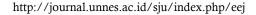


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Cohesion and Coherence in Undergraduate Students' Argumentative Essays

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Article Info

Abstract

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Keywords: Cohesion, coherence, argumentative essays This study aims to investigate cohesion and coherence in argumentative essays written by undergraduate students at Syekh Nurjati state Islamic institute of Cirebon, West Java, Indonesia. This study used discourse analysis as a research design. Five argumentative essays were chosen based on purposive sampling. The five argumentative essays were analyzed using Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) theory that contributing to the cohesion of the text, namely cohesive devices. Then, it was analyzed using Thornbury (2005) theory about coherence. The results of this study showed that undergraduate students at Syekh Nurjati state Islamic institute of Cirebon tend to use reference more frequently than the other grammatical cohesive devices. From 755 occurrences of grammatical cohesive devices which presented in the five argumentative essays, 532 of them were in the form of reference. Besides, they also tend to use repetition more often than the other lexical cohesive devices in their argumentative essay. It always present in the five argumentative essays. Furthermore, the thematic progressions were organized well. It is showed by the occurrence of two or more thematic progressions in each argumentative essay.

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INTRODUCTION

Four language skills are essential to master by a language learner. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Harmer (as cited in Muhib, Anggani & Hartono, 2014; Anggrayani, Sofwan & Saleh, 2015) states that writing is a skill that is as important as listening, speaking, and reading, but writing skill is more difficult for students to learn. It is because writing skill requires high-level thinking skills (Hidayat, Rukmini, & Bharati, 2019, p. 166). Hence, writing has long process to express ideas (Mamduhan, Fitriati & Sutopo, 2019, p. 85).

Writing is undoubtedly important for students of college (Amperawaty & Warsono, 2019, p. 30). It becomes the main tool for learning especially students of language department. Then, it is generally assumed as the most essential activity for measuring student's achievement. Besides that, Fitriati and Yonata (2017) assert that due to the complexity of writing, it can be used as the parameter of a result of students' language development (p. 252). This is because students of the college are demanded to be able to express their ideas both in non-academic and academic writing such as writing text, an essay and a final project. As asserted by Suwandi (2016), the ability to write a text has played an important role for college students in Indonesia since it is one of the requirements to graduate from university.

Language is realized as text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Thornbury, 2005; Sutopo, 2014) and variety of texts are used in a college. One of them is argumentative essays. An argumentative essay is an essay in which we agree or disagree with an issue then using reasons to support the opinion (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p. 142). Anderson and Anderson (1997) assert that an argumentative essay allows its writer to express their opinion on a topic and support that opinion with strong logic and evidence. Hence, an argumentative essay is a type of writing which requires its writer to defend a position on a topic using pieces of evidence. Besides that, the argumentative essay is different from the other texts because it is considered the most difficult writing which requires all the expository skill that students have learned. Furthermore,

Fahnestock and Secor (1983) believed that writing argument prepares students for the kinds of writing tasks demanded in a college courses and careers. As a result, the argumentative essay has become a complicated assignment for some undergraduate students as well as English department students.

There are some features in a text that make it good. Some of them are cohesion and coherence. As asserted by Halliday and Hasan (as cited in Rahmawati, Rukmini, & Sutopo, 2014, p. 107) that cohesion and coherence are two properties that make a text good. Cohesion refers to relation of meaning that exists within text and defines what it is a text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 4). It means that cohesion should always be presented in the text. It is because cohesion promotes clarity within text which is achieved through the implementation of cohesive devices. Cohesive devices are the words and strategies the writer uses to make a meaningful connection between ideas within a text clear to the reader. Meanwhile, coherence means clear and reasonable connection to each part in a sentence and it should be connected in smooth and logical order (Fengjie, Xiuying, & Chuanze, 2014). In other words, coherence refers to the unity or connectedness that makes the sentences in the text hangs together.

