown quantitatively as follows:

Table 4.14 Results of TPA on the thematic progressions patterns produced by the Vietnamese students in the pretest and posttest

| Student | CP | | LP | | SRP | | DP | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pretest | Post-test | Pretest | Post-test | Pretest | Post-test | Pretest | Post-test |
| 1 | 10 | *10* | 1 | *4* | 0 | *0* | 0 | *3* |
| 2 | 4 | *9* | 3 | *5* | 0 | *1* | 0 | *2* |
| 3 | 6 | *15* | 1 | *2* | 0 | *1* | 0 | *3* |
| 4 | 4 | *9* | 1 | *5* | 0 | *1* | 2 | *3* |
| 5 | 4 | *6* | 1 | *3* | 0 | *1* | 2 | *4* |
| 6 | 8 | *6* | 3 | *1* | 0 | *1* | 0 | *2* |
| 7 | 1 | *8* | 4 | *6* | 1 | *1* | 0 | *3* |
| 8 | 3 | *9* | 0 | *5* | 1 | *1* | 3 | *2* |
| 9 | 7 | *11* | 3 | *4* | 0 | *1* | 1 | *2* |
| 10 | 4 | *5* | 5 | *7* | 1 | *0* | 1 | *1* |
| 11 | 7 | *9* | 2 | *2* | 0 | *1* | 0 | *4* |
| 12 | 4 | *7* | 4 | *8* | 0 | *2* | 0 | *2* |
| 13 | 2 | *8* | 5 | *4* | 1 | *1* | 1 | *2* |
| 14 | 4 | *11* | 2 | *2* | 0 | *1* | 1 | *2* |
| 15 | 3 | *15* | 1 | *2* | 1 | *1* | 0 | *3* |
| 16 | 5 | *4* | 3 | *1* | 1 | *1* | 0 | *3* |

| Student | CP | | LP | | SRP | | DP | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pretest | Post-test | Pretest | Post-test | Pretest | Post-test | Pretest | Post-test |
| 17 | 2 | *8* | 3 | *6* | 1 | *0* | 0 | *3* |
| 18 | 5 | *9* | 1 | *2* | 1 | *1* | 0 | *3* |
| 19 | 2 | *6* | 2 | *3* | 1 | *1* | 1 | *1* |
| 20 | 7 | *5* | 2 | *6* | 0 | *0* | 0 | *3* |
| Total | 92 | *170* | 47 | *78* | 9 | *17* | 12 | *51* |

Table 4.14 shows the quantitative findings of the four thematic patterns including constant theme pattern (CP), linear pattern (LP), split rheme pattern (SRP), and derived pattern (DP). In terms of CP, LP, and DP, remarkable changes can be seen in all students' writings works. Meanwhile, regarding SRP, students 1 and 20 do not make a change in their choice in either pretest or posttest texts. Students 10 and 17 do not remain their choice for SRP in the argumentative writing from the pretest to the posttest as the construction of SRP decline from one to zero. In both times' writings, constant theme is the most common pattern found in the students' essays, following by linear theme, derived theme and split rheme patterns. In general, the findings show that there is an improvement in the students' TP construction from the pretest to the posttest. Interchangeable use of all types of themes can be found in nearly every essay of the posttest, while in the pretest the use of split rheme and derived theme patterns are only observed in a few essays (see Appendix 5). Although there constant theme and linear theme patterns are found in the pretest essays, the cohesive flows are created mainly at the clausal level as these patterns establish the ties between individual clauses. In order to create strong ties between paragraphs, or between the clause and other parts of the essays, split rheme and derived theme patterns are indispensable.

The establishment of cohesive ties among individual clauses, and between clauses and the whole text as an entity has a close relation with the allocation of theme types analyzed in the previous section. This relation is discussed further in the following sub-sections, each of which covers the findings for one TP pattern mentioned above.

Since the total numbers of clauses in the pretest and posttest essays are not equal, the proportion of occurrence for each pattern has been counted as in Table 4.15 in order to better evaluate the students' performance on average.

Table 4.15 Proportion of occurrence in percentage for thematic progression patterns by the Vietnamese students in pretest and posttest essays.

| | Pretest | | Posttest | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | Percentage | No. | Percentage |
| Constant Theme (CP) | 92 | 57.5% | 170 | 54% |
| Linear Theme (LP) | 47 | 29% | 78 | 25% |
| Split Rheme (SRP) | 9 | 6% | 17 | 5% |
| Derived Theme (DP) | 12 | 7.5% | 51 | 16% |
| Total No. of TP patterns | 160 | | 316 | |
| Total No. of Clauses | 333 | | 459 | |

Formula: Proportion = (Pattern/Total patterns) * 100%

The findings from Table 4.15 consist with what can be observed from Table 4.14. Generally, the proportion of CP, LP and SRP slightly decreases while the proportion of DP doubles from the pretest to the posttest. Among the four TP patterns, constant theme is the most frequent pattern in both pretest and posttest essays. Statistically, the occurrences of all four TP patterns increase. What should be remarked is the rise in terms of split rheme and derived theme patterns since these patterns contribute to the construction of cohesive flow from one paragraph to another, and from one clause to the other parts of the essay. Compared to the pretest essays, the exchangeable uses of all TP patterns in the posttest texts can explain why the students' tested component scores (cohesion and coherence scores) are significantly improved. This interchangeability of TP pattern uses

promotes the occurrence of cohesion not only between individual clauses and sentences, but also between paragraphs, hence, making the text as a cohesive entity as a whole.

The identification of each type of thematic progression is presented in the following sections.
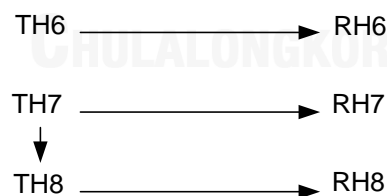
### 4.2.2.1 Constant Theme Pattern

Results from Table 4.15 shows that in both times of writing, constant theme pattern (CP) is the most commonly produced patterns by the students. The occurrence for CP nearly doubles from 92 in the pretest to 170 in the posttest. Eggins' (2005) study shows a strong relation between the regular use of CP and the improvement in textual cohesion. Apparently CP helps maintain a clear focus throughout the text as the theme of one clause is repeated in the theme position of the following clause(s), hence establishing textual cohesion. Take a look at the following examples:

*Pretest essay 5:*

> … **Furthermore (TT), homosexuality (UM/TP)** might not be an equally valid or successful option (6). **Because kids in same-sex marriages (M/TP)** may be affected in a negative way if they do not grow up in a traditional family (7). **As a result (TT), they (UM/TP)** are more likely choose to be gay (8)…

The paragraph is analyzed as follows:

TH6 ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯→ RH6

TH7 ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯→ RH7
  ↓
TH8 ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯→ RH8

In this example, constant theme pattern is only established between clause 7 and clause 8. Although the word "same-sex" in clause 7 has the same meaning with the unmarked topical theme "homosexuality" of clause 6, the focus of the clause has been changed from a phenomenon (clause 6) to the human subjects "kids in the same-sex marriages" (clause 7). Consequently, constant theme pattern is not

constructed between clauses 6-7. Meanwhile, the use of the pronoun "they" in the unmarked theme position in clause 8 is a reference to the "kids in the same-sex marriages", preserving the focus of "kids". Therefore, CP pattern occurs between clauses 7-8.

*Pretest essay 11:*

... **Gay marriage (M/TP)** is protected because of their rights (7). **Gay marriage (UM/TP)** can bring financial gain to state and local governments (8). **They (UM/TP)** would make it easier for same sex couples to adopt, providing stable homes for children who would otherwise be left in foster care (9)...

The paragraph is analyzed as follows:
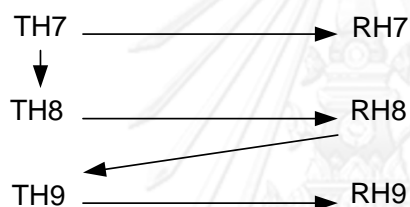


As shown in the above examples, the focus on "gay marriage" is maintained by a repetition of this phrase, thus building a tie between clause 7 and 8 of pretest essay 11. Meanwhile, the use of third personal pronoun "they" in clause 9 is a reference to "state and local governments" in the rheme instead of the theme position of clause 8. Therefore, CP pattern does not happen between clauses 8-9. However, the occurrence of the linear pattern is found instead to cohesively link the two clauses.

The research reveals the students' different ways to create CP links within their text. Specifically, in the pretest writings, they often use third personal pronoun "they" (as in pretest essay 5) and repetition of the word or phrase (as in pretest essay 11). In the posttest essays, CP pattern is created by means of third personal pronoun "they", textual themes (conjunctions and conjunctive adjuncts), lexical repetition, and lexical colocation (synonyms, antonyms, and nominalized phrases). Let us take a look at the following examples:

*Posttest essay 1:*

... **We (UM/TP)** should also recognize the fact that the younger have ability to creative more than the older (19). **Moreover (TT), they (UM/TP)** are more

healthy and enthusiastic (20). **The older (M/TP)**, their concentration on work can be less than younger (21). **They (UM/TP)** are likely to be easily tired from work (22). **Therefore (TT), it is clear (M/TP)** that the over 60 year-old workers should retire (23)...

The paragraph is analyzed as follows:
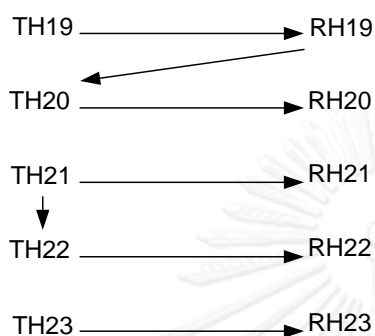


*Posttest essay 7:*

**... Firstly (TT), elder people (UM/TP)** do not have enough strength to do hard work (6). **People at the age of 60 (UM/TP)** are about to encounter health problems such as heart disease, cancers, diabetes which are very dangerous if they do not have time to relax (7). **Their bones (UM/TP)** are too weak to sit and stand too long (8), **thus (TT) they (UM/TP)** are very easy to get pains in muscle at night (9). **Moreover (TT), working after too long hours (UM/TP)** will put their mind under pressure which may lead them to get headache (10)...

The paragraph is analyzed as follows:
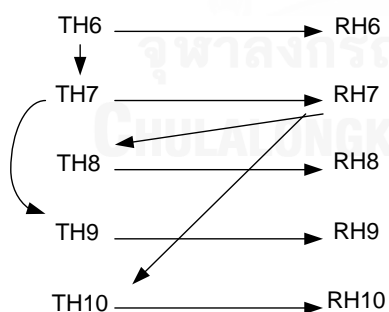


As can be seen from the two examples, the use of pronoun "they" builds a link between clauses 21 and 22 in posttest essay 1, and the use of the phrase "people at the age of 60" establishes a link between clause 6 and 7 of the sample from the posttest essay 7. The use of textual theme "thus" together with the

pronoun "they" creates a cohesive flow from clause 7 to clause 9 of posttest essay 7.

Although the repetition of themes plays an important role in creating textual cohesion, the extensive use of CP pattern may cause a lack of textual development in both coherence and cohesion if other patterns are not used in the text (Eggins, 2005; Wang, 2007; Mellos, 2011). While the use of CP patterns preserves the focus for the whole text, it creates cohesive flows from the theme parts only. Excessive use of CP pattern may lead to the fact that the clausal rhemes are left out and that the cohesive flows this pattern creates do not cover all parts of the text as a whole. Examples of extensive use of CP patterns can be found in the comparison of TPA of the students' pretest and posttest essays (Appendix 5). One example can be seen in the following example:
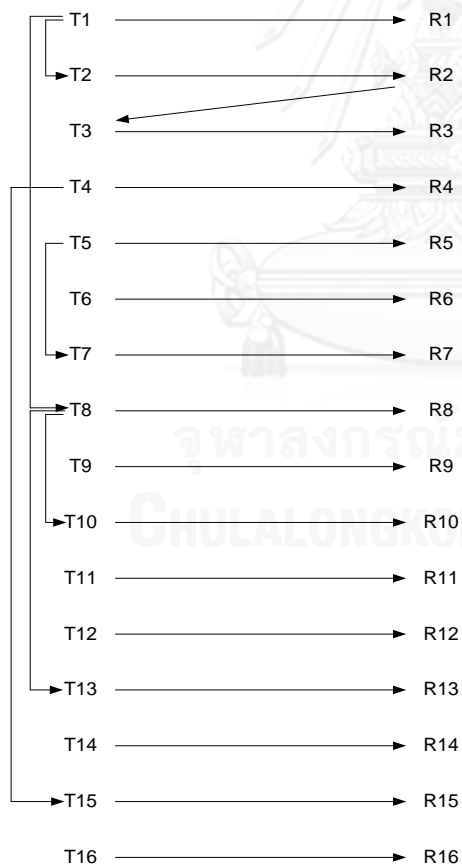
**Student 3:**
Pretest                                                          Posttest
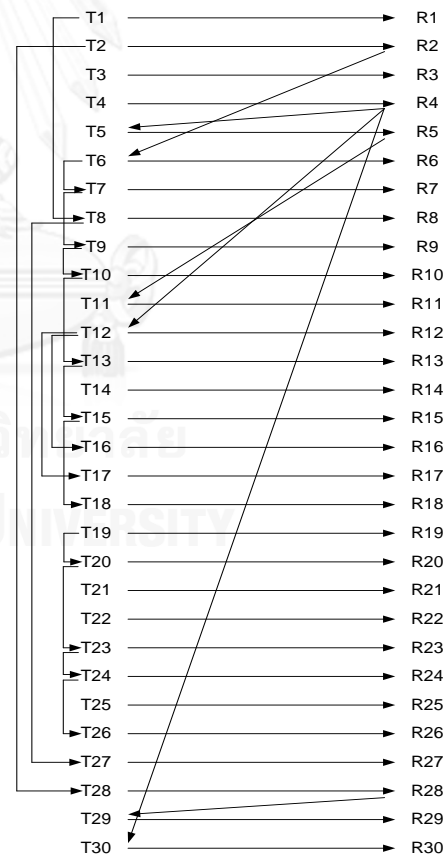


The above example is extracted from the TPA of the student 3's pretest and posttest essays. In the pretest essay, cohesive flows are established seven times,

among which six of them belongs to the category of CP patterns. However, the textual cohesion in this text appears to be loose and insufficient to build strong ties throughout the text. The C&C component score for student 3 in the pretest is 0.5 (Table 4.6, section 4.1.2.1). In the student's posttest essay, besides the considerable use of CP patterns, other thematic patterns namely linear theme, split rheme, and derived patterns are also found in the TPA. This alternate use of all types of themes makes the posttest text more connected as a whole, thus improve the overall cohesion. The C&C component score for student 3 in the posttest rises to 1.75 (Table 4.6, section 4.1.2.1).

### 4.2.2.2 Linear Theme Pattern

Results from Table 4.15 show that the use of Linear Theme Pattern (LP) in the Vietnamese students argumentative essays also nearly double from 47 patterns in the pretest to 78 patterns in the posttest. This is similar with Wang (2007) and Mellos' (2011) studies in which they found that LP occurs more often in the high-rating essays than in the low-rating essays. Previous studies have proved the indispensable role of LP in establishing cross-referential ties throughout the text by incorporating the information in the rheme of the previous clause to the following (Eggins, 2005; Wang, 2007). The research reveals that the establishment of LP in the Vietnamese students' texts is by means of using third personal pronouns ("it" and "they"), referencing ("this", "that"), lexical reiteration, collocation, and nominalization. Take a look at the following examples.

*Pretest essay 1:*

> **... Some people may argue (UM/TP)** that allowing same sex couples can get married, have a bad effect on innovative generations (11). **It (UM/TP)** is parly true (12), **but again (TT), whether children of parents that are not happiness (M/TP)** is happier than children of the same biological sex parents that are always love together (13). **Happiness (UM/TP)** can come from any couples who love and protect the other (14)...

The paragraph is analyzed as follows:
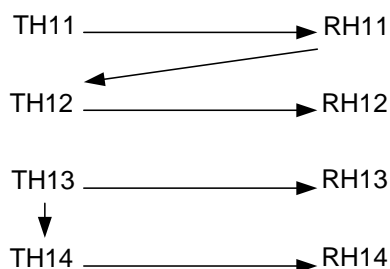
In this example, the cross-referential knot is built at clause 11-12, using third personal pronoun "it". The pronoun at the theme position of clause 12 refers to "a bad effect on innovative generations" in the rheme of clause 11.

*Pretest essay 10:*

> **... First of all (TT), I (UM/TP)** intensely oppose to gay couples due to the disability to take up human beings' mission (3). **That one (UM/TP)** is maintaining and developing generations stably (4). **In nature (M/TP),** a man and a woman get married (5), **and (TT) obviously (I) they (UM/TP)** are taking their assignment to sustain their gens and keep it enternal (6)...

The paragraph is analyzed as follows:
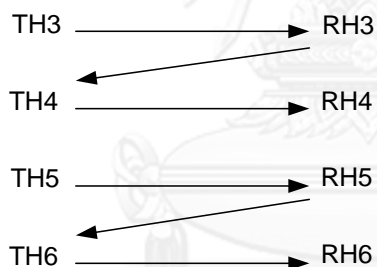


In this example, zigzag cohesion is created at two points between clause 3-4 and clause 5-6. The first tie is by the means of referencing "that" which refers to the "human beings' mission" in the rheme of clause 4. The second tie is built by the use of third personal pronoun "they" as the unmarked topical theme of clause 6 that refers to "a man and a woman" in the rheme of clause 5.

*Posttest essay 12:*

> **According to terms and conditions of Vietnam's labor laws (TT), the maximum age of employees working for companies and organizations (UM/TP)** is 60 (1). **However (TT), many people at the age of 60 and above (UM/TP)** can still work and devote to the society (2). **This (UM/TP)** leads to an increasingly popular stream of thoughts that policy makers should change the laws so that employees can choose to retire at the age above 60 (3).

**From my point of view (TT)**, **this suggestion (UM/TP)** is a good idea (4). **Retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** should be optional for the following reasons (5)...

The paragraph is analyzed as follows:

TH1 ──────────→ RH1

TH2 ──────────→ RH2

TH3 ──────────→ RH3

TH4 ──────────→ RH4

TH5                        RH5
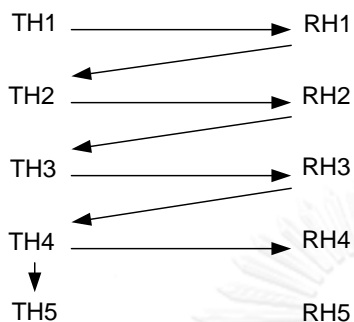
This example describes a good development of linear pattern as the cross-referential links are created at three consecutive points between clause 1-2, clause 2-3, and clause 3-4. The link between clause 1-2 is made by the repetition of the word "age", and the extended noun phrase "people at the age of 60" in the theme position of clause 2 to refer to the "employees" in the rheme of clause 1. The ties between clause 2-3, and clause 3-4 are both established by the use of referencing "this".

*Posttest essay 17:*

**Firstly (TT), we (UM/TP)** can be easy to recognize that at 60 workers' health is not good (3). **Their mind (UM/TP)** cannot remember all of missions or works that they must complete (4). **Of course (I), this (UM/TP)** effects on others (5). **Besides (TT), each of workers (UM/TP)** has some diseases that relate to heart, lung, head, etc (6).

