



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**THEMATICITY IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC RESEARCH ARTICLES ACROSS
DISCIPLINES IN HARD AND SOFT SCIENCES**

SEYED FOAD EBRAHIMI

FBMK 2014 15



**THEMATICITY IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC RESEARCH ARTICLES ACROSS
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By

SEYED FOAD EBRAHIMI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2014

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Specially Dedicated to:

My beloved Family

My Aunt, My Parents, My wife and My son

*This is just a small token of my love &
affection and underlying gratitude &
appreciation for all you have done for me.*

Thank you and God bless you always

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chairperson: Prof. Chan Swee Heng, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

Theme which is defined as the starting point of the message and the element which the clause is mainly about plays a major role in text organization (Halliday, 1994). This study explores the types and discourse functions of theme in the research articles and its four rhetorical sections (introduction, method, result and discussion) across four disciplines: Applied Linguistics and Psychology representing soft science and Chemistry and Environmental Engineering representing hard science. This cross-disciplinary study was carried out on a corpus of 40 (10 from each discipline) research articles. The research articles sourced from 12 ISI journals (3 from each discipline) published from 2008 to 2012. The corpus was analyzed based on the modified model of the available models in relation to theme types and discourse functions. The results revealed that the theme type selections were guided by the nature of the rhetorical sections of the research article. However, the frequency of use of the theme types was constrained by the nature of the discipline. Discourse functions in relation to theme types were predominantly determined by the divisions of the hard and soft sciences, the specific disciplines within, and the internal structure of the rhetorical sections of the research articles. In addition, the results of this study manifest a new framework for the analysis of discourse functions of theme types in research articles. The results and analysis establish that the theme is an important means of highlighting the disciplinary variations in the writing of the rhetorical sections of the research article. The study has implications for novice research article writers, EAP instructors and EAP text developers. These results could be used to target at the awareness of linguistic features such as theme as a crucial element in dispensing of discourse functions of the rhetorical sections of the research article.

Keywords: Theme, discourse function, disciplinary variation, research article, rhetorical sections of research article

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**TEMA DALAM ARTIKEL PENYELIDIKAN AKADEMIK BAHASA INGGERIS
MERENTAS DISIPLIN SAINS DAN SASTERA**

Oleh

SEYED FOAD EBRAHIMI

Julai 2014

Pengerusi: Prof. Chan Swee Heng, PhD

Fakulti: Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

Tema merupakan titik permulaan dalam ayat dan memainkan peranan penting dalam organisasi sesebuah teks (Halliday, 1994). Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji jenis dan fungsi bagi setiap Tema dalam artikel penyelidikan merangkumi 4 bahagian retorik (pengenalan, kaedah kajian, dapatan dan perbincangan) yang meliputi empat disiplin berbeza, iaitu Linguistik Terapan dan Psikologi mewakili bidang Sastera manakala Kimia dan Kejuruteraan Alam Sekitar mewakili bidang Sains. Kajian merentas disiplin ini, menganalisis 40 artikel penyelidikan (10 artikel daripada setiap subjek). Artikel-artikel ini adalah hasil eksperimen dan penyelidikan yang diperoleh daripada 12 jurnal ISI (3 daripada setiap disiplin) yang diterbitkan dari tahun 2008 hingga 2012. Korpus dianalisis berasaskan model yang diubahsuai daripada model terdahulu yang memiliki hubungan dengan jenis Tema dan fungsinya dalam wacana. Keputusan memperlihatkan bahawa, pilihan Tema bergantung pada sifat setiap bahagian retorik artikel penyelidikan. Walau bagaimanapun, kekerapan penggunaan jenis Tema telah terkekang oleh sifat disiplin artikel penyelidikan tersebut. Oleh itu, fungsi wacana berhubung dengan jenis Tema kebanyakannya ditentukan oleh perbezaan dalam disiplin artikel sama ada Sastera atau Sains dan struktur dalam retorik artikel penyelidikan. Sesungguhnya hasil kajian ini, merupakan satu rangka kerja baharu dalam analisis fungsi wacana jenis Tema artikel penyelidikan. Keputusan dan analisis membuktikan bahawa Tema adalah wahana penting bagi menonjolkan variasi dalam penulisan artikel penyelidikan. Kajian ini juga mendatangkan implikasi untuk penulis artikel baharu, tenaga pengajar EAP dan pembina teks EAP. Dapatan kajian boleh digunakan bagi membuktikan kesedaran ciri-ciri linguistik seperti Tema merupakan elemen penting dalam pendeskriptifan fungsi wacana dalam retorik penyelidikan artikel.

Kata kunci: tema, fungsi wacana, perbezaan disiplin, artikel pengajian, bahagian retorik dalam artikel penyelidikan

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Chan Swee Heng, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairperson)

Ain Nadzimah Abdullah, PhD

Associate Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Helen Tan, PhD

Lecturer
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, PhD

Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

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Signature: _____

Name of
Chairman of
Supervisory

Committee: Professor. Chan Swee Heng, PhD

Signature: _____

Name of
Member of
Supervisory

Committee: Dr. Helen Tan

Signature: _____

Name of
Chairman of
Member of
Supervisory

Committee: Associate Professor. Dr. Ain Nadzimah Abdullah

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