

Exploring Thematic Structures and Progression in Self-Help Literature: A Textual Metafunction Analysis of “The 5 Second Rule”

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Abstract

Given the widespread appeal and influence of self-help literature, understanding how authors engage and inform their readers through linguistic strategies is crucial. The study aims to explore how thematic structures contribute to the genre's purpose of motivating and guiding readers. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, involving observation, interpretation, and explanation. The analysis reveals that the most frequent Themes in the text are Unmarked Topical Themes, primarily in the forms of “You,” “I,” and “It.” The text also frequently utilizes Conjunctive Adjuncts as Textual Themes (e.g., “First,” “Second”) and Modal Adjuncts as Interpersonal Themes. The zig-zag pattern emerged as the dominant Thematic Progression, allowing the author to maintain clarity and engagement. The strategic use of Theme and Mood facilitates an approachable, mentor-like voice, helping to establish a connection with the reader. These findings offer valuable insight into how thematic structures and progression are employed in self-help literature to enhance readability, coherence, and emotional engagement. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the linguistic mechanisms that drive the effectiveness of self-help texts in fulfilling their social and communicative purposes.

Keywords: Theme-rheme; Mood; Thematic progression; Self-help book

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INTRODUCTION

Books serve as powerful tools for authors to communicate their messages to readers, delivering information in unique and compelling ways. Self-help literature, in particular, seeks to inform and inspire its readers, offering practical solutions to improve their lives and productivity and maintain positive mental health (Ruggeri et al., 2020). Yet, the effectiveness of such books does not rest solely on the content they provide but also on how that content is structured and communicated. For these messages to be effectively conveyed, authors must organize their ideas within each clause, ensuring that the text is both coherent and cohesive (Anjaniputra et al., 2022; Lopez, 2021). One method to analyze this organization is through Theme-Rheme structure, a core component of Textual Metafunction within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This approach allows for an examination of how ideas are introduced and developed, ensuring that a text flows naturally and remains comprehensible.

SFL, as introduced by Halliday (1994), views language as a semiotic system, emphasizing how meaning is constructed through specific semantic and lexico-grammatical resources (Halliday, 1994). Within SFL, the concept of Metafunction is

crucial. It is divided into three categories: Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual Metafunctions. The Ideational (or Experiential) Metafunction is used by authors to convey broad meanings known as "Processes," which express their experiences through actions, events, etc. The Interpersonal Metafunction focuses on meaning as a form of exchange (Adenan, 2001) Lastly, the Textual Metafunction which is particularly concerned with how authors construct their messages or information cohesively and coherently, ensuring a natural flow within their work (Thompson, 2014). This makes textual metafunction especially relevant to the analysis of self-help books, which not only aim to inform readers but also to guide and motivate them through structured and accessible language.

From a Textual Metafunction perspective, a clause always consists of two elements: Theme and Rheme. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), the Theme represents the starting point of the clause, providing the initial information that the clause conveys, while what follows is considered the Rheme. Themes can be classified into several types: Topical, Textual, and Interpersonal Themes. The Topical Theme, a mandatory component of the clause, may manifest as a participant, process, or circumstance. When a Topical Theme functions as a participant, it is classified as an Unmarked Topical Theme, whereas when it represents a process or circumstance, it is categorized as a Marked Topical Theme. A Textual Theme includes conjunctions, conjunctive adjuncts, and continuatives that appear before the Topical Theme. Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) describe the Interpersonal Theme as capable of expressing modality, polarity, vocative elements, finite verbs, and modal adjuncts. Furthermore, Themes also manifest in three types of moods: Declarative, Interrogative, and Imperative, as classified by Halliday & Matthiessen (2014). Eggins (2004) defines mood through two features: Subject and Finite, where the Subject serves as a "nominal-type" element and Finite as a "verbal-type" element within the clause's Mood Constituents.