The paragraph is analyzed as follows:

TH3 ──────────→ RH3

TH4 ──────────→ RH4

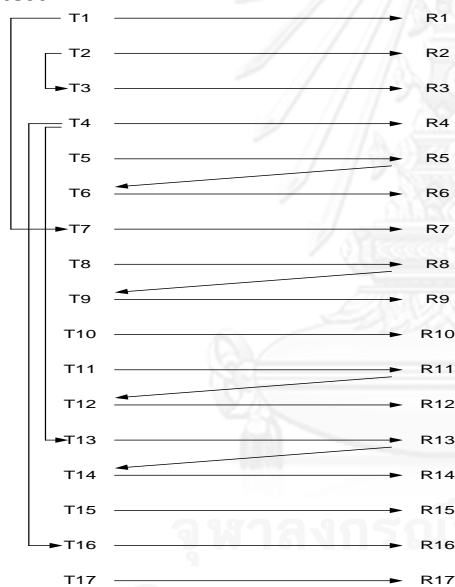TH5 ──────────→ RH5

TH6 ──────────→ RH6
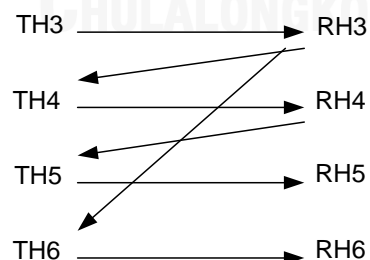
Two means are used in this paragraph in order to create the zigzag cohesion. First, it is the use of collocation: "mind" that belongs to the concept "health" mentioned in the previous rheme. Second is the use of referencing "this" that refers

to "cannot remember all of missions or works that they must complete" in the rheme of clause 5.
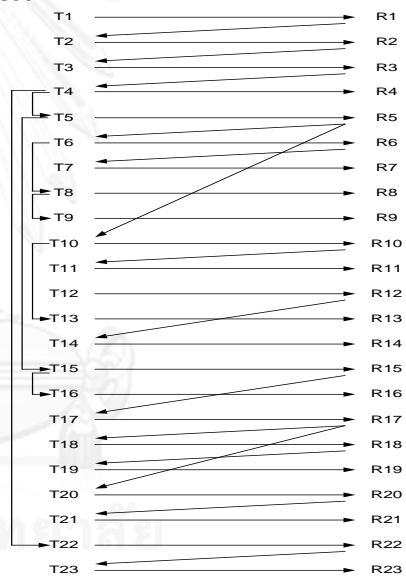
In addition to the identification of LP patter, quantitative and qualitative writings also imply a relation of the change in the use of LP pattern and the change in the C&C component scores obtained by the students in the pretest and posttest. Comparing the TPA of students' essays in the pretest and the posttest, it is obvious that the production of LP patterns considerably contributes to the establishment of textual cohesion in the pretest and the posttest essays (Appendix 5). Let us have a look at one example:

**Student 12:**

Pretest

| | Posttest |
|---|---|

Pretest:
T1 → R1
T2 → R2
T3 → R3
T4 → R4
T5 → R5
T6 → R6
T7 → R7
T8 → R8
T9 → R9
T10 → R10
T11 → R11
T12 → R12
T13 → R13
T14 → R14
T15 → R15
T16 → R16
T17 → R17

Posttest:
T1 → R1
T2 → R2
T3 → R3
T4 → R4
T5 → R5
T6 → R6
T7 → R7
T8 → R8
T9 → R9
T10 → R10
T11 → R11
T12 → R12
T13 → R13
T14 → R14
T15 → R15
T16 → R16
T17 → R17
T18 → R18
T19 → R19
T20 → R20
T21 → R21
T22 → R22
T23 → R23

Student 12 can be considered as a successful student after the Essay Writing 2 course since he made the highest changes in terms of C&C component scores (1.25 score units) as well as overall scores (2.75 score units) from the pretest to the posttest (Table 4.5, Table 4.6, section 4.1.2.1). TPA findings show that his production of LP pattern doubles from 4 in the pretest to 8 in the posttest. This together with the increase in the use of other patterns contributes greatly to his 1.25-unit gain regarding C&C component scores. TPA of the pretest and posttest essays also reveals that student 12's posttest essays involve more cohesive flows between clauses and

among parts of the text. According to the TPA results, the posttest textual cohesion can be considered stronger than the pretext textual cohesion.

### 4.2.2.3 Split Rheme Pattern and Derived Theme Pattern

The results from Table 4.15 reveal a considerable improvement in the use of derived theme pattern (DP) from 7.5% to 16% of occurrence proportion (over the total number of TP patterns). Meanwhile the proportion in percentage for split rheme pattern slightly changes by 1% downwards. However considering the frequency of occurrence per essay, the statistics show that in the pretest only 9 students could produce SRP in their essay while the figure is raised to 17 students producing SRP in their posttest essays. This result is consistent with other studies by Mellos (2011) and Eggins (2005) which conclude a more often construction of SRP and DP in the higher-scoring texts.

Noticeably, the occurrence of MRP in the studied students' texts can be seen as a cohesive tool to connect one paragraph and the others. In this research, most of the SRP patterns produced are with the purpose to connect the introduction paragraph (in particular, the thesis statement) with the paragraphs that follow. These paragraphs have a role to elaborate the argumentative points presented in the rheme of the thesis statement in the introduction paragraph.

Meanwhile, DP pattern allows cohesiveness to be created between and among clauses that are not next to each other. This can be seen as a flexible pattern in which the theme of one clause is related to the rhemes of the previous clauses that can be far from it. The paragraphs below illustrate my analysis:

*Pretest essay 8:*

**...In my opinion (TT), gay couples (UM/TP)** shouldn't be able to marry because marriage between people have the same sex will contribute to increasing significantly rate of lestbians and eroding off-spring (5).

**First of all (TT), the number of the lestbians in society (UM/TP)** will rise rapidly if gay couples have freedom of the choice married (6)....

**In addition (TT), many among people (UM/TP)** have the same sex also erode off-spring because they can't have children (11)…

The writing sample above can be analyzed as follows:
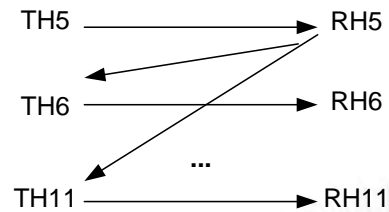


Accordingly, there are two argumentative points in the rheme of clause 5: "increasing significantly rate of lestbians" and "eroding off-spring". SRP helps the readers to predict that there are at least two paragraphs in the body of the essay, each of which elaborates one of these points. Therefore, a cohesive link is created to connect not only clause 5-6 and clause 6-7, but also it is expected to tie the two elaborating paragraphs with the introduction paragraph. The use of textual themes (conjunctive adjuncts: "first of all" and "in addition") support the creation of SRP in the text.

*Posttest essay 5:*

**…In my opinion (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** should be compulsory for the following reasons (4).

**Firstly (TT), workers at 65 or 70 (UM/TP)** have poor health which impact directly on working quality (5). **At that age (M/TP)** their bodies do not function well as young people or even people at 60 (6). **Blue collar workers (UM/TP)** often have to do heavy tasks such as carrying goods, working at intensive pace (7). **Meanwhile (TT) their health state (UM/TP)** does not afford these (8). **Therefore (TT), 60 (UM/TP)** is suitable age for retirement (9); **otherwise (TT) extensive working (UM/TP)** will damage their health (10).

**Secondly (TT), their mind (UM/TP)** is not flexible to complete missions effectively (11)…

The above writing text is analyzed as follows:
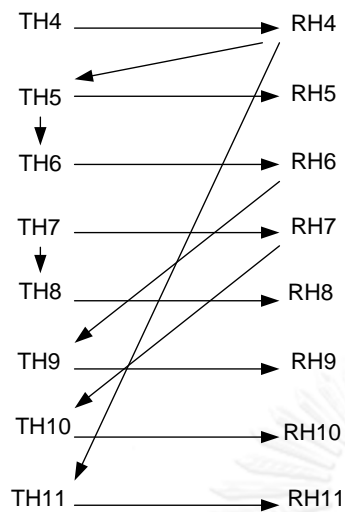
Looking at the TP analysis, one can see that cohesive ties are created by means of CP, SRP and DP. SRP not only creates links between clause 4-5, and clause 4-11, it also establishes ties between the essay introduction part with the next two paragraphs. CP builds cohesion between clauses 5-6 and clause 7-8. DP contributes to the linking of clause 6-9 and clause 7-10.

### 4.2.3 Problems of Thematic Progression

The problems of thematic progression are divided into three groups: brand new theme (BNT), empty rheme (ER), and double rheme (DbR). The identification of BNT, ER, and DbR is implemented as follows:

- Brand new theme is the TP problem that happens when the theme of one clause does not contain any familiar, or given information that has been mentioned in the previous clauses. The identification of BNT is demonstrated in the following example:

*Labor (UM/TP) is a long process (1).* **However (TT) there should be (M/TP)** *a specific time to put an end to people's working process (2).* **In some countries (M/TP),** *the average worker is obligated to retire at the age of 60, while in the others people can work until they are 65 or 70 (3). (Posttest Essay 18, Appendix 4)*

In this example, the problem of brand new theme occurs twice between clauses 1-2 and clauses 2-3 as the two marked topical themes in clauses 2 and 3 have never been mentioned before.

- Empty rheme is the TP problem that happens when the rheme in one clause does not contain new information that can be deployed in the following clauses. Let us take a look at the following example:

*A family (M/TP)* *may be expressed as a part of co-dependent and cooperating persons, connected together over time by strong social and emotional bonds (16).* *Its central purpose (UM/TP)* *is to support (17). (Pretest Essay 6, Appendix 3)*

In this example, the problem of empty rheme occurs in clause 17, as the rheme part does not give information that can be developed further in the next clauses. Instead of finishing the clause so abruptly, information of "whom" and "how to support" should be added so that it can be deployed in the theme position of the following clauses.

- Double rheme is the TP problem in which the rheme part of a clause includes more than one piece of information, one of which has not been mentioned before, or is not developed in the later clauses. The following example illustrate is type of TP problems:

*In my opinion (TT), I (UM/TP)* *am greatly in favor of the first opinion because they have love, individuals' personal lives and have a happy life together partner (4). (Pretest Essay 6, Appendix 3)*

In this example, the problem of double rheme happens when the rheme of clause 4 include three pieces of information namely "love", "personal lives", and "happy together with their partner" that should be developed in the following parts of the essay. Nonetheless, only the first piece of information was developed in the next clause (clause 5) while the other two pieces of information were ignored and not mentioned further in the later parts of the text.

The results show that the problems decrease from 162 problems in the pretest writings to 127 problems in the posttest writings. The proportion of occurrence of each type of problem is shown in Table 4.16 as follows.

Table 4.16 Proportion in percentage of TP problems by Vietnamese students in the pretest and posttest essays

|  | Pretest | | Posttest | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | No. | Percentage | No. | Percentage |
| Brand New Theme (BNT) | 127 | 78% | 94 | 80% |

| Empty Rheme (ER) | 32 | 20% | 22 | 20% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Double Rheme (DbR) | 3 | 2% | 1 | 1% |
| Total No. of Problems | 162 | | 117 | |
| Total No. of Clauses | 333 | | 459 | |

Formula: Proportion = (Themes/Clauses) * 100%

Accordingly, the research shows that the biggest problem of TP faced by Vietnamese students is brand new theme (BNT). The second is empty rheme (ER) while the third type, double rheme (DbR) does not seem to be problematic in the students' argumentative writings.

There is a considerable reduction in the students' production of TP problems. Statistically, BNT and ER are reported to fall by one third from the pretest to the posttest. This can be considered as a proof for the students' improvement in creating textual cohesion since the change in the occurrence of TP problems is related to the change in the construction of thematic patterns within the students' essays. The fewer the TP problems in the text, the more cohesive flows created by the establishment of thematic patterns throughout the text.

With respect to BNT, there are three most noticeable sources from which BNT exists. First, it is the use of existential clauses starting with "there + be" that leads to the problem of BNT as in the following example:

> ***There might be (M/TP)*** *some argument that open policies for gay marriage may pave the way for the spreadness of same-sex love or raising negative awareness of gay love especially among the youth (10). (Pretest Essay 7, Appendix 3)*

As explained in section 4.2.1.1, the marked theme originated from this structure does not refer to any previous information, nor does it refer to any information that may follow. Although one may argue that cohesion can be found in the rheme part of the clause, TPA of the essay reveals that it is at this point that the cohesive flow is disrupted (Appendix 5, student 7).

The second cause of BNT is the use of thematized marked themes and themes starting with non-referential subject "it". The reason is similar to the existential marked themes, and as its name suggests, such a subject does not refer to any information in the text at all, nor does it have any lexical meaning. The third reason is the use of adverbial marked topical themes, such as "nowadays", "in the recent years", "in some countries". Examples for these three causes are illustrated in section 4.2.1.1.

Another cause of BNT is the use of unmarked topical theme "people". 11 out 20 students used this theme in the pretest essays, whereas in the posttest the problem is only found in five essays. This theme is used as a general reference used by the ESL writers to start a fact for their point of argument. Using this theme, the writers want to avoid being personal. He does not want to direct the fact to a specific group that might be in his readers either. However, since the theme "people" is too general and is not backed up by any information before, it will be a problem for the establishment of cohesive flow within the text. Let us take a look at the following examples.

<u>Pretest essays:</u>

*Essay 5:* **There is (M/TP)** a wide range of spectrum opinions when it comes to the controversial issue whether the authorities should legalize homosexual marriage (1). **People (UM/TP)** may hold different perspective due to its distinctive backgrounds and experiences (2).

*Essay 16:* **Nowadays (M/TP),** gays become popular in social and the question is "should gay couples be able to marry? (1)" **Some people (UM/TP)** agree with this idea but others do not (2).

<u>Posttest essays:</u>

*Essay 8:* **Nowadays (M/TP)** the government increasingly takes care of workers' life that allows the average workers to retire at the age of 60 (1). **Many people (UM/TP)** agree that retirement at 60 brings us a lot of advantages (2).

*Essay 16:* **When they are high-old ages (M/TP),** they can stop working to enjoy the life (2). **However (TT), some people (UM/TP)** say that retirement at the age of 60 is unnecessary while they are still hearty with their jobs (3).

In these examples, "people" is considered the new information that appears in the theme positions. One may argue that it is not possible to claim that there is no cohesion between these clauses. It is partly true since the use of cohesive devices can still be found in other parts of the clause. However, because the theme is the focal point of the clause, a disruption at the theme position can weaken the cohesive flow of the clause with the previous part of the text.

The problem of empty rheme is caused when the rheme does not contain new information that can be developed in the following rhemes. This problem can mostly be found in the counter-argument paragraph of the essay, in which the following clause can be found:

> **It (UM/TP)** *may be true (15),* **but (TT) most of employees (UM/TP)** *feel happy when they do their jobs which make them better (16). (Posttest Essay 14, Appendix 4)*

The problem of empty rheme is found in clause 15 of the essay, in which the rheme part of the clause "may be true" does not contain any information to be developed further in the following clauses. However, since the problem is allocated in the rheme part of the clause, it can possibly block the chance to create linear theme or derived theme patterns which play important roles in creating cohesive flows within the text. One solution is to help the students practice with proper rheme production so as to minimize this problem in their writings.

The problem of double rheme occurs three times in the pretest essays (essays 6, 16, and 20), and only once in the posttest essays (essay 2) (see Appendix 3 and 4). The following example illustrates this problem:

> **Properly (I), 60 (UM/TP)** *is the right time for them to rest from their labors and enjoy their time beside their children (15). (Posttest Essay 2, Appendix 4)*

In the above example, the rheme part of clause 15 contains two sets of information: "the right time for them to rest from their labors" and "the right time for them to enjoy their time beside their children". Of these two sets of information, only the first one has been mentioned previously in clause 12 (see Appendix 4, posttest essay 2). The second one is not given information, nor is it mentioned later in other clauses. In fact, a rheme that includes more than one piece of information can have a possibility to develop a split rheme pattern in the next clauses when these sets of information appear in the theme positions of the following clauses. However, the

problem of double rheme halts this possibility, and thus prevents the cohesive flows between the clause in which it is contained and the other parts of the text.

## 4.3 Finding Summary

Overall, the holistic and textual analyses reveal significant points that are applicable to the teaching and learning of ESL argumentative writing. Firstly, analysis of the students' scores obtained in the pretest and posttest shows that there is a significant correlation between cohesion and the quality of text. Accordingly, the improvement in cohesion is linked to an increase in the overall scores for the students.

Textual analysis of the students' pretest and posttest essays show that proper choices of themes and rhemes plays an important role in the improvement of textual cohesion. In terms of theme types, it is noticeable that the students' choices of marked themes and unmarked themes result in whether the problems of thematic problems would exist in their text or not. Avoidance of existential and thematized structures, non-referential "it" and "people" in the theme position should be aware of. Besides, the use of questions and modal adjuncts are not appropriate in English academic writings, and thus should be avoided. Last but not least, conjunctions (and, but, yet) should be properly used at the clausal level, not sentence level.

In terms of thematic progression patterns, the research reveal that higher-scoring essays tend to not only include all four patterns, but also these patterns are applied quite flexibly in the text so as to create a smooth cohesion to the whole text. Although constant theme pattern is the most commonly used according to the results, more attention should be paid on linear theme pattern and split rheme pattern since the proper use of these two patterns would create a strong connection to the whole text. If constant theme pattern, linear pattern, and derived pattern establish links between and among clauses, split rheme pattern helps to strengthen the ties not only between clauses, but also between paragraphs, and hence the text as an entity.

Regarding the three problems of thematic progression, practice with rhemes that contain deployable information is important for the students to avoid the problem of empty rheme. The problem of brand new theme is most frequent in the Vietnamese ESL argumentative text; however this problem can be eradicated by following the suggestions for improving marked topical themes. Although the problem of double rheme does not cause much trouble to the studied learners, it is essential to keep in mind that practice with theme and rheme plays a vital role to prevent such problem.

In summary, the thematic progression is an effective framework to analyze textual cohesion in the learners' essays. The choice of themes and rhemes within the text can contribute to the text's cohesion, hence affecting the overall quality of the text.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSION

This study investigated cohesion in the Vietnamese EFL argumentative writings by means of thematic progression analysis (TPA). Research findings illustrate the effectiveness of TPA in assisting the students to improve cohesion in their writing. Choices of theme-rheme and thematic progression patterns were examined to decide whether they influence on the establishment of textual cohesion. Scores of 20 essays are found to improve in the posttest in terms of textual cohesion, and their overall textual quality.

## 5.1 Answers to the research questions

To the first question: *At the beginning of the Writing 2 course, to what extent are the Vietnamese EFL students' argumentative writings cohesive? At the end of the course, are the students' writing less or more cohesive after the teaching and learning of thematic progression?*

Findings of quantitative and qualitative analyses show that cohesion was established in students' essays in both pretest and posttest. However, textual cohesiveness was significantly improved in the posttest essays, in comparison with the pretest. Specifically, quantitative results reveal that there is a significant difference between the students' cohesion and coherence (C&C) component scores in the pretest and the posttest, and the component scores of the posttest is averagely 0.68 score units higher than of the pretest. Moreover, there is a remarkable relation between the change in the C&C component scores and the change in the overall scores as the former significantly predicts the latter.

Qualitative findings show important changes in terms of the students' choices of thematic progression (TP) patterns and theme types, as well as the occurrence of TP problems in the students pretest and posttest essays. These changes are closely related to the improvement in the textual cohesive flows in their posttest essays. TPA reveals that the students' posttest essays were considerably more cohesive than

the pretest essays since more flows were created throughout the text along with the occurrences of all types of thematic progression found in the analysis (see Appendix 5 for a comparison of the pretest and posttest TPA).

To the second question: *What thematic progression patterns are found in the Vietnamese EFL students' argumentative writings before and after the teaching and learning of thematic progression?*

In terms of TP patterns, textual analysis reveals that there was an important improvement in the students' posttest essays since all TP patterns were used interchangeably whereas in the pretest essays, patterns of split rheme and derived theme occurred only a few times. TPA of both pretest and posttest essays show that constant theme pattern dominated to create the textual flows among clauses. The increase in the uses of linear theme, split rheme patterns in the posttest essays considerably contribute to the establishment of the links not only between individual clauses, but also between clauses and other parts of the essays, or among different paragraphs of the essays. Furthermore, the alternate uses of all TP patterns in the posttest essays can be significantly linked to the increase in the posttest C&C component scores, and hence the increase in the posttest overall scores.

In addition to the TP patterns, the choices of themes help to decide the construction of thematic flows in the students' text. TPA findings reveal that there is an increase in the use of textual themes and unmarked topical themes. In terms of textual themes, conjunctive adjuncts appear to be the most common type, and the occurrence of this theme type contributes to the strong textual cohesion in the students' essays. Study of the markedness and unmarkedness of themes plays an important role since findings show that marked themes from thematized and existential structures can cause disruptions to the textual cohesive flows in the TPA. At these points, the occurrence of TP problems can be found.

With regard to the TP problems, the problem of brand new theme turns out to be the most frequent in the students pretest and posttest essays. TPA findings show a significant reduction in the occurrence of all types of TP problems from the pretest to the posttest, which means the students made a great enhancement in

their writing ability. Such a decrease in the TP problems is related to the success in building TP patterns in the students' posttest essays, and the increase in their C&C component as well as overall scores in the posttest.

## 5.2. Implications for ESL Writing Teaching and Learning

Quantitative and qualitative analyses reveal that the improvement in creating textual cohesion is related to the enhancement in the textual quality. Furthermore, changes in terms of theme types, thematic progression, as well as problems of thematic progression are reported after the analyses. The uses of marked topical themes, textual themes as well as interpersonal themes reveal an influence from the L1 to the L2 writings. These results are consistent with previous studies discussed in chapter 2. Besides, the significance of the study lies in the fact that it provides both quantitative and qualitative findings from a corpus of Vietnamese ESL argumentative writings that are beneficial not only for the Vietnamese ESL teachers and learners, but also for other researchers working in the field of ESL writing.

