

**AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ABILITY IN BUILDING
COHESION AND COHERENCE IN ARGUMENTATIVE
ESSAYS WRITTEN BY THE FOURTH YEAR
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
AT UNIVERSITY OF BENGKULU**

THESIS



**BY
ZIA HISNI MUBARAK
NIM 19345**

**Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements
to obtain a degree in Magister of Education**

**ENGLISH EDUCATION SECTION
LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM
GRADUATE PROGRAM
STATE UNIVERSITY OF PADANG
2013**

ABSTRAK

Zia Hisni Mubarak. 2013. Analisis Kemampuan Mahasiswa dalam Membangun Kohesi dan Koheren pada Essai Argumentatif yang ditulis oleh Mahasiswa tahun ke-empat Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Bengkulu. Tesis. Program Pasca Sarjana. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Ada beberapa permasalahan mendasar menulis yaitu; kesalahan gramatikal, kohesi dan koheren, dan isi serta organisasi. Berdasarkan permasalahan yang ditemukan pada awal penelitian, kemampuan mahasiswa dalam membangun kohesi dan koheren dalam menulis essai argumentatif oleh mahasiswa tahun ke-empat program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris universitas Bengkulu perlu untuk diteliti. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan kemampuan mahasiswa tahun ke-empat dalam membangun kohesi dan koheren dalam menulis essai argumentatif pada program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris universitas Bengkulu.

Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif. Populasi penelitian adalah mahasiswa tahun ke-empat program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris universitas Bengkulu yang terdaftar pada tahun ajaran 2012/2013. Sampel dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Data diperoleh melalui test menulis essai argumentatif. Data di analisa dengan menggunakan metode kuantitatif.

Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa dalam membangun kohesi adalah Low Average (LA) dan kemampuan mahasiswa dalam membangun koheren adalah Low Average (LA) dimana skor rata-rata menunjukkan bahwa beberapa siswa memiliki skor dengan rentang 3-3.5 yang berarti bahwa mereka memiliki pemahaman yang rendah terhadap macam-macam kohesi dan koheren. Penelitian ini mengimplikasikan bahwa kohesi dan koheren perlu diperkenalkan seluruhnya kepada mahasiswa di universitas. Dosen bahasa Inggris diharapkan untuk memberikan banyak latihan menulis kepada mahasiswanya berkaitan dengan kemampuan mereka dalam membangun kohesi dan koheren dalam tulisan mereka.

ABSTRACT

Zia Hisni Mubarak. 2013. An Analysis of Students' Ability in Building Cohesion And Coherence in Argumentative Essays Written By The Fourth Year Students of English Department of University of Bengkulu. Thesis. Graduate Program. State University of Padang.

There are some major problems regarding to the writing such as; grammatical errors, cohesion and coherence, and content and organization. Based on the problems found in preliminary research, the students' ability in building cohesion and coherence in argumentative essays written by the fourth year students of English department of University of Bengkulu is necessary to conduct. The purpose of this research was to find out the fourth year English department students' ability in building cohesion and coherence in writing argumentative essays at University of Bengkulu.

This research was designed as a descriptive research. The population of this research was the students in the fourth year of English Department at University of Bengkulu; enroll in the 2012/ 2013 academic year. The sample was selected by using purposive sampling technique. The data were collected through writing test in argumentative essays. The data was analyzed by using quantitative method.

The findings of this research concluded that the students' ability in building cohesion was Low Average (LA) and the students' ability in building coherence was Low Average (LA) where the average score shows that some students have scores in the range of 3-3.5 which means that they have low understanding on cohesion and coherence devices. This research implies that the cohesion and coherence devices need to be introduced completely to the students of university. English lecturers are suggested to give more practices in writing related to the students' ability in building cohesion and coherence into their writing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful. *Alhamdulillah*, all praises to Allah for the strengths and His blessing in completing this thesis which entitled **“An Analysis of Students’ Ability in Building Cohesion And Coherence in Argumentative Essays Written By The Fourth Year Students of English Department at University of Bengkulu”**. Then, *shalawat* and blessing are sent upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the *uswatun hasanah* for all moslems.

Special appreciation goes to my advisor, Dr. Hamzah, MA., MM. for his supervision and constant support. His invaluable help of constructive comments and suggestions throughout thesis works have contributed to the success of this research. Then, my appreciation to my co-advisor, Dr. Desmawati Radjab, M.Pd for her support and contribution to this research. My acknowledgement also goes to all the contributors— Prof. Dr. Mukhaiyar, Dr. Refnaldi, M.Litt and Prof. Dr. Gusril, M.Pd for their comments, contributions and supportive feedbacks for improvement of this thesis.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Director of Graduate Program, State University of Padang and Staffs, for their support and help towards my study. My acknowledgement also goes to all English lecturers and office staffs of University of Bengkulu for their co-operations.

