

Coherence in The Narrative Texts of Eastvaganza Story Writing Contest for Senior High-School Students

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Abstract

This study analyzes narratives written by six students who joined a story writing contest. It is assumed that the students who joined in the writing contest had fair knowledge in writing, so the texts may achieve coherence. This study uses qualitative research in the form of discourse analysis. The focuses of the study are to investigate micro and macro level coherence, tense use, and the context of situation of the texts. This study uses the theories from Thornbury (2005), Ellis (1997), and Eggins (1994). This study is aimed to know the quality of coherent text in the students' narrative. The findings of this study showed that constant theme patterns became the most frequent occurred in the narratives followed by zig-zag patterns and sentences which has no patterns. The sentences which have patterns might be logic in continuity. For the macro-level coherence, key word aspect became the most found in the narratives. The words represented the main characters in the stories. The macro-scripts showed that the narratives mostly use the script orientation-complication-resolution in arranging the paragraphs. The tense errors were found in almost all narratives. The findings showed three narratives had more errors than correct ones. The situational coherence showed that the fields in the texts were about heroes who had done something precious in their life. The tenors of the texts were same, namely between story writers and story readers. The modes of the texts were also the same. The texts are delivered by written media, so the texts did not have visual and aural distance between story writers and story readers. The goal of the texts is only for constructing experience.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of coherence has been explored by many researchers. They have revealed their statements about coherence studies. Coherence is the way a group of clauses or sentences (a text) respects to the context of situation and therefore consistent in register and respect to itself and therefore cohesive (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 23). In other words, Thornbury (2002: 36) said coherence is capacity of a text to 'make sense'. This relates to the connected sentences in a text to make the text meaningful and can be understood by readers.

The term coherence cannot be separated with cohesion. Cohesion may refer to the ways in which sentences are connected by cohesive devices through which readers can perceive the semantic relationship between the sentences (Suwandi: 2016). The study discussed the coherence and cohesion analysis of the final project abstracts of the undergraduate students of PGRI Semarang.

The other discussion comes from Eyyup Coskun (2009). He investigated the text coherence in the narrative texts of Turkish student and bilingual Uzbek students in Turkey. The focus was to compare the coherence text between two groups of different students. The text coherence was also investigated by Zheng (2009) in his study: *text coherence in translation*. The target of the study was to obtain the coherence of a target language text from a source text during the process of translation. The other coherence should be revealed in spoken language. For example, Manipuspika (2014) accomplished coherence in talk shows. She showed conversational coherence achieved within talk show in both English and Indonesian talk shows.

In case of coherence, students write to express their idea. Writing has long process in order to express our idea in a writing. Knapp and Watkins (2005: 15) say learning to write is a difficult and complex series of processes that require a range of explicit teaching methodologies throughout all the stages of learning. Additional statement stated by

Halliday (2004: 5) that says the process of writing has four main elements: planning, drafting, editing and final version. A writer should also concern on some writing aspects such as: structure, lexical density, nominalization, cohesive devices and punctuation. Those must be there because written language is more complex to produce language. It should be clear to make the readers understand what the purpose of the text. That is why some students who learn English as a foreign language face difficulty in writing English text.

Teaching writing English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesian curriculum. If we take one curriculum used in Indonesian: School-based curriculum (KTSP) for instance, students are taught the four language skill integratedly. Two are receptive skills, and two other are productive skills. They should organize the system of language well in order to be understood. Concerning on the importance of the purpose, teaching writing is one of them, and it will be a challenge for English teachers to teach writing. Students should be going to produce text in oral or written. However, the strategies of teaching writing have not been over ever. There are always new methods to teach writing at the class or outside class, at least to prompt students' willingness in writing. One can be used to motivate students to write English text is through writing contest.

Contest can be defined a competition in which people try to win something (Hornby, 2000: 282). A writing contest also has purpose to make participants to compete in writing a text. The text that is written is various from short functional text such as advertisement and letters, until genre text such as: descriptive, exposition and stories. The scoring for the contest is also various. The points of scoring are also commonly such as content, organization of text, vocabulary and grammar.

Related to the complexity in writing and one way to know students' ability in writing, the study investigated the quality of students' writing in a writing contest. The writing contest emphasized narratives as the genre of the

contest. The participants were also from senior high school students who definitely get writing matters from school. There were known how far the students master writing skills and known the output of the writing. That was the object of this research, to analyze the students' writing. This study had purpose to analyze the coherence of the narratives.

In this study, there were some narratives written by students. The students joined English story writing contest in "EASTVAGANZA" event on November 10, 2016. That event was the English contest for all students in Cirebon region, West Java Indonesia. The researcher analyzed the coherence and compared six students' narratives whose stories become the best six.