The investigation into theme types, TP patterns, and TP problems are beneficial to both ESL teachers and learners. For Vietnamese teachers, it is important to notice that there is a tendency of Vietnamese students to include questions in ESL academic writings, which should be avoided. The use of a number of structures including existential and thematized structures should be stressed more so that they would not be overused in the students' essays. While the use of textual-theme conjunctive adjuncts is encouraged since they build a technical cohesion among clauses, the use of conjunctions should be careful. Placing conjunction at the beginning of a sentence is not appropriate in English academic written style.

The research also reveals important points of thematic progression patterns that contribute to the success of the ESL learner in creating written cohesion. It can be concluded that TPA is a useful tool for both teachers and learners to analyze L2 written texts. The research findings imply a potential for the application of thematic structure in classroom context so that the learners improve their academic writing. The design of the lesson should focus on raising the learners' awareness of two important concepts: cohesion and thematic progression. This will include both reading and writing practices so that the students can see the relation between these

two concepts, how to use TPA as a tool to analyze a written text (may be their or their peer's text), and how to enhance their own writing from this analysis. Examples of theme-rheme practices are included in Appendix 2.

As mentioned in section 3.2, argumentative writing is considered to be a higher stage of writing for the EFL learners at the English Department, Hanoi University. It is also a preparation stage for these students before they move to a more complex stage of academic research writing. Since it proves to be useful for ESL/EFL writing, the study of cohesion in EFL argumentative writing through TPA using a Vietnamese case study ends with a new question of whether the application of thematic progression analysis (TPA) can be introduced to the ESL/EFL learners of the earlier stage of writing, specifically, those who attend an expository writing course. Therefore, it is recommended that further exploration into the application of TPA in keeping cohesion in ESL/EFL expository texts. Such a study can probably answer the questions of whether TPA helps enhance these learners' texts, and to which aspect(s) and to what degree(s) improvements can be made.

Finally, although this study reveals that the three common problems of thematic progression do exist in the Vietnamese EFL argumentative writing, these so-called problems are actually can be found many times even in the high-scoring texts whether or not the writer is aware of them. Study results suggested that although these problems can have several impacts on the students' writing quality, such impacts may not appear to be major disruption to the textual cohesion. Due to time constraint, this study has not been able to elucidate the roles of these so called problems in the Vietnamese EFL learners' argumentative texts; therefore, further studies can be done focusing on this question.

## 5.3. Limitation of the study

However applicable it seems, the research has two major limitations which can be referred to the research methodology. First, due to time constraint, the quantitative analysis, which was based on the scores of the students, only looks at the correlation between the overall scores and C&C component scores in the pretest and posttest essays. The other three component scores were not taken into account in the analysis so as to have a more comprehensive understanding of the relation of

the two scores. Secondly, the research is limited in terms of size and scope of the study. The research would be more reliable if it can be done on a wider population including ESL learners from other majors instead of the English major.

Besides, although the effectiveness of TPA as a tool to investigate the students' writing cohesiveness has been ascertained in this research, there is an undeniable fact that TPA does not cover all aspects of textual cohesion such as lexico-grammatical cohesive devices that occurs in the texts, the role of clausal punctuations in the construction of textual cohesion, and cohesion in multiple themes. Therefore, this method has to be combined with other frameworks in order to obtain a more comprehensive view of the textual cohesion in the ESL/EFL writing texts.

Even though, the study results in useful pedagogical implications. In order to realize these suggestions, further study on cohesion in other genres using TPA as well as writing pedagogy is needed so as to benefit the design of an academic writing course that is based on cohesion and TPA.

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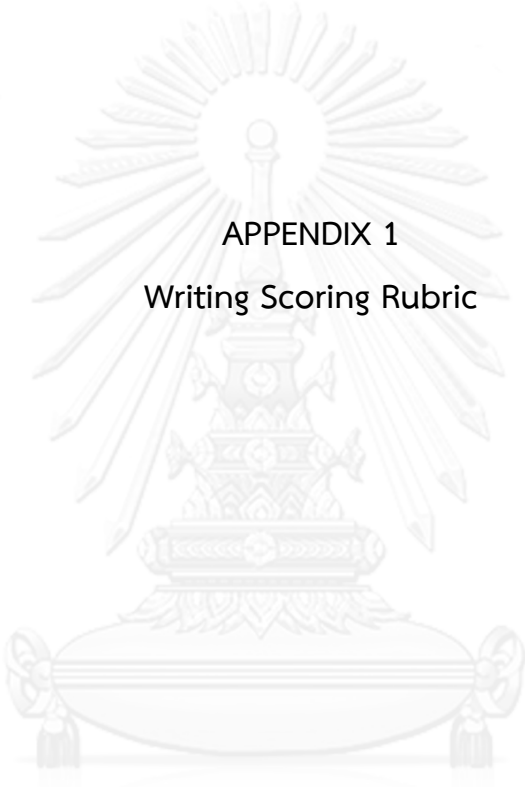
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Writing Scoring Rubric

APPENDIX 1 – Writing Scoring Rubric (IELTS Writing task-2 rubric as adapted by the English Department, Hanoi University)

| Score | Content & Organization | Coherence and Cohesion | Vocabulary | Grammar and Accuracy |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | - fully addresses to all parts of the prompt<br>- presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas | - uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention<br>- skillfully manages paragraphing | - uses a wide range of vocabulary with natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' | - uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' |
| 9 | - fully addresses all parts of the task<br>- presents a well-developed position in answer to the question with relevant, extended and well supported ideas | - skillfully develop sequences of information and ideas logically<br>- uses paragraphing skillfully<br>- effectively uses all aspects of cohesion | - uses a wide range of vocabulary in a natural control to convey precise meanings<br>- skillfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation<br>- produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation | - uses a wide range of structures with flexibility and accuracy<br>- produces rare errors or inappropriacies |
| 8 | - sufficiently | - sequences | - uses a wide | - uses a wide |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | addresses all parts of the task<br><br>- presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas | information and ideas logically<br><br>- manages all aspects of cohesion well<br><br>- uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately | range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly<br><br>- produces occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation, and errors in spelling and/or word formation | range of structures<br><br>- the majority of sentences are error-free<br><br>- makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies |
| 7 | - addresses all parts of the task<br><br>- presents a clear position throughout the response<br><br>- presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to over-generalize and/or supporting ideas may lack focus | - logically organizes information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout<br><br>- uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use<br><br>- presents a clear central topic within each paragraph | - uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision<br><br>- uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation<br><br>- may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation | - uses a variety of complex structures<br><br>- produces frequent error-free sentences<br><br>- has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors |
| 6 | - addresses all parts | - arranges | - uses an | - uses a mix of |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others<br><br>- presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive<br><br>- presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear | information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression<br><br>- uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical<br><br>- may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately<br><br>- uses paragraphing, but not always logically | adequate range of vocabulary for the task<br><br>- attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy<br><br>- makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication | simple and complex sentence forms<br><br>- makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication |
| 5 | - addresses the task only partially; the format may be inappropriate in places<br><br>- expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no | - presents information with some organization but there may be a lack of overall progression<br><br>- makes inadequate, inaccurate or | - uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task<br><br>- may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that | - uses only a limited range of structures<br><br>- attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | conclusions drawn<br><br>- presents some main ideas but these are limited and not sufficiently developed; there may be irrelevant detail | overuse of cohesive devices<br><br>- may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution<br><br>- may not write in paragraphs, or paragraphing may be inadequate | may cause some difficulty for the reader | - may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the Reader |
| 4 | - responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate<br><br>- presents a position but this is unclear<br><br>- presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported | - presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response<br><br>- uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive<br><br>- may not write in paragraphs or their use may be | - uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task<br><br>- has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader | - uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses<br><br>- some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty |

| | | confusing | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | - does not adequately address any part of the task<br><br>- does not express a clear position -<br>presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant | - does not organize ideas logically<br><br>- may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas | - uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling<br><br>- errors may severely distort the<br>Message | - attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning |
| 2 | - barely responds to the task<br><br>- does not express a position<br><br>- may attempt to present one or two ideas | - has very little control of organizational features | - uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling | - cannot use sentence forms except in memorized phrases |
| 1 | - answer is completely unrelated to the task | - fails to communicate any message | - can only use a few isolated words | - cannot use sentence forms at all |
| 0 | - does not attend<br><br>- does not attempt the task in anyway<br><br>- writes a totally memorized response | | | |

APPENDIX 2

Practices of Theme and Thematic Progression pattern identification.

APPENDIX 2 – Practices of Theme and Thematic Progression pattern identification.

***Practice 1.*** Identify Theme and Rheme in the following clause complexes. State whether the Theme is MARKED or UNMARKED

1. Michelangelo finished the statue of David in 1504.

2. The Statue of David was finished by Michelangelo in 1504.

3. In 1504, Michelangelo finished the statue of David.

4. A good teacher needs to be understanding.

5. Jeremy was too drunk to drive.

6. As regards the salary, how much do you want to earn?

7. Between you and me, why did you tell such a lie?

8. Are you being serious?

9. Did everybody vote for the new candidate?

10. Do it the way you are told.

11. Don't cry for me Argentina.

12. You do it the way you are told.

13. Before lunch, take two tablets for about a month.

14. How divinely he dances!

15. What an awful day it is!

16. This was Bono's first interview in two years.

17. In this same year, he also met Chester Kallman.

18. What are you currently reading?

19. Don't you feel more relaxed already?

20. Print your name and address on a piece of paper.

21. More heads at independent schools are considering testing their pupils for drugs.

22. Have you ever wondered where your favourite pop star is?

23. How many times a week do you buy 'The Guardian'?

24. Actions which are inconsistent with an individual's usual behaviour and which give rise to some concern may be an indication of psychological distress.

25. For enquiries relating to this offer please phone 0277 773111.

*Practice 2.* Mark the MULTIPLE THEME in the following clauses, say if it's MARKED or NOT

1. But, in my opinion, the action was not sufficiently convincing.

2. However, he had rejected a suggestion of shared government.

3. And, what were those suspects arrested charged with?

4. Then, why did it try to bite me?

5. But, surely, you can't see the difference.

6. But, don't you realise that he's lying?

7. In fact, Christopher Robins, it is cold.

8. Well, Frank, look in my cupboard.

9. And then, unfortunately, we'll have to go out, Piglet.

10. But, surprisingly, a hundred miles above him, a lark began to sing.

11. In Australia there are three levels of government: the Federal government, state government and Local governments. All of these levels of governments are necessary. This is so for a number of reasons. First, the federal government is necessary for the big things. They keep the economy in order and look after things like defense. Similarly, the state government looks after the middle-sized things. For example, they look after law and order, preventing things like vandalism in schools. Finally, local government looks after the small things. They look after things like collecting rubbish. Otherwise everyone would have diseases. Thus, for the reasons above we can conclude that the three levels of government are necessary.

12. Do you want a garden feature that everyone will remember? Then, dear friend, decorate your own garden pots with colourful mosaics. How funny it is! Our starter kits contain step-by-step instructions and, obviously, it also contains all the materials you need. If you are ready to create your own designs, then, don't go past our popular mixed media bags. In them, you'll find several hundred colorful and unusual mosaic pieces.

13. Let me start with my dislikes. First, soap operas. Why does a story like "Dallas" or "Dynasty" interest people for more than a month or two? I can't get it  but these programmes have been running  for years in this country. I

keep asking my wife why she can't miss an episode and haven't got a sensible answer yet. For similar reasons I dislike many of the American detective series. Sometimes, they are quite entertaining and a few have quite good scripts but they are rather repetitive, on the whole. You can always tell when the series    writers are running rather short of ideas because the final episodes of the series tend to be the noisiest and the most violent.

14. Do I like documentaries? Well, Yes, though some of them require rather more background knowledge than I have for me to enjoy them completely and let's say something about current-affairs programmes. These are often better than the news because in detailed interviews and debates you are more likely to hear something like the truth than in a short news bulletin.

*Practice 3.* Identify the type of thematic progression used by the author. Is it constant, linear, split rheme, or a combination?

1. Your food goes down a tube called the oesophagus. The oesophagus leads from the throat to the stomach. The digestive juice digests it so little that you can't see it at all, so it can go into the blood. The white blood cells kill all the germs but if you feel sick it's because you've got too many germs in your body and the cells can't fight them all at once. You'll need to take some medicine to help them. When our blood runs out of oxygen the blood goes back to your heart and new blood goes round your body and it's more bright and clean than the old blood.

2. There are according to Manuel Seco, two basic definitions, which he calls *proper definition* and *improper definition*. The so-called proper definition can be said to be a paraphrases or rephrasing of the meaning of the lemma or lexical unit. This type of definition could replace the lemma in a given context of use. This is the type of definition one resorts to for defining the great majority of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, i.e., for defining the so-called "content words". The improper definition is so called because it is not, properly speaking, a definition but rather an explanation as to how the word is used and for what communicative purpose. This is the type of definition one often uses when defining interjections or when defining function words, such as conjunctions, pronouns and articles. This type of definition can sometimes be used to explain the meaning of certain kinds of adjectives, adverbs and verbs, when they are light in meaning and are thus best defined

in terms of their communicative function or the meaning they acquire in collocations.

3. Peel the mango salad and cut into 1cm cubes. In the bowl from which you will serve the salad lightly beat the yoghurt until creamy. Add the chilli, salt and sugar. Put the mango on top of the yoghurt. Heat the oil in a little pan, and when hot put in the mustard seeds. They will start popping within seconds. Immediately put in the dried red chilli. As it darkens add the chopped shallots. Stir and fry until the shallot is just browned. Pour quickly over the bowl of mango and yoghurt. I don't mix the salad together as it looks beautiful as is – the red chilli and black mustard seeds glisten on top of the luscious golden mango which is in turn set off by the creamy yoghurt below. (text from Butt et al. P 101)

4. George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin, Ireland, on July 26, 1856. He attended four different schools, but his real education came from a thorough grounding in music and painting, which he obtained at home. In 1871, he was apprenticed to a Dublin estate agent, and later he worked as a cashier. In 1876, Shaw joined his mother and sister in London, where he spent the next nine years in unrecognized struggle and genteel poverty.

5. The French revolution resulted in a major shake-up among the European powers and in 1796 the Dutch were easily supplanted by the British, who also managed to subdue the Kingdom of Kandy and who managed to become the first European power to control the whole island. Until 1802, the British administered Sri Lanka from Madras in India, but in that year it became a Crown colony, and in 1818, three years after the incorporation of Kandy, a unified administration for the entire island was set up. In 1832, sweeping changes in property laws opened the door to British settlers.

6. After flash floods, desert streams from upland areas carry heavy loads of silt, sand and rock fragments. As they reach the flatter areas of desert basins, they slow down and their waters may soak quickly into the basin floor. Then the streams drop their loads; first they drop the heaviest material – the stones, then they drop the sand and finally they drop the silt. Soon these short-lived streams become choked by their own deposits and they spread their load in all directions. After some time, fan or cone-shaped deposits of gravel, sand, silt and clay are formed around each valley or canyon outlet. These are called alluvial fans.

7. On the Empress Place side of the river a statue of Sir Stamford Raffles stands imperiously by the water. It's in the approximate place where he first set foot on Singapore island. There is a second statue of Raffles in front of the clock tower by Empress Place. Nearby is the Supreme Court and City Hall, across from which is the open green of the Padang, site for cricket, hockey, football and rugby matches. There are some memorials to civilians who died because of the Japanese occupation and to Ling Bo Seng, a resistance leader killed by the Japanese.

8. Programs issue instructions to the computer. Many programs process files. *For example*, a message program can, by following your commands, create *and* send a message *and* manipulate a file of messages. A text-editing program can follow commands to create a text-file and edit it, *while* a text-formatting program can follow commands to format texts by centering a heading, enumerating a list, italicizing a name, etc. Programs are stored as files in the system.

9. Although the United States participated heavily in World War I (WW I), the nature of that participation was fundamentally different from what it became in World War II (WW II). The earlier conflict was a one-ocean war for the Navy and a one theatre war for the Army; the latter was a two-ocean war for the Navy and one of five major theatres for the Army. In both wars a vital responsibility of the Navy was escort-of-convoy and anti-submarine work, but in the 1917-1919 conflict it never clashed with the enemy on the surface; whilst between1941-1945 it fought some twenty major and countless minor engagements with the Japanese Navy.

    a. American soldiers who engaged in WW I were taken overseas in transports and (they were) landed on docks or in protected harbours; in WW II the art of amphibious warfare had to be revived and developed, since assault troops were forced to fight their way ashore. Airpower, in the early conflict, was still inchoate and almost negligible; in the latter it was a determining factor. In WW I the battleship still reigned queen of the sea, as she had, in changing forms, since the age of Drake. Battle Line fought with tactics inherited from the age of sail; but in WW II the capital naval force was the air-craft carrier task group, for which completely new tactics had to be devised.

APPENDIX 3

Pretest Essays by Vietnamese ESL learners.

APPENDIX 3 – Pretest Essays by Vietnamese ESL learners.

**Pretest Essay 1:**

**Today the burning question whether gay couples be able to marry (UM/TP)** is a controversial one (1). **In my point of view (TT), same-sex couples (M/TP)** should be allowed to get married due to their human right and no change the meaning of marrige (2).

**For one thing (TT), gay couples (UM/TP)** have right of being human, especially, marriage equality (3)**. Because on one (UM/TP)** can choose gender when they are born (4). **They (UM/TP)** also can not choose to be in love with the same or opponent sex (5). **Gays (UM/TP)** also are a human (6) **so (TT) undoubtly (I), they (UM/TP)** have right in marrige like others (7).

**Furthermore (TT), same biological sex couples (UM/TP)** do not change the traditional meaning of marrige (8). **For instance (TT), they (UM/TP)** just want to marry the person they love, to establish and protect a family and to make lifetime commitment in the sample way other couples are able to (9). **It (UM/TP)** is true because marrige is based on love (10).

**Some people may argue (UM/TP)** that allowing same sex couples can get married, have a bad effect on innovative generations (11). **It (UM/TP)** is parly true (12), **but again (TT), whether children of parents that are not happiness (M/TP)** is happier than children of the same biological sex parents that are always love together (13). **Happiness (UM/TP)** can come from any couples who love and protect the other (14).

**All is all (TT), gay couples (M/TP)** should be allowed to be get married because of their human right and no harm the meaning of marrige (15).

Pretest Essay 2:

**In recent years (M/TP),** gay marriage has become a controversal issue in many societies (1). **People (UM/TP)** question whether gay couples should be able to marry (2). **The answer (UM/TP)**, in this case, is obviously "yes" (3).

**To begin with (TT), gay (UM/TP)** are just normal human beings (4). **Therefore (TT), they (UM/TP)** deserve every right to be happy (5). **Some people (UM/TP)** are assuming that gay is a desease, a phobia which negatively changes human's sexual tendency (6). **This belief (UM/TP)** is wrong (7). **Gay (UM/TP)** is term refering to groups of people who are sexually or romantically attracted to others in the same gender (8). **They (UM/TP)** are normal and healthy being who loves and deserve to have the commitment of their loves (9).

**People (UM/TP)** often claim that the main purpose of marriage is to maintain offspring a mission which gay couple could not carry (10). **This belief (UM/TP)**, however, is also wrong due to the lack of knowledge (11). **As it is proven (M/TP),** gay are normal human beings (12). **Even if they have different sexual desirer (M/TP),** they can still produce or donor offsprings (13).

**Every one (UM/TP)** is different (14), **but (TT) they (UM/TP)** still deserve to have happy life (15).

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**Pretest Essay 3:**

**Gay couples (M/TP)** is seen to be normal in a society these centuries (1), **and (TT) they (UM/TP)** currently claim to have a legal right to get married together (2). **This (UM/TP)** has become a highly debated issue in many countries so far (3). **From my point of view (TT), I (UM/TP)** will analyze two main reasons to oppose this legislation (4).

**There is (M/TP)** no culture or tradition in the world to let men get married together (5). **Since our ancestor, (M/TP)** such a case has never existed nor been acceptable (6). **According to traddition (TT), getting married (UM/TP)** means to have children to inherit our ancestor's species (7), **and (TT) gay couple married case (UM/TP)** will not certainly obtain that (8). **And (TT) that (UM/TP)** why many percieve it as a shame to have a gay in family's member for example (9). **In addition (TT), gay couple marriage (UM/TP)** may lead to social problems (10). **In terms law (TT), who (UM/TP)** will be a husband or wife (11), **and (TT) how (UM/TP)** can people indenity their gender in society for example (12). **Moreover (TT) these couple (UM/TP)** can not have their own children (13), **and (TT) that world (UM/TP)** affect a nation's population to decrease negatively (14).

**I (UM/TP),** finally, confirm that to preserve our ancestors' will and void social conflicts homosexual couple should never been legally married (15). **And (TT) we (UM/TP)** would better find the alternative ways to prevent or curve human kind from being a gay (16).