Sincere thanks to all my friends especially, Ice, Keke, Ami, Yaya, Ega, EPS students and others for their kindness and moral support during my study. Thanks for the friendship and memories.

Last but not least, my deepest gratitude goes to my beloved parents; Mr. Alizar, BA and Mrs. Sudarni, BA and also to my beloved brothers; Hasnan Hanif, S.Ip, Hasnan Afif, S.Kom and Febi Fauzan Azmi for their endless love, prayers and encouragement. To my best friends, Suci Emilia Fitri, S.AP. M.PA, Ildi Kurniawan, M.Pd, Wisma Yunita, M.Pd, thanks for the support and care. To those who indirectly contributed in this research, your kindness means a lot to me. Thank you very much.

Finally, the writer realizes that this thesis may have several weaknesses. Therefore, comments, suggestions or supportive feedback for improvement of this research are really appreciated.

Padang, March 2013

The writer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRAK	i
ABSTRACT	ii
PERSETUJUAN AKHIR	iii
PERSETUJUAN KOMISI	iv
SURAT PERNYATAAN	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF THE TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background of the Problem.....	1
B. Identification of the Problem.....	5
C. Limitation of the Problem	6
D. Formulation of the Problems.....	6
E. Purposes of the Research.....	7
F. Significances of the Research	8
G. Definition of the Key Terms	8
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE.....	10
A. Review of the Related Theories	10
1. The Concept of Writing	10
a. Definition of Writing	10
b. Purposes of Writing	12
2. Teaching Writing Skill.....	15
3. Cohesion and Coherence in Writing	18

a. The Concept of Cohesion.....	19
b. Cohesion Devices.....	21
c. Cohesion Features	24
d. The Concept of Coherence.....	25
e. Coherence Devices.....	27
f. Unity in Writing	28
g. Cohesion and Coherence in Argumentative Essays.....	29
4. Argumentative Essays	29
a. Genre of Arguing	29
i. Exposition texts	31
ii. Discussion text.....	33
b. The Essay Writing of Argumentative Essays	34
5. Assessing Cohesion and Coherence in Writing Argumentative Essays.....	37
B. Review of the Related Findings	39
C. Conceptual Framework	44
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	47
A. Method of the Research.....	47
B. Location of the Research.....	47
C. Subjects of the Research	48
D. Instrumentation.....	49
E. Technique of Collecting Data	50
F. Technique of Analyzing Data	52
CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION	55
A. Data Description.....	55
B. Data Analysis	64
C. Research Findings	79
1. The students' ability in building cohesion	80
a. The students' ability in representing Substitution	80
b. The students' ability in representing Ellipsis.....	90
c. The students' ability in representing	

Reference.....	97
d. The students' ability in representing Conjunction.....	106
e. The students' ability in representing Lexical Cohesion.....	111
2. The students' ability in building coherence	118
a. The students' ability in repeating The Key Nouns	119
b. The students' ability in using Consistent Pronouns.....	123
c. The students' ability in using Transition Signals	130
d. The students' ability in representing Logical orders	139
D. Discussion	148
E. Limitation of the Research	150
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION	152
A. Conclusion.....	152
B. Implication	152
C. Suggestion	153
BIBLIOGRAPHY	154
APPENDICES	159

LIST OF THE TABLES

Table	Page
1 Holistic Scoring Hamp-Lyon (1992)	50
2 Students' average scores in building cohesion.....	56
3 Students' average scores in building coherence.....	58
4 The description of students' score in building cohesion	61
5 The description of students' score in building coherence	62
6 The students' ability in representing substitution.....	66
7 The students' ability in representing ellipsis.....	67
8 The students' ability in representing reference	69
9 The students' ability in representing conjunction	70
10 The students' ability in representing lexical cohesion	71
11 The students' ability in repeating key nouns.....	74
12 The students' ability in using consistent pronouns	75
13 The students' ability in using transition signals	76
14 The students' ability in representing logical orders	78

