An Analysis of Coherence Use in the Essay Written by English Language and Literature Department Student

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Abstract

Coherence is one of the characteristics of good writing. It is important for student to know how to use the way to achieve coherence in their writing. Therefore, it is also important to analyze students' use of the ways to achieve coherence when using coherence in writing. This research implemented descriptive quantitative approach to analyze the use of ways to achieve coherence in the essays written by the English Language and Literature Department students. The data was 30 essays, 20% of the total source of data (152 students). The data were gathered from the essays written by the students at final semester exam for Essay Writing course. After the data were analyzed, the results showed that all four of the ways to achieve coherence were found in the essays analyzed. The results from the most used ways to achieve coherence to the least one are: the repetition of key noun (463 times, 48.28%), the use of transition signals (405 times, 42.23%), the consistent of pronoun (71 times, 2.37%) and the use of logical order (20 times, 2.09%). This result showed student familiarity to the ways of achieving coherence. However, a special care in teaching the use of pronoun as one of the way to achieve coherence, alongside other ways.

INTRODUCTION

Coherence according to Oxford Learner's Dictionary (n.d.) is "the situation in which all the parts of something fit together well." In the case of coherence in writing, Enkvist (1990) defines coherence as the aspect of a text that allows it to adhere to a consistent world image and therefore summaries able and interpretable. Lybbert et al. (1969) explains that coherence entails a good compromise of elements that are mutually reliant in their capability to compose the whole. Parts are working together harmoniously to create a whole. Similarly, Oshima and Houge (1998) describe a coherent paragraph as a paragraph which the sentences are hold movement from sentences (or paragraph) to the other must be logical and smooth.

Concerning student use of coherence, previous research showed the importance of analyzing the use of coherence in writing as it is one of the aspects of good writing. Coherence, unity and adequate development are required for successful writing, with coherence being the most significant aspect (Almaden, 2006). To achieve coherence student need to apply several ways or strategies to achieve coherence.

Oshima and Houge (1998) suggested four ways in achieving coherent paragraph. The ways are the repetition of key noun, the consistent use of pronoun, the use of transition signals and the use of logical order. When using the repetition of key noun, the noun should be mentioned throughout the paragraph as a reminder for the writer and reader to the topic of the essay they read or write. Meanwhile, when the consistent use of pronoun is used, pronoun which used to refer to the key noun should be used consistently. The next way is the use transition signals. Transition signals are words or phrases that bridge your ideas together. Oshima and Hogue (2007) further defined transition signals as "words and phrases that connect the idea in one sentence with the idea in another sentence." The last way to achieve coherence are the use of logical order. Oshima and Hogue (1998) introduced some common logical order such as chronological order, logical division of idea and comparison/contrast.

A study conducted by Wachidah (2016) in researching explanation texts written by the 4th semester students of English Education Department showed the use of coherence in students' writing. Student used key noun repetition the most, followed by transition signals, consistent use of pronouns and logical order. However, a research in coherence use in highschool students' report text conducted by Astari (2019) illustrated that ways used are the most are the use of transition signals, followed by key noun repetition, consistent use of pronouns and the use of logical order. There was a slight difference on these results. In contrary to Astari research, Oktariana (2018) pointed out in her research that transition signals only used by students in their writing to add or contrast a new idea and there are concerning small numbers of other transition signals types used. Oktariana argued that this showed students' lack of competence in using transition signals as coherence devices. Next research held by Andayani et al. (2014) about cohesion and coherence of middle school students' narrative writing showed that students' writings were relatively coherence. The structure of students' writing corresponds to the genre of the writing. However, there are problems found in students' writing. The problems were reference or pronouns, conjunction, and limited use of lexical items. Suwandi (2016) conducted a research about coherence and cohesion of undergraduate students' final project abstracts. The research discovered that students were struggling to implement coherence in their writing. It was confirmed by minimal usage of sentence adverbials (e.g., however, nevertheless, furthermore). Adverbials, specifically transition signals are one of the ways to achieve coherence in writing. The next research held by Dasril et al. (2019) on English Department students' research proposal coherence and unity. The research showed that students' proposal was adequately coherence with high score on several indicators such as repetition of key noun, consistent pronoun, transitions signal and logical order. Similarly, Karjono (2020) in his research on students' thesis proposal indicated coherence was displayed in students writing, albeit the occasional

