Theme structure and thematic progression patterns in Anthropology research article introductions Written in English by Saudi and Anglophone academic writers [In English]

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ABSTRACT

Introductions to research articles establish the context of the study and present its rationale and objectives. Hence, research article introductions serve as an important guide, enabling readers to fully explore the research paper's potential. This importance incites the need to cultivate insights into the ideal scholarly writing practices. To the best of our knowledge, there is a lack of studies investigating the rhetoric in research article introductions in social sciences. This paper employed a comparative approach to investigate the thematic choices and patterns of thematic progression in the introductions to anthropology research articles written in English by Saudi English writers and Anglophone academic writers. Utilizing Halliday's systemic functional linguistic approach and the Daneš thematic progression model, we analyzed 14 research article introductions authored by Saudi English writers and Anglophone academic writers. The findings revealed that both groups exhibit quantitative and qualitative similarities in their thematic choices. Nonetheless, we observed notable differences in thematic progression usage between the two groups. Despite these variations, both groups employed thematic progression patterns and contextual frames for similar rhetorical functions. This finding highlights the importance of targeting English-language instruction. By addressing specific areas of variation, educators can help Saudi English writers improve their academic writing proficiency and facilitate their integration into the scholarly community.

Keywords: Anthropology Research Article introduction, Thematic Progression, Theme Structure, Comparative Rhetoric, Anglophone Academic Writers.

1. Introduction

Academic writing is a medium for sharing knowledge and engaging in intellectual discussions. Research articles (RAs) are crucial for expanding the epistemological comprehension of different fields. The introduction of a research paper holds great importance for establishing the context of the study, explaining the reasons behind the research, and moving from a broad overview of the issue to the specific research question or hypothesis being explored. This section is pivotal for persuading readers of the significance and the arguments being put forth, making it a demanding yet essential component of a RA (Swales, 1990; Swales & Najjar, 1987).

Linguistic studies of RA introductions of scientific publications can provide valuable information about the thematic patterns, rhetorical styles, and linguistic practices used by authors. Examining how writers organize their introductions, convey evaluative viewpoints, and create coherence can offer useful insights for enhancing academic writing abilities (Luthfianda et al., 2021). It can also provide insights into disciplinary writing norms, such as thematic progression (TP) patterns and the differences in Theme structure selections within particular areas (Luthfianda et al., 2021).

Scholars in discourse studies have analyzed scientific writing from various viewpoints, but there has been less attention to its Theme organization (Leong et al., 2018). TP is essential in academic genres, especially in RAs, since it helps organize Themes effectively, enhancing a text's structure, coherence, and readability. Researchers analyze TP patterns in the introduction section of RAs to understand how Themes are developed and connected, offering valuable insights into the textual development and coherence of academic texts. TP analysis can help discover recurring themes and patterns in a text, providing insight into how authors develop their arguments and lead readers through the content (Alyousef, 2021).

Theme structure and TP patterns are important qualities that help readers navigate the discourse and effectively convey the author's point. Current research offers valuable insights into Theme structure and TP in academic writing. Reading through the literature, we can identify a relatively growing interest in investigating Theme structure and TP patterns inter-disciplinarily or cross-linguistically (Alotaibi, 2020; Alyousef, 2020; Alyousef & Alsharif, 2019; Alyousef & Alzahrani, 2020; Fan & Ma, 2022; Jing, 2015; Khedri & Ebrahimi, 2012a, 2012b; Leong, 2022). However, to the best of my knowledge, there is no such study that examined English anthropology RA introductions written by Saudi

academic writers. This research aimed to fill a gap in the literature by investigating and comparing Theme structure and TP patterns in anthropology RA introductions authored by Saudi English writers (hereafter, SEWs) and Anglophone Academic Writers (hereafter, AAWs). We preferred not to use the dichotomies native/non-native since they are a myth (Alghamdi & Alyousef, 2022), i.e., not all native English-speaking writers are more proficient than non-native English-speaking writers living in non-Anglophone countries. Thus, while the acronym AAWs refers to Anglophone Academic Writers living and working in Anglophone countries (i.e., the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) although English is not necessarily their first language, SEWs refers to Saudi English writers living in Saudi Arabia. The present research study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. Are there any similarities or variations in the Theme structure employed by AAWs and SEWs in anthropology RA introductions? 2. Do AAWs and SEWs employ similar or different TP patterns in anthropology RA introductions? 3. Is there a discrepancy in Theme markedness in anthropology RA introductions written by AAWs and SEWs?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theme structure

Mathesius, a co-founder of the Prague School, introduced the concept of Theme and Rheme in the 1930s to differentiate between the conventional 'subject' and 'predicate' at the grammatical level (Fang & Li, 2015). He believed that a Theme is a well-known statement that acts as the first point of a sentence to guide the conversation towards the topic throughout communication. The other components are Rheme and new messages (Fang & Li, 2015). Later, Halliday (2014), the founder of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach to language, embraced the concept of Theme and Rheme and expanded this theory. Theme and Rheme are major concepts in SFL for comprehending a text's structure. Theme is defined by Halliday (2014) as the subject that the clause focuses on and serves as the starting point or point of departure in a message. It provides the initial or shared information, setting the context for the following information. Rheme, on the other hand, represents the new or informative aspect of the message and comes after the Theme in the clause. It provides the focus of the message and often carries the main point or the new information being introduced (Halliday, 2014).