Cohesion and coherence are essential features in the text. However, some undergraduate students do not use cohesion and coherence correctly. Chen (2008) reports that misuse of cohesive devices become the common problem found in composing an exposition text. Then, Emilia, Habibi and Bangga (2018) assert that the exposure to an argumentative genre is still limited both in native tongue and English in Indonesia context.

That problem leads researcher to investigate whether or not the undergraduate students' argumentative essay implement cohesion and coherence. Besides, the complexity of delivering arguments in argumentative essay is interesting area to be researched. It is because argumentative essays which considered as the complicated assignment for students will be written by their highest ability. Hence, they will use cohesive devices optimally to achieve coherent argumentative essays. Therefore, this

study is worth to be conducted to reveal the most frequent of cohesive devices which were employed in the argumentative essays and how well coherence can be achieved.

METHODS

The design of this study is discourse analysis. This study uses discourse analysis due to the objects of this study, which are five argumentative essays written by undergraduate students of the English department. The researcher analyzes the most frequent of cohesive devices and investigates how well coherence is achieved in argumentative essays. The primary data of this study are five argumentative essays under the same topic that the lecturer has decided before. The five argumentative essays are chosen based on purposive sampling.

The researcher analyzes the cohesion and coherence by using the table of cohesion and coherence check lists which adapted from Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) and Thornbury (2005). In analyzing the lexical cohesive devices, the researcher also uses online application for easier the process of analysis. After that, the researcher puts findings into some tables and writes the interpretation for each of them. At last, the researcher does the triangulation by asking an expert of cohesion and coherence theory as an investigator in order to validate the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Grammatical Cohesive Devices

The first research problem in this present study deals with the most frequent of grammatical cohesive devices. Grammatical cohesive devices contribute to cohesiveness of a text. There are three types of grammatical cohesive devices; reference, ellipsis and substitution, and conjunction. Yet, in the five argumentative essays, the researcher does not find the use of ellipsis and substitution. In other words, there are only two types of grammatical cohesive devices which use in argumentative essays written by undergraduate students of

Syekh Nurjati State Islamic institute of Cirebon. It can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Grammatical Cohesive Devices

	Reference			Ellipsis and Substitutio			Co	njunc	tion
				n	3.7	N.T.			
×	P	D	C	C	V	N	E	Ex	Е
Text							1		n
1	54	37	6	-	-	-	1	37	7
2	14	83	-	-	-	-	1	27	10
3	55	48	7	-	-	-	2	31	10
4	30	74	1	-	-	-	3	37	14
5	58	58	7	-	-	-	1	17	12
							2		
$\overline{\Sigma}$	21	30	2	-	-	-	1	15	53
	1	0	1				9	1	

The bold one indicates the most frequent of grammatical cohesive devices. It shows that reference is the most frequent of grammatical cohesive devices use in five argumentative essays. Reference, in the form of demonstrative reference and personal reference dominate the grammatical cohesive devices in the five argumentative essays. Based on the number of occurrence of reference, it shows that demonstrative reference is the most used of grammatical cohesive devices in argumentative essays written by undergraduate students of English department at *Syekh Nurjati* State Islamic Institute of Cirebon. Here are some examples of grammatical cohesive devices.

Example 1 Personal Reference

They are interesting in ICT due to it offers some easiness for them to access many resources that might help them to doing their tasks.

Personal reference in example above is presented in bold. The word "they" is used to represent the word "pupils" in the previous sentence. Then, the word "them" and "their" also relate to the word "pupils" in the previous sentence. However, the word "it" is used to represent the word "ICT" in the previous clause. The use of personal reference is to increase readers' interest in reading the text.

Example 2 Demonstrative Reference

This study shows that there are at least 30 million teenagers in Indonesia who access the internet technology.

The word "this" points out that it refers to the first argumentative essay. Then, the word "there" emphasizes the word "Indonesia". Furthermore, the article "the" emphasizes that the phrase "internet technology" is specific because it is mentioned before in previous paragraphs.

Example 3 Comparative Reference

It will give chance for pupils to be **more** creative due to they will learning by themselves.

