

# **STUDENTS' COHERENCE DEVELOPMENT IN LEARNING ENGLISH A CASE STUDY IN WRITING CLASS AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT YEAR 2009- 2008 IN FKIP UHN PEMATANG SIANTAR**

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## **Abstract**

This paper deals with the Students' Coherence Development in learning English Language: A case study in Writing Class at English Department Year 2009-2008 in FKIP UHN Pematangsiantar. The writers have the basic assumptions that the students have problems in developing of topic sentence into a reasonable number of supporting sentences such as cohesion, coherence, and unity of the paragraph. All the data are analyzed based on the writing with its definition, recount paragraph, types of paragraph, topic sentence, supporting sentence and conclusion. It relates to the theory of Alexander (1965), Harmer (2003), Herman (2009), McCrimon (1963) and Weaver (1975). The subject is the students at English department in FKIP UHN Pematangsiantar year 2009-2009. After analyzing the data, the writer found that After analyzing the data, there are some research findings as the following: (1) there is not well-structured sentence and the supporting sentences are not relevant to prove the topic sentence. (2) topic sentence is not clear because it's not relevant to the main topic "my campus" that will be elaborated in the paragraph and the word order of the topic sentence is not well-ordered and supporting sentences are not relevant to prove the topic sentence. (3) Some of the supporting sentences are not relevant to support the topic sentence. The students have some mistakes in word choice and structures. For example there should be written "complete facility" instead of *fasilities completely*. (4) topic sentence is not specific and the topic sentence and the supporting sentences are not correlated. Some of words in the text are misspelled. As the conclusion: first there are lacks in formulating the topic sentences and supporting sentences. Second, the coherence is mostly not well-applied in each data because the supporting sentences are not well-ordered to make the data in logical order.

*Key Words:* Learning, Writing, Coherence, Paragraph, Recount

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

There are some factors interconnected in contributing to the successful of English language learners. Jhonson (2001) states there are three variables which contribute to the successful in the case of English language learning, namely cognitive variables (intelligence and aptitude), affective variables (motivation and attitude) and personality. In learning English, the students have to be able to achieve the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). People tend to learn a foreign language, in this case English as an international language (Rivers 1969:187). In learning English as a foreign language, the students are expected to be able to master the four skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. But in fact, the students are still not able to write a good paragraph. The learners must be aware with what he/she produces in developing idea, using sentence pattern, and expressing the idea in his/her writing. For example, English learners at FKIP UHN Pematangsiantar still have problems in writing paragraph. The students' problem in developing paragraph mostly caused by their limited writing ability and less experience in writing. Through experiences in writing class, most of the students were not able to develop a paragraph especially in arranging their ideas in terms of the topic, topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, cohesion, coherence, and unity. The writer also found some ungrammatical sentences in their writing. It might be transferred from Bahasa Indonesia while writing in English.

Based on the writer's experiences in writing class at FKIP UHN Pematangsiantar, some students are not able to write a good paragraph even they have been on the second or third year such as year 2009 and 2008. In writing class, the writer are used to ask the students to write a simple paragraph. However, the writer found ungrammatical sentences and there was no coherence between one sentence and other sentences. The students also have problems in using tenses which can be seen from their writing for example missing -ed form, adverb of time, missing subject etc. In writing recount paragraph, the students do not understand well how to use the generic structure in recount

paragraph in their writing. Good writing is almost never accidental. It is a deliberate attempt by one person to communicate to other those ideas, facts or impressions that will create the result which the writer has intended to be achieved.