Moreover, Thematic Progression analysis, a branch of discourse analysis, explores how a clause's Theme may recur or how the meaning of a Theme or Rheme from a previous clause is taken up. This is a crucial technique for creating a cohesive information flow within a text (Paltridge, 2006). The coherence and cohesion of a text can be analyzed by examining the sequence of Themes in sentences and paragraphs. Paltridge (2006) identifies three main patterns of thematic progression: constant Theme or Theme reiteration (T-R), linear Theme or zig-zag pattern (Z-Z), and Split Theme or multiple-Rheme pattern (Combination Progression Pattern) (M-R). Additionally, Danes (1974), proposed the Theme-derived pattern as part of the thematic progression. These patterns are crucial for self-help books, where clarity and engagement are paramount in maintaining the reader's attention and facilitating the application of the book's principles.

Self-help literature, by design, seeks to help individuals overcome psychological and emotional challenges, offering practical solutions for improving mental health and overall life satisfaction (Wild, 2018; Parks & Szanto ,2013). Unlike other genres, self-help books must not only inform but also inspire action, requiring a unique balance of motivational and instructional language (Anderson et al., 2005). This makes them an ideal subject for linguistic analysis, particularly through the lens of Theme-Rheme and Thematic Progression, as these elements contribute directly to the effectiveness of the text in guiding readers toward meaningful change Mel Robbins' The 5 Second Rule (2017) exemplifies this balance, presenting a simple yet powerful strategy for overcoming procrastination and boosting productivity (Steinert et al., 2021). The book has become a bestseller, with over 2 million copies sold on Amazon. This book consists of the story of how the author found out the 5-second rule, the power of courage, how to start to use the rule, and how the rule can increase human productivity. Its effectiveness, however, is not

only due to the simplicity of the rule but also to how Robbins communicates it in an engaging and accessible manner.

Despite the growing interest in Theme-Rheme and Thematic Progression analysis, much of the existing research has focused on educational contexts, examining student writing, textbooks, and speeches (Mustofa & Kurniawan, 2023; Nugraha & Ridwan, 2022; Nurlela et al., 2021; Qurrata'ain, 2020; Swari & Ayomi, 2024; Yumeng, 2023; Suharsono et al., 2024), there is limited research on their role in self-help literature. The 5 Second Rule, offers an ideal case for exploring these linguistic features due to its widespread impact. Given the unique features of self-help books, this study addresses two key research questions. The first examines the types of Theme-Rheme structures and Mood patterns present in The 5 Second Rule. The second explores how Thematic Progression contributes to the text's coherence and effectiveness in fulfilling its motivational purpose.

This research is significant for its novel focus on a self-help book, a genre rarely explored in Theme-Rheme and Thematic Progression studies. It bridges linguistic analysis with the self-help genre, revealing how authors use language to both inform and motivate readers. Additionally, it underscores the role of linguistic choices in enhancing the practical and psychological impact of self-help literature.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach, as outlined by Creswell (2014), to examine the use of Theme-Rheme structures, Mood, and Thematic Progression patterns in *The 5 Second Rule* by Robbin (2017). A qualitative design was chosen to allow for in-depth textual analysis, as it aligns with the study's objective of exploring how language functions within the self-help genre to motivate and engage readers. The study drew upon Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), specifically focusing on the Textual Metafunction, to classify Theme-Rheme and Mood in each clause. Thematic Progression patterns were analyzed to understand the flow and coherence of the text. Chapter 8 of the book was selected for analysis due to its central role in illustrating the core concepts of the 5 Second Rule and its representative nature in terms of language use and structure throughout the book.

Data were collected using observation and documentation methods. Techniques such as scanning, marking, and note-taking were employed to identify and categorize Theme-Rheme structures and Thematic Progression patterns. The analysis applied theories from Halliday and Matthiessen (2013) and Eggins (2004) for Theme-Rheme and Mood classification, while (Paltridge, 2012) and (Danes, 1974) frameworks guided the analysis of Thematic Progression.