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1 Conceptual framework	46
2 The average score of cohesion devices	57
3 The average score of coherence devices	59
4 The average score of students' ability in building cohesion and coherence.....	60
5 The frequency of students' criteria in cohesion	62
6 The frequency of students' criteria in coherence.....	63
7 The students' ability in building cohesion	65
8 The students' ability in representing substitution	67
9 The students' ability in representing ellipsis.....	68
10 The students' ability in representing reference	69
11 The students' ability in representing conjunction	71
12 The students' ability in representing lexical cohesion	72
13 The students' ability in building coherence	73
14 The students' ability in repeating key nouns	74
15 The students' ability in using consistent pronouns	76
16 The students' ability in using transition signals	77
17 The students' ability in representing logical orders	79

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDICES	Page
1 Rubric of Using Cohesion Devices	159
2 Rubric of Using Coherence Devices	164
3 Writing tests form in Argumentative Essays	167
4 Students' scores and categories in building cohesion devices (scorer 1)	168
5 Students' scores and categories in building cohesion devices (scorer 2)	170
6 Students' scores and categories in building coherence devices (scorer 1)	172
7 Students' scores and categories in building coherence devices (scorer 2)	174
8 Students' scores and categories in representing Substitution	176
9 Students' scores and categories in representing Ellipsis.....	177
10 Students' scores and categories in representing Reference.....	178
11 Students' scores and categories in representing Conjunction in argumentative essay	179
12 Students' scores and categories in representing Lexical Cohesion.....	180
13 Students' scores and categories in Repeating Key Nouns	181
14 Students' scores and categories in using Consistent pronouns	182
15 Students' scores and categories in using Transition Signals.....	183
16 Students' scores and categories in Logical Orders	184
17 Students' scores and categories in using Cohesion devices.....	185
18 Students' scores and categories in using Coherence devices.....	186
19 The Students' skill in building Cohesion devices	187
20 The Students' skill in building Coherence devices	191
21 Students' score sheet in building cohesion and coherence (scorer 1)	194
22 Students' score sheet in building cohesion and coherence (scorer 2)	196
23 Students' Argumentative essays	198
24 Letters of Research Permission	206

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

There are four basic language skills in English such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Those are important skills in learning English. From those skills, “writing is considered as the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master” (Richards and Renandya, 2002: 303). Based on that statement, the difficulty of writing is not only on how to generate and organize the ideas, but also how to translate the ideas into the readable text. Relating to the difficulty of writing above, the students should pay more attention in writing and on how to express the ideas, thoughts, and opinions in the written form.

Moreover, as it is stated in the previous paragraph, writing is one of the important skills in English. There are some reasons relating to the importance of writing skill for students. The first is to lead the students to the academic success in the school. By developing the writing skill, students will gain benefit in writing their paper or essay assignments from a single paragraph and building multi-paragraphs essay. Then, the other reason for students is to develop their critical thinking so that they will have confidence in writing academic papers. By having good critical thinking in writing skill, they will be confident to put the ideas into the paper and write their papers easily in several pages long.

As mentioned in previous paragraph about the importance of writing skill for the students, being good at writing skill can help students easily to deliver their ideas, thoughts and opinions clearly to the readers and also to convey their messages into readable text. To tell the truth, it needs time to accomplish a piece of writing and it also needs more practice in transferring an idea or a message into a piece of paper, that is, the students have to know some major elements of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation in order to write good essay.

To assist the researcher in conducting the research, the preliminary research was conducted to see how well students put their idea into a piece of paper. The researcher took the third year students of University of Bengkulu on June 2012. In the learning process of building knowledge, the English Department of University of Bengkulu had offered the students to take Writing I to Writing IV and Academic Writing for the advanced course. The main aim of the writing courses is to provide the students with the knowledge of the process of academic writing especially on how to write good academic papers. Writing subjects are expected to give a good contribution for students to enhance their competence in communicating the idea well through the written language.

Based on the preliminary research during the research time, the researcher found some major problems regarding to their writing. First, the students had grammatical errors on their writing, for instance when they wrote a paragraph by using their own words, the researcher found some errors relating to the sentence structures, tenses use, and words choice. Next problem was cohesion which relates to

the representation of cohesion such as substitution, ellipsis, reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. Students, for example, had problem in their paragraph; it was found that the replacement of words (noun, verb, and clause) was based on the preceding sentences that did not show the substitution at all. They preferred to repeat the same word (noun, verb, and clause) in the next sentence instead of replacing them. Then, the third problem was the representation of coherence. There are four ways to achieve coherence; *repeating key nouns*, *using pronouns*, *using transition signals*, and *logical order*. In students' writing, the researcher found that the students failed to represent good coherence into their writing. For instance, in using transition signals, students failed to represent good movement from one sentence to the next. The last problem was content and organization in writing. It was found that the students lack of knowledge on how to write paragraph or an essay in a good way. It needed a continuity of practice in writing a paragraph or an essay. For example, the small mistake such as punctuation would make their writing failed to represent a good criteria of the text itself.