McCrimon (1963:3) says: "before starting to write, we must think carefully about two related questions what precisely do I want to do and how can I best do it. The same way the writer wants to try to understand what is needed to make her writing. The students usually do not know what topic that they want to write because they make writing without doing a research or an observation and they do not read the literature as additional information, listening to the radio, and watching the television before developing the paragraph. The students can not organize the topic by giving the information to make a writing. Commonly, the students are easier to write recount paragraph, because narrative paragraph is to make the students flashback based on their experiences without any data that they need. In terms of productive and expressive writing, students lack of practice and lack of knowledge in using the chronological order and transition signals. Moreover, writing ability does not appear spontaneously; it needs a number of practice and training. This research is expected to provide useful information for the improvement of teaching writing at English Department at FKIP UHN Pematangsiantar. The outcome of this study would be useful in minimizing the problems faced by the lecturers in teaching writing I, II, III, and IV. It might also be used for the students who are interested in doing the study. As what the writer experienced in class Writing I, II, III, and Writing IV, each student has a certain skill or ability of the subject. Not for a whole students interested in writing class but they are forced to be able to improve their writing skill in learning English. Some of them are not interested in writing class because they get bored and face difficulties in developing their ideas in writing, but they are good in other subject such as in class speaking, reading class etc. On the other hand, some of the students are taking an English course outside so they produce a good sentence in their writing, but some do not. In this research, the writer wants to analyze the students' problems in coherence development in writing Recount paragraph from the first Year up to the fourth Year students at English Department in FKIP UHN Pematangsiantar. The writer wants to know how far the students are able to develop paragraph, especially to arrange their ideas in term topic, topic sentences, supporting sentences, concluding sentence, cohesion, coherence and unity as the students with a good predicate of the public. The problem of this study is formulated in the form of a question as stated below: (1) What are the difficulties faced by the students year 2009-2008 in writing recount paragraph at English department at FKIP UHN Pematangsiantar? (2) What types of problems are found on the students' writing in coherence development in writing recount paragraph at English department at FKIP UHN Pematangsiantar?

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1.1 Definition of Writing**

Writing is a skill, like an aphetic skill, which comes more naturally to some people but which always and only improves with practice (Hudnall, 1988: 5). It is a process of composing the ideas and facts, so that the readers understand someone's thinking or someone's life. To make the readers understand, it is not easy to get and intelligible writing, the writer should think about the purpose of her writing and who will be the readers of her writing. Writing is a method of representing language in visual or tactile form. Writing systems use sets of symbols to represent the sounds of speech, and may also have symbols for such things as punctuation and numerals. Writing form is the writing that explains the things, the people, the ideas, the situation, a series of event, a series of stories, the acts, the pictures, the objects and so on (Wishon, 1980:378). Based on its purpose, there are some of writing forms. Writing, as defined by Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987), is "the composing of texts intended to be read by people not present" (Ibid: 4). It is a skill that is traditionally viewed as difficult to acquire. The study of writing has a rich tradition within rhetoric's and education (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Gannon (1985) asserts that writing is a central to almost every activity in the educational system. Nevertheless, a paradox exists as there is always a constant dissatisfaction with the quality of the written work produced by students. Writing seems to be a complex and difficult task for many writing students. As stated George (1980: 281) writing is a term which explained by using words that are easily understood. It means a good writing begins with understanding of how to construct and use the effective sentence and paragraphs and before we write, we need to determine what to write. We should have something meaningful and convey so we can put forward our message successfully.

Harmer states (1988:31) that writing as one of four skill of listening, speaking, and reading and writing has always formed part of the syllabus in the teaching of English. Writing has always been used as a means reinforcing language that has been taught. Teaching writing is entirely different; however since our objective here is to help the students to become better in writing and to learn how to write in various genres using different registers. General Language

improvement may, of course, occur, but that is by product of writing-for a writing activity, not necessarily its main purpose. It means in delivering ideas, a researcher must produce a piece of writing which embodies correctness of form. There are five important qualities of good writing, they are :

1. Writing should have focus  
An essay should have a single clear central idea. Each paragraph should have a clear central main point or topic sentence.
2. Writing should have development  
Each paragraph should support the central idea of the paper. Individual sentence should support the main point of the paragraph.
3. Writing should have unity  
Every paragraph in an essay should be related to the main idea. Each paragraph should stick to its main point.
4. Writing should have coherence  
An Essay of paper should be organized logically, flow smoothly and "stick" together. In other words, everything in the writing should make sense to a reader.
5. Writing should have correctness  
A paper should be written in generally correct Standard English, with complete sentence, and be relatively error – free.

