CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter provides conclusions of the findings in relation to the research questions formulated in Chapter 1, i.e. types of Theme and realizations of topical Theme in students' research papers and oral presentations. Recommendations for further study are also provided.

5.1 Conclusion

This research investigated the thematic structures in students' research papers and oral presentations. Specifically, it attempted to find out the types of Theme and realizations of topical Theme in students' research papers and oral presentations. The findings related to the types of Theme and realizations of topical Theme in students' research papers and oral presentations highlighted a number of differences of thematic structures between the two types of text.

Considering the first research question, i.e. types of Theme used in students' research papers and oral presentations, the two types of texts shared similar types of Theme, i.e. interpersonal, textual, and topical. However, the occurrence of each type of Theme in both texts varies considerably. Firstly, interpersonal Theme in the form of Modal Adjuncts tends to occur more commonly in oral presentations (5.2%) rather than in research papers (1.2%). This variation may stem from the fact that Modal Adjuncts realizing interpersonal Theme are movable; it is the speaker's choice either to assign Modal Adjuncts a thematic role or simply to consign them into the Rheme. It was also observed the variation in terms of the way the Theme is structured. While

the Mood Adjunct realizing interpersonal Theme in students' research papers were Adjunct, there were several cases when the interpersonal Themes in student's oral presentations were realized by grammatical metaphor. The occurrence of interpersonal Theme in student's oral presentations suggests the speaker's evaluation of something s/he has presented, whereas interpersonal Theme in research papers may be considered as a way to create "approachable, fallible style" of text (Eggins, 2004: 322).

Secondly, the findings related to textual Theme revealed considerable differences of thematic structure between students' research papers and oral presentations. This finding again confirms the proposition stated earlier that mode variation apparently affects the realizations of textual Theme in both types of text. Textual Theme can consist of any element of Conjunctive Adjuncts, Conjunctions, and Continuity Adjuncts. It was found that textual Theme tend to be used more frequently in student's oral presentations (39.5%) than that in students' research papers (26.1%). Conjunctive Adjuncts tend to appear more commonly in student's oral presentations (10.3%) than those in students' research papers (5.1%). They contribute to developing the rhetorical structure in students' research papers (see Gerot and Wignel, 1994). Conjunctions occurred more frequently in student's oral presentations (27.1%) than those in students' research papers (20.2%). This is relevant to the nature of spoken language in which clause complexes may abound as indicated by an extensive use of Conjunctions that link the clauses within sentences (see Eggins, 2004; Schleppegrell, 2004). Continuity Adjuncts, typical textual elements in spoken language, were only found in student's oral presentations.

Thirdly, realizations of topical Themes in students' research papers and oral presentations with respect to the use of marked and unmarked topical Theme revealed further differences between the two types of text. It was revealed that marked topical

Themes tend to occur more frequently in students' research papers (11.7%) than that in student's oral presentations (7.2%). Marked Themes in research papers contribute to doing coherence work in that they present information of previous texts and make them as the point of departure of the clause (see Thompson, 2004). They also allow other elements that are not usually functioning as Subject to become the Themes of the clause without making them Subject in declarative Mood. By contrast, marked topical Themes in oral presentations were often used to signal schematic move when speakers presented their research papers (see Lock, 1996).

The findings related to the second research question, i.e. realizations of topical Theme in students' research papers and oral presentations, revealed further characteristics of thematic structures in both texts. It was revealed that the nominal group with common noun as Head was frequently used in both students' research papers (46.1%) and oral presentations (40.3%). Despite this similarity, this element was in fact realized differently in both types of text. It was found that the speakers in oral presentations tend to use brief nominal groups, which refer to specific common nouns or simple prepositional phrases. In contrast to oral presentations, research papers were often loaded with relatively lengthy nominal groups. Nominal groups containing nominalizations as Head were also found quite frequently in research papers. In addition to nominal group with common noun as Head, the use of nominal group with personal pronoun as Head is also worth noticing. It was the second element mostly selected to be the topical Theme both in students' research papers (14.1%) and oral presentations (30.5%). In oral presentations, it is often the case that the speakers identify themselves by using first person singular pronoun *I*, which is hardly used in students' research papers.

The findings related to types of Theme and realizations of topical Theme in students' research papers and oral presentations elaborated in Chapter 4 are

considered partly as realizing textual meaning. The textual meaning realized deals with the way the messages are organized so that they "fit smoothly into the unfolding language event" (Thompson, 2004: 141; see also Lock, 1996: 219; Martin, Matthiessen, & Pinter, 1997: 21; Eggins, 2004: 320). In this case, it is the students' research papers and oral presentations. It was revealed how the thematic structures in students' research papers differ quite considerably from those in oral presentations by offering choices of what Theme to be selected as the point of departure of the clause, either single Theme that consists of topical Theme only, or multiple Theme that consists of a combination of textual and/or interpersonal and topical Theme. The realizations topical Theme in students' research papers and oral presentations also revealed another differing aspect between the two types of texts. In oral presentations, it was found that the topical Themes tend to be brief nominal groups of personal pronoun, or particular commons nouns. In research papers, by contrast, the elements selected to be the topical Themes tend to be relatively lengthy nominal groups, containing lengthy strings of word. Nominalizations and dependent clauses were also frequently given a thematic prominence of topical Theme. In addition to the analysis of thematic structures in clausal level, the analysis of higher level of Theme, i.e. macro- and hyper-Theme also reveals that both types of text are considered cohesive and coherent. This can be observed from the predictive relations between the macro- and hyper-Theme in both types of text.

5.2 Recommendations

This research investigates the differences between spoken and written texts with respect to the thematic structures in students' research papers and oral presentations. The findings revealed how thematic structure contributes to cohesion and coherence

of the text in both spoken and written language (see Martin, 2001). Given the importance of thematic structure in organizing the message of the texts, there are two suggestions that can be made in relation to the practice of English as Foreign Language (EFL) teaching particularly college level in which research papers and oral presentations become an essential part in this academic level, and linguistic research on thematic structure.

Firstly, with regard to the practice of EFL teaching, it is recommended that teaching on the way the message is organized in both written and spoken context of language use be given to students to improve coherence and cohesion of text (see Martin, 2001; Nunan, 1991). In addition, it is important that students be exposed to various research papers from which they internalize some characteristics of research papers especially in terms of the way the message is organized. For example, it is quite common that academic texts use abstract ideas as the point of departure (Eggins, 2004; see also Martin, 1993). In addition, nominalization is commonly used as the clause Theme since it allows for reiteration of prior information to be used as the point of departure in the writer's succeeding clause. Clause combination strategies signifying taxis and projections are the other points that need to be addressed properly in the teaching of writing because they play important roles in logical relationships either within or between sentences.

Secondly, for further research, it is recommended that other researcher analyze the method of development of research papers as compared to that of oral presentations. This will generate a complete description of how the texts are different. More importantly, this will show how thematic elements are related to each other, contributing to the cohesion and coherence of the texts.