Pretest Essay 4:

**Since the appearance of human rights' regulations (M/TP),** never before has seen the explosion of global movements to claims freedom (1). **Over the last decades (M/TP),** homosexual marriage has become a controversial issue among social researches (2), **and (TT) the question of whether gay couples should be able to marry or not (UM/TP)** still remain unanswered (3). **Though the question is still of heated debate (UM/TP),** in my point of view, every one has their right to live and same sex couples should be supported by society (4).

**Firstly (TT), in the moment of coming into the world (M/TP),** every child has in born right to live inspite of lacks that they may have and homosexual people is not an exception (5). **With the inborn gender which was wrongly put in an opposite sex body (M/TP),** it is totally unfair for those people to be treated in a different way, to be the victim of racists (6). **They (UM/TP)** have their right to live like a normal person (7), **and (TT) therefore (TT)** *(hidden UM/TP)* also have the right to choose who they will spend their lifetime with (8). **We (UM/TP)** can not force what was naturally generated to change in the way we want (9).

**However (TT), the over explosion of gay couples in recent years (UM/TP)** is really a big problem to every countries (10). **Though gay people with inborn gender has no fault to blame (UM/TP),** it's really a concern that nowaday in some society gay couple has become a trend (11). **It (UM/TP)** some how created a chaos in society (12), **and (TT)** *(hidden UM/TP)* make the population become older (13). **In another point of view (TT), it (M/TP)** is regarded as an act of seflfishness to satisfy their self feeling (14). **Consequently (TT), there will be (M/TP)** no more child to be born and position of man and woman will be changed (15).

**In conclusion (TT), gay couple (UM/TP)** should be able to marry (16).

Pretest Essay 5:

**There is (M/TP)** a wide range of spectrum opinions when it comes to the controversial issue whether the authorities should legalize homosexual marriage (1). **People (UM/TP)** may hold different perspective due to its distinctive backgrounds and experiences (2). **In my opinion (TT), gay (M/TP)** should not be allowed to marry (3).

**First of all (TT), the valid marriages (UM/TP)** should be those producing children (4). **Now that giving birth is one essential part of natural evolution (M/TP),** same-sex marriage would restraine humanity's developing process (5).

**Furthermore (TT), homosexuality (UM/TP)** might not be an equally valid or successful option (6). **Because kids in same-sex marriages (M/TP)** may be affected in a negative way if they do not grow up in a traditional family (7). **As a result (TT), they (UM/TP)** are more likely choose to be gay (8).

**In contrast (TT), opponents (UM/TP)** may claim that homosexual marriage should be a basic human right or an invidual personal choice either (9). **However (TT), they (UM/TP)** actually do not realize that (10) **legalizing gay marriage (UM/TP)** will open the door to all kinds of uncontrolable behavior such as the fact that people wish to marry their children, their pets, and so on (11).

**In conclusion (TT), for the preservation of human being's natural evolution (M/TP),** gay marriage should not be legalized due to its drawbacks above (12).

Pretest Essay 6:

The question of whether or not gay couple (UM/TP) should be able to marry (1). On one hand (TT), some people (UM/TP) say that gay couple should be able to marry (2). On the other hand (TT), supporter (UM/TP) argue that if gay couple get to married it lose national character (3). In my opinion (TT), I (UM/TP) am greatly in favor of the first opinion because they have love, individuals' personal lives and have a happy life together partner (4).

Firstly (TT), gay couples (UM/TP) also have pure love (5). Love (UM/TP) is something that is very popular in today's world (6). Everyone (UM/TP) should be able to love and be loved, to be joined in marriage (7). Although homosexuals are same-sex (UM/TP), two committed adults of the same sex can be receive government agreement marriage (8).

Secondly (TT), as other couples (M/TP), gay couple have also responsibility apply to only male and female couples (9). When they had been in a committed relationship (M/TP), they decided that they would like to have a child to complete their family (10). Moreover (TT), homosexuals (UM/TP) need to ponder our own choices and understand the choices of others and love is many shapes (11). Thus (TT), gay couple (M/TP) should be accepted like other couple (12).

On the other hand (TT), some people (UM/TP) disagree with gay couple get to married because they think that it lose national character (13). That (UM/TP) is true (14, but (TT) time (UM/TP) are changing as the gay life style becomes more accepted by society (15). A family (M/TP) may be expressed as a part of co-dependent and cooperating persons, connected together over time by strong social and emotional bonds (16). It's central purpose (UM/TP) is to support (17).

In all (TT), homosexual (UM/TP) should be got to married (18). When living together (M/TP), they can share happy and sad worried (19). And (TT) they (UM/TP) have good life when all people have sympathy with them (20).

Pretest Essay 7:

Nowadays (M/TP), it's an increasing concern that whether gay couples should be allowed to get married or not (1). **While some countries have fairly open policies on this problem (M/TP),** some still hold the view of opponents (2). **From the viewpoint of an advocate (M/TP),** I find same sex marriage feasible because of its natural tendency and humanity purpose (3).

**As regard the first (M/TP),** homosexuality is now considered as a normal sexual tendency when men feel attracted by same-sex people (4). **It (UM/TP)** depends on everyone's hormone which cannot be controlled or even given since they were born, not that kind of pervert one as many existing prejudice (5). **Therefore (TT), it's understandable that (M/TP)** gays want to marry men or other gay who they fall in love with (6).

**Besides (TT), allowing same-sex marriage (UM/TP)** is to show respect to human right commitment (7). **In fact (TT), the legal system of almost all countries (UM/TP)** protect the need of getting happiness, married and family (8). **Consequently (TT), there is (M/TP)** no reason to prevent gays from getting married as they are truly humankind (9).

**There might be (M/TP)** some argument that open policies for gay marriage may pave the way for the spreadness of same-sex love or raising negative awareness of gay love especially among the youth (10). **This (UM/TP)** seems to be true to some extent (11), **but (TT) there is (M/TP)** no evidence to prove that people will be affected by other people's gender or sexual tendency (12). **For instance (TT), living with gay couples (UM/TP)** doesn't mean that we will become gay or have gay love (13).

**In conclusion (TT), same-sex marriage (M/TP)** should be set free by more open policies of Government and disprejudiced viewpoint from society (14).

Pretest Essay 8:

**Have someone (UM/TP)** ever asked you that gay couples should be able to marry (1)? **Nowadays (M/TP),** this question remains controversial (2). **Some people (UM/TP)** believe that lestbians have the right got married (3). **Whereas (TT) others (UM/TP)** disagree (4). **In my opinion (TT), gay couples (UM/TP)** shouldn't be able to marry because marriage between people have the same sex will contribute to increasing significantly rate of lestbians and eroding off-spring (5).

**First of all (TT), the number of the lestbians in society (UM/TP)** will rise rapidly if gay couples have freedom of the choice married (6). **Nowadays (M/TP),** this problem have become the headache issue that capture the government's concern in all nations around the world (7). **People (UM/TP)** is always under pressure of studying and working (8). **As a result (TT) human beings (UM/TP)** tend to face to mental problem such as stress and other negative emotions (9). **Therefore (TT), when the issue of marriage among people have the same sex isn't banned (M/TP),** it's very easy for them to continue their mistake and develop this number (10).

**In addition (TT), many among people (UM/TP)** have the same sex also erode off-spring because they can't have children (11). **Although there are many advances in the technology (UM/TP),** people have the same sex won't be able to bear a child (12).

**On the contrary (TT), there are (M/TP)** many arguments in support of getting married among gay couples (13). **Many people (UM/TP)** confirm that god has given us freedom of the choice (14), **and (TT) police makers (UM/TP)** don't have right banned this problem (15). **That (UM/TP)** may be true (16), **but (TT) rat of gay (UM/TP)** rapidly growth will break the balance of the society (17). **Moreover (TT), it (UM/TP)** also will increase operation of change sex which is really expensive and complex (18).

**In conclusion (TT), I (UM/TP)** believe that it's high time for everybody to have right awareness of this problem (19). **Gay couples (UM/TP)** shouldn't able to marry because of all reasons (20).

Pretest Essay 9:

**There is (M/TP)** a argument that gay couples should or should not be able to marry (1). **This problem (UM/TP)** still remains a controvial (2). **Some people (UM/TP)** agree with this issue (3). **However (TT), others people (UM/TP)** disagree ones (4). **In my opinion (TT), I (UM/TP)** strongly believe that gay couples certainly build a happy relationship (5).

**First and foremost (TT) gays (UM/TP)** are people (6), **they (UM/TP)** admire to find loves to share emotion, difficulties together in their life (7). **People (UM/TP)** are living in high developing country, and have opened mind (8), **so (TT) homosexual person (UM/TP)** should protected and supported which help gays become more confident and they dare to be themselves (9).

**Secondly (TT), love (UM/TP)** is not distinguished sexual (10). **Couples gay (UM/TP)** always try to gain agreements from family and sociality (11). **That (UM/TP)** is completely true (12). **For example (TT), recently on youtube (M/TP),** even on TV have public video to support relationship of couples gay (13). **Another example (M/TP)** the actress – Barney who is very famous actress in "How I met your mother" (14). **He (UM/TP)** married with his boyfriend (15), **and (TT)** *(hidden UM/TP)* have two children (16). **They (UM/TP)** had a happy life (17).

**However (TT), there is (M/TP)** argument that couples gay can't bear children (18). **This (UM/TP)** effects to their next generation (19). **It (UM/TP)** may be true but having many ways to have children (20). **After they married (UM/TP)** they can adopt from social organization (21). **They (UM/TP)** are able to raise and teach their children become good people (22).

**In conclusion (TT), the God (UM/TP)** said that: "love is greatest emotion" (23). **So (TT) I (UM/TP)** think that people should support marriage of couple gays (24). **However (TT), someone (UM/TP)** should not take use of this relation for priviate target (25).

Pretest Essay 10:

**So far in many meetings and conferences (M/TP),** the government has stirred up a controversy over whether or not gay couple should be able to marry (1). **In my viewpoint (TT), I (UM/TP)** strongly believe that marriages among gay people should not be accepted because it contrast to the nature and becomes high-risk tendancy (2).

**First of all (TT), I (UM/TP)** intensly oppose to gay couples due to the disability to take up human beings' mission (3). **That one (UM/TP)** is maintaining and developing generations stably (4). **In nature (M/TP),** a man and a woman get married (5), **and (TT) obviously (I) they (UM/TP)** are taking their assignment to sustain their gens and keep it enternal (6). **However (TT), gay couples (UM/TP)** could not do (7). **If possible (M/TP),** they get to pay for surgeries or tranplants a huge mount of money (8), **which (TT, M/TP)** is wasteful (9).

**Secondly (TT), if the authority assert the right that gay couples freedomly get married (UM/TP),** it will be hazardous tendancy (10). **In fact (TT), many boys or girls (UM/TP)** are not gay in their essence (11), **they (UM/TP)** just imitate their friends and consider it as a modern-day trend (12). **Supposing (UM/TP)** that most of young generation pursue this trend (13), **it (UM/TP)** will have serious effects on the society (14).

**Many people (UM/TP)** may argue that being gay is not their own intention and they were born in that way (15). **It (UM/TP)** is true (16), **but (TT) I (UM/TP)** am strongly convinced that they are not allowed to celebrate weddings (17). **If they really love each other and determine to get true relationship (M/TP),** they could cohab it (18). **In many ways (M/TP),** it should never be recognized by the law (19).

**To sum up (TT), I (UM/TP)** believe that the gay couple's marriage should not be recognized (20). **It (UM/TP)** affect to both their own family and the society (21). **Also (TT) it (UM/TP)** break the image of the community (22).

Pretest Essay 11:

**Marriage (M/TP)** is usually seen as a commitment of love between a male and female (1). **Homosexuals (UM/TP)** do not choose which the gender they are sexually attracted to (2), **yet (TT) they (M/TP)** are ostracized and made fun of by many people (3). **Gays couples (UM/TP)** should be able to marry because as human, we should all be seen as equal, and deserve to love and be loved (4). **We (M/TP)** should not be deprived of same-sex marriage due to sexuality (5).

**Firstly (TT), there are (M/TP)** many benefits are only available to married couples, such as hospital visitation during an illness, taxation and inheritance rights, access to family health coverage and protection in the event of the relationship ending (6).

**Gay marriage (M/TP)** is protected because of their rights (7). **Gay marriage (UM/TP)** can bring financial gain to state and local governments (8). **They (UM/TP)** would make it easier for same sex couples to adopt, providing stable homes for children who would otherwise be left in foster care (9).

**Secondly (TT), gay couples (UM/TP)** could bring happiness for each other (10). **When they live together (M/TP),** same-sex couples could more understand (11).

**The opponents of many people (UM/TP)** say that marriage should not be extended to same-sex couples because they cannot produce children together (12). **Allowing gay marriage (UM/TP)** would only shift the purpose of marriage from producing and raising children to adult gratification (13), **but (TT) they (UM/TP)** can receive adopt (14).

**In short (TT), there are (M/TP)** many good reason for gay couples should be able to marry (15). **Certainly (I) not producing children but (TT) they (UM/TP)** can bring happiness to each other and understand, know about strange feeling (16).

Pretest Essay 12:

The question of whether or not gay couples should be able to marry (UM/TP) is remains controversial (1). Some people (UM/TP) assume that same-sex marriage should be banned in multiple regions (2). Meanwhile (TT), other people (UM/TP) think that homosexuals should have a legal right to get married together (3). It has long been my belief (M/TP) that gay couples' marriage should be opposed (4).

First of all (TT), there is (M/TP) not culture or tradition in the world to let heterosexual couples get married together (5). Traditionally getting married (UM/TP) means to have children to inherit our ancestor (6), but (TT) gay couples (UM/TP) will not certainly obtain that (7). As a result (TT), the legislation of gay couple's marriage (UM/TP) lead to destroy race (8). And (TT) that (UM/TP) is the reason why many people perceive it as a shame to have a gay in family (9).

Another reason (UM/TP) that gay couple marriage may cause social problems (10). When they cannot identify their gender in society (M/TP), those people will not rights to attend in some social activities (11). Moreover (TT), that (UM/TP) would have intense impact on nation's population to decrease negatively (12).

Opponents of this idea (UM/TP) claim that such as homosexual couples losing out some benifits such as sharing financial and beng easily sympathetic (13). Perhaps (I) this (UM/TP) is true (14), but (TT) it can't be denied (M/TP) that ancestor's preservation is the most significant mission to maintain our race (15).

In sum (TT), I (UM/TP) am convinced that same-sex couple should have never legally married (16). And (TT) we (UM/TP) would find the better alternative ways to preven human being from being a gay (17).

Pretest Essay 13:

**The question of whether or not gay couples should be able to marry (UM/TP)** is remains controlversial (1). **While many people believe that the marriage of hemosexual is nonsense (M/TP),** other people argue that the legalization of same-sex marriage is necessary for all countries around the world (2). **For me (TT) it is obvious (M/TP)** that governments should legalize gay couples' marriage for following reasons (3).

**First and foremost (TT), human rights (UM/TP)** is the most important reason for my legalization of same-sex marriage (4). **Marriage (UM/TP)** is a commitment of love and everyone have the rights to get married to their lovers (5). **So (TT) why (I & UM/TP)** gay men and lesbian can't marry while they are also human (6)? **Gay couples (UM/TP)** is like many other couples **so they** also should have a chance to assert their rights (7).

**In addition (TT), the right of same-sex marriage (UM/TP)** also is a signal of progress (8). **On the basis of the latest survey (M/TP),** there are 14 countries all over the world pass the law of gay couple's marriage (9). **Perhaps (I) because they (UM/TP)** understand that the desire of heterosexual (10). **Gays (UM/TP)** is unable to choose their gender and they also want to be others but they cannot (11). **This progress in law (UM/TP)** bring happiness to these unlucky gays (12).

**Those who disagree (UM/TP)** point out that gay couples cannot have children that lead to the decrease in population (13). **Perhaps (I) this (UM/TP)** is true (14), **but (TT) it cannot denied (M/TP)** that modern technology and science today still can help these people have children by many methods (15).

**In conclusion (TT), I (M/TP)** am convinced that authorize should enact the law of legalizing same-sex marriage like many other countries (16). **This law (UM/TP)** will help gays (17).

Pretest Essay 14:

The question of whether or not homosexual should be able to tie the know **(UM/TP)** has widely grabbed it's proponents and opponents (1). **I (M/TP)** am strongly convinced that the third sex couples should be capable to marry owing to their normal desire and powerful rights (2).

**To start with (TT), marriage (UM/TP)** is the prime, ultimate and sacrified scope of mature people (3). **Each grow-up person (UM/TP)** has desire of living in legality with their lover regardless of inconsistence between age and background (4). **Therefore (TT), gay couples (M/TP)** – mortals should be accepted to take their marriage for granted due to their simple and normal hope like the other human beings (5).

**Simultaneously (I), I (UM/TP)** also believe that policy makers had better approve of love pond of heterosexuals due to their powerful privileges as a citizen (6). **Needless to say (I), an official living being (M/TP)** have to be protected and respected when they are from in womb to tomb (7). **In other word (TT), they (M/TP)** are supported to do their dream under legal management of government (8). **As a result (TT), gay couples (UM/TP)** are able to live together for the rest of their life (9).

**Some people (UM/TP)** may argue that marriage of gay couples will not happy (10). **While it's true to some extents (M/TP),** this also have some merits on the surface due to homosexual also love their partner with their loyalty and sympathy (11). **Adam Lambert (M/TP),** for instance, a famous singer is a typical example (12).

**In the nutshell (TT), marriage of heterosexuals (UM/TP)** should be in legal permission of national law because they are human beings (13).

Pretest Essay 15:

The question of whether or not gay couples should be able to marry (UM/TP) is remains controversial (1). **While some people claims that only people have contrast sexual which is married (M/TP),** I believe there is no evidence to support homosexual persons should not get married (2). **In my view (TT), there are (M/TP)** two main points to support this marriage: the developing in people's mind and their right to live or love (3).

**First and foremost (TT), due to the developing in people's mind (M/TP),** it cause people have the comfortable eyes to gay couples (4). **Nowadays (M/TP),** people easily see couples who the male fall in love with the others (5), **and (TT) they (UM/TP)** totally admire them because they showed their real characteristic (6).

**In addition (TT), everyone (UM/TP)** has their right to live (7), **and (TT) gay (UM/TP)** is also usual people like the others in over the world (8). **They (M/TP)** should be treated equally and lived on their way they want (9).

**However (TT), some people (UM/TP)** said that gay couples may affect to country's manner (10). **Perhaps (I) this (UM/TP)** is true (11), **but (TT) it cannot be denied (M/TP)** that when they were born, they don't self-decide their sex, their real characteristics (12). **Thus (TT), let (UM/TP)** respect and support them (13).

**In conclusion (TT), I (M/TP)** am convinced that gay couples should be able to married (14). **Nowadays (M/TP),** there are more people have the comfortable eyes to them, admire their rights, their ways to live (15).

**Pretest Essay 16:**

**Nowadays (M/TP),** gays become popular in social and the question is "should gay couples be able to marry? (1)" **Some people (UM/TP)** agree with this idea but others do not (2). **I (M/TP)** am convinced that gay couples should be accepted by nation and people because they are human and they have right to live and love, treat equally and respect (3).

**Firstly (TT), even though they are gay (M/TP),** they are human and they have life like others (4). **They (UM/TP)** laugh (5), **they (UM/TP)** cry (6), **they (UM/TP)** have emotion like everyone so they know what love is (7). **Everybody (UM/TP)** have right to live, love and feel how love is (8). **It (UM/TP)** is the reason why they live and love by themselves (9).

**Next (TT), gay's love (M/TP)** should be respected and people should treat them equally (10). **A person (UM/TP)** can find their love in their way (11). **Although gay love a person who has the same sex with them (M/TP),** they love and care about each other by their heart (12). **They and their love (M/TP)** are treated equally (13).

**Many people (UM/TP)** may argue that it is opposite to nature when two people has the same sex love each other (14)**. If they still marry a person in opposite sex (M/TP),** they do not love her (15). **It (UM/TP)** is not love and they do not live by themselves (16).

**In conclusion (TT), everybody (M/TP)** are respected and their love are (17). **I (UM/TP)** believed that gay couples should be able to marry (18). **It is alright (M/TP)** when they love by heart and have happy life (19). **A real life (UM/TP)** is when you live by yourselves (20).

Pretest Essay 17:

The idea that whether or not the governments worldwide should allow gay couples to get married (UM/TP) remains a controversial (1). **On the one hand (TT), many people (UM/TP)** assume that marriages of these couples have badly adverse impact on the religious rules (2). **On the other hand (TT), it (M/TP)** is supposed that gay couples should be able to marry (3). **In all final analysis (M/TP),** I strongly agree with the second point for two following reasons (4).