The writer chose this topic in order to know the complexity of writing, especially English writing. It is a challenge for everyone, including Indonesian students. It needs other language component mastery like grammar and vocabulary. It needs other features like creativity and critical thinking of students. One of factors that influences the students' interest in language learning especially writing is "anxiety". Anxiety is known as a factor in academic performance (Brown, 2007, p.162 as cited in Astrid, A., et al: 2017). The lack of students' anxiety mostly becomes one barrier in second language learning. That is why it needs a new strategy to increase students' interest in learning second language especially writing.

In writing, there should have many features and one of them is coherence. This term is used to make texts related together to deliver an information to readers. Furthermore, the finding of coherence on the texts will show us how informative the texts are.

The texts that are chosen are from students' narratives writing in a story writing contest. Narratives are different than other texts in terms of goal, generic structure and the features. In narratives, those should have some features such as characters, plot, theme, and message delivered for readers. In the generic structure also different, narratives have orientation as the first opening in the text; it tells

us about the characters involved, time and place the story happened, and the beginning of the story. The second, third or fourth paragraph, it usually emerges complication as the first of where the story will go on. Even, whether the story is good or bad is decided in the complication session. And narratives are ended in resolution as the last step of the story; it will tell whether the story will end well of bad. Sometimes narratives are closed by "coda" or the good lesson which is taken from the story. That makes different; narratives require a "coda" to have readers affected to do or not to do something in the story. Writing narratives is so different; the writers, moreover students who write narratives are looked as high-English-quality students. This reason makes the researcher interested to investigate students' narratives.

Senior high school (SMA) students have learned English since Junior high schools (SMP), even since elementary schools (SD). The students of course have learned writing skill since the last high schools and at least have competed writing competence. Studying narratives is same; they have got the narrative lessons since junior high school in reading and even in writing. The writing contest can improve their writing skill, especially in narratives.

The writing contest was held by English tutors community in Cirebon: The EAST in November 2016, in the event EASTVAGANZA. A writing contest was probably still rare for Indonesian students, especially in writing stories. Even in Cirebon region, that event may be probably rarely held. This way made the researcher to choose narratives writing competition as the target of research.

Because it was a writing competition, there were the winners in the end. In the EASTVAGANZA contest, there were chosen the big six of students in the ranking. The choosing of big six was according to the score of the judges. The committee added the scores for the two judges to be cumulative score. The scores became the last score for the game. From

the result of the score, it was known the coherence of the stories. In addition, it was also to know the quality of writings from the students' narratives.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative study that uses discourse analysis. The data were taken from students' story texts. The unit of analysis focused on sentence and clause.

In this study, there was identification the text coherence on the students' narrative texts. It showed the relationship among each sentence and showed the meaning of the writings. The researcher took only six narratives of students who joined EASTVAGANZA contest to be analyzed.

The objects of the study are the texts written by students who joined EASTVAGANZA Contest. There were nine narratives from nine participants in this study. The researcher only took six narratives based on the ranking of participants. The big six of participants were taken according to committee's last score recapitulation; and the committee's scoring was based on the judges' first scoring. Then there was an analysis of coherence in terms of micro-level, macro-level, tense use and situational coherence.

The main instrument was the researcher himself because this research area was discourse in coherence analysis which concerned with analyzing the text.

There were some procedures in collecting data. They were as follows:

- 1.) Getting the story texts of all participants of EASTVAGANZA writing contest. The researcher was able to ask the text file from the committee of EASTVAGANZA, then to be printed. The data were taken only six narratives based on the big six ranking of participants in the end of the contest. The six narratives taken were based on the result from judges.
- 2.) After collecting the six of them, next there were taken as the main data of coherence analysis.
- 3.) Close reading the whole of students' stories. It was to know first the content of the story and to have attention the

connection among sentences and paragraphs. That was as the first of coherence analysis and the tense use analysis.

After the data were collected, they were analyzed using the following steps:

- 1.) In collecting data, the researcher prepared the printed story texts. Then, they were read and given marks in each unit of analysis.
- 2.) In reviewing and exploring the data, the researcher began to read the data carefully. Then the researcher reviewed the whole data in order to get the understanding of the text. And the researcher made a table to analyze the text then separated the text from sentence by sentence and determined the coherence.
- 3.) In coding the data to make it easy in analyzing, the researcher marked the text number and the clause. For example, narrative text 1 was shortened 'NT.1' and the clause 1 in the narrative text 1 became 'C.1 NT.1'.
- 4.) In analyzing the micro-level coherence of the texts, the researcher used thematic progression and logical relationship theories from Thornbury's (2005). From the relation, it was known the theme & rheme, cohesive devices, and whether the topic relates or no.
- 5.) In analyzing the macro-level coherence of the texts, the researcher used theory from Thornbury's (2005) in order to explore the key words and macro-scripts in each narrative. In analyzing the correct and error tense, the researchers took theory from Ellis (1997) as cited in Ratnah (2013). The analysis categorized tense error in three parts: error of verb selection, error of omission, and double verb/passive error. The error sentences were marked by different colors. Then, the sentences were separated with the error categorization and given the possible/correct ones.
- 6.) In analyzing the situational coherence of the texts, the researcher categorized each sentence into three variables according to Eggins (1994): field, tenor, and mode. To analyze it, it is taken generally all paragraphs. Here is the example of situational coherence analysis taken in a narrative.

