COHERENCE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS' WRITINGS: A CASE STUDY OF THE 4TH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LETTERS DIAN NUSWANTORO UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: *The title of this research is coherence analysis of the students ' writing ': a case study of the fourth semester students of English Department, Faculty of Language and Letter Dian Nuswantoro University. This analysis is conducted to know the coherence of students' writings that are made by the fourth semester students in writings class. The study of this research is descriptive qualitative, which includes a simple quantitative study. The subject of this research is the students' writings by twenty students in Faculty of Language and letters Dian Nuswantoro University, in Academic years 2003/2004.The result of the data reveals that all the texts which have been analyzed are coherent and the content was relevant to the topic "unforgettable experience". There were only four texts showing that the content was not relevant to the topic sentence. Most of the students employed the thematic progression of theme reiteration or constant theme pattern in their writing.*
Keywords: *coherence, students' writings, thematic progression*

Language as a means of communication can be used not only for the transmission of informative message but also for establishing and maintaining social relationships with other. Every people express this social function of language when he/she interact with another (Halliday, 1979 : 67) and Taylor state that language is a system of sign (e.g. speech sound, hand gestures, letters) used to communicate messages. These definition tend to systemic linguist to advance to main theories that claim about language is a system of sign (e.g speech sound, hand gestures, letters) used to communicate message. These definitions tend to systemic linguist to advance four main theories that claim about language that language use is functional, semantics, contextual, and grammatical. Chomsky in Thompson (1983:47) defines a language as a set of sentences. These sentences have meaning (sense) and pronunciation, and so in effect the grammar has to define a set of meanings whereby particular sense are matched with particular pronunciation. According to Matthiessen (1996:14), language is a shared code that enables user to transmit idea and desires to one another.

English is very importance language in real communication in the world, so many people are interested in learning this language. There are four skills in study of English: reading, listening, writing, and speaking.

Writing is a part of importance basic study of English. In principle, to write means to try produce or to reproduce written message. Before writing, we need to determine what the write, we should have something meaningful to convey. To put forward our message successfully, we, the writers, apply a number of writing strategies. These strategies are not talent – oriented. Every writer can learn and apply them in her or his writing. Every learner is than encouraged to keep on practicing. In other cases, we realize that many students get problems to know how to write well. They can write but the result is far from the greeting well, so usually in the final test the result is unsatisfactory.

The students usually make errors in the process of writing and it usually takes place in the sentence coherent. Many mistakes are frequently found when the students start to write. They tend not to obey the rules in writing and say that writing is a complicated skill, that this skill is concerned with the talent. Writing is not easy. It involves much work and practices. Trying to puts our ideas on paper in just the way we want them is never easy. When we write, we have to think of several things at the same time. Some of them are ideas, vocabularies, spelling, grammar, punctuation, hand writing. We have to think all of these things even in a very simple piece of writing. When writing, we should not forget to KISS (Keep It Simple and 'Stupid'). In addition, it should be kept in mind that the writer has the right to present the readers with easy-to-understand writing. Certainly, the word 'easy' may mean different thing to the audience, and to the readers. By easy-to-understand language, we mean that, as writer, we ought to know the average level of the reader mastery over the English language. The level of language that we use should not be too 'simple' or too 'complicated'.

Finding the main idea is very useful. In writing, the main idea gives unity and order to our paragraph. We need a good grammar as professional reference and we need theory of grammar to understand how the word text. A good grammar will help the readers to understand to analyze what the text is about and whether the writing is a good or not. Different types of writing are required for different purposes.

In addition to unity, coherence plays a crucial role in making a paragraph. Every coherent paragraph contains smoothly – connected ideas. Each sentence moves on naturally. The paragraph is like a well – built high way. A coherent paragraph consists of interrelated sentences which have in such a smooth way.

Writing is difficult skill for native speaker of non native speaker because a writer must balance multiple aspects such as content, organization, purpose, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and mechanism such as capitalization, Martin (1982:10). According to Faulkner (1985:11-12) writing is governed by rules, it means that writing process takes a set of convention of rules to make the writer 'writing make sense to their readers. According to Faulkner (1964:143) "To write is put down the graphic symbols that represent a language one understands., so

that others can read these graphics symbols if they know the language and the graphic representation.

Communication in writing tend to involve a thinking process as suggested by Schifrin (1995:17), because writing requires the process of selecting and organizing ideas into coherence and the contents must be logical. In line with this requirement, Bhatia (2004:130) says that writing has been characterized as written thinking. Students should be encouraged to express their ideas, experiences, thought, and feeling. In addition to a thinking process, writing also deals with culture.