The data analysis process followed several steps: identifying Themes and Moods in clauses, categorizing Thematic Progression patterns in paragraphs, and interpreting how these structures contribute to the text's coherence and motivational purpose. The findings were cross-verified to ensure accuracy and provide a thorough explanation of the text's thematic organization and flow. This methodological approach was chosen to capture both the linguistic and motivational dimensions of the book, grounded in established theories of SFL and thematic analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Type of Themes

After analyzing the sample of Chapter 8 of the self-help book. The use of each type of Theme can be seen as follows:

Table 1. The Frequency of each Type of Theme

Theme	Frequency
Topical Theme	
Unmarked Topical Theme	68
Marked Topical Theme	58
Textual Theme	
Conjunction	51
Conjunctive Adjunct	3
Interpersonal Theme	
Modal Adjuncts	5
Total	185

The data above shows that the book uses a variety of Themes: Topical, Textual, and Interpersonal. The thematic structure provides the clause's character in the form of a message or information (Ijam & Al-Ameedi, 2024). Based on the clause structure, the Theme is diverged into two classifications. They are Simple or Single Theme and Multiple Themes. Simple or Single Theme occurs in a clause structured by one Topical Theme only (Unmarked or Marked Topical Theme). Multiple Themes are a phenomenon that occurs when a clause is structured by more than one Theme, it can be structured by a Textual Theme with a Topical Theme; an Interpersonal Theme with a Topical Theme; and a Textual Theme with an Interpersonal Theme and a Topical Theme (Arunsirot, 2013). Given that the book not only used Topical Theme, but also Textual and Interpersonal Theme, meaning the the book also consist of Multiple The clauses.

The most frequent type of Theme used in the book is Unmarked Topical Theme. It is the most expected theme which can be obligatory in the clause. According to Thompson (2014), as cited in Handayani (2021). Topical Themes are utilized to formulate the elements such as Participant, Process, and Circumstance. An unmarked Topical Theme was classified as a Theme that contained a nominal group such as a pronoun, a person's name, and other nominal forms. The Unmarked Topical Theme which mostly appeared in this chapter formed pronouns such as "I", "You" and "It".

Excerpt 1:

You *can do it in any area that you are trying to improve.*
Topical Participant (unmarked)
Theme *Rheme*

The clause in the first excerpt shows that the word "You" is classified as the Topical Theme which functions as a Subject, explaining Participant in this clause. This clause is classified as a Simple Unmarked Topical Theme since this clause just contains only one Theme. Additionally, this clause formed a declarative pattern "Subject +Finite" which means that the author used the word "You" to represent the readers and tried to convince the readers about how helpful this rule was.

A marked Topical Theme is a theme characterized by a feature process that can be formed as a verb as a theme of the clause and a circumstance that is formed to indicate time and place as the theme of the clause. The Marked Topical Theme found in Chapter 8 of 5 Second Rule book in the form of Time such as "Tomorrow morning", in the form of verb or predicator as a Theme such as "Place", "Start", etc and in the form of WH-Question such as "what". Marked Topical Theme as WH-Question occurred in the clause when the begin with WH-Question such as "What", "Who", "Where", "When", "Why" and "How" as the theme of the clause.

Excerpt 2

<i>What</i>	<i>does that have to do with getting up?</i>
<i>Topical WH-Question (Marked)</i>	
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

The data in the table above revealed that this clause is categorized as a Simple Marked Topical Theme since this clause just consists of the word “What” which was distinguished as a Marked Topical Theme that acted as a WH-Question Interrogative clause. The context of the word “what” in this clause was utilized by the author to hook and engage the readers’ interest in simple guidelines to start using the 5 Second Rule and also outcomes it. Marked Topical Theme as the process that happens in a clause when the verb or predicate is placed as a starting point or Theme. Process as Marked Topical Theme frequently appears in imperative clauses, which are used by people to give commands.

Excerpts 3:

<i>Place</i>	<i>your alarm clock in another room,</i>
<i>Topical Process (Marked)</i>	
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

In the excerpt above, the verb “Place” was classified into Simple Marked Topical Theme because the word “Place” was positioned in the beginning of the clause. Since this clause puts the Marked Topical Theme as process or Predictor (Verbal-type element) as the first Theme, this clause is categorized as an imperative clause. The predictor or verb was used to give suggest actions and steps the author wants the readers to follow. This clause has a context that the author positions herself as the mentor for readers to give guidelines about how to start using this rule, so the author has the responsibility and power to give such a command in the clause in order to make the readers want to take action to start it and understandable by the readers.