**First and foremost (TT), the authority (UM/TP)** should give the same-sex lovers the permission to marry because they are also the normal residents so that they should have been enjoyed the civil rights (5). **In other words (TT), they (UM/TP)** have to receive the freedom to choose who they wish to love and to be a forever partner (6).

**Moreover (TT), the policy makers (UM/TP)** should support the same-sex marriages because the love between gay couples is not a disease (7). **That (UM/TP)** is to say these citizens have an interest in making love with a same gender partner (8), **and (TT) according to scientists (TT), it (M/TP)** is called sexual trend (9).

**Some people (UM/TP)** may argue that the gay couples are not able to give birth for a baby (10). **Therefore (TT) their life (UM/TP)** will be terribly boring (11). **That (UM/TP)** may be true but they can adopt a child (12), **and (TT) that (UM/TP)** can lead to the decrease in the orphan rate (13).

**All in all (TT), relationship of gay couples (M/TP)** should be legal by a wedding (14). **Nowadays (M/TP),** in some countries namely the United States and the Philippines, these couples have had a right to marry (15). **Maybe (I) in the future (M/TP),** the same sex marriage's rate will rapidly increase in all over the world (16).

Pretest Essay 18:

**Going to marry (UM/TP)** is a happy ending for coubles who are falling in love together (1). **And (TT) I (UM/TP)** am convenienced that gay coubles also should be able to marry because of equal on marriage and confession for their true love (2).

**There is (M/TP)** equal on marriage to same gender of love because they also like others coubles on this world as fall in love together, taking their dating with kiss and roses, living because of each other, passing many emotion of love and finally they want to live together under their roof (3). **It (UM/TP)** is really nomal proceeding of any couble, even gays (4), **there is (M/TP)** little diferent that they are same gender (5).

**Another point of going to marry for gay coubles (UM/TP)** is confession of their love (6). **Gay (UM/TP)** is never disease (7), **they (UM/TP)** are a part of natural revolution in human world like male or female (8). **So (TT) they (UM/TP)** apsolutely can get any need for their life, even love (9). **For example (TT), they (UM/TP)** definitely can go to church for their marrig like a husband and wife without refusetation (10).

**In conclusion (TT), going to marry for gay love (UM/TP)** is as important and necessary as other's (11). **Gay coubles (UM/TP)** are also deserve to get a happy ending (12).

Pretest Essay 19:

People (UM/TP) attend colleges or universities for a lot of different reasons (1). I (UM/TP) believe that the three most common reasons are to prepare for a career, to have new experiences, and to increase their knowledge of themeselves (2). But (TT) college and university (UM/TP) has variety courses (3), I (UM/TP) think that college and university students should have complete freedom to choose their own courses for many reasons (4).

Firstly (TT), it (UM/TP) is saving time and money (5). When putting students in all courses (M/TP), they must spend nearly all weeks on going to school (6). In spite of spending time (M/TP), learner are not certain get all knowledge (7). Moreover (TT), free of courses (UM/TP) are not cheap, not of all learner can pay (8).

Furthermore (TT), in a course that everyone can learn their favorite major or subject (M/TP), students are more motivated (9). In fact (TT), learner (UM/TP) usually do better in specialized classes they like so they feel need to study more and more (10). I (UM/TP) means (11), the passion (UM/TP) is important factor (12).

Most importantly (I), many people (UM/TP) said that: college or university students should attend all courses (13). For example (TT), parents (UM/TP) expect their children interest in all courses and get many skills (14). I (UM/TP) don't agree with them in some extend (15). Because a person (UM/TP) has abilities in one or two major (16).

For many above reasons (M/TP), I am convinced that college and university students should have complete freedom to choose their own courses with their ability (17). And (TT) as a member of university class (M/TP), I really certain that I make much progress when I attend my proper courses (18).

**Pretest Essay 20:**

**Should college and university students (I & UM/TP)** have complete freedom to choose their own courses (1)? **There are (UM/TP)** two different opinions (2). **While some people argue that complete freedom should be requirement (M/TP),** I believe that it should be optional (3). **It (UM/TP)** mean college and university students should have complete freedom to choose their own courses (4). **Because it helps them orrange the time of yourself (M/TP),** no pressure and complete own courses better (5).

**First of all (TT), when students orrange the time of yourself (M/TP),** they could save a great deal of time and efforts in figuring out general concepts (6). **Moreover (TT), students (UM/TP)** could took part in some social (7). For instance, enjoy some activities of chirity, volunteer, etc. **Therefore (TT), students (UM/TP)** could improve their relationship, with the others (8). **While students orrange their time (M/TP)** they could go to school, meeting and making friend (9). In my opinion, should be complete freedom of their courses.

**Secondly (TT), complete freedom (M/TP)**, students feel comfortable, no pressure (10). **Another reason for students to complete freedom (M/TP)** is that they could be better of result (11). **Research more information, deep knowledge and experiences (UM/TP)** would improve their choice (12).

**To sum up (TT), I (UM/TP)** strongly recommend that college and university students should have complete freedom to choose their own courses (13). **Because students (UM/TP)** could get time, comfortable and improve the result (14).

APPENDIX 4

Posttest Essays by Vietnamese ESL learners

APPENDIX 4 – Posttest Essays by Vietnamese ESL learners.

**Posttest Essay 1:**

**Devocating for work (UM/TP)** is a good action for everyone and worth being appreciated (1). **However (TT), everything (UM/TP)** has their own limit (2), **and (TT) working age (UM/TP)** is a proper example (3). **In some countries (M/TP)** the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 65, while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70 (4). **In my point of view (TT), this working law (UM/TP)** is very appropriate (5), **and (TT)** *(hidden UM/TP)* should be issued all over the world (6).

**First and foremost (TT), for the over 60 year-old workers (M/TP)**, it is the time for them to enjoy their life, not for working (7). **After retiring (M/TP)**, they can have a healthy life with their children (8). **Importantly (I), they (UM/TP)** are no longer healthy to suffer pressure from work (9). **Some (UM/TP)** do not care about their health and try to work as much as possible (10). **They (UM/TP)** do not know about their health state (11). **As a result (TT), some old people's diseases (UM/TP)** can appear suddenly (12). **Working too much (UM/TP)** can make their state more and more worse (13). **Therefore (TT), retiring at the age of 60 (UM/TP)** is totally true (14).

**Another point I would like to make (UM/TP)** is that the elder's retiring will create chances for younger to promote (15). **They (UM/TP)** are, for instance, continuing to devocate to the rest of their life (16), **they (UM/TP)** will be a huge fance for the younger to develop (17). **Therefore (TT), with the situation like that (M/TP)**, whether the company can develop (18).

**We (UM/TP)** should also recognize the fact that the younger have ability to creative more than the older (19). **Moreover (TT), they (UM/TP)** are more healthy and enthusiastic (20). **The older (M/TP)**, their concentration on work can be less than younger (21). **They (UM/TP)** are likely to be easily tired from work (22). **Therefore (TT), it is clear (M/TP)** that the over 60 year-old workers should retire (23).

**However (TT) some opponents (UM/TP)** say that they are not worth being obliged to retire at the age of 60 (24). **For their opinion (M/TP),** the over 60 year-old workers can still work like youngers (25). **They (UM/TP)** have more experiences than youngers (26), **and (TT)** *(hidden UM/TP)* can cope with many difficult situations (27). **This opinion quite good (M/TP)**, but I must disagree with that because of many reasons above (28).

**After discussing all the points (M/TP)**, I can finally conclude that the law is very appropriate (29). **They (UM/TP)** will make the society more develop (30), **and (TT) the younger (UM/TP)** can have more chances to devocate for country (31).

Posttest Essay 2:

In every country (M/TP), labor belongs to each citizen's responsibility and duty (1). They (UM/TP) devote their whole life to work and then retire from their career (2). The retirement age in some country (UM/TP) is 60 and people who reach the age of 60 are forced to retire (3). Meanwhile (TT) several other countries (UM/TP) allow people to work until they get 65 or even 70 (4). In my opinion (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP) is most convenient and should be compulsory (5). Of course (I), I (UM/TP) agree with this idea for a few reasons (6).

Firstly (TT), a very important problem which should be mentioned (UM/TP) is health (7). At the age of 60 (M/TP), many people are getting weaker and hardly can maintain their working ability like they did before (8). That (UM/TP) is also the aged people may easily go down with diseases and other health problems (9). Or else (TT), if they have not gotten diseases (M/TP), they are no longer sound in mind and nimble as in the past (10). Therefore (TT), working when people are over 60 (UM/TP) is less effective than when they were young (11).

Secondly (TT), 60 (UM/TP) is the proper time for retirement (12). People at that age (UM/TP) have been beyond the other side of life (13), and (TT) they (UM/TP) have devoted half of their life for career (14). Properly (I), 60 (UM/TP) is the right time for them to rest from their labors and enjoy their time beside their children (15). They (UM/TP) are worth being taken care of at that age (16). In some countries in which people's life expectancy is not high (M/TP), retirement at the age of 60 is more reasonable (17).

On the other hand (TT), many people (UM/TP) can still continue to work and devote to their career 5 or 10 more years (18). It (UM/TP) is maybe because they want to get better achievement when they retire (19). However (TT), when people are over 60 (M/TP), rarely they can maintain their ability (20). Therefore (TT), retirement at the age of 60 (UM/TP) should be compulsory in every country (21).

To sum up (TT), every country (UM/TP) should compel the retirement age of 60 so that citizens can have better conditions to rest because of their health and their maintenance of abilities (22).

Posttest Essay 3:

Labor (UM/TP) is an important part in life, especially in modern society nowadays (1). People (UM/TP) need working to maintain life (2). In some countries (M/TP), people can work until they are 65 or 70 (3). In my opinion (TT), retirement (UM/TP) should be compulsory at age 60 because of the following reasons (4).

It is unfair (M/TP) that they will have to work until the age of 65 or 70 because of health problems (5). They (UM/TP) try to work without thinking of their health (6). They (UM/TP) are often unable to do the same job all their life due to the face that people become older and older (7). Labor (UM/TP) has significant influence on health (8). For instance (TT), they (UM/TP) have problem with their eyesight (9), they (UM/TP) do not see clearly even with glasses or they have a headache and always need to take pills at specific time (10). Health problem (UM/TP) becomes serious and long lasting when they still continue working (11).

Another main reason that retirement should be compulsory (UM/TP) is working productivity (12). The older people are (M/TP), the worse their labor ability becomes (13). Their mind (UM/TP) is not so alert as the younger's (14). As we know (TT), the old (UM/TP) usually have much experience (15), but (TT) at the age of 60 (M/TP) they should be retired (16). Working (UM/TP) is still finished but it will have bad effects which reduces quality in labor (17). They (UM/TP) should give up their place to the next generation who are younger and more creative (18).

Opponents who disagree with continuing working at age of 65 or 70 (UM/TP) may claim that labor is happiness (19). People (UM/TP) can devote their life to working as much as good (20). On the surface (M/TP), they are right (21). A significant life (UM/TP) cannot have without labor (22). People (UM/TP) feel more helpful when they work (23). However (TT) people (UM/TP) can only spend their time and strength when young (24). At the end of life (M/TP), they should retire (25). They (UM/TP) need to spend time for their family and private space to go travelling, take care of themselves or do anything they like (26).

Labor (UM/TP) is very critical (27). But (TT) people (UM/TP) must stop working at suitable time (28). Retirement (UM/TP) should be compulsory at the age of 60 (29). Health problems and working effects (UM/TP) are more and more serious if people try to work too much (30).

Posttest Essay 4:

Retirement issue (UM/TP) remains controversial (1). **In some countries (M/TP),** the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 60 while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70 (2). **In my opinion (TT), retirement (UM/TP)** should be compulsory at 60 for the following reasons (3).

**First of all (TT), people (UM/TP)** become weaker at the age of 60 (4). **Their health (UM/TP)** is not strong enough to work effectively (5). **Old people (UM/TP)** are always forgetful and not enthusiastic (6). **Besides (TT) they (UM/TP)** continue to do their job (7), **they (UM/TP)** will work with less effort and reduced time (8). **Furthermore (TT), they (UM/TP)** are old so they do not have to go on business trip (9). **As a result (TT), they (UM/TP)** might not have chances to expand their knowledge and bring benefit for their company (10).

**Another reason (UM/TP)** is that the employer may need fresh graduates because they are more energetic and have up-to-date knowledge (11). **With developed technology (M/TP),** young people may work not only fast but also effectively to help their company score targets (12). **Therefore (TT), the employers (UM/TP)** tend to prefer the young rather than the elderly of over 60 years old (13). **Furthermore (TT), the youth (UM/TP)** is more flexible so they easily go away for business without difficulties (14).

**Opponents of retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** say that old people might work well in professional aspects while young people might not (15). **The point (UM/TP)** has some merit on the surface (16). **However (TT), as stated previously (TT), they youth (UM/TP)** are flexible and learn fast (17). **Besides (TT), many of them (UM/TP)** are talented nowadays (18). **They (UM/TP)** would do difficult tasks and be responsible for highly specific job positions (19).

**In conclusion (TT), retirement (UM/TP)** should be compulsory at the age of 60 (20). **The fact (UM/TP)** shows that most of old people would not work effectively and their health becomes weak when they reach the age of 60 (21). **Meanwhile (TT) the youth (UM/TP)** might do better and make more profit for their employers (22).

Posttest Essay 5:

Nowadays (M/TP) labor force is the important factor for the development of every country (1). So (TT) governments (UM/TP) have produced many policies to ensure effective human resources (2). In some countries (M/TP), the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 60, while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70 (3). In my opinion (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP) should be compulsory for the following reasons (4).

Firstly (TT), workers at 65 or 70 (UM/TP) have poor health which impact directly on working quality (5). At that age (M/TP) their bodies do not function well as young people or even people at 60 (6). Blue collar workers (UM/TP) often have to do heavy tasks such as carrying goods, working at intensive pace (7). Meanwhile (TT) their health state (UM/TP) does not afford these (8). Therefore (TT), 60 (UM/TP) is suitable age for retirement (9); otherwise (TT) extensive working (UM/TP) will damage their health (10).

Secondly (TT), their mind (UM/TP) is not flexible to complete missions effectively (11). Technology (UM/TP) is developing fast together with the growth of the economy (12). If people do not have enough brainpower (M/TP), they cannot get familiar with these changes (13). It (UM/TP) will lead to serious consequences that affect the rate of progress (14).

The opponent of this point (UM/TP) might claim that retiring at the age of 60 makes them do not have enough money to adapt to the growing living cost (15). This view (UM/TP) has some merit on the surface (16). However (TT), besides the early retirement policy (M/TP), government also has a lot of community services and retirement pension for them they do not have to worry about their financial security (17).

In short (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP) should be mandatory (18). Instead of working hard (M/TP) these old people can spend time with their family and do whatever they like (19). Besides (TT), policy makers (UM/TP) should create favorable conditions for them to be financially stable to enjoy life (20).

Posttest Essay 6:

Nowadays (M/TP) in some countries the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 60 while in others this number is raised to 65 or 70 (1). Some people (UM/TP) said that stopping their work at 60 is unreasonable because they still have enough physical and mental strength (2). From my point of view (TT), people (UM/TP) should retire at 60 because of the following reasons (3).

First of all (TT), after retiring (M/TP) people would have more free time to relax and refresh their life (4). Most workers (UM/TP) spend more than a half of life for working (5), hence (TT) their time for entertainment and other activities (UM/TP) is limited (6). For instance (TT), according to official time (TT), an engineer (UM/TP) has to work frequently from 8 to 9 hours per day (7). He (UM/TP) does not have enough time for his children (8), let alone (M/TP) social communication and entertainment (9).

Secondly (TT), the elder's retirement (UM/TP) gives opportunities to the younger generation (10). This is undeniable face (M/TP) that the younger are stronger and more energetic than their elderly (11). In some countries (M/TP), the rate of unemployment in the youth is increasing while the age of retirement in these countries is quite high (12).

The opponents (UM/TP) may argue that the retirement can kill them because without work their activities and salary would be reduced and this leads to many problems related to physical and mental health (13). They (UM/TP) have a good point (14); however (TT) retirement (UM/TP) does not mean that they must stop working permanently (15). They (UM/TP) can start lighter jobs such as gardening, volunteering, etc through which they can still maintain their health (16).

In conclusion (TT), I (UM/TP) keep the firm hold on the point that people should retire at the age of 60 (17). Retirement at this age (UM/TP) bring people benefits such as relaxation, new job opportunities, and health improvement (18).

Posttest Essay 7:

According to Russell in his essay "In praise of idleness" (1932) (TT) people (UM/TP) will not have to work much (1), and (TT) they (UM/TP) will retire quite soon to enjoy the life and pursue their own interests (2). But (TT) after over 80 years (M/TP), people seem to work harder (3). In some countries (M/TP) a worker is obliged to retire at the age of 60 while in others the average age to retire is higher, from 65 to 70 (4). From my point of view (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP) should be compulsory for some following reasons (5).

Firstly (TT), elder people (UM/TP) do not have enough strength to do hard work (6). People at the age of 60 (UM/TP) are about to encounter health problems such as heart disease, cancers, diabetes which are very dangerous if they do not have time to relax (7). Their bones (UM/TP) are too weak to sit and stand too long (8), thus (TT) they (UM/TP) are very easy to get pains in muscle at night (9). Moreover (TT), working after too long hours (UM/TP) will put their mind under pressure which may lead them to get headache (10). Furthermore (TT), memory (UM/TP) is also affected negatively when they are old (11), so (TT) managing to remember the schedule or work process (UM/TP) is really a challenge (12). Besides (TT), hard work (UM/TP) always puts the workers in danger of accident (13). Just a mistake (UM/TP) may take a life of them (14).

A further reason (UM/TP) is that the elderly needs time to relax and enjoy the life after working and contributing a half of their life (15). Some research (UM/TP) states that lots of old people from the top countries such as Japan, the UK, France, Germany, etc have been travelling all over the world at the age of 60 when they are retired (16). It is time for them (M/TP) to release all stress and pressure of work and pursue their own interests (17). Moreover (TT), they (UM/TP) will be closer to their family because they will have time to take care of children or grandchildren (18).

Opponents of early retirement (UM/TP) might claim that old people may fall into poverty if they do not work because their children do not have enough finance to support their life (19). It (UM/TP) might be right to some extent (20), but (TT) governments in many countries  (UM/TP) are considering the service for the elderly as one of their priorities (21). Many nurseries with good staffs and services (UM/TP) provide a full care for old people and they are free to enjoy anything they like (22).

**In conclusion (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** should be compulsory to benefit old people  (23). **It is unfair (M/TP)** when many people have to work until they are near to the death and are derived from opportunities to enjoy their life (24).

Posttest Essay 8:

**Nowadays (M/TP)** the government increasingly takes care of workers' life that allows the average workers to retire at the age of 60 (1). **Many people (UM/TP)** agree that retirement at 60 brings us a lot of advantages (2). **However (TT), others (UM/TP)** say that it is unnecessary because people can work until they are 65 or 70 (3). **In my opinion (TT), the first view (UM/TP)** is reasonable for the following reasons (4).

**Firstly (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** will ensure people's health (5). **Much health research (UM/TP)** has shown that human health is limited (6). **And (TT) at the age of 60 (M/TP)** a common body is impossible to function well (7). **At that time (M/TP)** the body cells are older (8), **and (TT) they (UM/TP)** cannot complete their tasks perfectly (9). **Therefore (TT), working at the age of 60 (UM/TP)** is unreasonable (10). **Moreover (TT), from the age of 60 (UM/TP)** people's mental is not clear (11). **Many complex problems (UM/TP)** sometimes make them confused wherever finding method to resolve a long process (12).

**Secondly (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** makes opportunities for the young to develop and devote to our country (13). **As you know (TT), new generation with their enthusiasm (UM/TP)** are always ready to devote all their life to the society (14). **They (UM/TP)** can go anywhere that the old is really difficult to do that (15). **Furthermore (TT), the more the population is (M/TP),** the higher the rate of unemployment in many countries (16). **If the old do not retire (M/TP),** the young may not have the opportunities to work (17).

**Opponents of retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** might say that as long as people from the age of 60 have their enthusiasm every work is possible to complete (18). **It (UM/TP)** is not wrong in some case (19). **However (TT), as stated previously (TT), ensuring people's health and making opportunities job for the young (M/TP),** people should obey government's law (20).

**In conclusion (TT), there are (M/TP)** undoubtedly many benefits to retire for people at the age of 60 (21). **It (UM/TP)** helps people have comfortable life in the rest of life and makes more opportunities for others in work (22). **Therefore (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** should be compulsory in very country (23).

Posttest Essay 9:

Nowadays (M/TP) life is getting harder and harder which brings about the increases in the demands for working to earn money of people (1). **Especially (I), this situation (UM/TP)** also occurs with the older people who are over 60 (2). **However (TT), should old people (I & UM/TP)** continue working at the age of 60 (3)? **In my opinion (TT), retirement at 60 (M/TP)** should be required for some main following reasons (4).

