



## Unity of Structure in EFL Academic Paragraphs: A Discourse Analysis of Upper-Intermediate Libyan Students' Writing at the University of Zawia Language Center (UZLC)

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الملخص :

يعدّ ترابط الفقرات جانبًا أساسيًا من الكتابة الأكاديمية، ومع ذلك لا تزال تُمثّل تحديًا كبيرًا لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية خصوصًا الذين يجب عليهم تحقيق الدقة اللغوية والالتزام بالتقاليد البلاغية. فالفقرة المنظمة جيدًا، والتي تتمحور حول فكرة رئيسية واحدة وتدعمها جمل مترابطة، تُمثّل الوحدة الأساسية للخطاب الأكاديمي (أوشيما وهوغ، 2006). وعلى الرغم من العديد من التدخلات التربوية، لا يزال طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الدول العربية، بما فيها ليبيا، يُعانون من صعوبة مستمرة في إنتاج فقرات متماسكة بنويًا. وتشير الأبحاث إلى أن الكتابة الأكاديمية للطلاب الليبيين غالبًا ما تُظهر ضعفًا في التماسك، وعبارات غير واضحة، واستطرادات مطولة (الغماتي، 2022؛ بن خليفة، 2023). ولا تُعزى هذه الصعوبات إلى أوجه القصور النحوية فحسب، بل هي متأصلة بعمق في تنظيم الخطاب. وبينما صنّفت العديد من الدراسات الأخطاء النحوية في كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، إلا أن القليل منها أجرى تحليلًا تفصيليًا للخطاب يستهدف الفقرات تحديدًا. تشير الملاحظات غير الرسمية التي أجراها مدرسون في مركز اللغات بجامعة الزاوية (UZLC) إلى أن طلاب المستوى فوق المتوسط يكتبون فقرات تحتوي على تفاصيل زائدة، وتفتقر إلى جمل موضوعية واضحة، ويحذفون الخاتمة. ومع ذلك، يجب إجراء تحقيق منهجي قائم على البيانات باستخدام أطر تحليل الخطاب الراسخة - وتحديدًا تحليل البنية الموضوعية (TSA) ونظرية الموضوع-الخبر - بشكل تجريبي لتوثيق وتصنيف أوجه القصور الهيكلية هذه بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الليبيين كلغة أجنبية في المستوى فوق المتوسط. تُعد فجوة البحث هذه مهمة لأن تحليل البنية الموضوعية وتحليل الموضوع-الخبر يمكنهما تحديد مكان وكيفية تدهور التماسك بدقة، والانتقال من مجرد عدّ الأخطاء السطحية إلى تشخيص المشكلات البلاغية الأعمق. تتناول هذه الدراسة هذه القضايا، وتسدّ الفجوة بتقصي الحفاظ على الترابط واختلاله في الفقرات الأكاديمية لطلاب مركز اللغات بجامعة الزاوية (UZLC). كما تبحث في آثار ذلك على تدريس الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وتطوير المناهج الدراسية في التعليم العالي الليبي.

### Abstract

The unity of paragraphs is an essential aspect of academic writing, yet it continues to pose a significant challenge for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) particularly who must achieve both linguistic accuracy and adherence to rhetorical conventions. The well-structured paragraph centered on a single controlling idea and supported by coherent sentences represents the essential unit of academic discourse (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). Despite several pedagogical interventions, EFL students in Arab countries, including Libya, persistently struggle to produce structurally unified paragraphs. Research indicates that Libyan students' academic writing frequently exhibits poor cohesion, unclear statements, and substantial digressions (El-Gmati, 2022; Ben Khalifa, 2023). These difficulties are not attributable solely to grammatical deficiencies but are deeply embedded in discourse organization. While a lot of studies have cataloged grammatical errors in EFL writing, relatively few have conducted detailed discourse analysis specifically targeting paragraph unity. Informal observations by instructors at the University of Zawia Language Center (UZLC) suggest that upper-intermediate students write paragraphs containing extraneous details, lacking clear topic sentences, and omitting conclusions. However a systematic data-driven investigation employing established discourse analysis frameworks- specifically Topical Structure Analysis (TSA) and Theme-Rheme theory- has to be empirically undertaken to document and categorize these structural shortcomings between Libyan EFL learners at the upper-intermediate level.