obscurity when connecting ideas. He further suggested that students need more exposure to standard guidance and rubric. The results of these previous studies are varied. This study was conducted to analyzed the ways incorporated by English Language and Literature students when using coherence in their essay to see what ways to achieve coherence students used in their essay.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted by using descriptive quantitative research design. Descriptive design was chosen because the research will attempt to analyze and describe the coherence use found in students' essays. The goal of descriptive research is to describe persons, events, or circumstances as they occur in nature (Siedlecki, 2020). Siedlecki (2020) then further elaborated that on descriptive research, rather than manipulate any variables on the research, researcher only describe the sample and/or the variables. Quantitative research designed was used because this research tried to describe the use of coherence found in students' essay with numerical representation. Œ, Creswell (1994, as cited in Sukamolson, 2007) explained quantitative research as collecting numerical data and analyzing it using mathematically based approaches to describe events.

The source of data of this research was all students who take essay writing course in the academic year of 2020/2021 in English Language and Literature Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. This population is selected since it is the latest essay writing course done at the moment this research conducted. Accessibility is another reason behind the selection of the population. The source of data is 152 in total. Gay et al. (2009, as cited on Mahmud, 2011) suggested that the sample should be at least 20% of the total population if the research is descriptive research with relatively small amount of population. Therefore, the sample of this research was 30 in total. The sampling method used was simple random sampling method. Simple random sampling is the method of picking a sample in such a way that all people in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2012).

The instruments used in this research were analyzed students essays as the collection instrument an analysis sheet adapted from the ways to achieve coherence introduced by Oshima and Hogue (1998). The ways are the repetition of key noun, the consistent use of pronoun, the use of transition signal and the use of logical ordering. The result would be the frequency of occurrences of the ways to achieve coherence. The instrument is used to determine what strategy used by student in incorporating coherence in their essay

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Research Finding
The data gathered from the document were the use of ways to achieve coherence found in students' essays. In this section, the researcher described the data found in the documents. The data were collected and classified based on Oshima and Houge (1998) ways to achieve coherence.

Finding 1

The first way to achieve coherence is repetition of the key noun. Additionally, the key noun used depends on the topic of the essay and typically present on the thesis statement. Repeating the key noun helps to keep the essay from straying away from the main idea or topic. Table 4.1 show the key noun used in the essays.

Table 1. Key noun used in the essays

Key Noun (A1)	Variants/Synonym	Frequency
part time job	part-time job, part-jobs, part-time work	131
Thanos's decision	Thanos's decisions	8
minimum age for pop stars	minimum age of pop stars, minimum age	10
uniforms	uniform	314
TOTAL		463
AVERAGE*		15.43
PERCENTAGE**		48.28%

*average use per essay | **out of all the ways used

The repetition of key noun was found 464 times (47.98%) on the essays. It was the most frequently used way to achieve coherence found in the research. It also got the highest average occurrence (15.47 uses per essay) among the ways. The kind of key noun used, however, depend on the topic chosen by students when writing the essays. The topics found are part-time jobs, Thanos's decision, minimum age for pop stars, and uniforms. There are also some variants or synonyms of the key noun used throughout the essays. The amount of repetition of the key noun per topic depends on the number of students who picked the topic when writing the essays. These are several examples of the repetition of key noun found in students' essays.

Essay 1: Uniforms are sign of students in many countries. Each level of education has its own **uniforms** characteristics. In Indonesia, students are required to wear school **uniforms** for approximately twelve years. It starts from elementary school to senior high school.

Essay 2: Part time job is one of the many jobs to earn extra money. This job is widely known as student work because there are many students who do part-time work for various reasons. There are those who do it because of financial needs, there are also those who do it to get additional income, and there are also those who do it to increase their work experience. Although there are various reasons why students do part-time work, there are some students who don't want to do part-time work on the grounds that they want to focus on the study they are doing. However, many students still have the pros and cons of this **part time job**. Is it good if students work part time while in college or not?