## 2.2 Paragraph

Writing paragraphs are in fact the most basic structure in any writing. So understanding how to write effective and intriguing paragraphs can improve your writing greatly. Basically, a paragraph is derived from the words "para and graphein". "Para" means beside, and "graphein" means the writing. Paragraph refers to a piece of writing in which the paragraphs starts to indicate the reader that a new kind of material will so on (Saraka, 1980:26). A paragraph is a group of a sentences expressing one idea, complete in one section of writing or point (McCrimon, 1984:195). The rules of constructing a paragraph are similar to those for constructing a sentence. A paragraph is a unit of discourse developing a single idea. It consists of a group or series of sentences closely related to one another and to the thought expressed by the whole group or series. Devoted, like the sentence, to the development of one topic, a good paragraph is also, like a good essay, a complete treatment in itself." A paragraph is a piece of writing that consists of several sentences. A paragraph should always have complete, correct, and concise sentences. As well it should be easy to read and well organized. The paragraph itself should focus on one subject, theme, or central idea. In other words, a paragraph could be about an object such as a young boy. According to Siahaan (2008:7) a paragraph is a piece of writing containing several sentences, which can be divided into three parts. The first is called the beginning. Technically it is also called as the Topic Sentence (TS). The second is called development which it contains several Supporting Sentence (SS). And the third part is called the ending. It is a complete sentence which concludes the development. It closes the paragraph. Technically, it is also called as the Concluding Sentences (CS).

## 2.3 Parts of Paragraph

A topic sentence is a sentence whose main idea or claim controls the rest of the paragraph; the body of a paragraph explains, develops or supports with evidence the topic sentence's main idea or claim. The topic sentence is usually the first sentence of a paragraph, but not necessarily. It may come, for example, after a transition sentence; it may even come at the end of a paragraph. Topic sentence is not the only a way to organize a paragraph, and not all paragraphs need a topic sentence. For example, paragraphs that describe, narrate, or detail the steps in an experiment are not usually needed the topic sentence. Topic sentences are useful, however, in paragraphs that analyze and argue. Topic sentences are particularly useful for writers who have difficulty developing focused, unified paragraphs (i.e., writers who tend to sprawl). Topic sentences help these writers develop a main idea or claim for their paragraphs, and, perhaps most importantly, they help these writers stay focused and keep paragraphs manageable. A paragraph is a unit of information untitled by controlling idea. A paragraph is a good one only if the reader completely understands the unit of the information contains, and if is the controlling idea that is completely developed. Related to this D'angelo (1980:331) say that supporting sentence. Is fact or examplesthat make the idea clear. After finishing writing supporting sentences, generally the paragraph is ended by a concluding sentence. Concluding sentence signals the end of the paragraph and leaves the reader with important point to remember. Muhyidin (1988:2) says that a concluding sentence is one of the main parts of the paragraph after the topic sentence. A concluding sentence is not

absolutely necessary but its very important and helped to the reader because it signal the end of the paragraph in addition, the characteristic of a paragraph are coherence and unity.

## 2.4 Cohesion

Cohesion is concerned with the way propositions that are linked structurally in a text from this point it can be known that element of cohesive include the use of cohesive include the use of pronouns, grammatical, connectors, lexical cohesion and the some terms that refer to the object (Muhyidin, 1988:20). According to Muhyidin (1988:20) to know about cohesive in paragraph it has two characteristics, namely pronominal and verbal cohesion. Pronominal cohesion deals with the use of all nouns or pronoun in a paragraph (Siahaan, 2008:127). To be cohesion, it is better to have consistency in the use of the pronouns leading to the topic of the paragraph. Verbal cohesion is show the use of predicate verb in paragraph need to have a restively similar tense, so that they constitute a clear setting of time (Siahaan, 2008:129). Providing transitions between ideas is largely a matter of attitude. we must never assume that the readers know what we know. In fact, it's a good idea to assume not only that the readers need all the information that we have and need to know how we arrived at the point we are at, but also that they are not quite as quick as we are. we might be able to leap from one side of the stream to the other; believe that the readers need some stepping stones and be sure to place them in readily accessible and visible spots. There are four basic mechanical considerations in providing transitions between ideas: using transitional expressions, repeating key words and phrases, using pronoun reference, and using parallel form. Transitional tags run the gamut from the most simple — the little conjunctions: *and*, *but*, *nor*, *for*, *yet*, *or*, (and sometimes) *so* — to more complex signals that ideas are somehow connected — the conjunctive adverbs and transitional expressions such as *however*, *moreover*, *nevertheless*, *on the other hand*.