This research gap is significant because TSA and Theme-Rheme analysis can precisely identify where and how coherence deteriorates, moving beyond surface-level error counts to diagnose deeper rhetorical issues. The present study fills this gap by investigating the maintenance and disruption of unity in the academic paragraphs of UZLC students. The implications for EFL writing instruction and curriculum development in Libyan higher education are examined.

**Keywords:** Libyan EFL learners, Paragraph Unity, Discourse Analysis, Theme-Rheme, Topical Structure Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Academic Writing.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 background of the study

The ability to write effectively is a vital skill for academic achievement, particularly for EFL learners who must not only achieve linguistic correctness but also adhere to rhetorical standards. As well-structured paragraphs, which are centered around a single controlling idea and supported by coherent sentences, is the essential unit of academic writing. Despite various instructional approaches, EFL students in Arab countries, including Libya, continue to express difficulties in forming paragraphs that are structurally unified. Research indicates that Libyan students' academic writing frequently shows a lack of cohesion, unclear thesis statements, and numerous digressions. These challenges are not just linked to grammatical issues but are also deeply embedded in the organization of discourse.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

While many academics have investigated grammatical errors in EFL writing, relatively few studies have conducted detailed discourse analyses on paragraph unity. Informal observations made by instructors at the University of Zawia Language Center (UZLC) reveal that upper-intermediate students tend to write paragraphs that are packed with unnecessary details, lack topic sentences, and omit conclusions. Despite receiving instruction in paragraph writing, many Libyan EFL learners continue to produce paragraphs lacking structural unity. That may affect the coherence and effectiveness of their academic writing. However, no systematic research has been conducted to empirically document and categorize these structural shortcomings from the perspective of discourse analysis. The present study attempts to fill this gap by investigating the maintenance and disruption of unity in the academic paragraphs of UZLC students from a data-driven perspective.

### 1.3 Research Objectives:

- To identify the range to which the upper-intermediate Libyan EFL students adapt to the standard English academic paragraph structure ( topic sentence, supporting sentence, concluding sentence) in their writing.
- To determine the most common unity-related problems, including digression, circular repetition, and absence of a topic sentence, present in students' academic paragraphs.
- To analyze how patterns of topical progression (parallel, sequential, or extended parallel), as revealed by Topical Structure Analysis (TSA), contribute to or reduce from paragraph coherence.
- To examine the flow of information at the clause level using Theme-Rheme mapping to identify specific points where coherence breaks down.

- To investigate possible pedagogical and rhetorical factors (including L1 Arabic transfer)
- To provide evidence-based pedagogical recommendations for improving paragraph unity instruction in Libyan EFL writing courses.

#### 1.4 Research Questions:

The study will answer the following questions:

1. How well do students' academic paragraphs follow the standard structure of the unified paragraph (topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentences)?
2. What specific problems with unity (e.g., digression, repetition, lack of topic sentence) are most common?
3. How do patterns of topical progression contribute to paragraph coherence or incoherence?
4. What pedagogical reasons can lead to the identified shortcomings?

#### 1.5 Significance of the study:

This research contributes to the field of applied linguistics by applying established models of discourse analysis, such as Topical Structure Analysis and Theme-Rheme theory, to an unstudied group of people. Practically, it offers useful diagnostic information to inform the development of writing curricula, teaching approaches, and assessment criteria at UZLC and other similar institutions in Libya.

#### 1.6 Scope and Delimitations:

The study was conducted on 20 upper-intermediate EFL students of UZLC. Each student wrote one opinion paragraph of 120- 150 words in controlled conditions. It does not take into account other forms of writing, longer essays, or the students' competence in other skills. The analysis is limited to structural coherence. Lexical and grammatical errors will be considered only insofar as they affect overall coherence.

### 2: Literature Review:

#### 2.1 Defining Paragraph Unity and Coherence:

In English academic writing, a paragraph is unified when each sentence supports a central idea, which is usually introduced by a topic sentence (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). A coherent paragraph is internally consistent, with sentences linked by cohesive ties (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) and organized in a clear information structure. Without this unity, the reader may be confused, as unrelated ideas are compete for attention within the same paragraph.

#### 2.2 The Role of the Topic Sentence:

Lautamatti (1987) states that topic sentences function as core elements that build the foundation for paragraph organization instead of serving as simple writing tools. A powerful topic sentence contains a directing concept that establishes the limits for what the writer will discuss. When writers fail to present an obvious topic sentence or produce unclear statements, then their following sentences start to wander between different subjects, which creates an unclear connection between their ideas.