The word "more" includes into the comparative reference because it has degree of comparison. In degree of comparison, the word "more" is in the comparative degree. It means that the word "more" is used to compare someone or something. Then, in example above, it is used to emphasize the adjective which is added by it. In other words, the word "more" emphasizes that the phrase "more creative" is higher than the word "creative".

Reference as part of grammatical cohesive devices creates cohesion by creating links between elements in a text. Besides that, Hameed (2008) states that reference as form of grammatical cohesive devices have function to retrieve presupposed information in a text and must be identifiable for it to be considered as cohesive (p. 84). Demonstrative reference keeps track of information through location using proximity references like "this, that, these, those, here, there, then, and the". Halliday and Hasan (1976) refer demonstrative reference as 'verbal pointing' to indicate a 'scale of proximity' to the presupposed reference (p. 57). It means that demonstrative reference is used to build cohesiveness in a text by keeping track of information. Therefore, the readers will know which of information that being discussed and where it refers to.

Demonstrative reference is the most used grammatical cohesive devices in the five argumentative essays. Then, most of the demonstrative reference which found in those five argumentative essays is in the form of "the".

Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that the use of "the" commonly referred to as a define article, acts to specifically identify (p. 71). It means that the writer of argumentative essay tries to specify the information given in essay in order the readers will easily understand which information that being discussed. Besides that, it also creates cohesiveness within an essay because the information or idea given is hanged together in essay.

Lexical Cohesive Devices

The second research problem in this present study deals with the most frequently used of lexical cohesive devices. Lexical cohesive devices contribute to the cohesiveness within a text. It consists of repetition, synonym, hyponym, and meronymy. However, not all of the five argumentative essays employe all type of lexical cohesive devices. It can be seen in table 2 below.

Table 2. Lexical Cohesive Devices

Text	Lexical Cohesive Devices					
	R	S	Н	M		
1	✓	√	✓	-		
2	✓	√	✓	✓		
3	✓	✓	✓	-		
4	✓	✓	-	-		
5	✓	✓	✓	-		

Table 2 above displays the occurrence of lexical cohesive devices in five argumentative essays. It shows that repetition and synonym were employed by the writer of each argumentative essay. It means that repetition and synonym are the most frequently used of lexical cohesive devices in the five argumentative essays.

The analyses of lexical cohesive devices are based on Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Then, the analysis of repetition and synonym are done with two online applications namely Wordcounter and Twinword. Wordcounter is used to help the researcher in determining the repetition which occurs in argumentative essays. Meanwhile, Twinword version 0.9.4 is used to

analyze synonym in argumentative essays. Here are some examples of repetition and synonym which are found in the five argumentative essays.

Example 3 Repetition

It shows the fact that over the past 20 years, ICT gives positive effects for pupils' learning progress (Mumtaz, 2017). From that fact, it means that ICT has an important role for pupils. Moreover, it can be seen from the fact that pupils will get higher motivation when they used ICT as a tool in learning English (Hennessy, Ruthven, & Brindley, n.d.). They are interesting in ICT due to it offers some easiness for them to access many resources that might help them to doing their tasks.

Repetition in the example above is showed in bold. Repetition is repeating of word or phrase to create interconnection. The word which is repeated in the example above is ICT. It means that "ICT" being the discussion topic in the argumentative essay. It also appropriates with the title of the first argumentative essay, "The Impacts of ICT in Teaching and Learning English". The function of using repetition in this context is to make the idea clearer.

Example 4 Synonym

Education is a tool to get better opportunity in our life, due to that, it is **important** for us to become an educated person. There are many **essential** things that must be applied for an educated person; one of them is mastering language.

Synonymy is showed in bold. The function of synonymy is to create cohesiveness – in the text. The word "*important*" is synonymous – with the word "*essential*".

Repetition and synonym are part of lexical cohesive devices used by those five argumentative essays. However, based on the frequency of occurrence of lexical cohesive devices found in five argumentative essays, repetition is the most frequently used by the writer of argumentative essay. It can be seen in appendix that repetition as part of lexical cohesive devices dominated the other types of

lexical cohesive devices. Furthermore, the result of this present study is in line with the previous studies (Indriani, 2012; Faizah & Bahri, 2014; Rahmawati, et al 2014; Adiantika, 2015).