Here is a chart of the transitional devices (also called **conjunctive adverbs** or **adverbial conjunctions**) accompanied with a simplified definition of function (note that some devices appear with more than one definition):

<b>addition</b>	again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, too
<b>comparison</b>	also, in the same way, likewise, similarly
<b>concession</b>	granted, naturally, of course
<b>contrast</b>	although, and yet, at the same time, but at the same time, despite that, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, regardless, still, though, yet
<b>emphasis</b>	certainly, indeed, in fact, of course
<b>example or illustration</b>	after all, as an illustration, even, for example, for instance, in conclusion, indeed, in fact, in other words, in short, it is true, of course, namely, specifically, that is, to illustrate, thus, truly
<b>summary</b>	all in all, altogether, as has been said, finally, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to put it differently, to summarize

<b>time sequence</b>	after a while, afterward, again, also, and then, as long as, at last, at length, at that time, before, besides, earlier, eventually, finally, formerly, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, in the past, last, lately, meanwhile, moreover, next, now, presently, second, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, still, subsequently, then, thereafter, too, until, until now, when
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McCrimon (1984: 195) says that there are two ways to achieve coherence, first by using transition signals to show that one idea is related to the next, and second by arranging sentences in a logical order. Transition signal are words such as first, second, finally, therefore and however, or phrases such as in conclusion, on the other hand, and as a result. The writer can be say that a paragraph is coherent when the sentences move together in such a way that the reader can move easily, from one sentence to another sentence and read a paragraph as integrated whole. The sentences paragraphs are arranged in a clear logical order and when the sentences are related.

## 2.5 Unity

Unity means that we discuss only one main idea in a paragraph (Siahaan, 2008:44). The main idea is stated in the topic sentence, and then each and every supporting sentence develops that idea. And every supporting sentence must directly explain or prove the main idea. This is stated in the topic sentence.

## 2.6 Recount Text

Recount text is often seen as the easiest non-fiction text type to teach, since recounts are organized chronologically, like a story (Siahaan, 2006: 6-7). A recount is introduced to retell events for the purpose of informing or entertaining. There are many occasions when students have a 'true story' to write, e.g. (1) Accounts of schoolwork or outings, (2) Events from history, (3) Anecdotes and personal accounts, (4) Bibliographical writing in any curricular area. However, chronological writing is not without its pitfalls. All teachers are familiar with young writers' accounts of school trips that deal admirably with the bus journey but omit to mention what happened later on. Some children, even in upper primary, have difficulty ordering events appropriately in more complex historical or biographical recounts (Siahaan, 2006:10). Most children therefore benefit from organizing the facts as notes on a timeline (or another sequenced framework) before writing. This provides an opportunity to sort out the main events, and their sequence, without the added effort of putting them into sentences

1. An overview of all the events, in clear chronological order, so the author knows exactly how much he or she has to cover (and doesn't get stuck on the bus)
2. An opportunity to consider how to divide the information into paragraphs before beginning to write
3. An opportunity to decide whether to follow a linear chronological structure or to adapt the time sequence for effect, e.g. starting with a key event in a biography.

If an appropriate recount note-taking format or 'skeleton' outline (such as the timeline) is used, the structure of these notes provides a bridge into the structure of the extended written recount. Chronological notes from any subject area can be used to provide the content for purposeful recount writing. It begins with an orientation that gives the background knowledge for the reader in order to understand about the text (i.e. who has involved, where it happened and when it happened). Then recount text unfolds with a series of events (ordered in chronological sequences). At various stages there may be personal comment on the events which is called re-orientation (Curriculum 2006). Thus it can be concluded that a recount text has three elements: Orientation or Setting, events and reorientation or concluding statement of the story.