### 2.3 Topical Structure Analysis (TSA)

Lautamatti developed Topical Structure Analysis (TSA) in 1987, and Simpson and other researchers expanded it in 2000. The research method, Text Structure Analysis (TSA), investigates how consecutive sentence subjects relate to the main idea that appears in the paragraph content. The system classifies three types of progression: parallel sentences that maintain identical subjects; sequential sentences that show subject evolution from previous statements; and extended parallel sentences that include a brief topic departure before returning to the main discussion. The TSA system helps users identify specific points where unity begins to break down through its structured analytical process.

### 2.4 Theme-Rheme Theory and Cohesion

Halliday's framework of systemic functional linguistics differentiates between Theme (the starting point of a message) and Rheme (the new information introduced). The Theme-Rheme progression creates predictable information pattern that facilitate reader comprehension (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The format of incoherent paragraphs shows that their themes exist without proper support, while their Rhemes keep repeating without any development, which produces a circular pattern instead of making progress.

### 2.5 Challenges Faced by Arab EFL Learners:

Research about Arab EFL students shows that they tend to repeat information while their writing presents extensive identical patterns and they prefer to add information instead of using connecting words (Al-Jarf,2001; Mohamed-Sayidina, 2010). The Arabic rhetorical tradition supports concept repetition along with decorative language, which creates a conflict with the straightforward academic writing style that English speakers use. The limited contact with English academic materials together with the focus on grammar in high-stakes examinations create learning difficulties for Libyan students who study English (Ahmed & Daff,2024).

### 2.6 Previous Studies on Libyan Students' Writing

Recent studies by El-Gmati (2022) and Ben Khalifa (2023) reveal that Libyan EFL students face major difficulties when they try to organize their written paragraphs. The research studies focused their efforts on screening language mistakes and measuring text coherence but they failed to apply topical structure analysis (TSA) for complete topic arrangement evaluation. The research builds upon previous studies through its implementation of an expanded discourse analysis method, which provides detailed analysis.

### 2.7 Theoretical Framework

The analysis is grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly Halliday's Theme-Rheme model of organization of clauses, and Lautamatti's (1987) Topical Structure Analysis (TSA), which can be used to explain how a paragraph organizes and develops its contents. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), language is a meaning-making system in which the construction of messages is based on the relationship between Theme and Rheme. The Theme can be described as the point of departure of a message, and the Rheme is the part of the message that conveys new information. If the Themes and Rhemes of sentences develop this way, then the flow of ideas is smoother and comprehension easier. Another method of

analysis, Lautamatti's (1987) Topical Structure Analysis, is based on the same principle and analyzes the topical progression of a text. Lautamatti identifies Parallel Progression, Sequential Progression and Extended Parallel Progression. Such patterns would indicate whether writers are remaining on topic or moving off of it with irrelevant information or switches of topic.

SFL and TSA both cover aspects of paragraph unity, with theme-Rheme analysis exploring the information structure in the clause and TSA focusing on theme continuity in discourse. These frameworks together allow for the systematic investigation of the construction of unity within academic paragraphs by Libyan EFL learners.

Therefore, this study attempts to carry out an analysis at the level of the paragraph based on both frameworks to show how topical progression contribute to the coherence and unity of paragraphs.

### **3: Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

A mixed-methods design was used to provide a comprehensive analysis of paragraph unity. Quantitative content analysis was employed to identify the frequency of structural features, while qualitative discourse analysis, including TSA and Theme-Rheme mapping, was used to investigate patterns of coherence and topical development.

#### **3.2 Participants and Sample Size Justification**

A group of 20 upper-intermediate students (11 males and 9 females), aged between 18 and 24, were intentionally chosen from the University of Zawia Language Center (UZLC). They had all been assessed at the B2 level (Upper-Intermediate) through the internal placement exam of the center, which is based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and had completed no fewer than eight semesters of English classes.

Relation for sample size: The research includes a limited number of participants because the chosen qualitative method requires a small sample to perform discourse analysis effectively. The core analytical methods which include TSA and Theme-Rheme progression analysis need researchers to perform detailed manual work on every sentence which appears in all paragraphs. The research study concentrates on particular textual elements for its assessment because it aims to analyze specific elements in depth rather than analyzing every part of the text. A sample size of 20 participants is adequate to:

- a. Provide significant frequency data and straightforward percentages.
- b. Facilitate the selection of diverse cases for thorough qualitative assessment.
- c. Ensure practicality within a project conducted by a single researcher.
- d. Correspond with earlier discourse-analytic investigations of L2 writing that have effectively utilized similar sample sizes (for instance, Simpson,2000; Mohamed-Sayidina,2010).