Thematic choices are classified into three types: topical Theme, textual Theme, and interpersonal Theme. These types serve different functions in discourse. A topical Theme relates to the subject matter or topic of the discourse. It introduces or establishes the primary subject or theme of the clause. A textual Theme, sometimes referred to as a textual subject or a presentational Theme, plays a crucial role in organizing and structuring the text. It enhances the overall coherence of the text and assists the reader in navigating through discourse. A textual Theme serves to introduce new sections, recapitulate prior information, or indicate a change in the discourse's emphasis. Words such as 'Firstly,' 'In conclusion,' or 'On the other hand' can serve as textual themes to show the structure of the text or signify shifts between parts or sections. Finally, interpersonal Theme conveys the speaker's or writer's stance, attitude, or engagement with discourse. It expresses the speaker's perspective, opinion, or evaluative stance on the information being shared. Words like 'Interestingly,' 'Unfortunately,' or 'In my opinion' might serve as interpersonal Themes, conveying the writer's subjective viewpoint or assessment of the information.

Another classification for Thematic choice is based on markedness. Theme Markedness relates to the prominence or salience of the Theme in a clause. It is linked to the level of predictability or familiarity of information. Marked themes are characterized by their unpredictability, while unmarked themes are more predictable or expected. Information status, discourse structure, and rhetorical purposes are some factors that can affect markedness. Studying Theme markedness assists in recognizing how writers intentionally place and highlight information in a text. Marked Themes can emphasize novel or unexpected information, whereas unmarked Themes can establish coherence and ensure a seamless progression of ideas.

2.2 Thematic Progression (TP)

TP tracks the connections among the messages in a text. The TP model, established by Daneš (1974), comprises three distinct types, namely, linear, constant, and split-Rheme. Linear (or zig zag) progression involves presenting ideas in a sequential order, with each succeeding subject building upon the prior one. This TP style offers a cohesive and logical information flow. Constant progression involves the repetition or reiteration of a Theme throughout the text. This repetition serves to reinforce or highlight a specific notion or concept. Split progression is characterized by the alternating or shifting of Themes between distinct topics or perspectives. This form of development enables the examination

of several ideas or perspectives within a text. By analyzing TP patterns, scholars can understand how ideas are structured and developed in a text, as well as the rhetorical techniques used to engage readers.

3. Literature Review

Theme structure and TP patterns in RAs are essential for improving the logical flow and coherence of academic writing. Research has emphasized the importance of TP in different contexts, including RAs, essays written by students, literary works, and scholarly conversations (Al Bakaa, 2014; Alyousef, 2021). Studies conducted with Arab postgraduate student writers have demonstrated that their academic writing exhibits a noticeable absence of text cohesion and consistency (Al Bakaa, 2014). Nevertheless, there exists a dearth of scholarly focus on the macro-level matters pertaining to the development of concepts, namely in the composition of scholarly publications (Alvin, 2015).

When examining Theme structure and TP patterns in cross-disciplinary research, it is crucial to consider the ways in which these aspects are observed across different academic fields. Leong et al. (2018) conducted a study that investigated TP patterns and thematic density in 200 RA abstracts from the fields of science and humanities. The results indicated that the utilization of topical themes in key clauses is more prevalent in science abstracts. The general TP in both fields was linear. Khedri and Ebrahimi (2012b) examined thematicity in academic texts written in English and Persian. Their aim was to investigate how Persian translators' approach Theme structure, particularly multiple themes and their subtypes, as well as textual and interpersonal themes in order to examine and contrast the coherent techniques employed in the writings of both groups. The data comprised the initial three pages of the first chapters from eight English books on the subject of teaching, together with their translated equivalents. The results revealed notable discrepancies across the languages in terms of their emphasis on numerous themes.

In a more relevant context, Alotaibi (2020) examined Theme organization in RA abstracts in the fields of business administration, applied linguistics, accounting, physics, chemistry, and computer science, focusing on topical, textual, and interpersonal themes. His findings indicated that unmarked topical themes were the most common in the RA abstracts, whereas interpersonal themes were the least common. The results also revealed differences in textual Themes among the disciplines. Susilowati et al. (2022), on the other hand, conducted a study to analyze the utilization of Theme structure and TP patterns in RAs published in Q1

and Q2 Scopus-indexed international journals and their correlation with achieving coherence in the texts. The study concluded that the correlation between Theme structure and TP contributes to the textual coherence of the RAs in Scopus-indexed international journals. This study reported the use of three forms of thematic structuring. The textual Theme was the most common theme in the texts, followed by the topical and interpersonal themes. Additionally, three sorts of TP patterns were utilized. The researchers argue Theme structure and TP provide logical connections between clauses or sentences to enhance the coherence of texts.

Moving from inter-disciplinary to intradisciplinary Thematic variations, Alyousef (2021) conducted a study to investigate differences and similarities in the use of Theme and TP patterns across seven subdisciplines of dentistry. The study showed significant differences between the various subfields of dentistry in the utilization of Theme types such as elliptical topical themes, one-word topical themes, passive constructions of Themes for the purpose of maintaining professionalism, and clause-initial deictic demonstratives. Nevertheless, the results revealed no notable changes in the employment of TP patterns or thematic markedness. Besides, remarkable interdisciplinary distinctions were seen between the abstracts of dentistry RAs and those of other disciplines in the literature.

Cross-linguistically, research on Theme organization and TP patterns in academic discourse has identified distinctions between AAWs and non-Anglophone English speakers. Johns (1997) discovered that ESL writers use less complex Theme structures and show less Thematic diversity than AAWs. Mosher (1998) noted distinct TP patterns in ESL and AAWs, with ESL writers favoring simpler thematic patterns and exhibiting less Thematic development. In another comparative study, Huang and Song (2022) examined the organization of Themes and TP patterns in 60 English abstracts chosen from two aeronautics journals. The findings indicated significant variations in the frequency and selection of TP patterns. Chinese abstracts exhibited a higher degree of constant TP pattern and straightforward linear progression. AAWs, on the other hand, employed a variety of thematic development patterns compared to Chinese speakers.