Essay 9: Some people believe that school **uniform** causes boredom to students. School **uniforms** have left students unable to express themselves to the fullest. Each person has his own preferences, as well as that of the clothing worn. School **uniforms** can influence adversely understudies' brain research and execution in learning in the school.

Finding 2

The consistent use of pronoun is directly connected to the previous way of achieving coherence, repetition of key noun, since the pronoun mentioned is

referring to the key noun. Consequently, the type of pronoun used depends on the type of key noun used on the essay. If the essay did not use repetition of key noun, the consistent use of pronoun would be irrelevant since it does not have a key noun to refer to. Listed below are pronouns which used consistently in students' essays. AdditionallOshima and Hogue stated that this ways are the easiest ways in achieving coherence. This statement could be confirmed by the fact that this way is the most frequently used way in the essays written by students with 463 occurrences (48.28%). In support of the theory suggested by Lund University, the essays used synonyms and variants of the key noun on the essays besides using the key noun.

Table 2 Pronoun used in the essays

Pronoun	Frequency
it, its, itself	68
they, them	3
TOTAL	71
AVERAGE*	2.37
PERCENTAGE**	7.40

*average use per essay | **out of all the ways used

The consistency mentioned here is the consistency of the pronoun when referring to the key noun and the variants or synonym. There are 71 use of pronoun found in the essays. This way is the second least frequently used ways to achieve coherence with 7.4% occurrence which the second least frequently use ways in the essays analyzed among all of the ways to achieve coherence. Similarly the average use of pronoun in the essays is the second least average use in 2.36 uses per essay. Below are the examples of the use of pronoun found in the essays.

> **Essay 1:** In summary, some people agree with the policy of wearing **uniforms** at school because **it** brings advantages in term of equality between students and identity for student itself

> **Essay 7:** Should students wear **uniforms** to school? If yes, can **it** make learning and teaching process better? Some people say that wearing **uniforms** to school has many benefits, especially for students. But the other people think that **it** is not entirely good.

> **Essay 29:** In conclusion, *having part-time* work even as studying has **its** due advantages and disadvantages.

Finding 3

Another way to achieve coherence is the use of transition signals. Transition signals, help reader in following the flow of ideas in the text. It connects the idea together in smooth way, avoiding gap or sudden jump of ideas. Each of the transition

signals has different meaning and nuances. Listed below are the uses of transition signals found in the essays

Table 3 Transition signals used in the essays

Transition Signals	Frequency
used to introduce an additional idea	102
used to introduce an opposite idea	105
used to introduce choice or alternative	32
used to introduce restatement or explanation	12
used to introduce an example	32
used to introduce a conclusion or summary	23
used to introduce a result	52
used to indicate sequence or logically divide an idea	47
TOTAL	405
AVERAGE*	13.5
PERCENTAGE**	42.23

*average use per essay | **out of all the ways used

In the case of transition signals, 405 uses (42.23%) are found in the essays. This put the use of transition signals in the second place of the most used ways to achieve coherence. The average use of transition signals also put it in the second place with 13.5 average uses/occurrences per essay. Additionally, the most frequently used kind of transition signal is transition signals used to introduce an opposite idea with 105 occurrences and the least frequently used kind of transition signals is transition signal used to introduce restatement or explanation with 12 occurrences. Below are the examples of the use of each kind of transition signals.

Transition signals used to introduce an additional idea

Essay 1: Besides, uniforms can also help schools to identify students who are trying to sneak away from school during class hours.

Essay 2: Moreover, a student who still wants to feel fun with his friends, if they ask their parents, their parents will be angry because they spent their parents' money just for their own pleasure.

Transition signals used to introduce an opposite idea

Essay 8: I believe that the bad impact of being a pop star in a young age is exists**, but** I think it still can be controlled when we create a law about children labor, maximize the role of the parents and let them decide what they want and guide them.

Essay 9: Some of them feel that school uniforms are necessary **while** others believe that they are definitely not.

Transition signals used to introduce choice or alternative

Essay 10: If the government allowed student to wear another clothes, every people will not know whether he student or not.

Essay 15: If students want to do that, they must prepare themselves to be able to handle both in order to avoid the negative impacts.