#### **3.3 Instrument**

The participants were requested to compose an academic paragraph containing 120-150 words in reply to the following prompt:

“Certain individuals feel that social media has enhanced communication between people. Conversely, others argue that it has created separation. Share your perspective, offering clear explanation and examples.”

This prompt was selected because it requires a definitive opinion, justifying reasons, and illustrations- elements that naturally bring forth the structural aspects being analyzed.

#### **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

The writing task took place during the standard sixty-minute time block, which teachers used for their regular class sessions. Students dedicated their time to write for 40 minutes using pen and paper, while they stayed away from dictionary usage and mobile phone access, and they avoided working together with their classmates. The researchers collected all finished

paragraphs while they assigned each one a secret identifier, which ranged from S1 through S20, to keep participant information confidential.

### 3.5 Analytical Framework

Each of the 20 sections underwent a two-tiered examination:

#### **Level 1: Macro-structure assessment**

The existence, arrangement, and quality of the following elements were analyzed;

- Topic Sentence: Effective (contains a distinct controlling idea), Weak/General (present but overly vague or broad), Not Present.
- Supporting Sentences: Each sentence was evaluated as Relevant or Off-Topic.
- Concluding Sentence: Effective, Weak (exact restatement), Not Present.

#### **Level 2: Discourse-level assessment (TSA and Theme-Rheme mapping)**

For each of the 20 sections, the main pattern of topical development was determined according to Lautamatti's (1987) TSA model:

- Parallel Progression: All sentences carry the same topic; the text remains unchanged.
- Sequential Progression: A new sentence's topic arises from the rheme of the preceding one; the text unfolds logically.
- Extended Parallel Progression: A parallel format is briefly interrupted by a sequential sub-sequence before reverting to the primary topic.

Furthermore, three sections were chosen for in-depth Theme-Rheme mapping: one high-coherence section (S3), one low-coherence section (S14), and one mid-range section (S7).

Reliability: Two separate evaluators coded 25% of the sections (n=5). Cohen's kappa score was 0.89, showing strong agreement. Any differences were settled through discussion.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was secured from every participant. They were guaranteed confidentiality and informed that their written work would not influence their grades in the course.

## 4: Findings and Analysis

### 4.1 Macro-Structural Features

**Table 4.1: Quality of Topic Sentences (N=20)**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Effective	3	15%
Weak/General	4	20%
Absent	13	65%

Only 15% of samples began with a clear, argumentative topic sentence. In contrast, 65% started with vague openings providing no roadmap.

**Table 4.2: Quality of Concluding Sentences (N= 20)**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Effective		20%
Weak/Restatement		25%
Absent		55%

More than half of the paragraphs ended abruptly with no concluding sentence.

## 4.2 Unity Violations: Digressions, Repetition, and Circular Reasoning

**Table 4.3: Incidence of Digressions per Paragraph (N=20)**

Number of Digressions	Number of Paragraphs	Percentage
0	6	30%
1	7	35%
2 or more	7	35%
Total with $\geq 1$	14	70%

Thus, 70% of paragraphs contained at least one off-topic sentence.

**Table 4.4: Types of Digression (based on ~ 105 sentences)**

Digression Type	Approx. Occurrence	% of All Sentence	% of Paragraphs Affected
Type A – Irrelevant Detail	16	~15%	50%
Type B – New Topic Shift	9	~9%	35%
Type C – Circular Repetition	21	20%	60%
Total digressed sentence	~46	~44%	-

Circular repetition was the most pervasive problem, affecting 60% of paragraphs.

## 4.3 Topical Structure Analysis (TSA)

**Table 4.5: Dominant Topical Progression Patterns (N= 20)**

Patter	Frequenc	Percentage
Mainly Paralle	14	70%
Sequentia	2	10%
Mixed (coherent	4	20%

The predominance of parallel progression (70%) explains the high rate of circular repetition and lack of argument development.