**Firstly (TT), 60 (UM/TP)** is the suitable age for retirement (5). **It is high time (M/TP)** for people to take a rest and enjoy their life (6). **Because they worked enthusiastically for a long time (M/TP),** they gave all their ability to earn money and raise their family when they were young (7). **So (TT), retirement at these ages (UM/TP)** is a worthy reward they deserve to receive (8).

**Secondly (TT), health problems and working ability (UM/TP)** are also important factors supporting for this retirement policy (9). **Because people are 60 (M/TP),** their health is not as good as it was in their young ages (10). **So (TT), their ability for working (UM/TP)** has been influenced a lot (11). **The jobs they do (UM/TP)** are not effective anymore (12). **Moreover (TT), their health (UM/TP)** will become poorer and poorer if they continue working (13).

**Some opponents of this issue (UM/TP)** might claim that people who are at the age of 60 should be allowed to continue working to earn money and not become a burden of their family (14). **This opinion (UM/TP)** has some weight on the surface (15). **However (TT), as stated previously (TT), the responsibility of old people (UM/TP)** is not working (16), **they (UM/TP)** worked all their life and it is fine time for them to relax (17). **Moreover (TT), retirement (UM/TP)** does not mean having no money (18). **They (UM/TP)** could still receive retirement pension monthly (19). **And (TT) thanks to the special policies for old people of the government (TT), the elderly (UM/TP)** can completely enjoy a better life (20).

**In conclusion (TT), the government (UM/TP)** should consider giving retirement for old people at the age of 60 (21). **It (UM/TP)** is important thing we have to do to give them a better health and a good life (22). **They (UM/TP)** deserve to receive relaxation from young people and the society (23).

Posttest Essay 10:

In some countries (M/TP) the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 60, while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70 (1). **Therefore (TT), the discussions about that retirement at 60 should be compulsory or not (UM/TP)** still open (2). **From my point of view (TT), that people are forced to retire at 60 (M/TP)** is reasonable for some following benefits (3).

**The most significant advantage that retirement at 60 brings about (UM/TP)** is job opportunities creation for the young (4). **Many governments (UM/TP)** have to face with great difficulty in economy due to economic recession or financial crisis (5). **That (UM/TP)** results in the unemployment rate increases quickly in recent years (6). **The number of people losing their jobs together with the number of new graduates looking for jobs (UM/TP)** are obviously huge trouble for many countries (7). **The old people (UM/TP)**, hence, must retire at the age of 60 to make space for the young and unemployment – a social long-term issue – will undoubtedly be coped with easier (8).

**Retirement at 60 should be mandatory (M/TP)** is reasonable because of economy's improvement and development (9). **At the age of 60 (M/TP)** few people still have good remembering and job enthusiastic behavior (10), **and (TT) almost 60 year-old people (UM/TP)** are too tired and forgetful to apply for job requirement (11). **They (UM/TP)** find trouble in travelling, working with high-tech equipment and daily updated news (12). **So (TT), the young working instead of the old (UM/TP)** will make the country's economy develop because of their creation and dynamy in career plans (13).

**Some people (UM/TP)** say that retirement at 60 should not be compulsory because people can still work when they are 65 or 70 and retirement at 60 might limits their devoted expectation for their country (14). **However (TT), as stated previously(TT), very few people (UM/TP)** are able to work out of 60 (15). **If people want to devote more to society (M/TP),** they can join in many other activities of social programs instead of following continually the job they have worked for most of their life (16).

**In conclusion (TT), it is so important (M/TP)** to force people retire at 60 because of development and job creation for the young (17). **Age 60 (UM/TP)** is the suitable time for relaxation and taking care of themselves, not for working (18).

Posttest Essay 11:

There are (M/TP) some differences among countries about retirement (1). A suitable age to retire (UM/TP) is a problem that is coming under fire (2). In some countries (M/TP) workers is obliged to retire at the age of 60, while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70 (3). In my opinion (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP) should not be compulsory for the following reasons (4).

Health (UM/TP) is the first problem we should care (5). A lot of people (UM/TP) do not want to work when they are at 50 or 55 because of bad health while others can work all day (6). In some cases (M/TP) many people at the age of 45 or even less want to stop working so that they can spend the whole time taking care of their family (7). If retirement at 60 is compulsory (M/TP), it will be difficult for them to retire early (8).

Another problem we have to deal with (M/TP) is the finance (9). In many families (M/TP) home economics completely depends on only one member (10). When retiring (M/TP), it is not easy for them to choose another job and earn enough money to afford their lives (11). Many (UM/TP) wish to retire early (12). Meanwhile (TT), lots of people (UM/TP) still have good health although they are over 60 (13). Of course (I), no one (UM/TP) wants to work at this age (14). However (TT), everyone (UM/TP) needs to earn enough money for a certain life (15). So (TT) they (UM/TP) still want to work (16). For these cases (TT), people (UM/TP) should be permitted to retire later (17).

Proponents for this issue (UM/TP) might claim that if people can retire whenever they want, there will be negative effects on the stability of society (18). This (UM/TP) has some merits on surface (19). However (TT), what we should care about more (M/TP) is workers' lives (20). Compulsory retirement (UM/TP) may make bad influences (21).

In conclusion (TT), finding a suitable age to retire (UM/TP) is difficult in current time (22). There are (M/TP) some important problems we have to pay attention (23). Therefore (TT), workers (UM/TP) had better have the right to decide perfect timing for retirement (24).

Posttest Essay 12:

According to terms and conditions of Vietnam's labor laws (TT), the maximum age of employees working for companies and organizations (UM/TP) is 60 (1). However (TT), many people at the age of 60 and above (UM/TP) can still work and devote to the society (2). This (UM/TP) leads to an increasingly popular stream of thoughts that policy makers should change the laws so that employees can choose to retire at the age above 60 (3). From my point of view (TT), this suggestion (UM/TP) is a good idea (4). Retirement at 60 (UM/TP) should be optional for the following reasons (5).

To begin with (TT), as stated above (TT), more people at the age of 60 and above (UM/TP) are able to continue their work efficiently in modern society (6). This (UM/TP) is due to higher standards of living and medical services which increase human beings' life expectancy, and therefore, lengthen their working years (7). Senior employees (UM/TP) are more skillful and experienced, and hence are able to carry out tasks in an effective way and help the companies attain more success and profits (8). Therefore (TT), aged workers (UM/TP) are invaluable property of companies and the whole society (9).

What is more (TT), keeping senior employees in organizations (UM/TP) can help ease the financial burden of welfare services for old people (10), which (TT & UM/TP) benefits the government (11). In many developed countries (M/TP) costs of medical and pension for retired people are at surprisingly high level, and grab a considerable piece of the "budget cake" (12). So (TT) if old people continue their work (M/TP), they are able to earn money and still make contributions to their countries (13). The amount of budget that governments spent on supporting welfares of old people (UM/TP) may be used to improve education system for young people, cope with poverty and natural disasters and so forth (14).

Many opponents of the idea that retirement at 60 should be optional (UM/TP) argue that aged workers who are kept to work in companies will take away employment chances of young people (15). They (UM/TP) may be right to some extent (16). However (TT), this (UM/TP) seems to be one-side view of the young people, not the view of the whole society's members (17). Firstly (TT), companies and organizations (UM/TP) only need people who can work effectively for them (18). So (TT) even if you are young (M/TP), you will not be accepted to work for them if you are not capable enough (19). Secondly (TT), the difficulties and pressure of finding jobs (UM/TP) will motivate young people to make efforts to

improve their ability (20), **so that (TT) when the old people retire (M/TP)** they will deserve to take their positions and work efficiently (21).

**In conclusion (TT), if the retirement age is changed to 65 or 70 (M/TP),** not only the aged people but also the government and the society will get benefits from the policy (22). **Senior workers (UM/TP)** will make greater contribution to their companies and the government as well as the society will save a great proportion of budget for the well-being of the whole country (23).

Posttest Essay 13:

**In many countries (M/TP)** government has imposed a labor law that employees is obliged to retire at the age of 60 (1). **Some people (UM/TP)** think that it should be optional and workers can have the chance to decide their age retirement while others believe that working age should be limited as these countries do (2). **In my opinion (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** should be mandatory for some reasons (3).

**To begin with (TT), people (UM/TP)** should retire at the age of 60 so as to keep their health (4). **60 year-old workers (UM/TP)** cannot have mental or physical health strong as young (5). **They (UM/TP)** may suffer from many kinds of diseases such as high blood pressure, backache, diabetes (6). **These problems (UM/TP)** can prevent them from making good performance at work (7). **Moreover (TT), they (UM/TP)** are also easier to feel stress or exhausted when they have to endure continuous working intensively (8). **People (UM/TP)** should enjoy their life instead of working hard at that age by using their pension (9).

**The second reason (UM/TP)** is that old employees are not able to guarantee the quality of job (10). **They (UM/TP)** are not quite as flexible as youngsters in learning new technology which plays an indispensible role in working today (11). **They (UM/TP)** maybe lack of adventurousness and attempt to try something new and get higher productivity (12). **Besides (TT), their retirement (UM/TP)** will create more opportunities and options for jobs for youngsters, especially in high unemployment stage as recently (13).

**Opponents (UM/TP)** may claim that people are at high level of experiences in the age of 60 (14). **This opinion (UM/TP)** is not wrong (15), **but (TT) it (UM/TP)** may take away many chances of job for young people (16). **Experience (UM/TP)** cannot be achieved if youngsters even do not have an opportunity for work (17). **The governments (UM/TP)** should generate more favorable conditions for young people to express themselves so as to find more talented employees for our country instead of improving old labor (18).

**In conclusion (TT), retirement at the age of 60 (UM/TP)** is a good idea not only for the companies or societies but for the senior people as well (19). **It (UM/TP)** also will allow workers to enjoy their leisure and provide them more chances to rest after a long working term (20).

Posttest Essay 14:

Retirement (UM/TP) is becoming the primary focus in some countries (1). Worker (UM/TP) should retire at the age of 60 or not (2)? In my opinion (TT), they (UM/TP) should be allowed to continue working until they are not able to do that job (3). Therefore (TT), I (UM/TP) am simply disagreeing that retirement should be compulsory at 60 years of age by several reasons (4).

Firstly (TT), age (UM/TP) is not a guarantee of ability (5). Actually (I), many younger employees (UM/TP) do not have experience and skills than older staffs (6). They (UM/TP) have collected a large amount of knowledge for many years (7). Thus (TT), if they are obliged to retire at the age of 60 (M/TP), business can be lost full of experienced people (8). Furthermore (TT), they (UM/TP) also have many contacts or social relationships and it is convenient for business when they want to co-operate with other ones (9).

Secondly (TT), the older employees' attitudes (UM/TP) are also important (10). They (UM/TP) are extremely loyal and willing to donate for their business, for their country (11). For example (TT), the younger people (UM/TP) always look for jobs which have high salary and suitable with them (12). They (UM/TP) are attracted to the salary (13).

The opponents of this idea (UM/TP) claim that older people need to have time of rest and have more time with their family (14). It (UM/TP) may be true (15), but (TT) most of employees (UM/TP) feel happy when they do their jobs which make them better (16). Moreover (TT), they (UM/TP) will see that they are still useful for their country and not pity for themselves (17). Sometimes some people (UM/TP) have to work because of their family budget (18).

In conclusion (TT), we (UM/TP) cannot judge someone's work by their age (19). They (UM/TP) should be worked as long as they can do well (20). All of experiences, knowledge and spirit of working (UM/TP) are benefits for society (21).

Posttest Essay 15:

**The age of retirement (UM/TP)** is an important issue which is considering (1). **In some countries (M/TP)** the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 60 (2). **However (TT), a lot of people (UM/TP)** can continue working until they are 65 or 70 (3). **Some people (UM/TP)** say that 60 is reasonable to retire and retirement at 60 is compulsory (4). **By contrast (TT), others (UM/TP)** object because they think 60 is a little early (5). **In my opinion (TT), I (UM/TP)** agree with a first view for the following reasons (6).

**Firstly (TT), if workers retire at 60 (M/TP),** they have more time to relax and take care of their family (7). **When they were a worker (M/TP),** they had to spend most of their time in factories, companies, and had no time for their family and themselves (8). **60 (UM/TP)** is suitable time for them to enjoy their life because at this age (9), **they (UM/TP)** are still healthy enough to do everything by themselves (10). **They (UM/TP)** will complete all things which they want when they were young but having no time (11). **They (UM/TP)** have time to live with family, take care of their wives or husbands or grandchildren (12). **It (UM/TP)** might be the happiness time in their life (13).

**Secondly (TT), there are (M/TP)** more job opportunities for young people when old workers retire earlier (14). **If they retire at 65 or 70, not 60 (M/TP),** young people, especially people who just graduate from university wait for 5 or 10 years to have desired jobs (15). **I (UM/TP)** think it is very wasteful (16). **If old workers retire at 60 (UM/TP),** they can create a lot of opportunities for young people to show ability (17). **In other way (TT), hence (TT), old workers' retirement (UM/TP)** help to develop economy and decrease the rate of unemployment (18).

**Some opponents of retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** say that people can work until they are 65 or 70 (19). **It (UM/TP)** will waste of workforce if people stop working at age 60 (20). **This point (UM/TP)** has some merits in the surface (21). **As stated previously (TT), when they retire early at 60 (M/TP),** they can give a lot of job opportunities for young people and have time for themselves (22). **They (UM/TP)** can work to the age of 65 or 70 (23), **but (TT) will they (I & UM/TP)** be healthy enough to enjoy their life when they stop working (24)? **Therefore (TT), 60 (UM/TP)** is suitable age for retirement (25).

**People (UM/TP)** need time to relax themselves and live with their family, especially when they are old (26). **Society (UM/TP)** should create opportunities for them to

enjoy their life (27). **60 (UM/TP)** is the age for relaxation and enjoyment (28). **Therefore (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** should be compulsory (29).

Posttest Essay 16:

Working (UM/TP) is one of the fundamental human's rights (1). **When they are high-old ages (M/TP),** they can stop working to enjoy the life (2). **However (TT), some people (UM/TP)** say that retirement at the age of 60 is unnecessary while they are still hearty with their jobs (3). **In my opinion (TT), we (UM/TP)** should have obligation of retirement at the age of 60 because of some following reasons (4).

**Firstly (TT), enjoyment of life (M/TP)** should be mentioned as the bright sides of leaving the jobs after long-time devotion (5). **For example (TT), the teachers (UM/TP)** have devoted nearly 40 years to educating in school (6). **They (UM/TP)** are now quietly weaker than the time they started to teach (7). **Therefore (TT), it is time (M/TP)** for them to enjoy the life with their children and so on (8).

**Secondly (TT), the miraculous development of technology as nowadays (UM/TP)** makes them feel difficult to apply (9). **Therefore (TT), the young (UM/TP)** should be the next people to use (10). **Although the old-aged people have many experiences (M/TP),** they are still a bit out-of-date (11). **For instance (TT), in the field of architect (M/TP)** workers should use computer efficiently to design the diagram which make the old feel complicated to use (12).

**Some proponents of retirement at the age of 60 (UM/TP)** say that we have spend a lot of time on training excellent professor teachers (13); **therefore (TT), it is not worth (M/TP)** retiring them when they are 60 years old (14). **To some extent (M/TP),** they are right (15). **Life (UM/TP)** is just meaningful when we balance between working and enjoying (16). **They (UM/TP)** have been devoting nearly half of their lives to developing countries (17). **Therefore (TT) We (UM/TP)** also should give them the time to please their achievement they created (18).

**In conclusion (TT), the workers (UM/TP)** should be retired at the age of 60 (19). **The society (UM/TP)** should thank them for everything they have devoted to developing the countries (20). **They (UM/TP)** have the right to reunite with families and the young should follow and broaden the steps of former generation (21).

**Posttest Essay 17:**

**In some countries (M/TP) the average worker** is obliged to retire at the age of 60 while in others people can work until they are 65 or 70 (1). **In my opinion (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** should be compulsory (2).

**Firstly (TT), we (UM/TP)** can be easy to recognize that at 60 workers' health is not good (3). **Their mind (UM/TP)** cannot remember all of missions or works that they must complete (4). **Of course (I), this (UM/TP)** effects on others (5). **Besides (TT), each of workers (UM/TP)** has some diseases that relate to heart, lung, head, etc (6). **The more they work (M/TP),** the more their health can be effected (7). **Some researchers (UM/TP)** show that there are many workers get heart attack while they are working (8). **It (UM/TP)** is so dangerous (9).

**Secondly (TT), there are (M/TP)** not enough chances for young workers if workers at 60 do not retire (10). **Young workers (UM/TP)** cannot develop their skills (11). **Their abilities (M/TP)** are not used if there is no suitable work environment (12).

**People who disagree with retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** might claim that workers at 60 have much experience to solve any problem (13). **To some extent (M/TP)** they are right (14), **but (TT) worker at 60 (UM/TP)** can retire instead of just working (15). **When they retire (M/TP),** they will not worry about work (16). **They (UM/TP)** relax and feel comfortable (17). **Their retirement (UM/TP)** does not mean that they do not work (18). **They (UM/TP)** can give suitable advices and share their own experience with young workers (19).

**In conclusion (TT), worker at 60 (UM/TP)** should retire (20). **Relaxing after many years working (UM/TP)** is good for them (21). **60 (UM/TP)** is the age for their retirement, not for working (22).

**Posttest Essay 18:**

Labor (UM/TP) is a long process (1). **However (TT) there should be (M/TP)** a specific time to put an end to people's working process (2). **In some countries (M/TP)** the average worker is obligated to retire at the age of 60, while in the others people can work until they are 65 or 70 (3). **From my point of view (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** should not be compulsory for some reasons (4).

**To start with (TT), many old workers (UM/TP)** still have got enough good working abilities (5). **The older they are (M/TP),** the more experiences they have (6). **Many facts (UM/TP)** proved this point (7). **Some young workers (UM/TP)** have less experience or skills than the older workers do (8). **A large amount of work skills and the way to solve work (UM/TP)** have been stimulated for a long time (9). **As a result (TT) the old staff (UM/TP)** can run business projects or muddle work (10).

**Secondly (TT), many old workers (UM/TP)** do not want to quit their jobs at an early age because of their passion (11). **Job (UM/TP)** is like a friend having a strong attachment to them for a long time (12). **They (UM/TP)** occasionally spent much time on jobs, try hard for them, even cry for them (13). **So that (TT), many old people who are really confidential (UM/TP)** wish to work for a long time (14). **Doing their jobs (UM/TP)** will make them happy, avoid loneliness at old age time (15).

**Opponents of this issue (UM/TP)** might claim that old workers do not have enough health to work (16). **To some extent (M/TP)** they are right (17). **However (TT), old staffs (UM/TP)** are not compulsory for exhausting work (18). **They (UM/TP)** still have enough health for a light piece of work (19).

**In conclusion (TT), retirement at 60 (UM/TP)** should not be compulsory because of some reasons (20). **They (UM/TP)** have enough abilities to work until they are 65 or 70 (21). **We (UM/TP)** have to look at their quality of work not their age (22). **Furthermore (TT), job (UM/TP)** is their passion (23).

**Posttest Essay 19:**

**Should retirement at 60 (I & UM/TP)** be compulsory (1)? **This (UM/TP)** still has been debated for a long time (2). **Some (UM/TP)** says yes (3), **others (UM/TP)** say no (4). **In my point of view (TT), retirement at 60 (M/TP)** should not be obliged because of two main reasons (5).

**First of all (TT), people who work at 65 or 70 (UM/TP)** can develop their ability (6). **Apart from their job (M/TP)** they can find another interest in another job (7). **Their experience and knowledge (M/TP)** should be encouraged (8). **If they retire while they still want to devote their labor (M/TP),** it will limit their ability (9). **In fact (TT), you (UM/TP)** can see a lot of old people still find the best position in their work, even work until their last breath (10).

**Moreover (TT), a lot of old people (UM/TP)** do not want to be their family's burden (11). **They (UM/TP)** usually fall in despair psychology that they make their children get trouble (12). **Their life (UM/TP)** is depend on their children (13). **They (UM/TP)** find it is not comfortable (14). **What they are looking forward (M/TP)** is freedom in finance (15).

**However (TT), some opponents (UM/TP)** say that the average worker is obliged to retire at the age of 60 because it does not ensure their health (16). **This point (UM/TP)** has some push factors to some extent (17). **On the other hand (TT), if people still want to sacrifired their knowledge and labour (M/TP),** we should not restrict them (18). **People who would like to show their enthusiasm to work (M/TP),** let them do it (19).

**In conclusion (TT), there are (M/TP)** undoubtedly many benefits for people at the age of 60 should not retire (20). **People (UM/TP)** show that they can be freedom while working (21).