Transition signals used to introduce restatement or explanation

Essay 13: In fact, it all depends on each of us and our own intentions.

Essay 18: Indeed, not many countries require school students to wear uniforms

Transition signals used to introduce an example

Essay 7: For instance, color, length, and size of the uniforms are definitely regulated

Essay 18: In general, school uniforms consist of several elements **such as** belts, hats, shirts, skirts or pants, shoes, socks, and badges on clothes.

Transition signals used to introduce a conclusion or summary

Essay 8: In summary, implementing a minimum age for pop stars has some clear advantages like preventing children from losing their childhood and also save them from the post-impact of fame at a young age.

Essay 9: In conclusion, school uniforms are still important to students.

Transition signals used to introduce a result

Essay 6: Therefore, we must do it wisely

Essay 29: As a result, colleges students may not be capable of maintain higher grades.

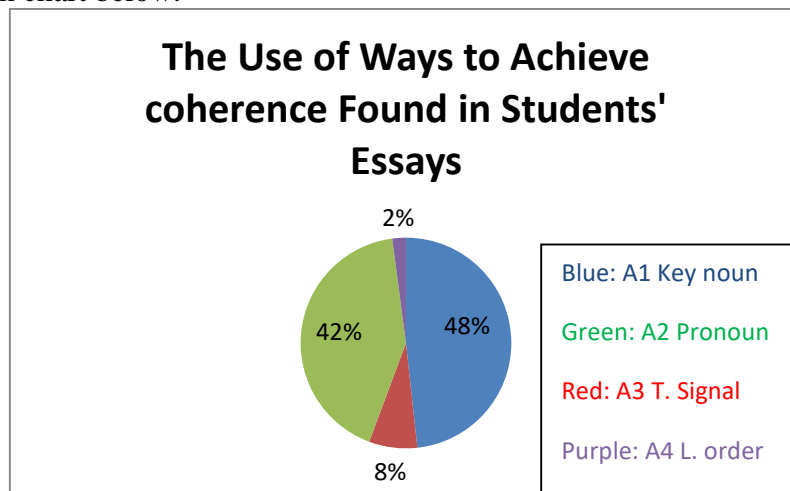*Transition signals used to indicate sequence or logically divide an idea*

Essay 11: The next (A3-i11) negative impact is stress in making assignments given by the lecturer because the time to make assignments has been divided to do work.

Essay 12: The first (A3-i6) positive aspect of having part-time jobs for college students is part-time jobs can help them financially.

Finding 4

The fourth way to achieve coherence introduced by Oshima and Hogue is the use of logical order. Since all of the essays analyzed on the research happened to be discussion essay, the logical order used should be logical division of ideas. Essays with the used logical division of ideas were Essay 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, and 29. There are 20 use of logical order found in the essay. In contrast to other ways to achieve coherence, only one logical order is used in each of the essays. Consequently the results of the use of logical order found in essays are showed in the analysis sheet in form of 1 or 0. Incidentally, all of the essays analyzed on this research were discussion essays. As a result, the only type of logical order found in the essays is logical division of ideas. There are 20 (2.09%) occurrences of the use of logical order in the essays, with averages of 0.6.

The overall use of ways to achieve coherence found in student essays is presented in chart below.

The Use of Ways to Achieve coherence Found in Students' Essays

- 2%
- Blue: A1 Key noun
- 42%
- Green: A2 Pronoun
- 48%
- Red: A3 T. Signal
- 8%
- Purple: A4 L. order

Discussion

The finding of this research showed all four ways to achieve coherence proposed by Oshima and Hogue (1998) were used in the essays. Oshima and Hogue stated that this ways are the easiest ways in achieving coherence. This statement could be confirmed by the fact that this way is the most frequently used way in the essays written by students with 463 occurrences (48.28%). In support of the theory suggested by Lund University, the essays used synonyms and variants of the key noun on the essays besides using the key noun.