In this study, the researcher used triangulation on some theories of analysis of coherence. Micro-macro level coherence analysis was taken from Thornbury's theory (2005). The other theory which related to

Thornbury's was by Eggins (1994). It guided the analysis of situational coherence. The other theory about tense error used theory from Ellis (1997) as cited in Ratnah (2013). To add the certainty of analysis result, because the object was students' story writing in writing contest, the researcher compared with the scoring by judges. It was to compare the scoring from the committee, scored by the judges and for the researcher's analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The micro-level coherence in terms of thematic progression and logical relationship are taken from Eggins (2004) cited in Fitriati & Yonata (2017); which has three main patterns: theme reiteration or constant pattern, zig-zag pattern, and multiple-rheme pattern. The findings of the thematic progression and the logical relationship in the six student's texts can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. The overall result of thematic progression found in six students' texts

N o	Text	Consta nt theme pattern	Zig- zag patte rn	Multi ple theme patter n	Rogue senten ce	Tot al
1	Ketu Aji	27	23	-	9	60
2	The Friendly Giant	19	12	-	7	38
3	The True Hero	35	21	-	25	81
4	Friends hip Butterfl y and Bee	27	13	-	4	44
5	Hero	23	20	-	19	62
6	Werew olf	35	16	2	20	73
Total		156	105	2	84	358

In the table, we see that from the six texts, there are 358 patterns. It shows constant theme pattern becomes the most used to link sentences with 156 numbers, followed with zig-zag pattern 105 numbers, multiple-theme pattern 2 numbers

and rogue sentence 84 numbers. In the reality of narratives, Knap & Watkins (2005) say that narratives set up a complexity of some sort that must be resolved. It is different that recount where it has shown that the story steps come from orientation and events without any significant complication appeared. However, narratives reflect more complex story stages added with complication or problem. So far, Knap & Watkins (2005) explain narratives are not only in the structure of *orientation-complication-resolution*, but it can be develop more than that according to how writers make their stories.

In the macro-level coherence from the six texts, the writers had their own style to write their stories. The use of writer's point of view as the third person or only the story teller becomes the most used, but sometimes the writers use first person reference or use both first and third person. There are also some structures used, at least using simple structure: orientation – complication – resolution, or using structure: orientation – problem – solution – resolution, or possibly using: orientation – first problem – second problem – resolution. Well, this differentiation is not a matter in narratives. Even if the writers do not put the complication, the stories can still run.

The next analysis is the use of past tense in the story texts. Except for direct speech, it can use other tense. That makes all verb uses should be changed into past forms. The use also occurs in the time signal that should be changed into past time signal forms. In this research, the writers write narratives and of course, those should be written in past tense. However, we can see from the findings that the writers are not qualified enough to use tense in their text. Those can be seen in the table below.

Table 2. The summary of tense error in six texts

No	Text	Total of Sentence correct Tense	Error of Verb with Selection	Error of Omission	Double verb/Err or Passive	Total of Sentence
1	Ketu Aji	40	16	2	2	60
2	The Friendly Giant	10	27	-	1	38
3	The True Hero	11	58	11	2	82
4	Friendship Butterfly and Bee	11	25	4	5	45
5	Hero	50	10	2	1	63
6	Werewolf	61	5	5	2	73
	Total	182	142	24	13	361

In the table, we see that from the six texts, there are 361 sentences. It shows the sentences with correct tense are only 182 numbers. The rests prove the writers still make mistakes in verb selection with 142 numbers, error of omission with 24 numbers, and use of double verbs or passive voice errors with 13 numbers.

The next discussion is about the situational coherence of the texts. One of definition of coherence that is stated by Halliday & Hasan (1976: 23) that the clauses or the sentences arranged in a text should be related to the context. The contexts can be context of culture and context of situation. Further, Eggins (1994) states the context of situation is similar to situational coherence. In other words, everything occurs that relate to the text. As Gerot & Wignell (1995) classify that there are three variables in situational coherence: field, tenor and mode.