Recently, Alyousef and Alsharif (2020) conducted a qualitative study analyzing the Theme types and TP patterns in English medical RA abstracts written by SEWs and AAWs. Results revealed that both groups of researchers predominantly utilized topical and textual Themes. The results align with prior research indicating that interpersonal Themes are

seldom utilized in scientific research because of their impersonal and factual characteristics, with unmarked topical and textual Themes being the primary types of Themes used. Further, their study revealed that SEW tend to incorporate several Themes in their writing because they rely excessively on textual Themes. They seemed focused on the necessity of a text being cohesive through the use of conjunctions, while AAWs accomplished cohesiveness by using more intricate clauses. Regarding TP, AAWs utilized constant and linear theme patterns equally. In contrast, SEWs favored constant pattern over the linear. The findings suggest that SEWs may opt to use cohesive ties instead of thematic development patterns to establish cohesion in the work.

Another comparative study by Alyousef and Alzahrani (2020) studied Theme structure in RA introductions written by AAWs and SEWs in the field of electrical engineering. The study highlighted that the introductions written by both groups shared similarities at the clause level but differed as the text progresses. The two groups revealed differences in their use of TP patterns, specifically with AAWs' writings containing remarkably more linear and split-Rheme patterns. The study's key findings indicate that Theme selections within a clause by SEWs closely resemble those of AAWs, both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, there are only qualitative similarities in the use of TP patterns.

None of the aforementioned studies have conducted a comparative analysis of English anthropology RA introductions authored by SEWs. The present study aimed to contribute to the expanding body of literature concerning Theme structure and TP patterns of English anthropology RA introductions, with a particular emphasis on examining the distinctions between AAWs and SEWs.

4. Methodology
4.1 Data
The sample consisted of two RA-introduction data sets. Each set comprised seven RA introductions written by SEWs and AAWs. The estimated number of words in both data sets was 10,362 words. We extracted all the samples from RAs published in scientific journals between 2020 and 2024 (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of the data

SEWs articles (5186 words)		
RA #	RA Title & Journal	T-Units
1	Culture in early childhood education: Insights into Saudi preschool teaching, *Journal of Education and Learning*, (2023).	57
2	Analysis of the Sociolinguistic Status of Saudi Female Personal Names, *International Journal of Linguistics*, (2020).	35
3	Lateral view anthropology of the Saudi Arabian nose; Computed tomography measurement, *Global journal of otolaryngology*, (2020)	11
4	Mock Impoliteness in Saudi Arabia: Strategies of Evil Cursing, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, (2022).	19
5	Reimagining the Ever-Changing Construct of Saudi Writerly Identity: A heuristic approach, *Arab World English Journal* (2021).	21
6	The typology of courtyard space in Najdi architecture, Saudi Arabia: A response to human needs, culture, and the environment, *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering*, (2024).	48
7	"We are back": Reverse culture shock among Saudi Scholars after doctoral study abroad, *SAGE Open*, (2020).	14
AAWs articles (5176 words)		
RA #	RA Title & Journal	T-Units
1	Public Health, Visual Rhetoric, and Latin America: Steinbeck's The Forgotten Village, *Journal of Medical Humanities*, (2024).	35
2	Incarnation, p humanism and performative anthropology: The body of technology and the body of Christ, *Christian bioethics: Non-Ecumenical Studies in Medical Morality*, (2022).	38
3	The shelf life of skulls: Anthropology and 'race' in the Vrolik Craniological Collection, *Journal of the History of Biology*, (2023).	35
4	The child everyone has inside: Anthropology and the labor theory of value, *Dialect Anthropology*, (2022).	30
5	Tourists' engagement in cultural attractions: an exploratory study of psychological and behavioral engagement in indigenous tourism, *International Journal of Anthropology and Ethnology*, (2023).	26
6	Shall we forget human nature? Political anthropology and technics from Marx and Engels to Simondon, *Contemporary Political Theory*, (2023).	38
7	Tang China and the Buddhist Silk Roads: The historical geographies of Daxingshan Temple, *Advances in Anthropology*, (2023).	16

The data analysis procedures entailed identifying and coding themes and TP patterns using annotation techniques to guarantee uniformity and reliability, as presented next.

4.2 Data analysis procedures & instrumentation

The fourteen RA introductions were meticulously analyzed to determine and extract Theme structure and TP patterns. The Theme structures were analyzed based on their categories: topical, interpersonal, textual, Theme markedness, and how they are spread across the introductions. The automated linguistic analysis tool UAM Corpus Tool was used to calculate and explore the types of themes. A manual revision followed the automated one for a more thorough and subtle analysis. A manual analysis of TP patterns was conducted.

TP patterns were analyzed by studying the connections between Thems within and between sentences and paragraphs. TP patterns were identified using recognized models, including linear (or zig-zag), continuous (or constant), and split-Rheme patterns.

The data analysis procedures were performed according to the classification of Theme and TP patterns by Halliday (2014), utilizing the T-unit or (clause complex) as the unit of analysis since it is the optimal unit for capturing patterns of TP and by the fact many previous studies followed this procedure in their study of thematic development. (Alyousef, 2021; Alyousef & Alzahrani, 2020; Leong et al., 2018).