Therefore, from the description above, the researcher provided his preliminary research with empirical data of students' marks from the lecturer. The researcher took the data from 37 students in the class and the data described the students' ability in writing. The researcher found that 3 students (8.1 %) got the lowest mark in range 50 to 60. Then, 15 students (40.5 %) got the mark in range 61 to 70. After that, 12 students (32.5 %) got the mark in range 71 to 80. Then, the last range was 81 to 90 where 7 students (18.9 %) got the best mark.

From the description of the empirical data above, the students' ability was average and more important that students at English Department of University of Bengkulu should be able to write better. As it is found in the field, students' problems in writing are common to be found in writing. Therefore, the process of writing may not be ignored by the students. They need to pay attention to the writing stages beginning from planning the text until finishing the draft. Thus, writing as a required subject at University of Bengkulu is one subject which is considered as difficult subject for the students.

In fact, the students who are asked to write an essay, failed to represent the criteria of good text such as *cohesion* and *coherence*. The essay produced by the students was still disappointed. This is happened due to the lack of knowledge of the students. In the university level, they are expected to acquire the knowledge on how to write good academic papers (a paragraph, an essay and a research report or research plan) in English.

Moreover, they need to be familiar with kinds of genre in the text, one of them is genre of arguing or which is known best as argumentative essays; discussion, analytical and hortatory exposition text. These kinds of the text have their own function to each other but together they employ some arguments to be discussed. This genre correlates to the task of writing subjects to write papers in some paragraphs or an essay or research report or research plan which involve the argumentation itself. This genre also represents the criteria of cohesion and coherence into its essay.

Furthermore, considering the problems that researcher found in the field on the preliminary research, the researcher is interested to conduct a further research in analyzing the students' ability in building cohesion and coherence devices in students' writing of argumentative essays written by the fourth year students of English Department of University of Bengkulu.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the curriculum of writing subjects at English Department University of Bengkulu, students who study writing subjects (including Academic Writing) are expected to be able to write good academic papers (a paragraph, an essay and a research report or research plan) in English. Since they must write their research report or thesis for completing their S1 degree, so that, they need to write paragraph by paragraph linked together as the standard of a good paragraph. Relating to the background of problem above, the researcher identifies some problems faced by the students in writing such as problems regarding to cohesion and coherence.

A good paragraph or writing should indicates three main types; *unity*, *cohesion*, and *coherence*. From those criteria, most students are failed to represent cohesion and coherence into their writing. There are some solutions which can be done regarding this issue. The first is getting them to be familiar to cohesion devices such as substitution, ellipsis, reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. They have to be familiar also to the coherence that could be achieved by repeating key words, using pronouns, using transition signals, and logical orders. By this way, they can learn

how to substitute the noun to pronoun and to arrange their sentences into logical order. The second one is getting them involved in practicing how to write paragraph coherent and cohesive. There is no other best way to cope the problems than to practice and force them to write.

C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, the researcher conducts the research on student's ability in building cohesion and coherence in their writing of argumentative essays. As it is stated in the review of related literature, the scope of good paragraph is indicated by the three main types of good paragraph in the text; *unity*, *cohesion*, and *coherence*, but in this research the researcher limits the problem of the research only on the representation of *cohesion* and *coherence* which are found in the students' writing of argumentative essays. This genre is chosen by the researcher because considering the ability of students of fourth year of English Department of University of Bengkulu in writing argumentative essays which is assumed to be better enough to represent the cohesion and coherence into their writing.

D. Formulation of the Problems

Based on the limitation of the problem above, the problems of the research are formulated as follows:

1. How is the fourth year English department students' ability in building cohesion devices concerning with the ellipsis, substitution, reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion in writing argumentative essays at University of Bengkulu?
2. How is the fourth year English department students' ability in building coherence devices concerning with the repetitions of key word/noun, the use of pronoun, the use of transition signals, and logical orders in writing argumentative essays at University of Bengkulu?