## 4.4 Detailed Theme-Rheme Mapping of Selected Samples

### Sample 1: Weak Paragraph (S14) – Parallel and Circular

- (1) Social media is very common in the world. (2) Social media has many platforms like Facebook and Twitter. (3) Social media helps people to talk. (4) But also social media has bad effects. (5) The smartphones in Libya are expensive. (6) Social media makes people waste time.

Sentence Theme (marked) Rheme

- (1) Social media is very common in the world  
 (2) Social media has many platforms like Facebook and Twitter  
 (3) Social media helps people to talk  
 (4) But also social media has bad effects  
 (5) The smartphones in Libya are expensive  
 (6) Social media makes people waste time

Discourse diagnosis: Constant Theme “Social media” creates a static list. Sentence (5) introduces a completely new Theme, breaking unity entirely. Several sentences overlap in meaning without progression.

**Sample 2: Strong Paragraph (S3) – Sequential and Unified**

- (1) I strongly believe that social media has damaged real human relationships. (2) One main reason is that it replaces face-to-face conversations with text messages. (3) These messages often lack emotional tone, which can cause misunderstandings between friends. (4) For example, my cousin fought with his best friend because a text was read in a cold way. (5) Therefore, instead of bringing people together, social media sometimes pushes them apart.

Sentence Theme (marked) Rheme

- (1) I strongly believe that social media has damaged real human relationships  
 (2) One main reason is that it replaces face-to-face conversations with text messages  
 (3) These messages [from Rheme of (2)] often lack emotional tone, which can cause misunderstandings  
 (4) For example, my cousin [example of (3)] fought with his best friend because a text was read in a cold way  
 (5) Therefore, social media sometimes pushes them apart

Discourse strengths: Clear controlling idea, sequential progression (Rheme → Theme), no digressions, logical conclusion.

**Sample 3: Mid-Range Paragraph (S7) – Extended Parallel with Partial Return**

- (1) Social media has both advantages and disadvantages for communication. (2) There are many good things like fast messaging and video calls. (3) These tools help families stay in touch across long distances. (4) Social media can also cause problems such as addiction. (5) For example, addiction to phones and social media is a growing problem for young people.

Sentence Theme (marked) Rheme

- (1) Social media has both advantages and disadvantages  
 (2) There are many good things like fast messaging and video calls  
 (3) These tools [from (2)] help families stay in touch  
 (4) Social media [return to main topic] can also cause problems such as addiction  
 (5) For example, addiction [from (4)] is a growing problem for young people

Discourse assessment: The paragraph starts parallel, shifts temporarily to examples (sequential), then returns to the main topic “Social media,” maintaining overall unity. This represents an acceptable extended parallel pattern, though the topic sentence could be sharper