In sum, the six texts written by the students have same theme and goal. The theme is about hero and the goal is general narrative itself: to entertain readers; or to teach the moral value from the text. We see from the findings in each text has almost similar variable of situational coherence.

Field : hero story

Tenor : writers to readers

Mode : written to be read

The fields of the texts are same, about hero stories. However, each text has different views about hero. This represents the writers' thinking when they wrote the story. If we know, from the text 1, the hero means someone who fought to defend his land from his enemy. Text 2, is almost similar to text 1, which name hero as someone who could defend his place from danger. In text 3, the writer thinks that the real hero is someone who struggle for family. Text 4, is also almost similar to text 1 and text 2; the hero is someone who struggled to make its land/place better. Text 5 does not explain more about what hero means, but focuses more on hero that someone who always do good action in its life. In the last text, there is contradiction between good hero or bad hero, because the focus of the story is on the hero who made good action in the past, but made a wrong decision in the end.

Tenor means the participants and their statuses. The statuses of participants in the texts are similar too. The texts are all written, so the writers of the texts are students who joined story writing contest. In this case, they are story writers. The second interactant is for general; for story readers who enjoyed reading stories. If we detail the six narratives, we can know different kinds of narratives there. The first narrative seems to be folklore from someone's experience. The 2nd and 5th narratives seem to be fable where the characters who played are all animals. Meanwhile the 3rd, 4th and 6th narratives are similar to kind of short stories or pieces of novels. We can see the plot of the three stories which have some conflicts and writers' view. Even, the stories may be able to have longer stories than now stories.

The mode is the way the message of the story delivered to the readers. It is also similar with the six texts. Because the texts are written, they do not have visual distance, aural distance and feedback. The communication between the writers and the readers is limited and indirect. It is perhaps different than letter, e-mail or short messages; they do not have visual distance and

aural distance, but have rapid feedback between interactants. Between the writers and the readers of short messages can communicate each other. For experiential distance, the story seems non-fiction, although there are some stories which seem to be real stories. Those are used for constructing experience. It means the language constituting social process called language as reflection. In the table, we see that from the six texts, there are 361 sentences. It shows the sentences with correct tense are only 182 numbers. The rests prove the writers still make mistakes in verb selection with 142 numbers, error of omission with 24 numbers, and use of double verbs or passive voice errors with 13 numbers.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion is drawn in order to answer the statement in the objective of research. The present study was to investigate the coherence in students' narratives in EASTVAGANZA writing contest. It investigated the micro-level and macro-level coherence, the tense use, and the context of situation of the texts. In micro-level coherence, this only discussed the thematic progression and the logical relationship. For the thematic progression, many writers used the constant theme pattern in building the new theme of each sentence. The pattern was more dominant than the zig-zag pattern and even the multiple theme patterns which were rarely used. However, besides the three patterns, the writers still did many rogue sentences or jumping idea, so there were some sentences which were not identified. In other words, rogue sentences made the sentences were out of readers' expectation.

It analyzed the macro-level coherence. This only discussed the key words and the macro-scripts which were there in the texts. The key words could represent the theme and topic of the texts. Likewise, in the texts had same theme about hero, but here had not to be the word *hero* mentioned many times in the texts. The other words could be representative to symbolize *hero*. For example, the text 1, text 2,

and text 4, the main characters who became hero were always mentioned many times such as the words: young man or *Ketu Aji*, the Giant, and the butterfly and the bee. This also occurred in text 3, when the word *mother/mom* as the hero was mentioned more. More than that, the other words were only supporting words which could explain what the heroes had done in the stories.

Besides key words, the other macro coherence was macro-script. The scripts were like the generic structure which arranged paragraph-by-paragraph to become a text. As we see in finding, from the six texts, at least the writers used simple structure: orientation – complication – resolution, or using structure: orientation – problem – solution – resolution. Possibly there were some stories using: orientation – first problem – second problem – resolution.

It also was about tense use. For narratives which tell readers past events, the tense used past tense. The finding showed the writers still felt difficulty to understand past tense. It was shown that only text 1, text 5 and text 6 which had sentences with correct tense more than the errors. It meant the writers were carefully to use the tense, so they could avoid doing the mistakes. Nevertheless the text 2, text 3 and text 4 had error tense more than the correct, so it would possibly made the text incoherent with many tense errors. It meant the writers were less careful to write the texts or did not have fair knowledge in writing English stories.

The context of situation contained three variables: field, tenor and mode. The fields of the texts were same, about hero stories. However, each text had different views about hero. This represented the writers' thinking when they wrote the story. The tenors of the texts were also same, between story writers to story readers. The mode of the texts delivered the message by written media. The texts did not have visual distance, aural distance and feedback. For experiential distance, the texts were used for constructing experience. It meant the language constituting social process called language as reflection.

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