We conducted a thorough qualitative and quantitative data analysis search to address the proposed research questions. A statistical analysis was performed to uncover the frequencies of each Theme type between SEWs and AAWs. Moreover, we applied the Chi-square test to calculate the significance of the variations between the two groups, if any.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents the statistical findings regarding the frequencies, percentages, and Chi-square distribution of the thematic representations. This table illustrates the similarities and differences observed between SEWs and AAWs in terms of Theme choices, Theme markedness, and TP. Overall, there is a noticeable resemblance between these investigated features in the RAs written by both SEWs and AAWs. However, there is a significant difference in the use of TP patterns between the two groups. The results indicate a statistically significant difference in the utilization of "constant" and "split" patterns within the two datasets.

Table 2: The Chi-square test of AAWs' RAs shows a higher usage percentage of these two TP patterns.

		AAWs n	AAWs %	SEWs n	SEWs %	Chi-square	df	P-Value
Theme Type	Topical	218	76.49	205	75.93			
	Textual	61	21.40	61	22.59			
	Interpersonal	6	2.11	4	1.48			
		285	100%	270	100%	0.394	2	0.821
Markedness	Unmarked	159	72.94	153	74.63			
	Marked	59	27.06	52	25.37			
		218	100%	205	100%	0.082	1	0.775
TP pattern	Constant	56	33.33	78	48.75			
	Split	55	32.74	30	18.75			
	Zig zag	57	33.93	52	32.50			
		168	100%	160	100%	11.006	2	0.004

We conducted a Chi-square test to compare the significance of the variations between the two groups. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between the two groups in terms of theme types and thematic markedness at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. However, when examining the TP patterns, the Chi-square values (11.006) indicated significant differences at a significance level of $p < 0.05$ (p-value = 0.004). In simple terms, this means that AAWs and SEWs demonstrated notable disparities in their use of TP patterns.

5.1 Theme choice analysis
Based on the descriptive statistics of Theme choices portrayed in Figure 1, it is evident that SEWs and AAWs exhibit similar distributions in their choice of themes in the introductions of their RAs. In the two groups, the frequencies of thematic types, including topical, textual, and interpersonal themes, are almost identical. The Chi-square test also shows that there are no significant differences in the types of Themes used by SEWs and AAWs (p = 0.8210224, p > 0.05), which means that both groups used the same Theme structure.

Figure 1*: *Theme choices by SEWs and AAWs

Theme Types Comparison
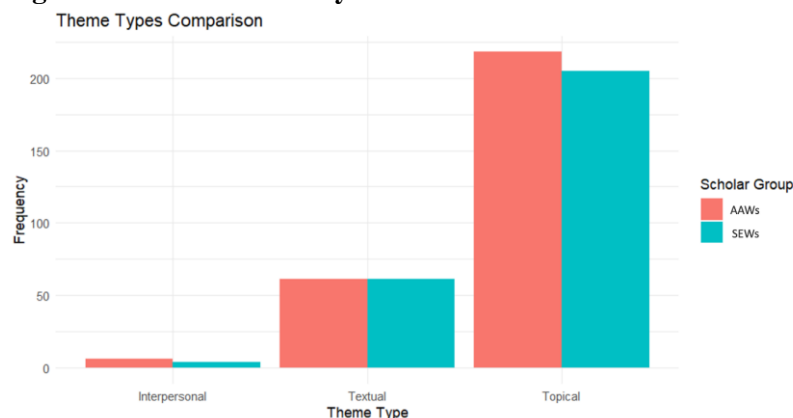
5.2 Topical Theme

The data revealed that the topical theme is the most prominent Theme type, comprising a total of 423 instances (73%) of the topical Theme. This finding aligns with Alyousef and Alzahrani (2020) and Alotaibi (2020), who indicated that topical Themes are more prominent in RA introductions and abstracts than interpersonal and textual Themes in RAs introductions written by both SEWs and AAWs. This indicates that scholarly writing incites using topical Themes over other Theme types to maintain objectivity.

5.2.1 Personal Pronouns as topical Themes

Notably, a closer examination of Examples (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) reveals further and subtle differences in the writings of the two groups regarding the types of elements chosen as topical Themes. Specifically, when considering the use of first-person singular and plural pronouns as the topical Theme, we can observe clear variations in the Thematic choices between SEWs and AAWs. It is evident that SEWs employed fewer personal pronouns (N = 12) compared to their counterparts (N = 41). These figures suggest that SEWs scholars use a less authoritative tone in scholarly discourse. Previous research has indicated that the use of first-person pronouns reflects the author's stance on a proposition and aims to enhance the author's visibility (Ebrahimi & Chan, 2015; Ebrahimi et al., 2014; Leong et al., 2018). The AAWs used first-person pronouns as topical Themes twice as much as the SEWs. This finding aligns with the findings of Alyousef and Alzahrani (2020), who suggest that AAWs' reluctance to overuse this form may stem from their understanding of

academic writing rules that discourage its use. Examples of first-person pronouns as topical Themes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Instances of using first personal pronouns as a topical Theme

Text Group	Examples
SEWs: RA 5	(1) In the following sections, I begin with a brief definition of identity and how it is related to second language writing, followed by a brief explanation of Ivanić's (1998) framework of writer identity and the difficulties it can present for students. *Arab World English Journal* (2021).
RA 6	(2) We can say that traditions are "dynamic" rather than steadfast and static, and by understanding this dynamism, it becomes crucial to the assessment and development of the architecture of a given society. *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering*, (2024).
AAWs: RA 1	(3) In this essay, I argue that The Forgotten Village juxtaposes film and public health to advance Euro-American ideologies. *Journal of Medical Humanities*, (2024).
RA 5	(4) We then proceed to describe the methodology, including a description of participants, interviewing processes and analysis procedures. *International Journal of Anthropology and Ethnology*, (2023).
RA 6	(5) Our proposal is ultimately centered on the question of technics, which, in our view, can save 'human nature' both from being reduced to an essence and from being dissolved into a mere social construct. *Contemporary Political Theory*, (2023).