Posttest Essay 20:

**In some countries in the world (M/TP)** old employees must to work until they are 65 or 70 (1). **Many people (UM/TP)** believe that old workers have a rich of knowledges and experiences so they can work more effectively than younger ones (2). **However (TT), if the government oblige old people to work until they too old (M/TP),** it will have some disadvantageous (3). **In my opinion (TT), retirement (UM/TP)** should be made compulsory at the age of 60 because of the following reasons (4).

**It is very unfair (M/TP)** that old people have to work until the age from 60 to 70 (5). **Because people at that age (UM/TP)** are not strong and healthy enough (6). **They (UM/TP)** may not be able to concentrate to do their tasks for a long time (7). **By the researches of scientists (M/TP),** the brain of people at that age can work incorrect (8). **In addition (TT), they (UM/TP)** can have to deal with eyesight problem (9), **they (UM/TP)** do not see clearly even wearing glasses (10). **Moreover (TT), there are (M/TP)** many diseases like heart attack, spinal pain they can get because of pressures of works (11). **I (UM/TP)** think old people need a rest and a lot of time for themselves (12). **They (UM/TP)** have devoted a long time of their life to work (13). **Now (M/TP)** this is the time for them to relax and entertain (14).

**The opponents of this idea (UM/TP)** may say that old employee have more working experiences than younger, many contacts with other companies (15). **This point (UM/TP)** has some merits on the surface (16). **However (TT), this (UM/TP)** is a causes that lead to unemploy actual state in many countries in the world (17). **Each year (M/TP),** there are amount of graduated students but it is very difficult to them to find a job (18). **When they apply for a job (M/TP),** they are often refused because of lack of experiences (19). **What (I & UM/TP)** should a graduated student do to find a job if no one give he or she a chance (20)? **An old worker (UM/TP)** retire meaning there is an addition chance for younger (21).

**In conclusion (TT), the government of each country (UM/TP)** should require retirement at 60 (22). **Because of above stated reasons (M/TP),** when people are at age from 60 to 70 they need a time for their family and themselves, not working (23). **They (UM/TP)** work to earn money and this is the time for them to spend money and relax (24).
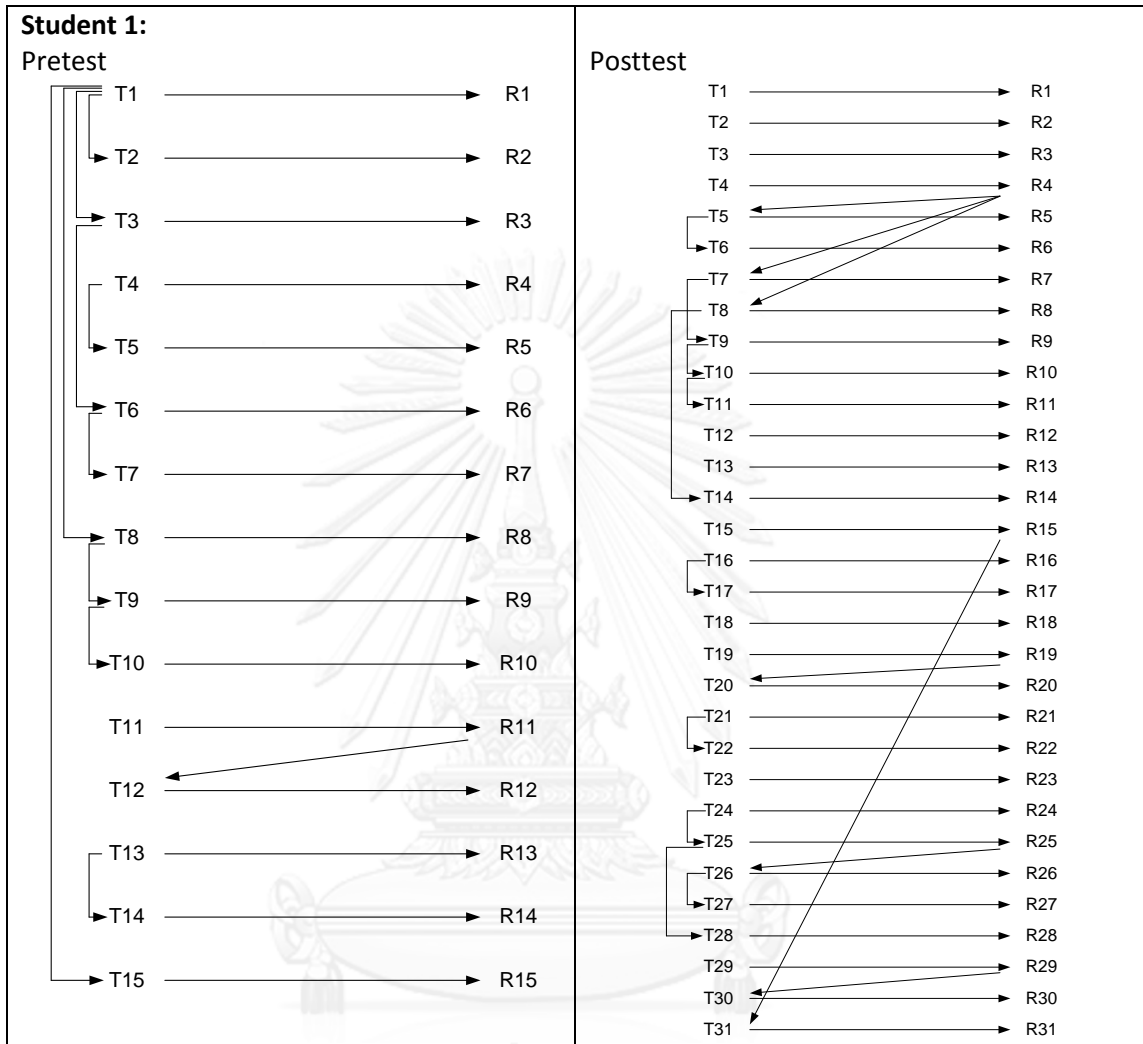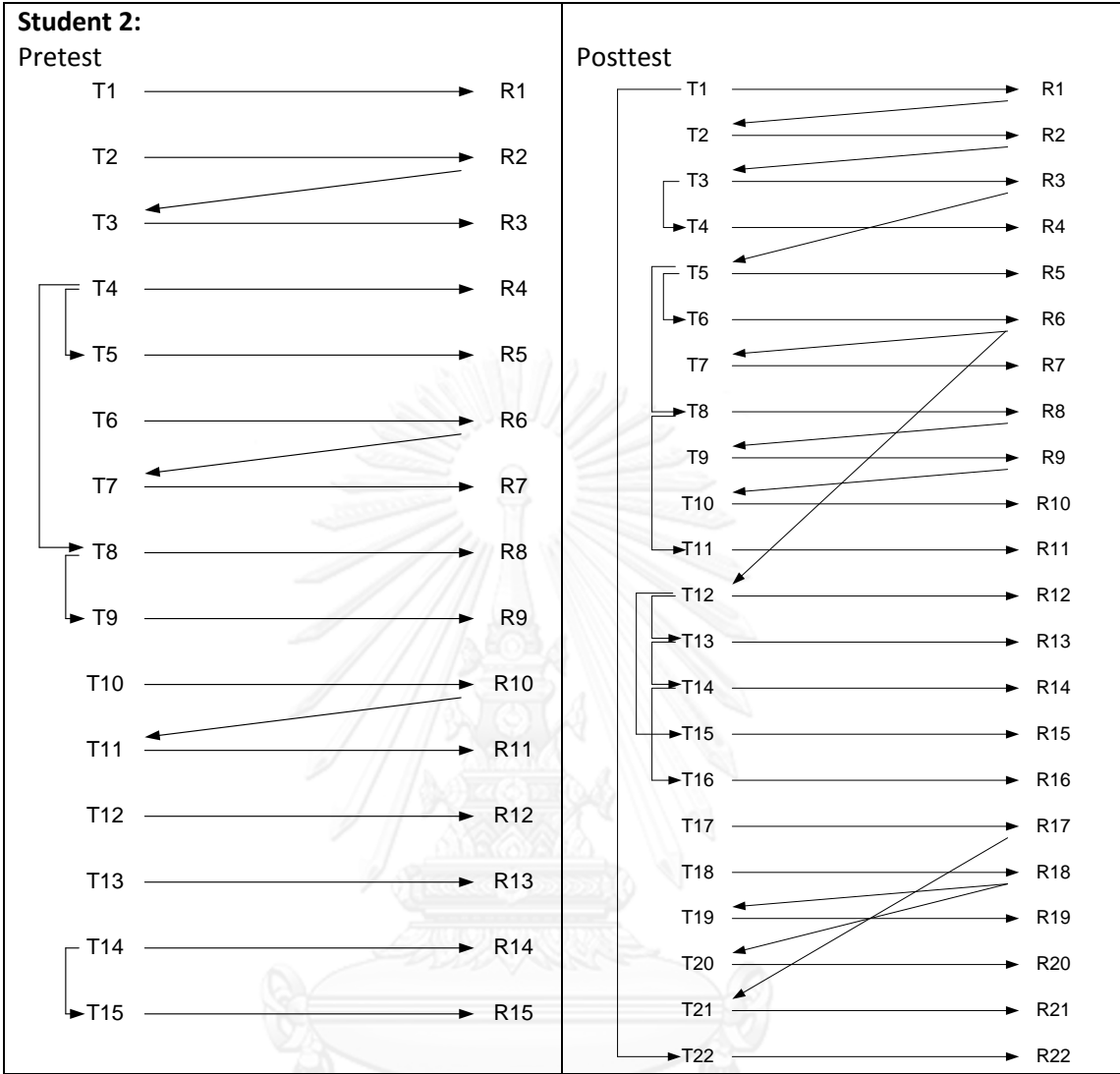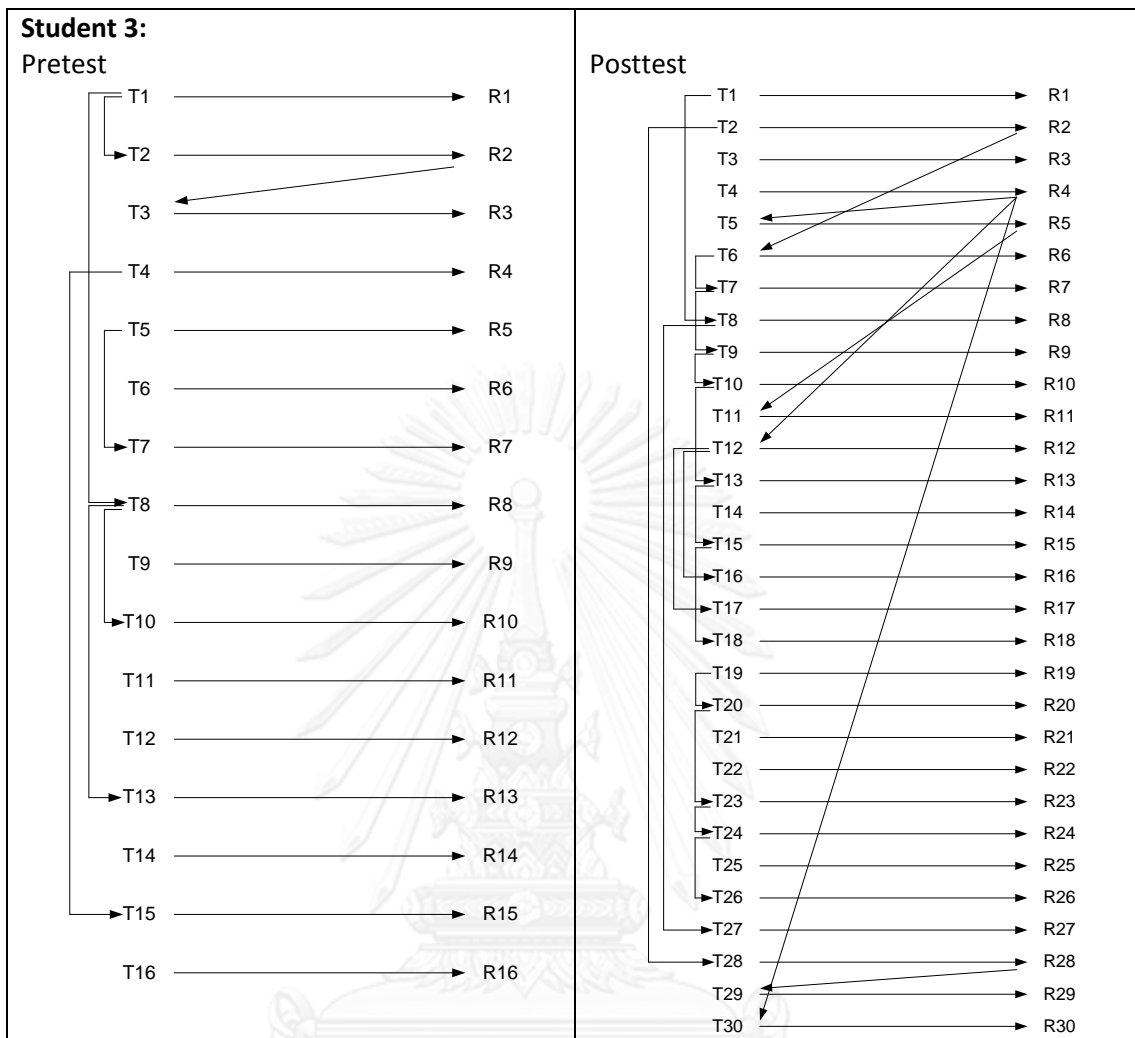
APPENDIX 5

Thematic Progression Analysis: Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Essays by Vietnamese ESL learners
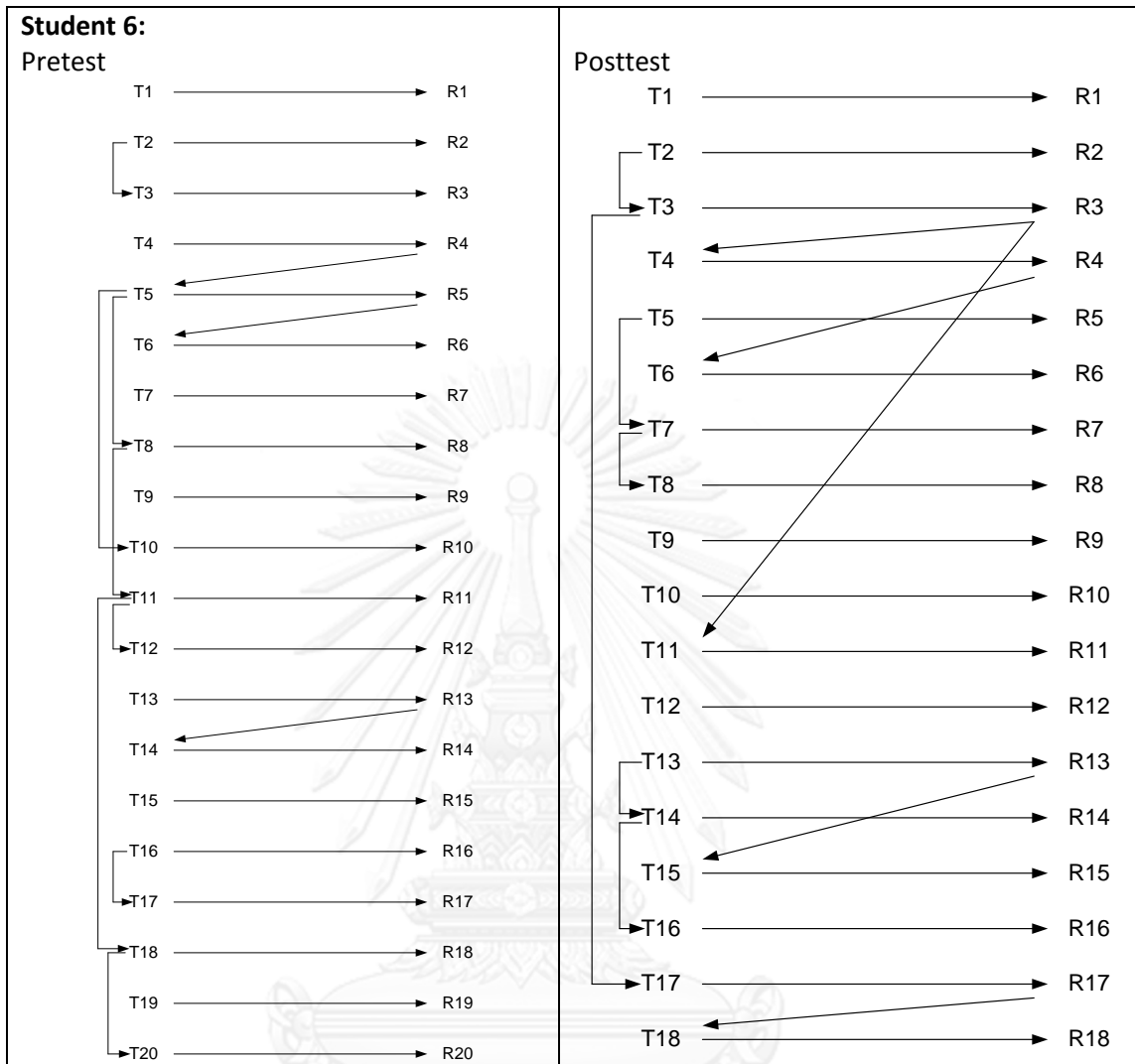
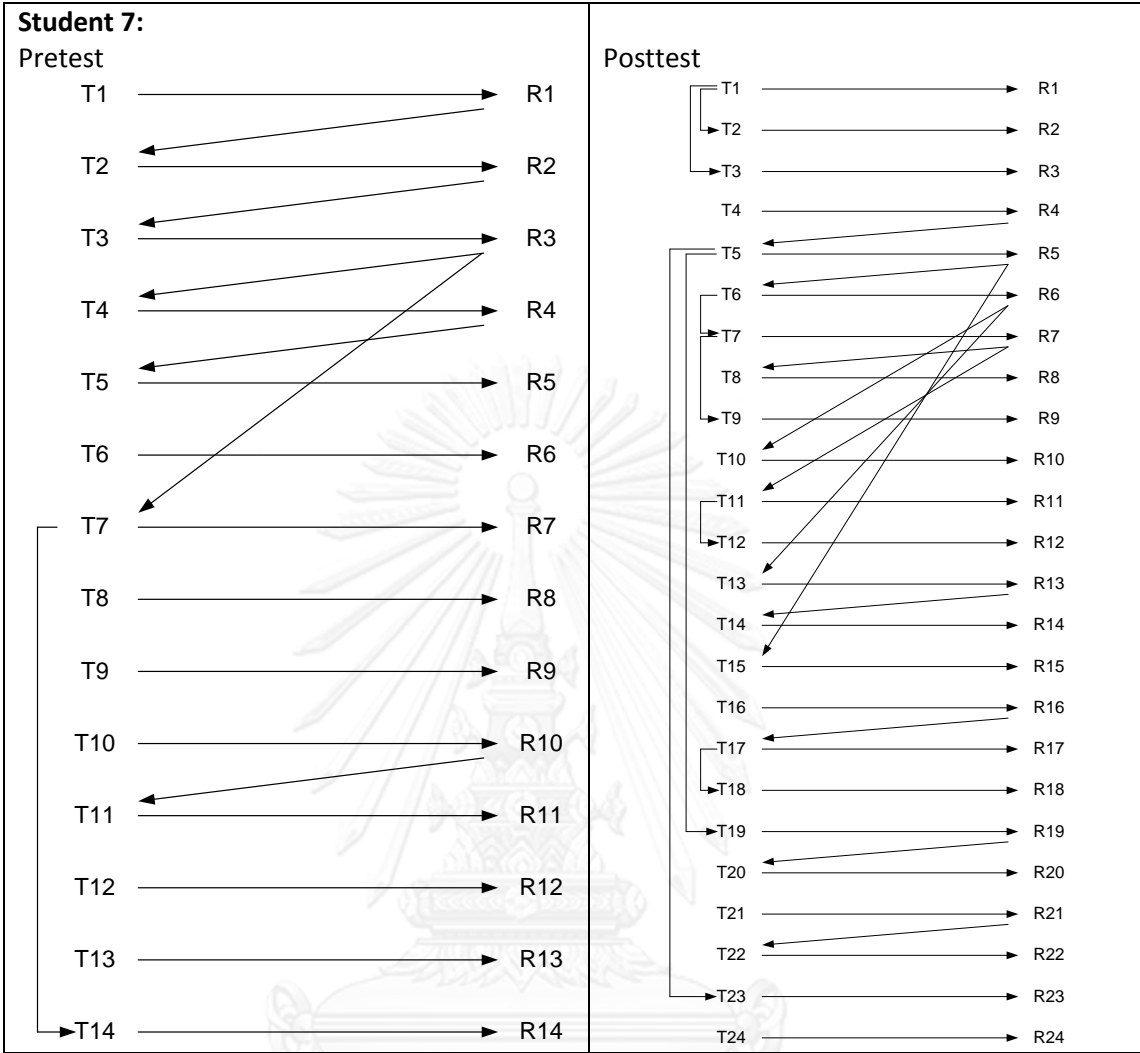APPENDIX 5 – Thematic Progression Analysis: Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Essays by Vietnamese ESL learners.