Repetition occurs when word or phrase is repeated continuously in a text. It also has function to build cohesiveness within a text. It is because the information or idea given is repeated so the readers will aware that it is the information or idea that the writer tries to deliver. Besides that, repetition is the easier way to create cohesiveness within a text compared to other lexical cohesive devices. It is because the writer just needs to repeat the information or idea that wants to deliver.

Coherence

The third research problem in this present study aims to draw the thematic progression the argumentative essays. The argumentative essays are analyzed based on Thornbury (2005)theory of thematic progression. There are three types of thematic progression, namely zigzag, constant and multiple. Those three types of thematic progressions are found in five argumentative essays. It can be seen in table 3 below.

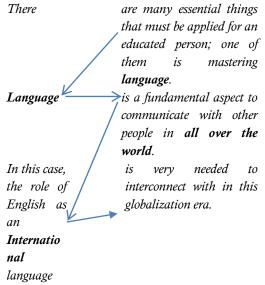
Table 3. Thematic Progression

	Thematic Progression					
Text	Zigzag	Constant	Multiple			
1	28	11	2			
2	23	14	4			
3	11	13	8			
4	19	21	0			
5	13	22	0			
Σ	94	81	14			

Table 3 above shows the number of thematic progression that appears in each argumentative essay. The bold one indicates the dominant pattern in each essay. It can be seen that two argumentative essays are dominated by zigzag pattern. Then, three argumentative essays are dominated by constant pattern. However, the occurrence of zigzag pattern in five argumentative essays is the most frequently employed by all of the writers. From 189

patterns of thematic progression which exist in five argumentative essays, 94 of them are in the form of zigzag patterns. Here are the examples of each pattern of thematic progression that found in argumentative essays.

Example 5 Zigzag Pattern

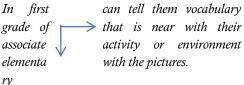


Zigzag pattern occurs when the comment in the previous sentence became topic in the next sentence. In example above, the bold one indicates the process of changing from the comment into the topic. It can be seen that "language" which is placed in comment became topic in the next sentence. Then, the phrase "all over the world" in comment became topic in the next sentence. But, the phrase "all over the world" is changed into "international".

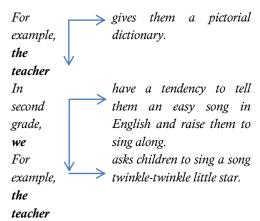
As mentioned earlier that zigzag patterns dominate the occurrence number in the five argumentative essays. It means that zigzag pattern is the most frequently used in argumentative essays written by undergraduate students of *Syekh Nurjati* State Islamic Institute of Cirebon. Besides zigzag pattern, the writers of five argumentative essays also employ constant pattern. Here is the example.

Example 6 Constant Pattern

school,

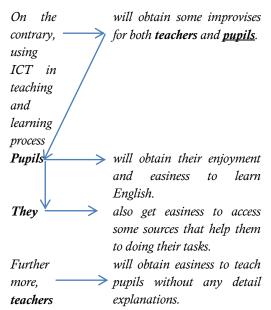


we



Constant pattern occurs when the writer uses the same topic in sentences. In example above, the bold one indicates the topic in each sentence. It can be seen that the word "we" and "the teacher" are the topic. The word "we" appears because the writer positions him/herself and the readers as a teacher.

Example 7 Multiple Topic Pattern



Multiple topic patterns are a development topic with repeating word of a comment in some next topic. It can happen when the new topic are formed from the same comment. In example above, the topic 'pupils' and 'teachers' are formed from the comment of the first sentence. Therefore, it is included into multiple topic patterns.