**4.5 Descriptive Charts (Text-Based Representations for Visualization)**

Figure 4: Topical Progression Patterns

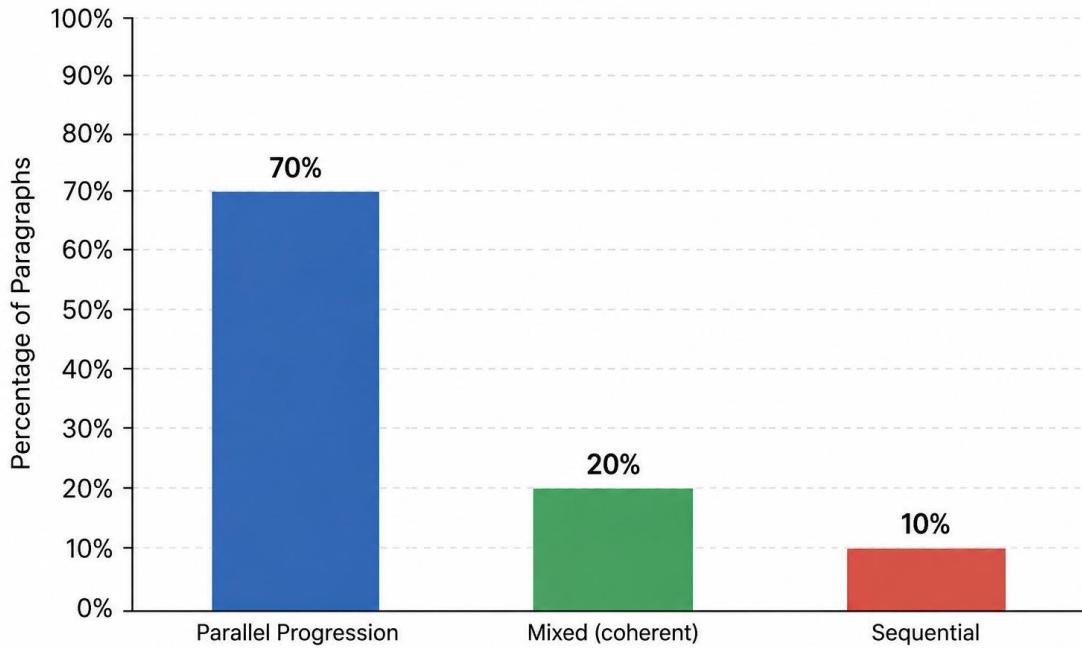
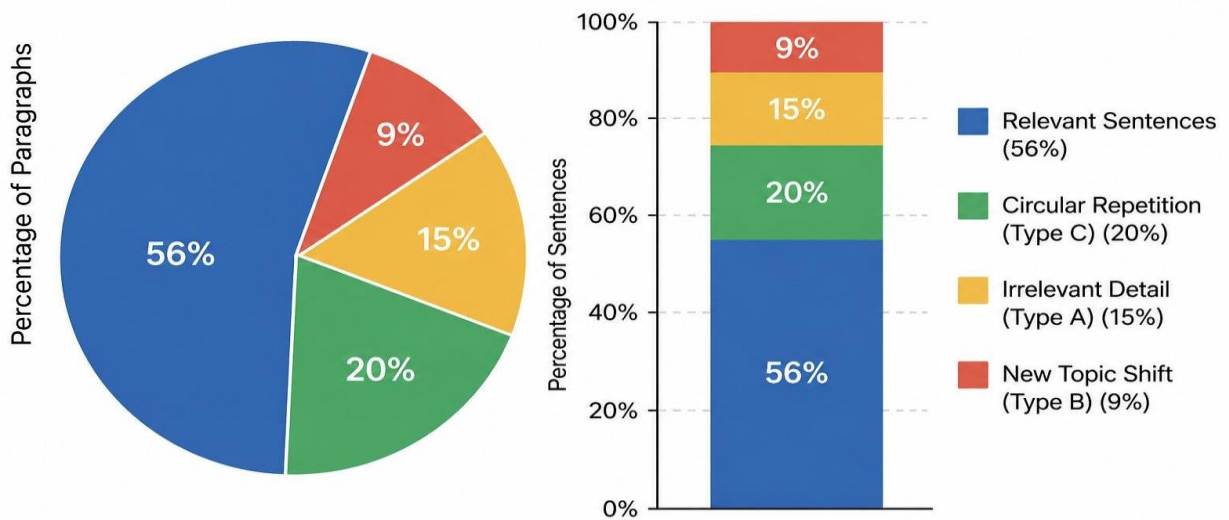


Figure 2: Incidence of Unity Violations per Paragraph

Figure 3: Distribution of Sentence Types



#### 4.6 Summary of Findings:

Both the quantitative and qualitative data provide a clear diagnosis that most upper-intermediate Libyan students at UZLC cannot write cohesive paragraphs according to the English academic standards. The problems are a lack of a focused topic sentence, the use of parallel lists rather than a logical progression, and the difficulty in getting rid of unnecessary or redundant material. The findings are consistent with those reported by Smith (2022), who found that EFL learners often struggle to maintain thematic consistency throughout academic paragraphs.

#### 5. Discussion

The findings suggest that paragraph unity is not merely a linguistic issue but also a cognitive and organizational one. Students who failed to build clear topic sentence often lacked a framework for selecting and organizing supporting details. Consequently, irrelevant information and repetitive statements appeared frequently throughout the paragraphs. This observation supports previous research emphasizing the role of planning strategies and discourse awareness in academic writing development.

Research outcomes validate previous Arab EFL writing studies while they expand the existing knowledge base. The research shows that 65% of effective topic sentences are missing, which supports Al-Jarf's (2001) observation that students tend to begin their paragraphs with unclear, broad statements. The research study presents a major contribution through its established link between the current absence and the future loss of unity, which will occur through TSA. When a topic sentence is missing from a paragraph, the writer lacks a semantic filter, leading to the inclusion of sentences based on loose connections instead of logical coherence. The study shows that 70% of paragraphs contained information that did not relate to the main topic. This may be attributed to limited planning strategies and insufficient instruction in discourse organization.