### Generic Structure of Recount

1. Orientation : Introducing the participants, place and time.
2. Events : Describing series of events that happened in the past.
3. Reorientation : It is optional.

Stating personal comments of the writer to the story.

### Language Feature of Recount

1. Introducing personal participants : I, my, group, etc.
2. Using Chronological connection : First, then, etc.

3. Using linking verbs : was, were, saw, heard, etc.
4. Using action verbs : look, go, change, etc.
5. Using Simple Past
6. Using material process

To be able to compose a recount text effectively one should know well about the procedure or step by step activities that should be followed. There are many ways can be adopted in order to write a recount text, one of them is by following the next procedures (Ngabut, 2003). The steps are: (1) Prepare what information based on theme or the topic, (2) Provide the setting and introduce participants in orientation, (3) Determine the events that occur based on its sequences, (4) Summarize the events in re-orientation, (5) Arrange all the information to make first draft, and (6) Analyze the first draft especially in structure of text, vocabulary and grammar conjunction, spelling and punctuation.

### **Earthquake**

Let me remind you my experience during an earthquake last week. When the earthquake happened, I was on my car. I was driving home from my vocation to Bali. Suddenly my car lunched to one side to the left. I though I got flat tire. I did not know that it was an earthquake. I know that it was earthquake when I saw some telephone and electricity poles falling down to the ground, like matchsticks. Then I saw a lot of rocks tumbling across the road. I was trapped by the rock. Even I could not move my car at all. There were rocks everywhere. There was nothing I could do but left the car and walked along way to my house, in the town. When I reached my town, I was surprised that there was almost nothing left. The earthquake made a lot of damage to my town. Although was left, I thanked to God that nobody was seriously injured.

Analyzing the text

Generic structure analysis;

Orientation; I was on the car last week

Events; telephone and electricity poles were falling down, etc

Re- orientation; thanking God because nobody was seriously injured

Language feature analysis

Using personal participant; I

Using chronological connectives; then, and, suddenly

Using linking verb; was, were

Using action verb; moved, left, walked, made, etc

Using simple past tense pattern; earthquake happened, I was on the car, etc

### **3. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

In this research the writer wants to know the performance of the students in the developing paragraph. Its observation is focused on writing paragraph that based on topic, supporting sentence, cohesion, coherence and unity. As a descriptive qualitative in which the researcher needs to determine the students' performance in writing based on giving imagination. And try to give a description of a concept, and also give the answer for the question which are related to the subject of the research. The subject on this research is the year 2009-2008 at English Department in FKIP UHN Pematangsiantar. The writer uses the students in writing class to be the key subjects and a teacher to be the supplement. The writer concentrated most of the students in their performance in developing paragraph but the teacher is needed to give information about the application of what the students did. The level of the student that writer investigates is 25 students from each year (2009-2008) and the total number is 50 students. The object of the research is the students' writing in writing class as how they develop paragraph with the title: I LOVE MY CAMPUS. All the students on their writing to be data are selected and reduced to the three data. In processing the data, the researchers collected by these steps:

1. Explain the elements of writing like Topic Sentence, Supporting Sentence, Concluding Sentence, Cohesion, Coherence and Unity.
2. Explain the generic structure of paragraph.
3. Ask the students to writing paragraph I LOVE MY CAMPUS.
4. Finally, collect students' writing and analyses the Topic Sentence, Supporting Sentences, Concluding Sentences, Cohesion, Coherence, Unity and the generic structure in their writing.

### 3.1 Triangulation

The triangulation in qualitative study is indicated to look for aspect of: Theory, Methodology and Data (Harris, 1969:21). Aspect for theory is studied according to its relation with the concern with the technique and procedure. It is hoped to get needed data. Aspect of the data concerns with the needed process and technique to indicate the validity and believability of data. All the aspects are bound each other. A certain methodology and a set of that are propounded by triangulation theory and methodology and a set of instrument that is propounded by relationship among the theory, methodology and functionally is qualitative study.