Another form of Marked Topical Theme is Circumstantial Adjunct is commonly used to organize the sequence of time in conversation or text, making the information more understandable and clearer (Thompson, 2014). The existence of a Marked Topical Theme in the form of a Circumstantial Adjunct functioned to intend the moment or time and location specifically (Kusumantara & Marantika, 2023).

Excerpts 4:

<i>In those moments,</i>	<i>this rule will help you take action like it does for Jessica.</i>
<i>Topical Circumstantial (marked)</i>	
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

The data in the excerpt 4 above is considered a Simple Marked Topical Theme because this clause contains one Theme. The phrase “*In those moments*” as a temporal adverb functioned as a Subject of the clause. The use of “*in those moments*” as a Theme is to mark the moment or time when Jessica felt a “*just don’t feel like it*” attitude, this rule can help Jessica to step outside the uncomfortable zone and from this sentence, the author wants to the readers distinguished that this is another reason why this rule important to increase human productivity. This clause formed the pattern “Subject + Finite” which is characterized as a declarative clause.

A textual Theme is a theme that functions as a conjunction in a clause. Textual Theme can be formed as a conjunction, conjunctive adjunct, continuative, and WH-Relative in a clause. In the data source, the frequent Textual Theme is in the form of Conjunction with 51 frequencies and followed by the conjunctive adjunct with 3 frequencies. Halliday & Matthiessen (2013) define the Conjunctive Adjunct as a prepositional phrase that comes before the Topical Theme in a clause related to the preceded clause as a continuity.

Excerpts 5:

<i>Second,</i>	<i>if you can change your morning routines,</i>	<i>you can change anything.</i>
<i>Textual (Conjunctive adjunct; Additive) Theme</i>	<i>Topical Circumstantial (marked)</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

The data above represented Multiple Themes which consisted of two kinds Textual Themes, and Marked Topical Themes. First, the word “Second” in this clause is distinguished as Textual Theme as a form of Conjunctive Adjunct, because the word “Second” was functioned as a continuity of the preceded clause’s explanation. Second, the hypotactic clause introduced by “If” serves as Circumstance as Topical Theme. The context of the clause in the table above is the author convinces the readers that “if” the readers can change their morning routines, the readers can change everything in their lives, the author used the word “If” to give a supposition or modality when the readers can apply this rule to their morning routines. The most typical Textual Theme is conjunction. A conjunction is a word that is utilized to link one clause to another (Umiyati, 2019).

Excerpts 6:

<i>But</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>want you to feel that resistant so you learn what it’s like to push yourself.</i>
<i>Textual (conjunction; Adversative/paratactic) Theme</i>	<i>Topical Participant (unmarked)</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

Theme in excerpt 6 above is classified as a Multiple Unmarked Theme because this clause contains more than one Theme. The first Theme is a Textual Theme, the word “But” in this clause was used by the author to contrast the message in the preceded clause “That first bout of activation energy is so uncomfortable”. Lastly, the Topical Theme as a Participant was used in this clause by using the word “I” as a subject of the clause. Moreover, this clause forms a declarative pattern “Subject + Finite” which means that the author wants to convey that to use this rule, the readers must have the courage to push themselves.

The author uses the word “I” to position herself not only as the book’s writer but also as a mentor to the reader. She emphasizes that applying this rule requires the reader to confront resistance, which is essential for cultivating courage. If readers can do this, they can transform and improve their lives. Additionally, the use of “But” at the beginning of the clause underscores the conditional nature of this process, highlighting that starting to use this rule demands stepping out of one’s comfort zone and learning how to push oneself..

The last type is Interpersonal theme, which is an optional theme used by the writer to express personal judgments such as arguments, opinions, assumptions, points of view,

etc. (Eggins, 2004). An interpersonal theme is realized through modal adjuncts, finites, vocatives, and polarity. In the data source, any key elements of an interpersonal theme are always positioned before the topical theme in a clause (Utama et al., 2024). The presence of an interpersonal theme is important for signaling the writer's position in the text (Himphinit & Astia, 2023).