In course books produced in the 1960s and 1970s, there is a belief that before students be expected to write coherent paragraph, they should have mastered the language at the level of sentence. Writing as process focuses more on the various classroom' activities which are believed to promote the development of skilled language use. Then, writing as product oriented approaches to the development of writing favor classroom activities in which the leaner is engaged in imitating, copying and transforming models of correct language. According to Martin (1985:27) argues that the form of process writing encourages the development of critical thinking which in turn encourages individual to explore and challenge social reality.

According to Bhathia (2004:35) the writing class should take into account the learners purposes for writing which transcend that of producing text for teacher evaluation. Writing skill can develop rapidly when students' concern and interest are acknowledge, when they are given numerous opportunities to write, and when they are encouraged to become participants in community of writers.

Coherence means to hold together, in basic that paragraph in writing has the right order with the clear process. In addition to unity, coherence plays a crucial or important role in making a paragraph read well. Every coherent paragraph contains smoothly – connected ideas. Each sentence moves on naturally. The paragraph is like a well – built high way; vehicles run smoothly on it without encountering too many obstacles. On the contrary, the incoherent paragraph might be like a zig – zag, bumpy mountain road; vehicles cannot move fast or easily on it. A coherent paragraph consists of interrelated sentences which move in such a way that they smooth the way for one another.

In a clear paragraph the sentences must follow each other in good order if they do not, the paragraph becomes mixed up and confusing. The supporting sentences must be related to the topic sentences must follow each other. If the ideas re to be clearly understood by the readers, there must be close connection between the sentences.

When we read a paragraph, we may not be conscious of how closely related the sentences are. Who probably think about the ideas and do not notice how the sentences are connected. If they were not closely connected, however, we would have difficulty in following the author's ideas. A sentence in a paragraph is said irrelevant when the sentence does not deal with the topic of the paragraph. If a sentence is irrelevant, it does not belong to the paragraph and should take out. If
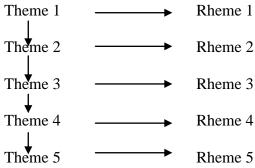
a paragraph contains irrelevant material, it does not have unity, the 'traffic' of the paragraph will be zig – zag or confusing like what has been mentioned above.

A well – written paragraph has coherence; it "hangs together". The reader sees how the material in the paragraph relates to the main point. The problem of this research is how is the coherence of the writing of the fourth semester students of English Department, Faculty of languages and letters Dian Nuswantoro University?

In achieving a coherent paragraph, it is useful for the students to apply a thematic pattern in their writings. Thematic progression refers to the way in which the Theme of a clause may pick up or repeat, a meaning from a preceding theme and rheme. According to Martin and Rother in Paltridge (2000:140), there are three kinds of thematic development patterns, they are:

a. *Theme reiteration/ constant theme pattern*

This pattern shows that the first theme is picked up and repeated in the beginning of the next clause. This is the example of this pattern:

Theme 1   ⟶   Rheme 1

Theme 2   ⟶   Rheme 2

Theme 3   ⟶   Rheme 3

Theme 4   ⟶   Rheme 4

Theme 5   ⟶   Rheme 5

b. *A zig-zag/ linear theme pattern*

It is a pattern when the subject matter in the rheme of one clause is taken up in the theme of the following clause. The example of zig-zag pattern can be seen below:

Theme 1   ⟶   Rheme 1

Theme 2   ⟶   Rheme 2

Theme 3   ⟶   Rheme 3

Theme 4   ⟶   Rheme 4

Theme 5   ⟶   Rheme 5

c. *Multiple theme/ split rheme pattern*

In this pattern, a rheme may include a number of different pieces of information, each of which may be taken up as the theme in a number of subsequent clauses. The example of multiple theme patterns can be seen below:

Theme 1 ———→ Rheme 1

Theme 2 ———→ Rheme 2

Theme 3 ———→ Rheme 3

Theme 4 ———→ Rheme 4

Theme 5 ———→ Rheme 5

METHOD

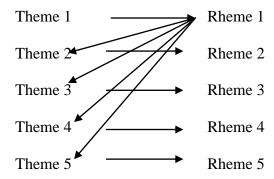Arikunto (1996:114) says that data source means a subject form which the data are obtained. Data are the most important items in research because the information about problems which are discussed could be achieved from the data. The data of this research were taken from the assignments of the fourth semester students of English Department, Faculty of Language and Letters Dian Nuswantoro University. To collect the data, the researcher used elicitation prompts. The elicitation prompts were design and administered by 75 students. They were given 100 minutes to do the instruction in the elicitation prompts. The instructions are: 1) each student has to make a writing which consists of one paragraph with a topic "unforgettable experience". 2) the students must finish their writings in 100 minutes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are 10 students' writings used as the data of this research. The writings are in the form of paragraphs with different topics. The students choose their own topic, unforgettable experience, such as, *accident in the class room, young mother, canter pillar, my funny story, etc.* In this part the writer presents the Theme and Rheme of every student's writing and also its thematic progression based on Butt *et .al.* analysis (2000:142) to know the coherency of the students' writing and types of thematic progression patterns the students mostly employ. The errors concerning with grammar or spelling are ignored.