### 3.2 Data Analysis and Results

The analysis of each data is written in the following table. The abbreviations in the table are from the following terms;

TS→ Topic Sentence

SS→ Supporting Sentences

CS→ Concluding Sentences

PC→ Pronominal Cohesion

VC→ Verbal Cohesion

C→ Coherence

U→ Unity

The following table consists of the score for each data. The score of each data is accumulated from five aspects, such as; Content (C), Organization (O), Vocabulary (V), Language Use (LU), Mechanic (M).

Data	C	O	V	LU	M	Total	Note
1	24	16	20	20	3	83	The writer uses word <i>laboraturium</i> which is not relevant in English. The writer should use Laboratory in stead of <i>laboraturium</i> .
2	18	10	13	13	3	57	There is not well-structured sentence and the supporting sentences are not relevant to prove the topic sentence.
Data	C	O	V	LU	M	Total	Note
3	12	12	15	16	3	58	The topic sentence is not clear because it's not relevant to the main topic "my campus" that will be elaborated in the paragraph.
4	18	10	13	13	3	57	The word order of the topic sentence is not well-ordered and supporting sentences are not relevant to prove the topic sentence.
5	18	10	13	13	3	57	Some of the supporting sentences are not relevant to support the topic sentence.
6	25	16	20	20	5	86	The unity of the paragraph is satisfactory
7	18	12	18	18	3	69	Some of the supporting sentences are not relevant to support the topic sentence.
8	18	12	18	18	2	68	Writer has mistakes in word choice and structures
9	19	12	13	17	3	64	There should be written "complete facility" in stead of <i>fasilities completely</i> .
10	19	12	19	19	3	72	"I couldn't enjoyed study there" should be "I couldn't enjoy.
11	30	17	20	23	4	94	The paragraph is good enough.
12	18	12	15	16	3	64	The writer uses word <i>laboraturium</i> which is not relevant in English. The writer should use Laboratory in stead of <i>laboraturium</i> .
13	20	12	19	20	4	75	The topic sentence is not relevant to the 3 supporting sentences.
14	25	19	20	22	4	90	The text/paragraph is well-structured and it is good paragraph.

15	13	12	12	12	3	52	The topic sentence and the supporting sentences are not correlated.
16	12	12	10	12	2	48	There are mistakes in the word choice and structures.
17	13	12	12	12	3	52	The topic sentence is unclear/not relevant to the main topic.
18	19	15	19	21	4	78	The topic sentence is not specific.
19	13	12	12	12	3	52	The topic sentence and the supporting sentences are not correlated.
20	22	15	19	21	4	81	The paragraph is good enough.
21	20	15	20	18	4	77	The topic sentence and the supporting sentences are not correlated.
22	30	17	20	23	4	94	The paragraph is good enough.
23	14	16	15	13	3	61	The topic sentence is not specific.
24	30	17	20	23	4	94	The paragraph is good enough.
25	20	13	14	18	3	68	Some of words in the text are misspelled.

After analyzing the data, there are some research findings as the following:

1. There is not well-structured sentence and the supporting sentences are not relevant to prove the topic sentence.
2. The topic sentence is not clear because it's not relevant to the main topic "my campus" that will be elaborated in the paragraph and the word order of the topic sentence is not well-ordered and supporting sentences are not relevant to prove the topic sentence.
3. Some of the supporting sentences are not relevant to support the topic sentence. The writer has mistakes in word choice and structures. For example there should be written "complete facility" in stead of *fasilities completely*.
4. The topic sentence is not specific and the topic sentence and the supporting sentences are not correlated. Some of words in the text are misspelled.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

After observing and analyzing the data written by English Department students, the writers decide on two things; first, there are lacks in formulating the topic sentences and supporting sentences. Some supporting sentences are not correlated/not relevant to the topic sentences presented by the students because the topic sentences are often not supported by the supporting sentences. Second, the coherence is mostly not well-applied in each data because the supporting sentences are not well-ordered to make the data in logical order.

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