Multiple topic patterns are rarely used by the writer of argumentative essays at *Syekh Nurjati* State Islamic Institute of Cirebon. From the five argumentative essays which are chosen as the subject of this present study, only three of them that employed this kind of topic patterns. Besides that, the number of occurrence of multiple topic patterns is the lowest among other. It only occurs 14 times from 189 occurrences of thematic progression.

In conclusion, zigzag pattern occupies the first position of the most frequently used of thematic progression in five argumentative essays written by undergraduate students of *Syekh Nurjati* State Islamic Institute of Cirebon. Then, it is followed by constant pattern of thematic progression. The last, multiple topic patterns occupy the last position.

An understanding of how information is structured within a text and the ways of its delivered is essential for cohesion and coherent in a text. Hawes (2015) states that theme and rheme act as the building brick of cohesion but its role in thematic progression contribute to coherence of a text (p. 93). It means that the use of thematic progression in an argumentative essay contributes to its coherence.

There are three types of thematic progression found in the five argumentative essays. Those are constant pattern, zigzag pattern, and multiple topic patterns. Each argumentative essay employs two or more thematic progression. For instance, the first, the second, and the third argumentative essay use three types of thematic progression. Meanwhile, the fourth and the fifth argumentative essay only use two types of thematic progression in the form of constant pattern and zigzag pattern. Thus, it is in line with Thornbury (2005) who asserts that it would be rare to find a longish text that adopted one pattern at the exclusion of others (p. 40). It means that the five argumentative essays use thematic progression in the right way. It is because an argumentative essay is not only use one type of thematic progression. Besides that, the implementation of thematic progression demonstrates how the writers mix and combine their argument in the

way they feel is most coherent. Therefore, the writers combine the three types of thematic progression in their argumentative essay.

The occurrence of zigzag pattern in five argumentative essays is the most frequently employed by all of the writers. From 189 patterns of thematic progression which exist in five argumentative essays, 94 of them are in the form of zigzag patterns. Zigzag pattern of thematic progression is used when the writer wants to build continuity within a text. It is because zigzag pattern occurs when the comment in previous sentence became the topic in the following sentence. It means that the topic will develop, not focus on one topic. In addition, Eggins (2004) also states that the zigzag pattern can be the solution for the theme re-iteration which does not have a sense of cumulative development.

Furthermore, the use of zigzag patterns in argumentative essay reinforces the arguments in within a text. Then, it is also in line with the previous study that conducted by Undayasari and Saleh (2017) which was revealing that writers in maintaining the focus and reinforcing the arguments in the texts use zigzag pattern as much as re-iteration pattern. The result of analysis from the five argumentative essays in this present study also shows that there is no big difference between the occurrence of constant pattern (re-iteration) and zigzag pattern. The constant pattern occurs 81 in five argumentative essays meanwhile zigzag pattern appears 94 times.

CONCLUSION

From the research finding and discussion, this study has some conclusions related to the research problems. The first research problem deals with the most frequent of grammatical cohesive devices in undergraduate students' argumentative essays. It is found that reference, particularly demonstrative reference, is frequently used by undergraduate students at Sykeh Nurjati State Islamic Institute of Cirebon in their argumentative essays. Demonstrative

reference is used to build cohesiveness in a text by keeping track of information.

The second research problem deals with the most frequent of lexical cohesive devices in undergraduate students' argumentative essays. It is found that repetition is the most frequently used by undergraduate students at Sykeh Nurjati State Islamic Institute of Cirebon in their argumentative essays. It is mostly used by undergraduate students because repetition is assumed as the simple way to build cohesiveness within a text.

The third research problem deals with thematic progression in undergraduate students' argumentative essays. It is found that the implementation of thematic progression is well because each argumentative essay uses more than one type of thematic progression. Besides that, zigzag pattern dominates the five argumentative essays written by undergraduate students of English department at Syekh Nurjati State Islamic Institute of Cirebon.

For further research, we suggest for the use of interview as part of data collection. Through interview, the researcher will know the reason behind the occurrence of certain types of cohesive devices in undergraduate students' argumentative essays. Besides, it helps the researcher in providing deeper explanation.

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