Excerpts 7:

<i>Just like Patty said,</i>	<i>tomorrow morning, as soon as the alarm sound,</i>	<i>open your eyes and start counting backward 5-4-3-2-1.</i>
<i>Interpersonal (Modal Adjunct; intensity) Theme</i>	<i>Topical circumstance (Marked)</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

The clause in the table above is labeled as a Multiple Marked Topical Theme because it consists of more than one theme. First, the phrase “Just like Patty said” is identified as an Interpersonal Theme in the form of a modal adjunct, which Gerot & Wignell (1994) also define as an expression of intensity. Second, the phrase “tomorrow morning, as soon as the alarm” is characterized as the Marked Topical Theme, containing a temporal adverb positioned after the Interpersonal Theme. Additionally, this excerpt is classified as an imperative clause. Excerpt 7 shows the context where the author, acting as a mentor to the readers, provides detailed guidelines. By using the temporal adverb “*tomorrow morning, as soon as the alarm*,” the author not only conveys the guidelines clearly but also emphasizes the temporal aspect to ensure that the instructions are understood correctly and to prevent any misunderstanding of how to apply the rule.

Excerpts 8:

<i>I guarantee</i>	<i>This one small change</i>	<i>will make “a huge difference”.</i>
<i>Interpersonal (Modal Adjunct) Theme</i>	<i>Topical Subject (Unmarked)</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

The data in the table above consists of more than one theme. The phrase “I guarantee” in this clause functions as an interpersonal theme, serving as a modal adjunct in the form of persuasion. The phrase “This one small change” is categorized as a marked topical theme and a declarative clause since it functions as the subject. The author uses various themes to connect with readers, positioning herself as a mentor who guides them on how to use the 5 Second Rule to increase productivity. By employing a consultative and casual language style, she makes the book relatable and easy to understand.

Thematic Progression Patterns

Table. 2 Frequency of Thematic Progression Pattern

Pattern	Frequency
Constant Theme Pattern	1
Multiple Rheme Pattern	5
Zig-zag Pattern	11
Derived Theme Pattern	8
Total	25

The result in the table above shows that the frequency of Thematic Progression Pattern which has the highest number of frequencies is Zig-zag Pattern with 10 times occurrence of 25 paragraphs in Chapter 8. Paltridge (2006) defines that Thematic progression alludes to how a clause's Theme may choose up or emphasize a sense from a going before Theme or Rheme. Thematic progression is a strategy of advancing and getting to a clause's Theme and Rheme. According to Wang (2010), as cited in (Haji, 2023) Thematic Progression plays a crucial key factor in the organization of information and ideas as it is utilized to chain the level of sentences and assists the writer in communicating their ideas cohesively and successfully.

According to Paltridge (2006), a Constant Theme pattern is a clause sentence in which there's the utilization of a pronoun or conjunction within the beginning of a sentence at that point changes the Theme of the sentence, and the Theme of the sentence is rehashed into the following sentence. The cohesion is produced from the reiteration of the Topical Theme in each clause in a particular paragraph. The utilization of the Constant Theme pattern can show the ability of the writer to focus on one Theme by reiterating the Theme of the previous clause (Mustika et al., 2021). The use of the Constant Theme Pattern is as follows:

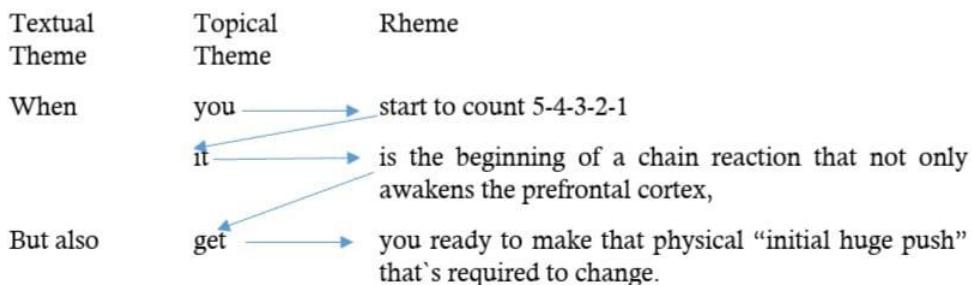
Excerpts 9:

Textual Theme	Topical Theme	Rheme
If	you	→ can't get yourself out of bed,
Then	you	→ 'll never be able to pursue all of the other changes that you want to make in your life.
And if	you	→ take that simple step of taking control of your mornings,
	you	→ 'll catalyze a chain of events that leads to change everywhere.

The data above showed the Constant Theme pattern in the data source. The first Theme in the twelfth paragraph began with the word "you", and then the second until the last clause began with the same word "You" to refer to the same reference, which is the audience. All the clauses in this paragraph reiterated one another until the last clause of this paragraph. This pattern is an effective way to convince and guarantee the readers about how useful this rule is to lead the change, as a consequence, the reader will be motivated to use this rule. This pattern is regularly found in the textbook and the text which consists of factual information (Bloor, T & Bloor, M, 2013). Consequently, the appearance of a Constant Theme Pattern is not unexpected in the data source.

Another form is the Zig-zag pattern, according to Paltridge (2006), it is a pattern utilized in sentences that describes where the second theme in the second sentence has established the information from the preceding theme in the first sentence. The Zig-zag Pattern is a model of Thematic Progression in which the Rheme placed in every clause derives the Theme in the following clause (Kuswoyo & Susardi, 2016). The Zig-zag Pattern is intended to achieve cohesion by developing new information (Latifa & Kurniawan, 2023). The table below shows a sample of the Zig-zag Pattern found in the data source.

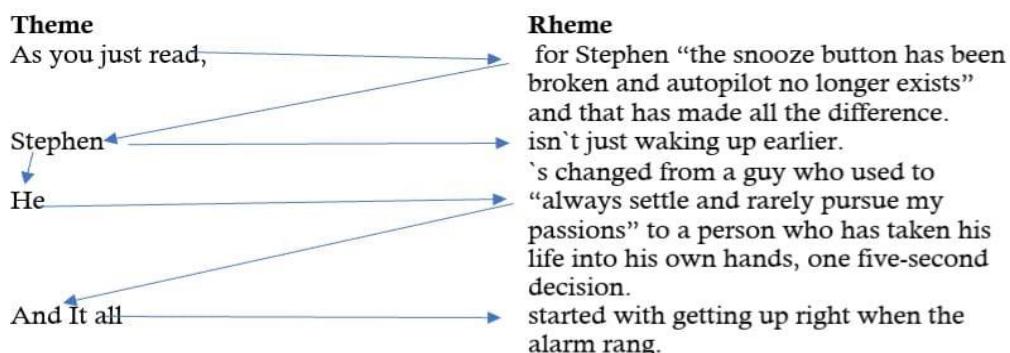
Excerpts 10:



The data above showed the Zig-zag Pattern. The information in Rheme 1 "start count 5-4-3-2-1" is clarified clearly in the second theme "it". The second Theme "it" refers to the information in the first Rheme "start count 5-4-3-2-1". After that, the second Rheme "is the beginning of a chain reaction that not only awakens the prefrontal cortex" is clearly in the last theme "get" which is considered as the further information of the preceded Rheme.

The next pattern is the Combination Progression Pattern. This pattern is a mixture of a pattern between a Theme Reiteration or Constant Pattern and a Zig-zag or Linear Pattern. So multiple themes are the theme of one clause that introduces several different pieces of information made in subsequent clauses. Excerpt 11 below shows the use of the Combination Progression Pattern found in the data source.

Excerpt 11.