E. Purposes of the Research

In relation to the formulation of the problem above, this research has two purposes as follows:

1. to find out the fourth year English department students' ability in building cohesion devices concerning with the ellipsis, substitution, reference, conjunction, and lexical cohesion in writing argumentative essays at University of Bengkulu.
2. to find out the fourth year English department students' ability in building coherence devices concerning with the repetitions of key word/noun, the use of pronoun, the use of transition signals, and logical orders in writing argumentative essays at University of Bengkulu.

F. Significances of the Research

The research is expected to have theoretical and practical significance for both lecturers and students or other researchers. Theoretically, it is expected that the result of this research can be as useful input for lecturers regarding to the purposes of writing subjects in university. It can be a source of information for the lecturers about analyzing the students' ability in building cohesion and coherence devices. Then, it is practically expected that it can be a guideline or information for the lecturers to improve teaching writing in the university level. For students, it is expected that they can involve actively in the teaching learning process of writing, and for another researcher, it is expected that this research gives contribution in evolving knowledge and skill about how to analyze cohesion and coherence in students' argumentative essays and how to compose good academic writing paper (a paragraph, an essay and a research report or research plan) in English and as one of the useful sources for conducting further research.

F. Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding of the terms used in this research, the key terms are defined as follow:

1. Students' ability is the English department students' capacity of being able to do something in relation to build cohesion and coherence into argumentative essays (Hornby, 2000: 2).

2. Cohesion is the connection that results when the interpretation of a textual element is dependent on another element in the text (Renkema, 2004: 49-51).
3. Coherence is the extent to which the reader or listener is able to infer the writer's or speakers communicative intentions (Renkema, 2004: 49-51).
4. Argumentative essays are kind of an arguing genre (discussion, analytical and hortatory exposition) which involve reasoning, evaluation and persuasion (Knapp and Megan, 2005: 187)
5. Fourth year students of English Department University of Bengkulu are the students in seventh or eighth semester and those who have taken all subjects of writing.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION

A. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, there are some conclusions which can be derived from the analysis:

1. The students' ability in building cohesion into argumentative essays written by fourth year students of English department at Bengkulu University is Low Average (LA) where the average score shows that some students have scores in the range of 3-3.5 which means that they have low understanding on cohesion devices.
2. Meanwhile, the students' ability in building coherence into argumentative essays written by fourth year students of English department at Bengkulu University is Low Average (LA) where the average score shows that some students have scores in the range of 3-3.5 which means that they have low understanding on coherence devices.

B. IMPLICATION

The implication of this research is in relation to the findings of the research that the cohesion and coherence devices need to be introduced completely to the

students of university since they have to accomplish their study by presenting a thesis as a requirement for completing Sarjana degree. On the other hands, the cohesion and coherence devices are helpful materials to be developed in teaching writing at schools or universities.

C. SUGGESTION

Based on the research findings and conclusions above, the researcher would like to propose suggestion as follows;

1. English department students at University of Bengkulu are suggested to be aware to the kind of cohesion and coherence devices in writing especially when they are writing their argumentative essays, to be active in practicing to write and to know the other kinds of the text related to the teaching writing.
2. English department lecturers at University of Bengkulu are suggested to give more practices in writing related to the students' ability in building cohesion and coherence into their writing whether writing in home or at campus and should be aware of instant writing which directly copying the sources from internet.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al-Jarf, Reima. 2001. Processing of Cohesive Ties by EFL Arab College Students. *Foreign Language Annals*; March/April 2001.
- Arikunto, Suharsimi. 2010. *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Arikunto, Suharsimi. 2010. *Manajemen Penelitian*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Bae, Jungok. 2001. Cohesion and Coherence in Children's Written English: Immersion and English-only Classes. *Regents of the University of California Vol. 12 No. 1*, 51-58.
- Bailey, Stephen. 2003. *Academic Writing: A Practical Guide for Students*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Brown, H Douglas. 1994. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Brown, H Douglas and Priyanvada Abeywickrama. 2010. *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices (Second Edition)*. San Fransisco: Pearson Education.
- Coulmas, Florian. 2003. *Writing Systems: An Introduction to their Linguistic analysis*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Elfisa, Yesi. 2012. A Study about Students' Ability in Using Coherence and Cohesive Devices in Expository Text at the Fifth Semester of STKIP YPM Bangko Kabupaten Merangin Jambi. Unpublished *Thesis*. State University of Padang.
- Ellis, Charles. Et. al. 2005. Recovery of Cohesion in Descriptive Discourse after Left-Hemisphere Stroke. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research & Development*, Vol. 42. No. 6. Pages 737-746.
- Evans, Virginia. 1998. *Successful Writing Proficiency*. Newbury: Express Publishing.