In the academic circumstance, the teaching of language skills should not just treat the skills as they are; however, teachers should position these skills as realization of meanings in communication. By this consideration, teachers should teach their students to act of communicating with these skills about any

phenomenon. In so doing, the teaching of language skills, for example writing skill, should encourage students to write well. In this thought, teachers should train students to develop their awareness of their context for their own communication. By the end of the overall courses of writing subjects, students will be able to write a well paragraph especially a coherent paragraph in their writing. Based on the findings of 10 students' writings; it can be drawn in the following table below.

Table 1. Thematic Progression Pattern of the Students' Writing.

Thematic Progression Patterns	Students' Writings									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Constants	16	11	8	2	3	11	7	12	9	4
Zig-zag	-	1	-	3	4	1	1	3	3	4
Multiple	3	-	7	7	8	7	7	4	5	6
Total of Clause	21	14	17	15	16	21	16	20	18	16

As shown in the table above, it can be seen that the most dominant thematic progression pattern found in the students' writings is reiteration/constant theme patterns. In this case, the students tend to use pronouns such as *I, he, she, it and they* in their writings. The students think that it is easier for them by repeating theme of one clause to another at the beginning of a clause. In this type of thematic pattern, the purpose of the students repeats those pronouns because the students tell about their own unforgettable experiences to their friends or somebody else. That's why they produce those third singular and plural pronouns. Then, it is followed by multiple theme patterns. In this part of pattern, the students try to develop their paragraphs by picking the rheme which may include a number of different pieces of information, each of which may be taken up as the theme in a number of subsequent clauses. Meanwhile, the last pattern is zig-zag theme pattern. The students try to develop their paragraph by taking the subject matter in the rheme of one clause is taken up in the theme of a following clause. As the table above shows, it can be seen that the total number of clauses in every text is close to the numbers of the thematic patterns in every text. It can be concluded that all writings the students made are coherent, besides that, their writings are also relevant to the topics they employed. The example of those thematic patterns found in the students' writings can be seen in the figure below:

Theme   **Rheme**

1. Now, many people   have experience of love.
2. Many people   get broken heart.
3. Because of this   many people do something to lose their
                                                             sadness like watching movie with friends or playing games.
4. Because of broken heart   many people feels
5. They   were alone
6. Although they   have many friends besides them
7. And they   often feels nothing spirit and power to do
                                                             anything
8. They   are also feels wants to cry and scream.
9. They   are looks so sad
10. And (they)   can't smile to everyone
11. Many people   can suicide
12. Although it   is very crazy and stupid
13. Sometimes they   feel lazy to eat
14. And (they)   become to sick
15. Mayoritas of the people   feels like that
16. But some people   think
17. That she   is free
18. And she   can do anything without boy friends
19. And the girl   feel
20. She   can get more friends
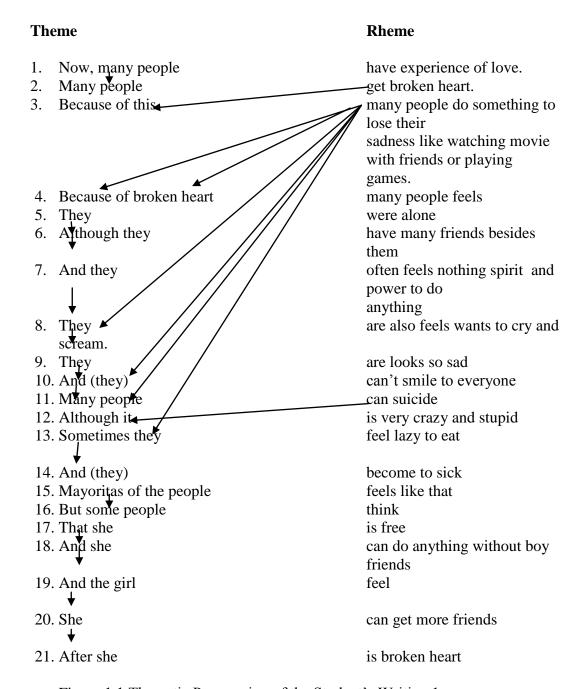21. After she   is broken heart

Figure 1.1 Thematic Progression of the Student's Writing 1

The figure above shows that the student employs three types of thematic patterns. Those are constant, zig-zag, and reiteration patterns in his writing. The first type of thematic patterns found is constant theme pattern. It can be seen in the first clause that the theme "many people" is repeated in the second clause with a similar phrase "many people". Then the third plural pronoun "they" in the fifth clause is also repeated in the sixth until the tenth clauses with the similar pronoun