As can be seen, the data above formed a Combination Progression Pattern. In the first sentence has Rheme "for Stephen "the snooze button has been broken and autopilot no longer exists" and that has made all the difference." This is picked up in the Theme in the second sentence and it becomes "Stephen". Next, the Theme in the second sentence is reiterated in the Theme in the third sentence and the Theme in this sentence becomes "He" followed by its Rheme " 's changed from a guy who used to "always settle and rarely pursue my passions" to a person who has taken his life into his own hands, one five-second decision." . lastly, in the last sentence has Theme "and it all" which taken up from the preceded Rheme in the third sentence.

As shown in the data above, a Combination Progression Pattern is formed. In the first sentence, the Rheme is "for Stephen, the snooze button has been broken and autopilot no longer exists, and that has made all the difference." This Rheme is picked up as the Theme in the second sentence, where the Theme becomes "Stephen." The Theme from the second sentence is then reiterated in the third sentence, where the Theme becomes "He," followed by the Rheme: "He's changed from a guy who used to always settle and rarely pursue his passions to someone who has taken control of his life, one five-second

decision at a time." Finally, in the last sentence, the Theme "and it all" is taken from the Rheme in the third sentence, maintaining the progression.

Another form of thematic progression is Theme Derived pattern (Danes, 1974). This Pattern is categorized as a kind of Thematic Progression Pattern in which the first Theme of the paragraph takes part as a Hyper-Theme and as an essential feature of the next clauses that are derived in the paragraph (Ayomi et al, 2016; Kuswoyo & Susardi, 2016). Theme-derived Pattern is the way to introduce new information that can be utilized as a Theme of the following clauses, this pattern does not display the Theme-rheme form explicitly but signalized the connection of meaning with the Theme or Rheme in the previous clause (Siahaan et al., 2023). Excerpt 12 below shows the paragraph and the Thematic progression Pattern used in the data source.

Excerpts 12:

Topical Theme	Rheme
Tomorrow morning as soon as the alarm sounds,	as soon as the alarm sounds, open your eyes and start counting backwards.... 5-4-3-2-1.
Throw off	the covers, get up, and walk out of bedroom.
Start	your day.
No delay,	no pillow over the head.
No lingering,	no snooze, no crawling back into bed.

Clause 1 has Theme "Tomorrow morning" and followed by its Rheme "As soon as the alarm sounds, open your eyes and start counting backwards.... 5-4-3-2-1.", the first Theme classified as hyper-theme that has brief explanation in clause 2 to 5. In clause 2 until 5 is about continuity activities after the alarm sounds in tomorrow morning.

Discussion

The data reveals that Unmarked Topical Themes, particularly those featuring participants like "I," "You," and "It," dominate the text, with a frequency of 68 occurrences. This suggests that the author frequently employs personal and direct references to engage the reader, aligning with the self-help genre's aim of creating a conversational and motivational tone. The frequent use of "You" and "I" positions the author as a mentor, directly addressing the reader and establishing a close, personal connection. This aligns with Anderson et al. (2005), who emphasized the importance of engaging readers on a personal level in self-help literature.

Textual Themes, primarily in the form of conjunctions, appear 51 times, indicating the author's emphasis on structuring the text cohesively. The frequent use of conjunctions helps the text flow logically, guiding the reader through the arguments and steps of the 5 Second Rule in a systematic manner. This cohesion is crucial in self-help literature, where the clarity of instructions and logical progression are essential to motivating readers to take actionable steps. Lastly, Interpersonal Themes, represented by modal adjuncts, occurred less frequently, with only 5 instances. Despite their lower frequency, these modal adjuncts serve an important role by subtly conveying the author's confidence and conviction in the advice being offered. This helps reinforce the motivational tone, giving the reader reassurance and encouragement to follow through on the rule.

When compared with existing literature, these findings align with previous research on Theme-Rheme structures in motivational texts (Mustofa & Kurniawan, 2023; Yumeng, 2023). However, the frequent use of Marked Topical Themes shows a slight deviation

from studies on other genres, such as academic writing or textbooks. In the self-help book, the difference in frequency between Marked and Unmarked Themes is relatively small, whereas previous studies have typically found a much larger gap, with a stronger preference for Unmarked Topical Themes.