The study shows that 70% of cases followed parallel progression, but only 10% demonstrated sequential progression. Mohamed-Sayidina (2010) supports this observation through his research about rhetorical differences, which shows Arabic persuasive writing uses parallelism and repetition as its main stylistic elements, but English academic writing follows a straightforward structure. The recurring Theme pattern in S14 shows how languages experience this process of transfer. Students add unnecessary sentences, which lead to circular repetition in 20% of cases, because they try to meet word count requirements when their vocabulary skills fail to express their thoughts properly.

Paragraph S3 indicates that some students can achieve coherence at the discourse level, though they represent a small fraction of the cohort. The learning environment seems to fail students who need direct instruction about how to create paragraphs. The fact that just 15% of students are able to craft a viable topic sentence suggests there is an issue in the curriculum rather than a deficiency in student ability.

The complete mapping between Theme and Rheme components through TSA enables diagnostic assessment for delivering automated feedback. Teachers need to show students how to change their Rheme into their following Theme instead of giving them basic feedback about their paragraph unity problems. The research produces specific visual feedback through descriptive charts, which should improve writing instruction delivery.

Another possible explanation concerns instructional practices. Writing instruction in many EFL contexts, including |Libya, tends to emphasize grammatical accuracy and vocabulary acquisition more than discourse organization. As a result, students may learn how to produce correct sentences without developing the ability to connect those sentences into a coherent and unified paragraph.

## 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusion

The research team focused their work on discourse analysis which proved through actual data that upper-intermediate Libyan EFL students fail to develop essential structural elements in their academic writing. The main issues which researchers found involved missing clear topic sentences and students who followed only straight topic progression and they kept showing the same circular reasoning multiple times. The research used Topical Structure Analysis together with Theme-Rheme mapping to identify detailed problems which emerged during the analysis process. The results show that people who know grammar well still need to learn about discourse structure and teachers should teach paragraph coherence through direct methods.

### 6.2 Pedagogical Recommendations:

1. Direct instruction on paragraph structure: Teachers need to show students how to analyze example paragraphs by explaining how a topic sentence controls paragraph content and how supporting sentences follow a natural progression of ideas.
2. TSA-oriented feedback: Teachers use color-coded charts to show students their paragraphs stopped changing at specific points and their content drifted away from the main subject.
3. Revision of the curriculum: The writing program at UZLC needs to add activities which teach students about discourse level through sentence organization and topic sentence creation from given information.
4. Awareness of contrastive rhetoric: Students can learn to write better through a brief explanation that shows how Arabic and English rhetorical standards differ from each other.
5. Changes in assessment: The evaluation process for paragraphs needs to include assessment of topic development and coherence, together with the current focus on grammar and word selection.

### 6.3 Limitations of the Study:

The research provides a complete analysis of paragraph cohesion in Libyan EFL student writing through a discourse-oriented approach, but it contains various research boundaries which affect the study. The researchers selected their participant pool from 20 students who attended a single educational institution. The researchers selected this approach because TSA and Theme-Rheme mapping require qualitative methods, which need interpretive analysis. The research findings remain unsuitable for conducting statistical assessments which would apply to all students who study Libyan English as a Foreign Language. The study aims to develop analytical generalization through its research findings which should apply to other similar EFL learning environments. Future research needs to include bigger participant groups, which should contain different types of members.

The research focused its analysis on academic opinion paragraphs which researchers obtained by using a single standardized prompt to generate these paragraphs. The research method provided standardized results, yet it failed to show how students would perform when they worked with various academic writing types. The short duration of the task likely created problems for participants because they needed to plan their work and make necessary revisions. The analysis focused only on written output, which remained its main area of study. The study did not investigate how people think-aloud protocol analysis. The research team would gain a better understanding of student choices for topic structures when they receive this information. The research study showed that inter-rater reliability existed but the TSA and Theme-Rheme classification systems required human judgment for their application. Discourse analysis produces better explanations through its interpretative approach, yet researchers need to view

its findings as well-supported textual data interpretations which receive backing from quantitative evidence.

#### 6.4 Suggestions for Further Research:

Future research should examine larger collocations, different types of writing and long-term strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of discussion-based teaching. Writing habits observed may show the processes in the mind and so may verbalizing their thoughts. Further, studies that compare the writing of students whose first language is Arabic with that of students who write in English as a second language (ESL) would add to the knowledge of rhetorical shifts.

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