5.2.2 Normalized forms (clause-initial deictic this/these) as topical Theme

According to Halliday (2014), the typology of Theme structure extends to include deictic elements. The data collected in this study documented the usage of clause-initial deictic "this/these" as topical Themes by authors in both the SEWs and AAWs. However, the study found no significant difference in the utilization of this structure between the two groups, with SEWs using it 23 times and AAWs using it 20 times. The examples in Table 5 illustrate the clause-initial deictic

"this/these" used by both SEWs and AAWs. The use of the clause-initial deictic "this/these" contributes to coherence by reiterating the previous Theme, as demonstrated in the examples.

Table 4

Instances of using clause-initial deictic this/ these *as a topical Theme*

Text Group	Examples
SEWs: RA 7	(6) The main objective of sending these students abroad [Theme] was to make them globally competitive and enrich their experience. [Rheme] // This [Theme] helps them to contribute toward the development of Saudi Arabia, given the limited number of graduate programs in the country. [Rheme] *SAGE Open*, 2020).
RA 6	(7) Despite the use of modern building techniques, until the year 1960 the central region, [Theme] still relied on local materials in the traditional environment in its construction. [Rheme] // This reliance [Theme] was, in part, because of the economic constraints that people faced and the need to rely on locally available resources. [Rheme] *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering*, (2024).
RA 5	(8) Significant examples including Block (2007) and Norton (2013), and in 2015, The Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, a preeminent applied linguistic journal, [Theme] dedicated a whole volume to the review of topics related to identity and language learning. [Rheme] // These efforts [Theme] reflect that the current awareness, in applied linguistics and other related fields such as L2 writing, of the growing need to harbor healthy diverse classroom environments in developed/ing countries. [Rheme] *Arab World English Journal* (2021).
AAWs: RA 5	(9) Shelf lives [Theme] tell a story of changing meanings of race, understandings of the relationship between humans and apes, polygenism and monogenism, whiteness and blackness, supposed normal and other, and bias and supposed scientific objectivity. [Rheme] // This approach [Theme] critically considers the practices and perspectives of the collector scientists—all privileged, white Dutch scientists—who

	studied these racial skulls. [Rheme] *International Journal of Anthropology and Ethnology*, (2023).
RA 4	(10) An examination of the category "essential work" [Theme] is revealing in this respect. [Rheme] // This category, so rapidly normalized in public discussion and policy design amidst the pandemic, has in practice encompassed different types of jobs in different societies,1 often just involving a change in the denomination of labor that, sensu stricto, was already indispensable for our societies to function before the pandemic (Guerrero et al 2020). *Dialect Anthropology,* (2022)
RA 5	(11) Engagement [Theme] has been conceptualized as having two main dimensions, behavioral and psychological (Prentice et al.) [Rheme] // These dimensions [Theme] [Rheme] apply well in both general and indigenous tourism contexts. [Rheme] *International Journal of Anthropology and Ethnology*, (2023).

5.3 Textual Theme

In the introductions of RAs written by both SEWs and AAWs, a total of 61 textual Themes were identified (N = 61). This indicates that both SEWs and AAWs utilized cohesive ties in their writing to an equal extent. This finding contradicts a previous study by Alyousef and Alsharif (2020) mentioned in the literature review, which suggested that SEWs tended to rely more on cohesive conjunctions to maintain coherence in their writing, rather than effectively linking ideas together through TP, as compared to their NES counterparts.

Furthermore, while both groups used conjunctions almost equally, the data revealed a slightly higher tendency towards the utilization of conjunctive adjuncts as textual Themes by the SEWs (N = 40) compared to the AAWs (N = 32). Moreover, both sets of RAs utilized conjunctive adjuncts more frequently than conjunctions, with 72 instances and 49 instances, respectively. This finding aligns with the findings of Alotaibi (2020), who examined research abstracts from various disciplines and found that SEWs use conjunctive adjuncts more frequently than conjunctions. In Table 5, the SEWs and AAWs used conjunctions to show causal (therefore, as a result), additive (moreover, additionally), and adversative (yet, nevertheless, however) meanings.

Table 5*:* Instance of textual Themes used by SEWs and AAWs

Text Group	Textual Theme	Topical Theme	Rheme
SEWs: RA 5	Moreover,	this study	investigates critically previous empirical studies that were conducted on Saudi ESL writers and deconstructs the essentialist views towards L2 Saudi writers;
RA 7	Therefore,	the present study	aims to explore how six Saudi professors of both genders men and women working in the higher education sector readjust and reconnect to their workplace after returning from abroad, using a narrative qualitative approach.
RA 5	However,	studies like Canagarajah's (2013) and Saba (2013)	can forward the conversation into a deeper understanding of these students' writing identities and how they perceive themselves as writers and knowledge constructors/negotiators.
Text Group	Textual Theme	Topical Theme	Rheme
AAWs: RA 5	Additionally,	these experiences	often involve "personalized interaction" with local communities, which requires a greater level of engagement from tourists compared to other types of tourism experiences (Buckley and Zhong 2021).
RA 4	Yet nevertheless	many people	respond to the call, be it in the name of social responsibility, under the coercion imposed by the lack of alternatives, or under a combination of both drives: "work" must go on.
RA 6	As a result,	we	get to the core of Simondon's political anthropology, the concept of the trans individual.