While it is seems like there are a lot of occurrences in the use of pronoun in the essays (71 occurrences), the occurrences were eclipsed by the other ways occurrences. The use of pronoun only was 7.2% of all the ways to achieve coherence found in the essay with a low average of 2.37 occurrences per essays. This finding is similar with the findings of Andayani et al. (2014). In their research on middle school students' narrative writing, students were struggling in reference or pronoun but the fact that the population of their study is middle school students should be taken into consideration. The finding in this research on the consistent use of pronoun, however, is a polar opposite of Dasril et al. (2019) findings in their research that showed high score in several indicators of coherence in student thesis proposal including consistent use of pronoun.

The use of transition signals are the second most frequently used ways to achieve coherence. There were 405 occurrences (42.23%) found in the essays with average of 13 occurrences per essay. This may happened because of the huge selection of transition signals fiction or meaning that student may choose to use when writing their essays. Transition signals used to introduce opposite idea are the most frequently used kind. This may happened since the essays were discussion essays which students use to convey arguments and information from several points of view, such as advantages and disadvantages, supporting opinion and opposing opinion. Unlike the finding on this research, the finding of Suwandi's research (2016) showed that student used minimal amount of transition signals. This arguably happened because he was researching students' final project abstract. Unlike essay, the limitation of word count in abstract and the fact that abstract is the brief summary of the final project would take part in minimizing the use of transition signals in students writing.

When putting idea into logical order, logical division of idea is found in the essays. This happened because the essays analyzed in this research happened to be discussion essays. The number of occurrences of the use of logical order showed in the data description and Appendix 3 seems like a relatively small numbers. However, slightly different approach needs to be implemented when interpreting the result. Each essay are only using one type of logical order, logical division of ideas, since the essay were all discussion essay. This happened because of the structure of the essay: Issue, Supporting Argument, Opposing Argument, and Conclusion/Suggestion. These facts are the cause of the use logical division of ideas because ideas are put into group of supporting argument and opposing argument and discussing it one after another. This is similar with Oshima and Hogue (1998) and Boardman and Frydenberg definition of logical division of ideas. The 20 occurrences may seem pale in comparison with other ways to achieve coherence, but this meant that 20 out of 30 essays are using logical order which is majority of them. The number of average use per essay (0.67) also confirms that more than half of all the essays are using logical order to achieve coherence in the essays.

CONCLUSION

From the finding of this research, it could be seen that English language education students who took Essay Writing course were able to incorporate coherence to their essay by using the ways to achieve coherence. This showed

students' awareness of the ways to achieve coherence. The huge number of key noun used implied that students are familiar with the repetition of key noun and its importance as one of the way to achieve coherence. Similarly, the huge number of occurrences in the use of transition signals showed students familiarity to the transition signals, the meaning and the function/purpose of it. Additionally the fact that students used transition signals used to introduce opposite idea when writing a discussion essay further confirm the familiarity to not only the meaning and function of transition signals, but also the purpose and general structure of a discussion essay. However, the small number of pronoun used implied that either students were not as familiar with the use of pronoun and its role as the way to achieve coherence or student were too focused on repeating the key noun which resulted in relatively small amount of its occurrences.

In the case of the use of logical order, as stated in previous sections, a slight change in the way of interpreting the result may need to be done. The results of 20 occurrences showed that majority of students are using logical order, in this case logical division of idea, to achieve coherence in their essay.

After conducting this research, researcher proposes some suggestions in regard to the use coherence in students' writing. In spite of overall results that showed that student does use coherence in their essay, students may need to be reminded of the ways of achieving coherence, especially the consistent use if pronoun. Additionally, students need to be taught to use more variation of transition signals since there one of the transition signals that used more than 30 times while there also transition signals that only used once or not used at all in each of the kind of transition signals. Students also need to be reminded to the structure of the text since it helps in leading student to use the correct logical order for the essay.

The next suggestions are given to future researcher, while this research discussed the use of coherence in students' essays, specifically the use of ways to achieve coherence introduced by Oshima and Houge, the next study could be done in other such as ways to achieve coherence introduced by Sherman et al. Also, this research did not dive into student problem and ability. The next researcher may look into problem that English Language and Literature Department student problem and/or ability in incorporating coherence to their writing. The genre of the essays analyzed was limited to discussion essay because of the nature of the final examination taken by the students. The future researcher could analyze another genre or genres.

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