"they". Another constant theme existed in the example above is in the nineteenth clause, there is a word "and the girl" is take up as the theme in the twentieth clause by replacing with a singular pronoun "she". The second is zig-zag theme pattern. It is found that there are only two zig-zag theme patterns found in the example above. They occurred in the second clause where the rheme of the second clause "get broken heart" is taken up as the theme of the third clause with demonstrative pronoun "this". Whereas, the rheme in the eleventh clause "can suicide" is taken up as the theme in the twelfth clause with personal pronoun "it". Meanwhile reiteration theme, the last theme patterns found in the example above, is the most dominant theme pattern found in the figure above. There are five multiple patterns found in the example above. It is found that the rheme of the third clause "many people do something to lose their sadness like watching movie with friends or playing games" is almost taken up as the theme in some clauses above. This rheme is repeated in the fifth, the eleventh, the thirteenth, the fourteenth, and the fifteenth clauses. As a result, it can be concluded that the student's writing above is coherent since the clauses are related to each other.

Another example shows thematic pattern produced by the students is given in the illustration below. The figure below depicts that the student also produced three types of thematic progression pattern in his writing. It can be seen that constant theme pattern is the most dominant pattern found in the example below then, it is followed by reiteration and zig-zag simultaneously. There are sixteen clauses existed in the student's writing. From those clauses, it is revealed that constant theme pattern occurred in some clauses. For example, the theme in the first clause "Nowadays, many things" is repeated in as theme in the second clause with personal pronoun "them". Afterward, the theme of the fifth clause "In view of my experience, the players" is repeated in the following theme, the sixth clause, with personal pronoun "they" then it is repeated in the seventh clause with the similar pronoun. Whereas, zig-zag theme pattern is the only theme pattern existed in the student's writing. It is occurred in the second clause, where the rheme "is playing online games" is taken up as the theme in the following clause by replacing the phrase with personal pronoun "it". Another theme pattern found in the student's writing here is multiple theme patterns. This type of theme patterns is the most occurrences found in the example given below. It is seen in the rheme of the second clause "is playing online games" is repeated as theme in the eleventh, the twelfth, the thirteenth, and the fourteenth clauses. As a result, it can be drawn in a figure below. As a result, it can be concluded that the student's writing above is coherent since the clauses are interrelated to one another.
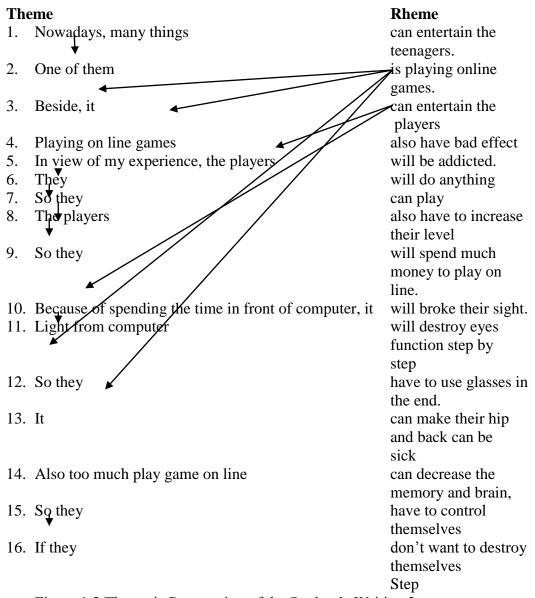
Theme	Rheme
1. Nowadays, many things	can entertain the teenagers.
2. One of them	is playing online games.
3. Beside, it	can entertain the players
4. Playing on line games	also have bad effect
5. In view of my experience, the players	will be addicted.
6. They	will do anything
7. So they	can play
8. The players	also have to increase their level
9. So they	will spend much money to play on line.
10. Because of spending the time in front of computer, it	will broke their sight.
11. Light from computer	will destroy eyes function step by step
12. So they	have to use glasses in the end.
13. It	can make their hip and back can be sick
14. Also too much play game on line	can decrease the memory and brain,
15. So they	have to control themselves
16. If they	don't want to destroy themselves Step

Figure 1.2 Thematic Progression of the Student's Writing 2

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The ability to make a coherent paragraph in writing is very important writing skill that students need to master. This skill is considered very helpful in their studies, when writing in their natives language as well as in foreign language.

Based on the data analysis outcome, all of the texts are coherent. In every text, the sentences are related to each other and the content of every text is relevant to the topics.

In writing their texts, the students have tendency to use unmarked topical Theme; in this case, in the form of pronouns, whether singular or plural. In their writings most of the students employed the thematic progression of theme reiteration or constant theme. The second preferred in multiple patterns. Meanwhile, zig-zag pattern is in the third place employed by the students in their writings.

In line with the findings above, teachers and curriculum developers should pay attention to this, and it is suggested they can explain the important of thematic progression patterns in writing in order to be coherent.

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