5.4 Interpersonal Theme

Both SEWs and AAWs utilized the interpersonal Theme to express their stances towards propositions in a neutral manner, as exemplified by Examples 12, 16 (Table 6). The AAWs employed this structure six times,

while the SEWs used it four times, comprising 2% of the overall usage of the interpersonal Theme. We anticipate this outcome due to the prevalence of this specific type of construction in genres that are less formal and more subjective than RAs (Gómez González, 2001; Mirahayuni, 2002). A substantial body of literature (Alotaibi, 2020; Alyousef & Alsharif, 2020; Khedri & Ebrahimi, 2012a, 2012b; Susilowati et al., 2022) supports our findings. Whittaker (1995) indicated that it is expected for RAs to have a lower frequency of utilizing interpersonal Themes, with a suggestion that they should not exceed 10% of the total Theme categories.

Table 6: Instance of Interpersonal Themes used by SEWs and AAWs

SEWs:			
RA 1	(12) The practices associated with the most prominent culture	might	offset culturally responsive teaching from a Western perspective, Rheme
	Topical Theme	Interpersonal Theme	
RA 3	(13) The surgeon	should	individualize the analysis of their patient to get a harmonic shape for the candidate with the help of anthropology
	Topical Theme	Interpersonal Theme	measurement for the intended population Rheme
AAWs:			
RA 2	(14) Christianity	must	simultaneously reject both Gnostic and Docetic views of material existence.
	Topical Theme	Interpersonal Theme	Rheme
	(15) This	should not	seem strange since God affirms the goodness of creation long before taking on flesh in the incarnation.
	Topical Theme	Interpersonal Theme	Rheme
RA 6	(16) Their scant interest in the themes of biology and	probably	lies in the fact that the issues in play have notoriously been

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technics as they relate to Simondon's theory of the transindividual		monopolised by conservative and neoliberal political theories.
	Interpersonal Theme	
Topical Theme		
		Rheme

5.5 Thematic Markedness

Looking at the descriptive statistics for Thematic Markedness (Figure 2), we observe slight variations in the frequencies of marked and unmarked themes between SEWs and AAWs. The Chi-square test results (p = 0.7747044) indicate that these differences are not statistically significant, suggesting a lack of remarkable disparities in employing Theme markedness between the two sets of RAs. Alyousef and Alzahrani's (2020) research, which found that both SEWs and AAWs employed marked and unmarked themes in engineering RA introductions to a similar extent, is consistent with this finding.

Figure 2: Thematic Markedness for SEWs and AAWs
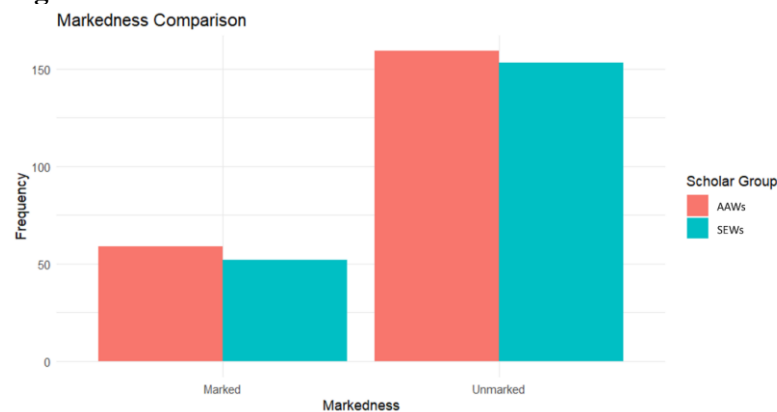
It is evident from the data sets that both SEWs and AAWs utilized marked Themes or contextual frames (CFs) to fulfill similar functions. To substantiate this claim, we present subsequent evidence from both samples. Examples (17) and (18) demonstrate the use of marked Themes to guide the readers through the text.

(17) AAW's RA 1: In what follows [Theme], I discuss the genres of documentary drama and salvage ethnography, including the impact of the foreign gaze.
Journal of Medical Humanities, (2024).

(18) SEW's RA 5: In the following sections [Theme], I begin with a brief definition of identity and how it is related to second language writing, followed by a
brief explanation of Ivanić's (1998) framework of writer identity and the difficulties it can present for students.
Arab World English Journal (2021).

Moreover, in the introductions of their RAs, authors from both groups utilized marked Themes to draw comparisons with previous research. This comparison not only helped in identifying gaps in the existing literature and justifying the significance and novelty of their own studies, but it also played a critical role in establishing coherence within their writings (e.g., examples 19, 20). By referring to prior research and highlighting the connections and distinctions between their work and existing knowledge, authors were able to provide a clear and logical flow of ideas, contributing to the overall coherence of their RAs (e.g., examples 21, 22, 23).

(19) AAW's RA 3: Given these limitations [Theme], this study interrogates the "shelf life"4 of Vrolik's ethnographical collection through close study of the skulls themselves. [Rheme]
Journal of the History of Biology, (2023).

(20) AAW's RA 6: While the former is the vector of a tendency towards opening up social systems [Theme], the latter is a mechanism of social normalization and reproduction. [Rheme]
Contemporary Political Theory, (2023).

(21) AAW's RA 5: While previous studies have explored the concept of engagement in tourism [Theme], our study contributes to the literature by applying this concept specifically to the indigenous tourism context, which presents unique challenges and opportunities for engagement. [Rheme]
International Journal of Anthropology and Ethnology, (2023).

(22) SEW's RA 3: To overcome this limitation [Theme], computed tomography scan for nasal bone can be used to study the nose from different angles [3]. [Rheme]
Global journal of otolaryngology, (2020)

(23) SEW's RA 4:   Although cursing has attracted an extensive amount of research worldwide [Theme], it has been left untouched in the Middle East, with the exception of work carried out on related phenomena, such as swearing and insulting (Abdel-Jawad 2000; Albirini 2011; Al-Harthi 2015; Babou-Sekkal 2012). [Rheme]
Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, (2022).