Student 1:
Pretest / Posttest thematic progression diagrams showing Theme (T) and Rheme (R) relationships.

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**Student 2:**

Pretest

| T1 → R1 |
| T2 → R2 |
| T3 ← R3 |
| T4 → R4 |
| T5 → R5 |
| T6 → R6 |
| T7 → R7 |
| T8 → R8 |
| T9 → R9 |
| T10 → R10 |
| T11 → R11 |
| T12 → R12 |
| T13 → R13 |
| T14 → R14 |
| T15 → R15 |

Posttest

| T1 → R1 |
| T2 → R2 |
| T3 → R3 |
| T4 → R4 |
| T5 → R5 |
| T6 → R6 |
| T7 → R7 |
| T8 → R8 |
| T9 → R9 |
| T10 → R10 |
| T11 → R11 |
| T12 → R12 |
| T13 → R13 |
| T14 → R14 |
| T15 → R15 |
| T16 → R16 |
| T17 → R17 |
| T18 → R18 |
| T19 → R19 |
| T20 → R20 |
| T21 → R21 |
| T22 → R22 |

**Student 3:**

Pretest



Posttest

**Student 4:**

Pretest

| | |
|---|---|
| T1 | R1 |
| T2 | R2 |
| T3 | R3 |
| T4 | R4 |
| T5 | R5 |
| T6 | R6 |
| T7 | R7 |
| T8 | R8 |
| T9 | R9 |
| T10 | R10 |
| T11 | R11 |
| T12 | R12 |
| T13 | R13 |
| T14 | R14 |
| T15 | R15 |
| T16 | R16 |

Posttest

| | |
|---|---|
| T1 | R1 |
| T2 | R2 |
| T3 | R3 |
| T4 | R4 |
| T5 | R5 |
| T6 | R6 |
| T7 | R7 |
| T8 | R8 |
| T9 | R9 |
| T10 | R10 |
| T11 | R11 |
| T12 | R12 |
| T13 | R13 |
| T14 | R14 |
| T15 | R15 |
| T16 | R16 |
| T17 | R17 |
| T18 | R18 |
| T19 | R19 |
| T20 | R20 |
| T21 | R21 |
| T22 | R22 |

**Student 5:**
Pretest



Posttest

**Student 6:**
Pretest / Posttest

Student 7:

**Student 8:**

Pretest



Posttest

**Student 9:**

Pretest

| | |
|---|---|
| T1 | R1 |
| T2 | R2 |
| T3 | R3 |
| T4 | R4 |
| T5 | R5 |
| T6 | R6 |
| T7 | R7 |
| T8 | R8 |
| T9 | R9 |
| T10 | R10 |
| T11 | R11 |
| T12 | R12 |
| T13 | R13 |
| T14 | R14 |
| T15 | R15 |
| T16 | R16 |
| T17 | R17 |
| T18 | R18 |
| T19 | R19 |
| T20 | R20 |
| T21 | R21 |
| T22 | R22 |
| T23 | R23 |
| T24 | R24 |
| T25 | R25 |

Posttest

| | |
|---|---|
| T1 | R1 |
| T2 | R2 |
| T3 | R3 |
| T4 | R4 |
| T5 | R5 |
| T6 | R6 |
| T7 | R7 |
| T8 | R8 |
| T9 | R9 |
| T10 | R10 |
| T11 | R11 |
| T12 | R12 |
| T13 | R13 |
| T14 | R14 |
| T15 | R15 |
| T16 | R16 |
| T17 | R17 |
| T18 | R18 |
| T19 | R19 |
| T20 | R20 |
| T21 | R21 |
| T22 | R22 |
| T23 | R23 |

**Student 12:**

Pretest



Posttest

**Student 13:**
Pretest

Posttest

Student 15:

Student 16:
Pretest

Posttest

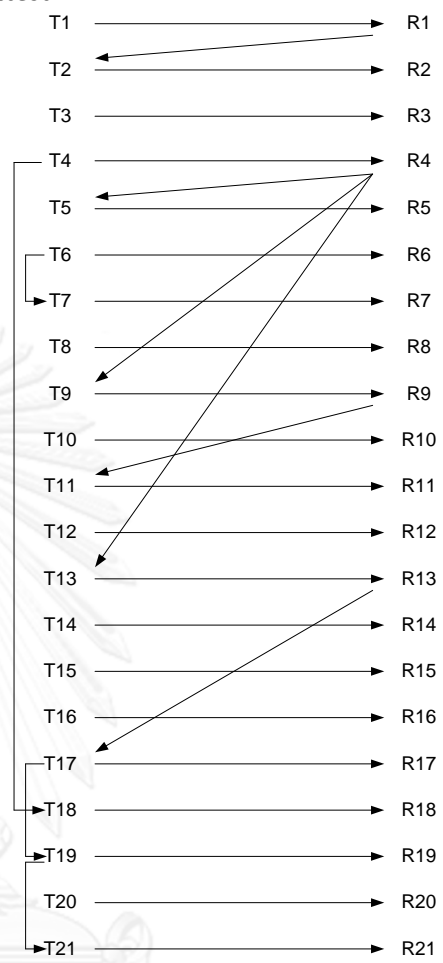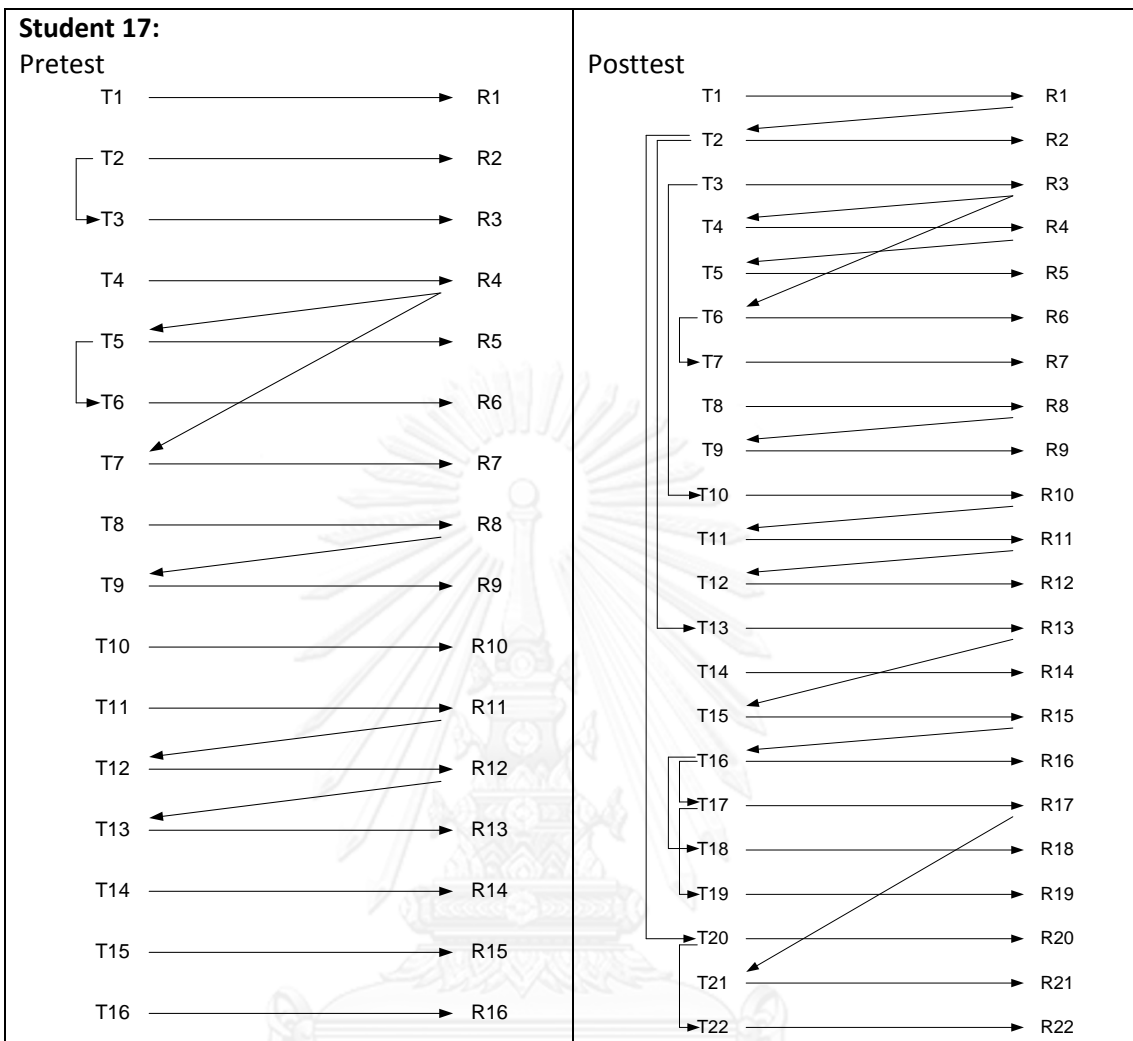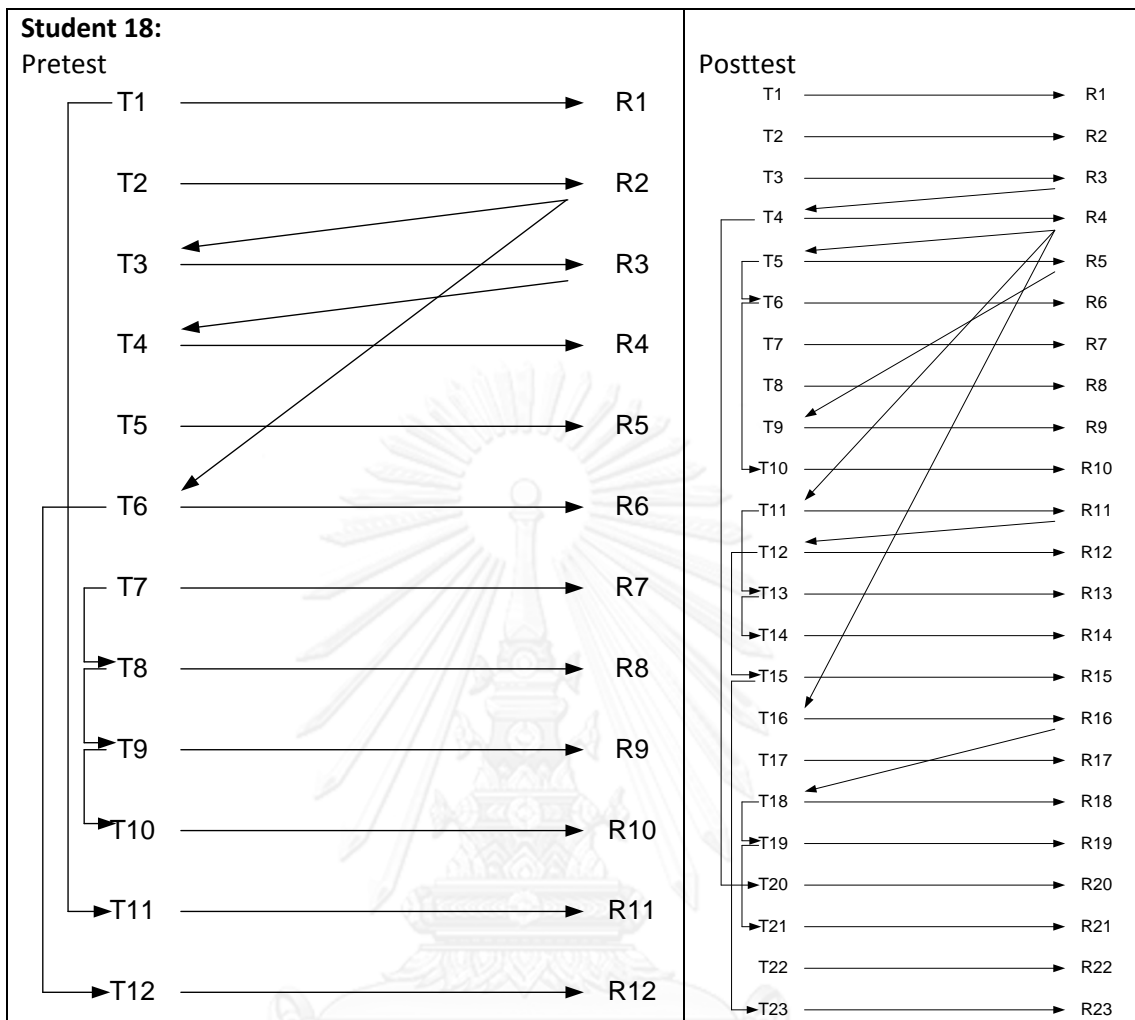**Student 17:**

Pretest

Posttest

**Student 18:**

Pretest

| | |
|---|---|
| T1 | R1 |
| T2 | R2 |
| T3 | R3 |
| T4 | R4 |
| T5 | R5 |
| T6 | R6 |
| T7 | R7 |
| T8 | R8 |
| T9 | R9 |
| T10 | R10 |
| T11 | R11 |
| T12 | R12 |

Posttest

| | |
|---|---|
| T1 | R1 |
| T2 | R2 |
| T3 | R3 |
| T4 | R4 |
| T5 | R5 |
| T6 | R6 |
| T7 | R7 |
| T8 | R8 |
| T9 | R9 |
| T10 | R10 |
| T11 | R11 |
| T12 | R12 |
| T13 | R13 |
| T14 | R14 |
| T15 | R15 |
| T16 | R16 |
| T17 | R17 |
| T18 | R18 |
| T19 | R19 |
| T20 | R20 |
| T21 | R21 |
| T22 | R22 |
| T23 | R23 |

Student 19:

Pretest

| T1 | → | R1 |
| T2 | → | R2 |
| T3 | | R3 |
| T4 | | R4 |
| T5 | | R5 |
| T6 | → | R6 |
| T7 | | R7 |
| T8 | → | R8 |
| T9 | | R9 |
| T10 | | R10 |
| T11 | → | R11 |
| T12 | → | R12 |
| T13 | → | R13 |
| T14 | → | R14 |
| T15 | → | R15 |
| T16 | → | R16 |
| T17 | → | R17 |
| T18 | → | R18 |

Posttest

| T1 | → | R1 |
| T2 | | R2 |
| T3 | → | R3 |
| T4 | → | R4 |
| T5 | → | R5 |
| T6 | | R6 |
| T7 | → | R7 |
| T8 | → | R8 |
| T9 | → | R9 |
| T10 | → | R10 |
| T11 | → | R11 |
| T12 | → | R12 |
| T13 | → | R13 |
| T14 | → | R14 |
| T15 | → | R15 |
| T16 | → | R16 |
| T17 | → | R17 |
| T18 | → | R18 |
| T19 | → | R19 |
| T20 | → | R20 |
| T21 | → | R21 |

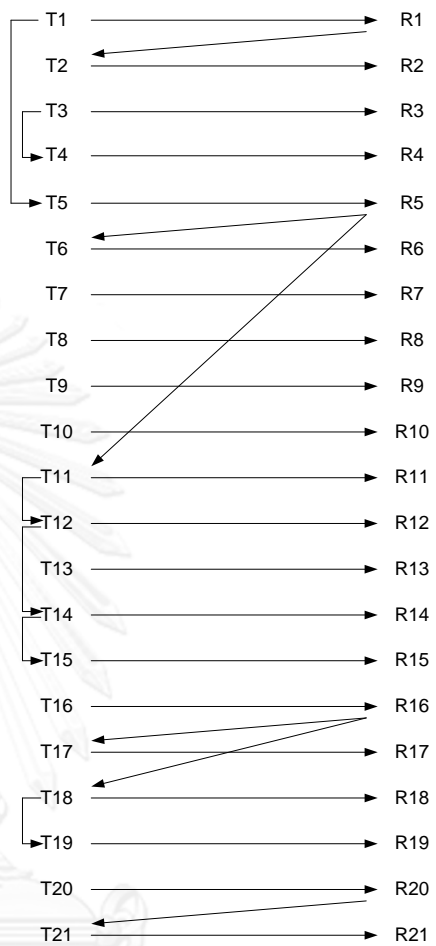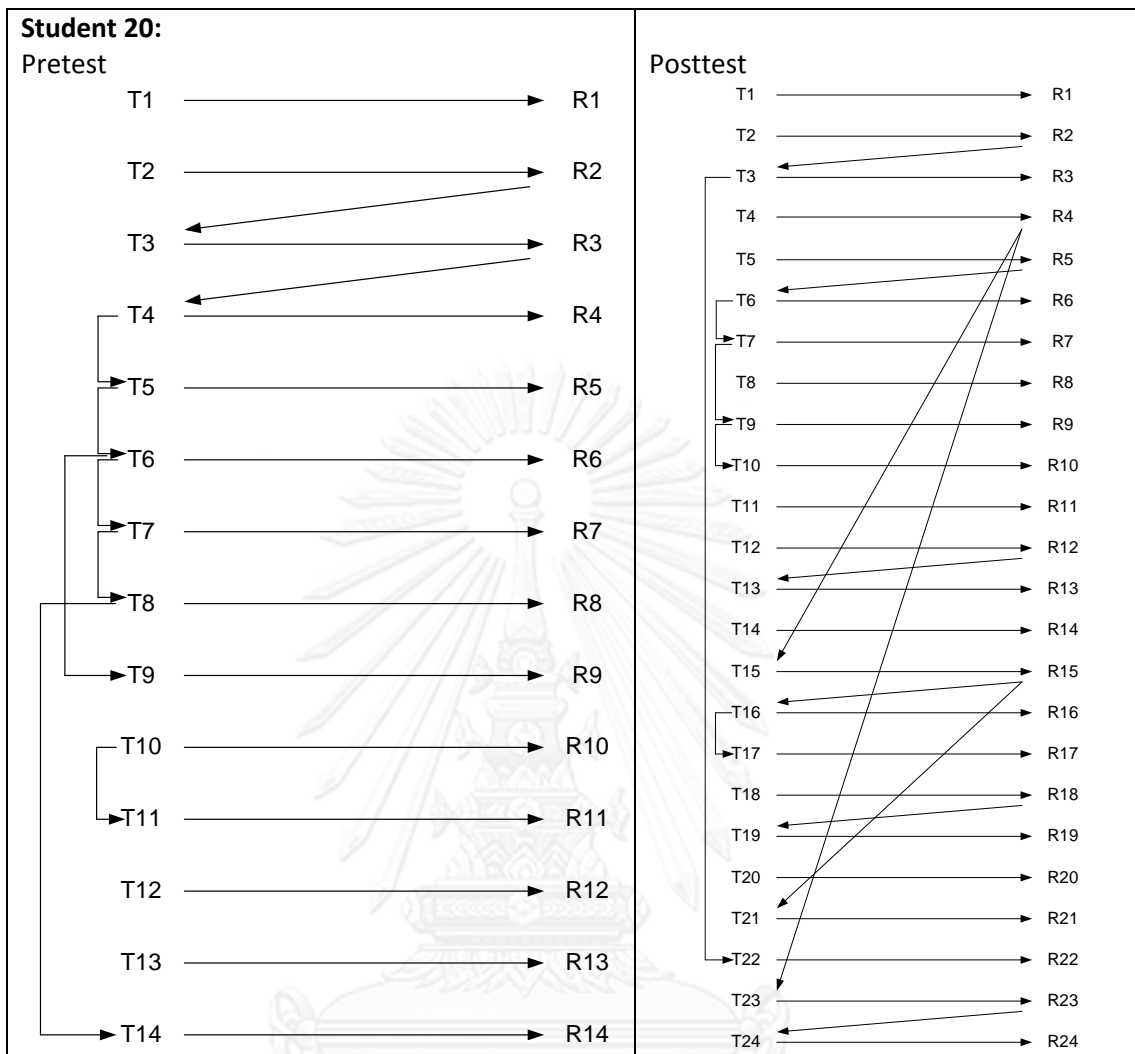**Student 20:**
Pretest / Posttest

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- 2004 to 2008: Bachelor Degree of English, English Department, Hanoi University, Vietnam

Publications:

- Le, D.T. & Wijitsupong, R. (2014). Using Theme-Rheme to analyze ESL/EFL learners' academic writing cohesion. Proceeding The 10th Annual CamTESOL Conference, Institute of Technology Cambodia (ITC), Phnompenh, Cambodia.