The self-help book frequently uses Marked Topical Themes, such as processes and circumstances, which significantly impact the text's structure and effectiveness. In the context of this genre, these Marked Topical Themes help highlight specific actions (processes) or situations (circumstances) that readers should focus on. By foregrounding processes, the author emphasizes actionable steps, making the content more dynamic and instructional, which is crucial for motivating readers to take tangible actions—one of the key goals of self-help literature. For example, starting a clause with a process verb like “Begin” or “Act” creates a direct, imperative tone that urges the reader to follow the advice immediately. Similarly, foregrounding circumstances such as time or place (“In five seconds,” “At that moment”) helps contextualize the advice, making it more relatable and giving readers a clearer sense of when and how to apply the concepts. This aligns with the genre’s purpose of guiding readers through personal change by making the instructions practical and applicable to real-life situations.

In terms of thematic progression, the most commonly occurring pattern is the Zig-zag Pattern, followed by the Derived Theme Pattern, Multiple Rheme Pattern, and the Constant Theme Pattern. These findings offer valuable insights into the text’s structure and its alignment with the goals of the self-help genre. The predominance of the Zig-zag Pattern, where the Rheme of one clause becomes the Theme of the following clause is especially effective because it allows the author to build ideas progressively, reinforcing the concepts while maintaining a natural flow. This helps readers digest the advice more easily, guiding them from one step to the next in a clear and logical sequence. The Zig-zag Pattern helps establish coherence, allowing the author to explore complex ideas without overwhelming the reader, which is crucial for maintaining engagement in a self-help book. The frequent use of the Derived Theme Pattern suggests that the text often branches off from a central theme, with each clause contributing to a broader idea. The use of the Multiple Rheme Pattern, where a single Theme is followed by multiple Rhemes, reflects the author’s tendency to provide multiple outcomes or examples from a single idea. In the context of self-help books, this pattern allows the author to offer diverse applications or explanations of the advice, making it more relatable to different readers. On the contrary, the minimal use of the Constant Theme Pattern, where the same Theme is repeated across several clauses, suggests that the author prefers a more dynamic and varied approach to idea development. In other genres, such as academic writing, the Constant Theme Pattern may be more prevalent to emphasize continuity and focus. However, in self-help literature, variation in thematic progression may be more engaging, keeping the reader actively involved as new ideas and perspectives are introduced.

When compared with other genres, such as academic or narrative texts, the results show a significant difference in the thematic structures employed. In academic writing, for instance, the Constant Theme Pattern tends to dominate (Al-Bazzaz & Al-Shajlawi, 2018; Kuswoyo, et al., 2020; Mustika et al., 2021) because it reinforces the subject and maintains a more formal and focused tone. In contrast, self-help books like The 5 Second Rule benefit from the Zig-zag and Derived Theme Patterns, which create a more conversational, evolving discourse. This difference underscores the importance of thematic variation in self-help texts to engage readers and support the motivational purpose of the genre.

CONCLUSION

This study presents an in-depth examination of the Theme-Rheme structure, Mood, and Thematic Progression Patterns in The 5 Second Rule. The results show that the author primarily uses Topical Unmarked Themes to introduce and structure key ideas, while Textual Themes ensure smooth transitions and maintain coherence throughout the text. Although less frequent, Interpersonal Themes are used to provide persuasive elements, engaging readers through testimonials. The prevalent use of the Zig-zag Pattern in Thematic Progression reflects the author's approach to logically connect ideas, ensuring a cohesive flow of information. This research adds to existing knowledge by shedding light on how thematic structures are employed in self-help literature, specifically how these linguistic choices enhance the motivational and instructional aspects of the text. The strategic variation in thematic patterns helps the author effectively engage readers, making the content both accessible and compelling while maintaining clarity in conveying practical advice.

Future studies could expand this analysis to other chapters or self-help books to determine if the thematic patterns identified here are common across the genre. Additionally, further research could explore how other linguistic features, such as modality or voice, affect reader engagement and the perceived impact of self-help content. Addressing these areas would further deepen our understanding of how language is used to inspire and guide readers in self-help literature.

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