Additionally, in order to demonstrate the authorial voice, marked Themes were utilized in examples (24, 25, 26, 27). These examples showcase how authors employed marked Themes to express their own perspectives and assert their authority within the text.

(24) AAW's RA 1: In this essay [Theme], I argue that The Forgotten Village juxtaposes film and public health to advance Euro-American ideologies. [Rheme]
Journal of Medical Humanities, (2024).

(25) SEW's RA 3: To overcome this limitation [Theme], computed tomography scan for nasal bone can be used to study the nose from different angles [3].[Rheme]

Global journal of otolaryngology, (2020)
(26) SEW's RA 4: In this study [Theme], we will show that this linguistic strategy is of four types, [Rheme]
Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, (2022).

(27) SEW's RA 4: On the theoretical side [Theme], we aim to examine within which (im)politeness models curses can be accommodated (Brown and Levinson 1987; Culpeper 1996; Leech 1983). [Rheme]
*Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, (2022)..*

5.6 Thematic Progression (TP)

The findings reported in Table 1 present a clear picture of the different TP patterns applied in the two data sets. The frequencies and percentages of TP patterns, namely Constant, Split, and Zigzag, exhibit significant variations between the two groups. Furthermore, the Chi-square test

results (p = 0.0040752, p<0.05) indicate that there are significant differences in TP pattern utilization between SEWs and AAWs in anthropology RA introductions. It is evident in Figure 3 that SEWs employed constant TP more frequently in their RA introductions, whereas AAWs utilized split Rheme TP more often. However, both groups employed the linear TP pattern at relatively similar frequencies.

Figure 3: TP patterns employed by SEWs and AAWs
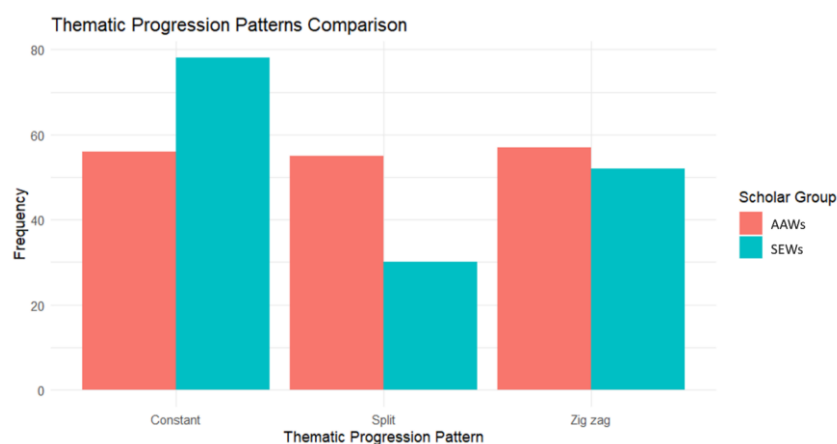
5.6.1 Constant

The findings clearly show that the constant and split patterns exhibit the most significant variations in TP pattern usage. The data obtained reports that the constant pattern was the most prevalent among the three TP types in the two data sets, accounting for 47% of instances. However, as shown in Table 1, SEWs employed the constant TP pattern more frequently, with a total of 78 instances, representing 48.75% of the total instances. In contrast, AAWs utilized this pattern in only 56 instances, accounting for 33.33% of the total instances. The frequent use of the constant TP pattern by SEWs aligns with the findings of Khedri and Ebrahimi (2012b) and Alyousef and Alsharif (2020), which indicate a greater tendency to utilize the constant pattern over the linear pattern in SEWs academic writing. Additionally, Johns (1997) and Mosher (1998) reported that ESL writers prefer simpler thematic patterns and exhibit less thematic development.

Table 7*: Constant development in the two data sets*

Text Group	Theme	Rheme
SEW's RA 2	(28) Names	are commonly viewed as cultural words or words that refer to elements deeply rooted within the culture of a given speech community (Al-Quran & Al-Azzam, 2014). 2014).
	Naming system as a subject matter	is a broad area of research which has received a special consideration of multitude people especially linguists and a considerable number of language philosophers.
	The investigation of the names of human beings	is attributed to anthroponomy which binds to genealogy, sociology , and anthropology
	and it	is considered as a branch of the science of onomastics which studies language innovation and attitude towards language as a cultural phenomenon on a sufficient comparative principle for all groups (Thonus, 1992).
AAW's RA 6	(29) We	Reject both these conceptions as idealistic
	and (elipsed we).	seek to counter them by putting forward a materialist political anthropology that rejects every ontological separation between the human and the rest of nature
	We	intend to do this by drawing out the key elements of a political anthropology from the work of Marx and Engels and from Simondon's concepts of the 'transindividual' and 'technics'
	More precisely, our article.	Aims to extend the debate over the transindividual into the themes of biology and technic
	Our proposal	is ultimately centered on the question of technics, which, in our view, can save 'human nature' both from being reduced to an essence and from being dissolved into a mere social construct.

The constant pattern in writing serves the functions of providing a straightforward and concise presentation of information, maintaining a consistent focus on the main topic. In Table 7, Example 28, the author used this pattern to refer to the multiple facets of *"Naming"*. Additionally, in Example 29, the Theme is reiterated to outline the steps that the author should follow when addressing the topic of their research. The author achieves this by repeating the authorial subject at the beginning of each clause, emphasizing the sequential nature of the steps, and providing a clear and organized structure to guide the reader.

5.6.2 Zig zag

The second most commonly utilized TP pattern in the two sets of RA introductions, the linear or zigzag pattern. This finding is consistent with Alyousef's (2020) identification of the zigzag TP pattern as the second most frequently used type in Saudi undergraduate texts, following the constant pattern. Additionally, the findings indicate that both groups use the zigzag pattern at a similar frequency, indicating a close resemblance in this regard. Interestingly, in their introductions, the frequency of employing the linear or zigzag pattern is similar between NNES and NES scholars. The zigzag TP pattern appeared in 52 SEWs' introductions, accounting for 32.50% of the total instances. Similarly, AAWs' introductions also exhibited the zigzag TP pattern in 57 instances, representing 33.93% of the total instances.

The zigzag TP pattern plays a crucial role in enhancing the coherence and logical flow of information in social science research. This pattern effectively interweaves different thematic units, allowing for the seamless connection of ideas and the creation of a cohesive narrative. As a result, scholars were able to present their arguments or findings in a structured and organized manner. The SEWs used the zigzag pattern in Example (30) to discuss the various functions and roles of naming as a social practice, while the AAWs used it in Example (31) to explain the concept of incarnation (Table 8).

Table 8*: Linear (or zig-zag) pattern in the two data sets

Text Group	Theme	Rheme
SEW's RA 2	(30) Naming	can be regarded as a universal norm that is common to all human cultures, where each community around the world assigns names as labels to its people.
	Besides labeling people, personal names	also fulfill other additional roles.
	According to Machaba (2004), these roles	involve easing tension amongst members of a certain society, mirroring on people's communal, cultural, and religious beliefs, along with the events and circumstances surrounding the birth of a child.
AAW's RA 2		
	(31) Christians	perform faithfully as the collective body of Christ, or the church.
	The church.	performs its witness in the midst of other public, secularizing forces like posthumanism
	Against the grain of the church's incarnational witness,	such forces often witness against the body.

5.6.3 Split -Rheme Pattern

Our findings also indicate that the Split-Rheme TP pattern is the least used pattern in 85 instances (23%) of the two groups of authors. This aligns with Alyousef (2020), who reported the rare utilization of the split-Rheme pattern in the scientific texts written by Saudi undergraduates. More specifically, the data reveals that the SEWs used the split-Rheme pattern a total of 30 times, accounting for 18.75% of instances. In contrast, the AAWs scholars used this pattern 55 times, making up 33.93% of cases. This finding aligns with Alyousef and Alzahrani's (2020) results, which demonstrated a remarkably more linear and split-Rheme pattern in the AAWs' texts than their counterparts. This pattern allows for the exploration of various aspects and expressions of culture. Additionally, Example (33) demonstrates the use of the split-Rheme pattern to explain the different positions or opinions within an argument.

By employing this pattern, the author can present contrasting viewpoints and analyze the different perspectives within the argument.

Table 9:Split-Rheme pattern in the two data sets

Text Group	Theme	Rheme
SEW's RA 1	(32) For example, the culture to which people belong, whether Western or non-Western,	appears in the binary of teaching styles that opposes individualism to collectivism.
	Western cultures	are characterized as individualistic
	In contrast, non-Western cultures	are characterized as collectivistic, that is, they are characterized by shared values and group patterns, beliefs, and behaviors [8]
AAW's RA 6	(33) Following Byron (2016), we	can briefly identify three prevailing positions on Marx's and Engels's thoughts on human nature.
	The first (supported, for example, by Sayers)	argues that Marx did believe in the existence of a human nature, albeit an entirely 'historic' one.
	In other words, human nature.	varies, depending on 'the different means of production', so it is therefore always historically contingent, hence no transhistorical feature of human nature can form the basis of political theory
	A third position (supported by Geras and Callinicos, among others)	claims that for Marx human nature was 'trans-historic', that is, 'the same in every moment of history', even if there is a lack of agreement on the characteristics of this human nature.

6. Conclusion and Implications

In this research we focused on cultivating insights about the way SEWs construct their RA introductions compared with AAWs. The findings of this study have important implications for understanding the writing practices of the SEWs and the AAWs in the field of anthropology and social sciences in general. The study reveals that both groups demonstrate similarities in their thematic choices, indicating a common understanding and utilization of Theme structures in the introduction sections of RAs. This suggests that the SEWs are able to effectively navigate the conventions of academic writing and produce texts that are comparable to those of the AAWs.

The study also highlights a notable difference in the employment of TP patterns between the two groups. The AAWs tend to use linear and split-Rheme patterns more frequently than the SEWs. This difference may reflect variations in the rhetorical strategies employed by the two groups. Further research is needed to explore the reasons behind these differences and to investigate how they may impact the overall coherence and effectiveness of the RAs.

These findings have implications for English language instruction and academic writing support for the SEWs. Understanding the commonalities and differences in thematic choices and TP patterns can inform the development of targeted interventions to enhance the writing skills of the SEWs in the field of anthropology. By addressing specific areas of variation, educators can help SEWs improve their academic writing proficiency and facilitate their integration into the scholarly community.

It is important to note some limitations of this study. Firstly, the analysis focused solely on the introduction sections of anthropology RAs, and the findings may not be generalizable to other sections or disciplines. Additionally, the study only examined written texts and did not consider other factors such as the writers' language proficiency or cultural backgrounds, which may influence their writing choices. Future research could expand the scope of the investigation to include a wider range of genres and linguistic features, as well as incorporate qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of the writers' perspectives and experiences.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the thematic choices and TP patterns employed by SEWs and AAWs in anthropology RAs. The findings suggest that while there are similarities in Theme structure, there are also notable differences in TP patterns between the

two groups. These findings have implications for language instruction and writing support for SEWs and contribute to our understanding of academic writing practices in the field of anthropology. Further research is needed to build upon these findings and explore additional factors that may influence the writing choices of SEWs.

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